

Office for
Students



HESF20

Higher Education Students Forecast 2020-21

Reference OfS 2019.36

Enquiries to recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk

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This document is relevant to higher education providers that:

- have registered (or applied to be registered) with the Office for Students (OfS) in the Approved (fee cap) category
- do not have higher education provision recognised for OfS funding purposes in 2019-20
- will offer higher education provision recognised for OfS funding purposes in 2020-21.

The data collected provides a forecast of higher education students expected to study on courses recognised for OfS funding in 2020-21 and will inform the allocation of teaching funds for 2020-21.

Action: To allow grant allocations to be calculated in time for the spring 2020 grant announcement, higher education providers should upload returns to the OfS portal by **noon on Tuesday 10 December 2019**.

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Introduction

Purpose

1. All providers that are registered in the Approved (fee cap) category with the Office for Students (OfS) for the academic year (1 August – 31 July) 2020-21 will be required to submit a data return in 2019-20. This will allow us to calculate OfS funding for 2020-21.
2. This document sets out the requirements for the HESF20 survey, and applies only to higher education providers that:
 - a. have registered (or applied to be registered) with the OfS in the Approved (fee cap) category.
 - b. do **not** have higher education provision in 2019-20 recognised for OfS funding purposes and are therefore not receiving OfS funding for the 2019-20 academic year. (Some may, however, have provision that is subcontracted in, whereby they teach students of another provider under a subcontractual arrangement.)
 - c. will offer higher education provision recognised for OfS funding purposes for the first time in 2020-21. This excludes eligible provision that is subcontracted in.

Recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes relates to the types of courses offered by a provider as defined in paragraphs 91 to 93. It does not depend on whether the OfS is actually funding the provider directly.

3. Higher education providers in the Approved (fee cap) category that have students in 2019-20 on higher education courses recognised for OfS funding purposes will need to complete the 2019 Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES19) survey.
4. The data in this return will provide a forecast of the number of students on higher education courses recognised for OfS funding purposes who are expected to be studying in the academic year 2020-21, and will inform the initial allocation of teaching funds for the academic year 2020-21.
5. This document provides the following:
 - a. An introduction to the HESF20 survey and how we will use it to inform our funding allocations.
 - b. Guidance notes for completing the HESF20 survey (Part 1).
 - c. Notes on the specific definitions used in the HESF20 survey (Part 2).
 - d. Appendices which provide detailed technical information to support the HESF20 tables (Part 3). Sample tables are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/hesf20-higher-education-students-forecast-2020-21. The tables for completion will be available to download from the OfS portal from late October 2019. Full appendices will be supplied soon after.
 - e. Good practice guidance.

6. Information on how our data returns inform funding allocations can be found in ‘Guide to funding 2019-20: How the Office for Students allocates money to higher education providers’ (OfS 2019.18).¹

Action required

7. To allow grant allocations to be calculated in time for the spring 2020 grant announcement, providers must ensure that:
- a. Completed workbooks are uploaded to the OfS portal by noon on **Tuesday 10 December 2019**.
 - b. By 3 February 2020:
 - i. Any data verification queries are answered.
 - ii. The data is signed off by their accountable officer.
8. Providers may be asked to complete HESF20 outside of this timeframe – if so, we will provide amended deadlines as necessary. This may be the case if providers apply to be registered later in the 2019-20 academic year. We will announce 2020-21 grant allocations for providers that become registered in the Approved (fee cap) category after the deadline has passed throughout 2020-21.

Outline timetable for HESF20 survey and funding round process

9. The timetable for HESF20 and the 2020-21 funding round is summarised in Table A.

Table A: Timetable

Date	Action
From late October 2019	HESF20 workbooks available to providers via the OfS portal.
10 December 2019	Submission deadline to return HESF data. Workbooks must be submitted through the OfS portal by noon.
From late December 2019	Data verification phase. Student data contacts at providers will be asked to verify, and answer any questions about, the data. Contacts will have up to five working days to respond. Further rounds of queries may be necessary.
3 February 2020	HESF20 data must be signed off by the provider’s accountable officer , ² who is usually the head of provider, as being a realistic forecast of the student numbers that the provider will have in 2020-21.
March 2020	Terms and conditions of funding for 2020-21 confirmed to providers.
March 2020	Capital grant allocations for 2020-21 released to providers.
Spring 2020	Recurrent grant allocations for 2020-21 released to providers.

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guide-to-funding-2019-20/.

² See ‘Regulatory advice 10: Accountable officers: Guidance for providers on the responsibilities of accountable officers’ (OfS 2018.29), available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-10-accountable-officers-guidance-for-providers-on-the-responsibilities-of-accountable-officers/.

Date	Action
November to December 2020	Providers will complete a data return to report their 2020-21 student numbers.
Spring 2021	Providers that completed HESF20 will have their grant allocations for 2020-21 recalculated using their updated 2020-21 student numbers.

10. Where a provider fails to return credible data on time, we may base the allocation of funds on our own estimate of student activity. Providers that do not submit credible data on time are more likely to be audited.
11. Each provider completing HESF must have its data signed off by its accountable officer. This forecast data should represent the most realistic and likely outcome of the provider's recruitment in 2020-21. We will use this data to calculate each provider's initial 2020-21 grant allocations.
12. Providers that receive OfS funding for 2020-21 will be required to complete an in-year data return in late 2020. For providers that have completed HESF20, this in-year data return will be used to recalculate their initial 2020-21 grant allocations.

How to use this document

13. This document provides guidance on how to complete the HESF20 survey and summarises the funding rules and definitions for OfS-funded higher education, with links to further guidance. This document has three parts.

Part 1: Guidance for completing the survey

14. This part explains how to download the survey and describes the data to enter into each table. It also explains the process for verifying and signing off the data, as well as considerations for data assurance.

Part 2: Funding rules and definitions

15. This part defines the student population covered by the HESF survey and gives guidance on what is 'countable' in HESF20. This ensures we can collect information on students counted for funding purposes.
16. Data returns must be prepared using the OfS funding rules set out in our guidance and not according to your own academic regulations. There are often, quite reasonably, differences between individual providers' academic regulations and the rules relating to the counting of students for funding purposes. Links to definitions and more detailed information provided in our HESF20 guidance document are given throughout this document.

Part 3: Appendices

17. The appendices contain detailed technical information to support the HESF20 tables:
 - Appendix 1 provides guidance on using the OfS portal and workbook submission
 - Appendix 2 describes the validation checks on HESF20 data.

Part 1: The HESF process and instructions on completing the workbook

Contents of this section

The HESF process

- Overview of the HESF20 process
- Before completing your survey
- Notes on completing your survey
- Submitting your survey
- The data verification phase
- Signing off your data
- What happens after the data is signed off
- Data assurance
- Good practice

Self-check questions

Guidance for completing workbook tables

- Selecting students to include in the survey
- Definitions
- The tables in the HESF20 survey workbook
- Data to enter into the tables

The HESF process

18. This part describes the HESF process as a whole, from compiling and submitting the survey, through the data verification phase, to the point where the data is signed off. It also gives details of our data audit programme and recommendations on good practice.

Before completing your survey

19. In preparation for completing the survey, we recommend that you read this guidance thoroughly. When completing the survey, you will need to follow the definitions described in Part 2. You will also need to refer to the guidance given in the HESF19 survey, which is available on the OfS website³.

³ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses19/.

Part 1: The HESF process and instructions on completing the workbook – The HESF process

20. We have also released a number of online training materials, which are available from our website at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/.
21. Your provider should nominate a member of staff to act as our contact for the HESF20 survey. This person will be our primary point of contact during the HESF process, though it is possible for your provider to nominate alternative contacts. It is important that your contact details are correct. If you want to check or amend them, please contact us at recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk. We recommend that more than one person is involved with completing the survey, so that expertise is spread across your staff.
22. We will write to you when the workbooks are released. The HESF20 workbook is a Microsoft Excel file (.xlsx) that will be available to download from the OfS portal (<https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/data>). Please note that before you can access the workbook, the OfS portal user administrator at your provider will need to grant you access. Appendix 1 provides further information on how to use the portal and the role of the user administrator.

Notes on completing your survey

23. When completing the workbook, any validation errors will be automatically highlighted. This indicates where data is not feasible; for example, where a negative number has been entered in a column. Validation errors need to be corrected before the workbook is submitted.
24. After completing the workbook, it is good practice for someone else to review the data. You should also:
 - a. Have a senior member of the provider check the return and agree that it is a realistic forecast of the student numbers that the provider will have in 2020-21.
 - b. Use the set of self-check questions (page 11) as a final check on your data and processes.

Submitting your survey

25. When you are satisfied that the data is complete and credible, you have until the submission deadline (**noon on Tuesday 10 December 2019**) to upload the workbook to the OfS portal. We will not give extensions to this deadline. Please note that the portal usually sees heavy traffic on deadline day, which can cause the upload process to take longer than usual. You can submit the workbook to us before this date, and it is possible to submit the workbook multiple times, though we will only keep and use the most recently uploaded version.
26. After the HESF workbook has been successfully uploaded to the portal, you will be able to download a results package. This contains the latest processed copy of your HESF workbook with an updated 'Information' worksheet that will show the submission date and a version number. You should always download the results package, as we will refer to the most recent version of your workbook during the rest of the HESF process.

The data verification phase

27. We use the data verification phase of the HESF process to make sure that we are confident in the accuracy of your data and that we understand the basis for the predictions you have made.

28. The data verification phase starts after the submission deadline, and ends on the sign-off deadline (**Monday 3 February 2020 for all providers**). By this point any queries we have will need to be answered and your data will need to be signed off as a realistic forecast of the student numbers you will have in 2020-21. The timescale for data verification takes account of the holiday period. It is advisable to have more than one member of staff involved with completing the HESF survey and the data verification phase.
29. After the submission deadline, we will normally email your provider's HESF contact with our initial queries within seven working days. This email will come from a member of our data verification team who will have reviewed your HESF workbook. This initial email will contain a letter with full instructions, along with our specific queries set out in a separate document.
30. We expect your response to our initial queries to be returned within five working days and emailed to dataverification@officeforstudents.org.uk. We will then review your response and, if necessary, respond with further queries. Several rounds of queries are often necessary before your data is ready to be signed off. In later rounds of queries, response deadlines may be shorter because of the timescales of the data verification phase.
31. During data verification, it may become apparent that part of your workbook needs to be amended. If so, directions for resubmitting the survey will be included in the letter.

Data queries

32. Generally, data verification queries are raised where your data differs from our expectations. For example, queries might be raised about how you have categorised students in the return or about the reason why the reporting of large numbers of students might be considered realistic. We may also compare your HESF20 forecast with information you have provided for OfS registration purposes and with student numbers that you have previously taught on behalf of another registering provider under any subcontractual arrangement.
33. When you respond to our queries, we are looking for responses that directly relate to the query, provide an appropriate level of detail, and show an understanding of the relevant OfS funding definitions.

Signing off your data

34. When our queries have been answered and any amendments to your data have been processed, we will ask for your data to be signed off by your provider's **accountable officer**.
35. We will send you a verification form by email. Please check that the date and version number match those in your most recent HESF workbook. Your accountable officer will need to sign this form, which should then be emailed to dataverification@officeforstudents.org.uk. The final deadline for us to have received the sign-off form is **noon on Monday 3 February 2020**.

What happens after the data is signed off

36. Straight after the sign-off deadline, we will start to prepare your HESF data to calculate your grant for 2020-21.

37. Shortly after the data verification phase has ended, we will contact you for feedback on the HESF process. This feedback is extremely valuable to us, and will allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of the data returns process and guide any improvements.

Recalculation of 2020-21 funding based on updated 2020-21 student numbers

38. In the autumn of 2020, providers completing HESF20 will be required to complete an in-year survey of their student numbers (as will all other providers receiving OfS funding for 2020-21). The exact form of this survey will be confirmed next year. We will use this in-year data return to recalculate and adjust your funding (up or down) to reflect your actual student numbers in 2020-21. This will ensure that you are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by a forecast that turns out not to reflect the actual position. Further details of how this recalculation process will work will be released at a later date.

Data assurance

39. Data assurance is an essential part of how we can ensure our approach to regulation is appropriate and effective. Providers are responsible for the quality and accuracy of the data they submit to us and other bodies. We do not approve or agree their data submissions, but we monitor the reasonableness and credibility of data, including by comparing and reconciling between different datasets and carrying out audits. We will require providers to amend their data submissions, if we believe there are errors which would significantly and materially affect our use of the data. This may include requiring changes to how providers use subject classifications and hence how students are assigned to price groups for our funding purposes.
40. It is essential to keep an audit trail when filling out your HESF return, recording how your decisions have been made and the data used to support them. One example of an area we may look at as part of our regulatory responsibilities is whether there is sufficient data for any estimates, forecasts or judgements.
41. Our data audits test the systems and processes used by a provider to prepare specific aspects of their data. This can involve desk-based audit work, as well as visits to providers to:
- a. Review systems used to manage student data.
 - b. Review supporting audit trail documents that show how the return was produced.
 - c. Test the values reported on the return and the assumptions underpinning them. This involves selecting samples (or whole populations) of students and testing how they have been reported in the return.
42. Audits will often include a review of the final (outturn) position of students at the end of an academic year. This will allow us to assess the reasonableness of the forecasts and will ensure providers are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by forecasts that turn out not to reflect the actual position.

Good practice

Audit trail

43. You should keep an adequate audit trail for the compilation of your HESF and future data returns, for at least five years. It should be possible to provide a clear rationale for the figures, and to supply any data used to support your estimates along with any relevant electronically stored data, printouts and working papers used in completing the return. Source documents such as registration forms should also be retained, including information on students' detailed study intentions for the academic year and their qualifications on entry.
44. Where your provider is involved in subcontractual or other partnership arrangements, your audit trail must contain evidence for the inclusion or exclusion of students (including details of the partnership arrangements between providers) and for the categorisation of students that are included.

Knowledge management and staff training

45. It is advisable to have **at least two people** who know how to prepare data returns, including HESF. Where the knowledge required to prepare OfS data returns is undocumented and lies with only one person, this creates a risk that in that person's absence, particularly at crucial times of the year, the provider may not be able to prepare the return on time and to the appropriate standard. A good audit trail helps to reduce this risk, but we also consider it good practice for all providers to manage it by ensuring that at least two people can produce the information for the return and prepare the return itself.
46. All relevant staff, including experienced staff, should consider the relevant OfS guidance each year and make any necessary changes to their systems. Providers should also ensure that the relevant processes are adequately documented and that this documentation is kept up to date.
47. Staff should prepare data returns using the OfS funding rules set out in our guidance and not according to their own academic regulations. There are often, quite reasonably, differences between providers' academic regulations and the rules relating to the counting of students for funding purposes. It is essential that individuals involved in completing student data fields used for funding purposes fully understand the fields they are completing in the student record.
48. Your data collection and recording procedures should be **applied consistently** across the provider. Although providers have academic regulations and procedures for managing student data in their student record systems, practice within providers can be inconsistent. In general, provider practices for collecting and recording data should be applied consistently across all departments and faculties with the same data requirements. However, some departments may have additional requirements to meet. For example, faculties of health studies often have requirements beyond those of the rest of the provider.
49. Your staff should **understand the funding rules** and how they relate to the provider's student record system. Data quality will be improved if staff who input data into, manage and maintain the student record system understand and take into account the requirements of its users. Such staff should be trained in the provider's data requirements, with reference to any differences between academic regulation requirements and funding rule requirements, so that they understand why they are asked to perform particular tasks.

Implementing new student record systems

50. Implementing a new student record system is a major undertaking. It is essential that providers manage this process carefully. As part of the overall implementation project, it is essential to include the requirements both for everyday reports needed by academic and administrative staff and for top-level management reports, and to make arrangements to ensure that they are delivered.

Management information

51. In gaining assurance we do not ask for any reports that could not reasonably be expected to be used in everyday activity. Providers should ensure that their student record system holds the required data and that they are able to extract it.

52. Developing exception reporting, and using it to highlight data issues for review and subsequent amendment, will help to ensure that high-quality data is returned. Data quality is also enhanced by data management reviews by those with a good understanding of the data.

Self-check questions

Please ensure that you can answer ‘Yes’ to all these questions before submitting the completed HESF20 return.

Q1. Have you complied with the OfS’s funding rules, as set out in Part 2?

Q2. Have you considered the good practice tips contained in this document?

Q3. Have you kept an effective audit trail?

Q5. Have you passed all of the validation checks on each table? (See Appendix 2 for further information.)

Q6. In your forecasts, have you only included students that **will complete** their years of instance? (Using the OfS definition.)

Q7. Are the forecasts and estimates you have made as part of your HESF return made from robust and accurate past performance data where this is available, for example where the provision was previously taught on behalf of another provider under a subcontractual arrangement? Have you kept an audit trail for these decisions?

Q8. Have you excluded years of instance which will be subcontracted in?

Guidance for completing workbook tables

53. The following paragraphs provide guidance on how to complete the HESF survey workbook tables. The survey tables are contained in an Excel workbook. There are two worksheets to complete:

- Table 1 – Forecast of years of instance for 2020-21
- Table 2 – Teaching locations for students.

54. In these tables you will provide a forecast of student numbers you expect to recruit for 2020-21 on higher education courses recognised for OfS funding purposes. The forecast you make should represent the most realistic and likely outcome and should not be overly ambitious or pessimistic.

Content and structure of the workbook tables

55. For these tables, you are specifically forecasting the number of **completed years of instance** that **start in the academic year 2020-21**. Only years of instance generated by **new entrants** who are **OfS-fundable** should be counted. You should only be forecasting students that you expect to be **registered with your provider** and who are actively pursuing studies for a course that meets our definition of **recognised higher education** for OfS funding purposes. Information on these terms is given in Part 2.

56. Both tables in HESF are divided into sections 1 and 2:

- a. In **Section 1** you need to enter the estimated completed years of instance for the academic year 2020-21.
- b. In **Section 2** you need to enter the estimated full-time equivalence (FTE) for the completed years included in Section 1 for the academic year 2020-21.

Sections 1 and 2 are further broken down by price group.

57. Further information on the definitions used in these tables is given in Part 2 of this document.

58. The tables contain two different cell types:

- white cells, where we require data to be entered where appropriate to your provider
- blue cells, which have either been pre-populated with data from another source, or pre-filled by an underlying calculation.

59. When entering data into the tables, you may also see a red highlighted message above or to the right of the table. These validation failures indicate where the data you have entered is not feasible; for example, if you enter values to more than two decimal places. If any validation checks are triggered, you should check your data and make any necessary corrections. We will not accept a workbook with validation failures.

Table 1: Forecast of years of instance for 2020-21

60. In this table you are providing a forecast of the students you are expecting to start studying in the 2020-21 academic year, and complete their year of instance. We will use this information when we calculate initial funding for 2020-21. A partial screenshot of the table is shown in Figure 1.
61. When completing Section 1, you need to enter a forecast of the total completed years of instance for new entrants in 2020-21. You will need to further break down the years of instance by:
- Mode of study (Full-time or Part-time) – see paragraphs 99 to 101.
 - Length of year (Standard or Long) – see paragraphs 106 and 107.
 - Level of study (UG, PGT (UG fee), PGT (Masters' loan) or PGT (Other)) – see paragraphs 102 to 105.
 - Price group (A, B, C1, C2 or D). You may need to split years of instance across price groups. If this is the case, up to two decimal places can be used but the total years of instance must be a whole number – see paragraphs 108 to 110.
62. When completing Section 2, you will need to enter a forecast of the FTE for the completed years included in Section 1. You will only need to do this for the part-time rows; the full-time rows will be completed automatically. You will need to break down the FTE in the same way as in Section 1.

70. **Validation failure** messages will occur for Table 1 if:

- Section 1 or 2 contains a negative number.
- You record numbers to more than two decimal places.
- The totals in Section 1 do not add up to whole numbers. If you have courses that are split across price groups the totals must still be a whole number.
- The FTE recorded in Section 2 is greater than the completed years of instance in Section 1.
- The FTE recorded in Section 2 is less than 3 per cent of the completed years in Section 1. (Years of instance that have an FTE of less than 0.03 are not included.)

Figure 1: Table 1 – Forecast of years of instance for 2020-21

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	Provider														
2															
3	Table 1: Forecast of years of instance for 2020-21														
4															
5				Validation: OK					Validation: OK						
6				Section 1					Section 2						
7				Estimated completed years of instance for academic year 2020-21					Estimated FTE for completed years of instance included in Section 1 for academic year 2020-21						
8				Price group					Price group						
9	Mode	Length	Level	A	B	C1	C2	D	Total	A	B	C1	C2	D	Total
10	Full-time	Standard	UG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11			PGT (UG fee)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12			PGT (Masters' loan)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
13			PGT (Other)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
14		Long	UG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
15			PGT (UG fee)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
16			PGT (Masters' loan)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
17			PGT (Other)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	Part-time	Standard	UG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
19			PGT (UG fee)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
20			PGT (Masters' loan)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
21			PGT (Other)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
22		Long	UG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
23			PGT (UG fee)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
24			PGT (Masters' loan)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
25			PGT (Other)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
26	Total	UG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
27		PGT (UG fee)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
28		PGT (Masters' loan)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
29		PGT (Other)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
30		Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Table 2: Teaching locations for students

71. In this table you are providing information about the locations at which you expect students to be taught in the 2020-21 academic year. Locations are always campuses or other premises of a provider, even though some students may be away from those locations during a year of instance (for example, because they are studying by distance learning, on a work placement or on a study year abroad). This information will be used to calculate any location-based funding allocations. It also allows us to identify whether any of your students will be taught by another organisation on your behalf (subcontracted out). A partial screenshot of the table is shown in Figure 2.
72. When completing Sections 1 and 2 of this table, you need to further break down the years of instance into:
- location type (which must be either a location of your provider, or of a subcontracted out provider)
 - location identifiers (UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN), name of location and campus postcode).
73. You need to complete one row for each of your provider's own locations, and one row for each location of a provider that teaches students on your behalf under a subcontractual arrangement. If a provider teaches in a number of separate buildings that all fall within a single local authority district or unitary authority⁴, these can all be treated as a single location. Hence we would not generally expect locations that are all part of a single campus to be identified separately. However, if teaching is provided at locations in different local authority districts or unitary authorities, those locations should be identified separately, using a new row on Table 2 for each.
74. When completing the table you will need to:
- a. Start a new row for each new location. Leaving empty rows between filled rows will trigger a validation error. **Row number** will be automatically completed.
 - b. Select the **location type** from the dropdown list:
 - i. **Subcontracted out** – for years of instance where another provider teaches students on your behalf under a subcontractual arrangement. If the subcontracted provider has more than one campus, start a new row for each.
 - ii. **Other** – for all other years of instance.

If a student is taught at more than one location, for example if some, but not all, of their teaching is subcontracted out to another provider, their year of instance should be split according to the proportion of teaching activity that takes place at each location. **Distance learning:** Study by distance learning should be attributed to the main address of the provider that delivers it (reflecting whether this is subcontracted out or not).

⁴ For guidance on local authority districts and unitary authorities, see the guidance on local administrative units level 1, a: www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat#relationship-of-nuts-areas-to-uk-administrative-geographies.

Learning in the workplace, work experience and study abroad: The location type for learning in the workplace, work experience, or study abroad, should normally be recorded as 'other'. However, if delivery of a **whole** course is subcontracted out to another provider, then the location type for any learning in the workplace, work experience or study abroad that forms part of that course should be recorded as 'subcontracted out'.

- c. Enter the **UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)**:
- i. If you selected 'Subcontracted out' as the location type, enter the UKPRN for the subcontracted-out provider.
 - ii. If you selected 'Other' as the location type, the UKPRN column will be populated automatically with the UKPRN of your provider.

Where the UKPRN for a subcontracted-out provider is not known, values can be obtained from the UK Register of Learning Providers (www.ukrlp.co.uk). If a subcontracted out provider does not have a UKPRN, you may use the following generic codes (as defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)) in the UKPRN column:

- i. 4002 Other Non-UK provider.
 - ii. 4003 Other public body in the UK.
 - iii. 4004 Other private body in the UK.
- d. The **Name of location** column will be automatically populated to show the provider name associated with the UKPRN. You should modify this to **additionally** record the location, if the provider has more than one location or campus. If you entered a generic code under UKPRN, enter the name of the provider in the Name of location column and, if it teaches your students at more than one location, a further name to identify each such location. Do not group different providers into a single row; list each provider (and each of their locations) in individual rows.
- e. Enter the **postcode** for each teaching location. This must be a location of the relevant provider, and will therefore not necessarily reflect where a student is undertaking their course-related activity. If you used the generic code 4002 (Other non-UK provider) in the UKPRN column, then enter 'NA' in the postcode column. For students studying by distance learning the postcode should be that of the main address of the provider that delivers the distance learning (reflecting whether this is subcontracted out or not). For students undertaking learning in the workplace, work experience or study abroad this should be the postcode of a location of the provider at which teaching for the whole instance primarily takes place.
- f. For each row, you need to complete Sections 1 and 2, broken down by price group. As in Table 1, you may need to split years of instance across price groups. In these cases up to two decimal places can be used.

75. **Validation failure** messages will occur for the Teaching locations for students table if:

- a. The location type has not been set as 'Other' or 'Subcontracted'.
- b. You enter an invalid UKPRN or generic code, or no UKPRN or generic code in a row.
- c. The UKPRN is not the provider's own, where the location type has been set as 'Other'.
- d. The name of the location has not been entered.
- e. An invalid postcode or no postcode has been entered for the provider's own location.
- f. You record numbers to more than two decimal places.
- g. Any column contains a negative number.
- h. For Section 1, the total estimated completed years for a price group does not equal the equivalent total in Table 1.
- i. You leave a blank row between filled rows.
- j. For Section 2, the estimated FTE for completed years for a price group does not equal the equivalent total in Table 1.
- k. The UKPRN is the provider's own, where the location type has been set as 'Subcontracted'.
- l. No completed years have been entered in Section 1 or 2.
- m. The FTE has not been entered in Section 2

Figure 2: Table 2 – Teaching locations for students

Row number	Location type	UKPRN	Name of location	Campus postcode	Section 1 Estimated completed years for academic year 2020-21					Section 2 Estimated FTE for completed years included in Section 1 for academic year 2020-21						
					Price group					Price group						
					A	B	C1	C2	D	Total	A	B	C1	C2	D	Total
				Total	0.00	0.00	120.00	0.00	0.00	120.00	0.00	0.00	85.00	0.00	0.00	85.00
1	Subcontracted out	10001234	Office for Students	BS1 ABC	0.00	0.00	120.00	0.00	0.00	120.00	0.00	0.00	55.00	0.00	0.00	55.00
2	Other	10004321	Campus A	BS2 ABC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
3	Other	10001122	Campus B	BS3 ABC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
4	Other	10001100	Campus C	BS4 ABC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00

Part 2: Definitions and further guidance

76. This document provides a summary of OfS funding rules and definitions, but does not provide the complete guidance on them, as this has already been provided for the HESES19 survey. You should consult the HESES19 guidance document⁵ for further information when completing your HESF20 survey.

77. OfS funding rules and definitions are given in the annexes contained in Section 2 of the HESES19 guidance document. These are listed in Table B.

Table B: Contents of the HESES19 guidance annexes

Section of HESES19 guidance	Content and key definitions
Annex A	Defines the student population and who should be counted in the survey.
Annex B	Defines recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes, and also describes how we treat students studying as part of an apprenticeship.
Annex C	Describes how we count student activity on the survey and defines a year of instance and when students are considered to be new entrants.
Annex D	Contains the OfS definition of non-completion.
Annex E	Describes how to calculate FTE for part-time years of instance.
Annex F	Describes how to determine the residential and fundability status of a student.
Annex G	Describes how to assign a year of instance to a price group.
Annex H	Describes how to determine the mode of study for a year of instance.
Annex I	Describes how to determine a student's level of study.
Annex J	Describes how to determine if a year of instance should be classified as 'long'.
Annex K	Describes how to determine if a year of instance is classified as a year abroad.
Annex L	Discusses how pre-registration courses in certain healthcare professions are recorded in the survey.

The HESF20 population

78. In HESF, you are forecasting the number of **completed years of instance** that start in the **academic year 2020-21**, for students that you expect to be **registered with you**. The HESF survey should include only years of instance generated by students who are:

- new entrants
- actively pursuing studies for a course that meets our definition of recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes

⁵ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses19.

- **not studying for most of their course outside the UK** (including by distance learning), unless certain exceptional circumstances apply (set out in Annex A of the HESES19 guidance).
- OfS-fundable.

The highlighted terms are defined in paragraphs 79 to 95.

Academic year

79. The academic year is the 12-month period from 1 August to the following 31 July. The academic year 2020-21 therefore means the period from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.

Completed year of instance

80. An **instance** is defined as a coherent engagement with the provider by a student aiming towards the award of one or more qualifications, or of higher education credit. An instance can be split into one or more **years of instance**. The first year of instance begins when the student starts studying towards the qualification and subsequent years of instance begin on or around the anniversary of that date.

81. To be counted in HESF, a year of instance will need to begin within the 2020-21 academic year.

82. For a year of instance to be **completed**, a student must complete all the modules they intended to complete in the year of instance, and do so within 13 calendar months of the start of the year of instance. To complete a module, the student must either undergo the final assessment of the module (this refers to the activity of the student in sitting an exam or submitting coursework); or pass the module, where this can be achieved without undergoing the final assessment. Full guidance on completion or non-completion is given in Annex D of the HESES19 survey. It is important to note that the OfS has a specific definition of completion that is not the same as the concepts of 'progression' or 'continuation'.

83. We expect that each year a proportion of students will, for various reasons, not complete their year of instance. Your forecasts should only include students who will **complete** their year of instance.

84. Providers are expected to base their estimates of non-completion rates on historical data, not on aspirations or targets. When completing HESF20, we would encourage you to use any available comparable data.

The provider that registers the student

85. The **provider with which a student is registered** means the provider that has the full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of educational services. This applies whether the provider provides all the teaching for the course, or subcontracts some or all of that teaching out to another body. Where fee payments from the Student Loans Company are concerned, this will also be the provider that collects the student tuition fee. Where payments

from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for apprenticeships are concerned, this will also be the provider that is paid by the ESFA. The HESF survey should therefore:

- a. **include** years of instance for students who will be taught on your behalf by another provider (subcontracted out). These students will need to be identified as subcontracted out on the 'Teaching locations for students' table.
- b. **exclude** years of instance for students that you will be teaching on behalf of another registering provider under a subcontractual relationship.

86. Because the HESF survey is for completion by providers that **do not** have higher education provision recognised for OfS funding purposes in 2019-20, the forecast numbers for inclusion in the survey for 2020-21 should be only new entrants (see paragraph 89). Some providers may, however, already have provision that is subcontracted in, whereby they teach students of another provider under a subcontractual arrangement. These subcontracted in students should not be included in HESF20.

87. The responsibility for reporting student data rests with the provider with which a student is registered, which is (as set out in paragraph 85) the provider that has full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of educational services. Students should not, other than in exceptional circumstances, change the provider they are registered with, and no change should be made to which provider reports data on students who are continuing on the same course without each student's informed agreement. In reporting student data to us, providers will be confirming their contractual responsibilities for the provision of education to students.

88. Where a provider wishes to offer provision directly that they have previously subcontracted in, we would expect this to apply to successive entry cohorts of students, rather than to continuing students who entered under the subcontractual arrangement. However, where we are satisfied that all parties (the providers and students concerned) agree, we will be prepared to allow transfers of continuing students to reflect changes in registering providers, including for our funding purposes. The HESF survey **should not** be used to implement such transfers, as it is limited to the reporting of new entrants. Providers should email recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk for guidance about the separate process for implementing transfers of continuing student numbers between providers for funding and data reporting purposes.

New entrants

89. We define students as new entrants when they first generate a countable year of instance for a higher education course recognised for OfS funding purposes (see paragraphs 91 to 93) and have not been active at the same broad level (undergraduate or postgraduate) as a student of the same registering provider in either of the two previous academic years. See Annex C of the HESES19 guidance for further information.

Actively pursuing studies

90. A year of instance should be counted in HESF only if the student is actively pursuing studies with the provider and these studies fall at least partly in the academic year 2020-21. This excludes years of instance falling in the year that are entirely 'writing up', or where the only activity is assessment.

Recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes

91. Recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes:

- a. includes courses that are designated under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011
- b. includes 'courses of higher education' as defined in Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988, other than leading to a qualification in the Register of Regulated Qualifications.

92. Study for higher education-level credit (rather than towards a specific qualification) may be included if it meets the criteria in Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988 and either:

- it is not credit that may count only towards a qualification in the Register of Regulated Qualifications
- it is credit that may count towards a course that is designated under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011.

93. Years of instance for students on an apprenticeship may be included in HESF where they are undertaking activity that meets our definition of recognised higher education for OfS funding purposes during the year of instance. Only the activity spent in study or learning that directly contributes to their recognised higher education qualification should be counted.

Study outside the UK

94. Student instances should be included in HESF only if no more than half of the active study time for the whole instance is spent outside the UK (including through distance learning), unless any of the following apply:

- a. There is a clear academic reason for studying abroad rather than in the UK. Even where such a reason exists, we must specifically sanction the course as eligible.
- b. The student is temporarily and unavoidably abroad and remains liable to UK tax on their earnings, or is a dependant of such a person. This includes members of HM Forces and their dependants.
- c. The student is receiving UK student support from the Student Loans Company for the year.

95. Instances for sandwich students working abroad and language students on years abroad should normally be included in the HESF population, because the year abroad will not constitute most of the instance.

OfS-fundable students

96. Only students who are OfS-fundable should be returned in the HESF survey. To be considered as OfS-fundable, students will need to:

- a. Meet criteria for Home and EU status according to both nationality and residency requirements set out in regulations⁶. Student Finance England provides a practitioners' helpline (0300 100 0618) for detailed information about policy and regulations or for help with more complex assessment, eligibility or circumstantial questions. If Student Finance England says that a student is eligible, this means that the student is also regarded as a Home and EU student for HESF purposes.
- b. Not fall into any of the 'non-fundable' categories given in Annex F of the HESES19 guidance. In summary, these categories of non-fundable students include:
 - i. Those where another EU public source funds, or is responsible for funding, their provision. This includes all postgraduate research students and students on initial and in-service teacher training courses for school teachers. However, years of instance that are undertaken as part of an apprenticeship should not be treated as non-fundable (and thus excluded from HESF) solely on the basis that funding for their apprenticeship is provided by the ESFA.
 - ii. Those on courses leading to first registration in certain healthcare professions. This depends on when the student started the course, and on whether the course is provided under contract with, or commissioned and funded by, an NHS organisation.
 - iii. Those on a 'closed' course. This is a course which is not open to all suitably qualified candidates, typically because it is open only to employees of a particular company. This does not apply to apprenticeships.
 - iv. Those aiming for a qualification of an academic level that is no higher than one they have already achieved (an equivalent or lower qualification), unless an exemption applies⁷.

⁶ See www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards

⁶ Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 779), as amended. See www.legislation.gov.uk/.

⁷ Current exemptions, for OfS funding purposes, include: students aiming for foundation degrees; those aiming for a qualification in certain public sector professions, such as medicine, nursing, social work or teaching; and those receiving Disabled Students' Allowances. The policy also applies for Student Loans Company student support purposes and in defining qualifying persons on qualifying courses that are subject to regulated tuition fees. However, implementation of the policy, and exemptions to it, can be different for those other purposes.

How years of instance are counted and categorised in HESF

97. In each HESF table, you should report completed years of instance in Section 1 and the **full-time equivalence** for those completed years in Section 2. These are broken down according to **mode of study**, **level of study**, whether the year of instance is **long**, and the subject-related **price group** for the activity. The highlighted terms are defined in paragraphs 98 to 110.

Full-time equivalence

98. A full-time year of instance counts as 1 FTE. The FTE for students studying part-time is calculated with reference to an equivalent full-time course. This comparison can either be based on credit points studied or, if the intensity of study for the whole course is uniform across each year of instance, on the duration of course. In both cases, when viewed as a whole, the total FTE for a part-time course should equal the total FTE of the equivalent full-time course. Where the duration of the course is used, the calculation should be based on the number of years of instance. Where no equivalent full-time course exists at the provider, a reasonable academic judgement should be made of the FTE relative to a full-time student, based on a typical full-time pattern of 120 credit points per standard year (or 180 credit points for a long year – see paragraphs 106 to 107). See Annex E of the HESES19 guidance for further information.

Mode of study

99. The mode of study for a year of instance of a new entrant will be either **full-time** or **part-time**. To be counted as full-time, a year of instance must meet all of the following criteria:

- a. The student is normally required to attend the provider, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of instance and during that time they are expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich placement which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.
- b. Full-time fees are chargeable for the course for the year.

100. If years of instance forecast in HESF20 do not meet our definition of full-time, they should be reported as part-time. See Annex H of the HESES19 guidance for further information. This also provides information on a third mode of study, 'sandwich year out'; however, we do not expect this to be relevant for new entrants and hence for HESF20.

101. Learning in the workplace is a structured academic programme, controlled by the higher or further education provider and delivered in the workplace by the academic staff of the provider, staff of the employer, or both. Unlike work experience, which is one element of a course such as a sandwich placement (whether for all or part of a year), learning in the workplace is at the heart of a student's learning programme and must be subject to the same level of academic supervision and rigour as any other form of assessed learning. It includes:

- the imparting of relevant knowledge and skills to students
- opportunities for students to discuss knowledge and skills with their tutors

- assessment of students' acquisition of knowledge and skills by the provider's academic staff, perhaps jointly with an employer.

Learning in the workplace should be substituting for learning that under other circumstances would normally take place within the provider. The inclusion of an element of learning in the workplace should not, therefore, extend the normal duration of a course.

Level of study

102. A student's level of study can be **undergraduate** or **postgraduate**.
103. Undergraduates are students on higher education courses for which it is not a normal condition of entry that they are already qualified to degree level: that is, they are not already qualified at Level 6 of the 'Frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies' (FHEQ)⁸. They may be studying towards a first degree (including foundation degree), integrated masters' programme, higher education certificate, higher education diploma or equivalent, or registered for a higher education level credit that can be counted towards one of these qualifications.
104. Postgraduate students are registered for courses or credits where a normal condition of entry is that entrants are already qualified to degree level: that is, they are already qualified at Level 6 of FHEQ. There are two main categories of postgraduate students:
- a. Postgraduate research (PGR) students are those whose qualification aim is a research-based higher degree. This is a postgraduate programme comprising a research component (including a requirement to produce original work) which is larger in terms of student effort than any accompanying taught component. Postgraduate research students are excluded from HESF20.
 - b. Postgraduate taught (PGT) students are postgraduates who do not meet the requirements to be a research student. They are further divided into three sub-levels:
 - i. PGT (UG fee): students on courses that are designated under the undergraduate (UG) student support regime.
 - ii. PGT (Masters' loan): students on courses that are designated under the postgraduate masters' loan arrangements, but excluding those courses that may also be designated under the undergraduate student support arrangements.
 - iii. PGT (other): all other postgraduate taught students.
105. See Annex I of the HESES19 survey for further guidance on level of study.

⁸ See www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards.

Long years of instance

106. A year of instance can be classified as either standard-length or long.
- For full-time courses, a year of instance is counted as long if students are normally required to attend for 45 weeks or more within that year of instance, not counting time spent on work experience or learning in the workplace. Otherwise the year of instance will be standard-length.
 - For part-time courses a year is only counted as long if the equivalent full-time course is also long. The number of weeks attended within the year of instance for part-time students is irrelevant in determining whether the year of instance is long.
107. See Annex J of the HESES19 survey guidance for further information on long years of study.

Price group

108. The costs associated with teaching different subjects will vary. To account for this, we assign years of instance to price groups which range from A (most expensive) to D (least expensive). Full details on how to assign years of instance to price groups are given in Annex G of the HESES19.
109. Years of instance in HESF20 are matched to price groups based on two criteria. Firstly, they may be one of a number of specific cases:
- Sandwich years out
 - Clinical years of medical, dental and veterinary science courses
 - Pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions
 - Courses leading to registration as a social worker
 - Initial teacher training courses.
- Full guidance on the criteria for these specific cases, and how they should be assigned to price groups, is given in the HESES19 guidance.
110. Secondly, if none of the specific cases apply, they are assigned to price groups based on the subject of the course.
- For further education colleges, sixth form colleges and academies, this is determined by the learning directory classification system (LDCS) codes for the learning aim of the course.
 - For other higher education providers, this is determined by the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) codes that describe the subject of the course.

Full guidance on how these codes are mapped to price groups is provided in the HESES19 guidance.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
FHEQ	Frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies
FTE	Full-time equivalence
HECoS	Higher Education Classification of Subjects
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HESES	Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey
HESF	Higher Education Students Forecast
LDCS	Learning directory classification system
OfS	Office for Students
PGR	Postgraduate research
PGT	Postgraduate taught
UG	Undergraduate
UKPRN	UK Provider Reference Number



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