

September 2014/16

Core operations

Request for data

Returns must be uploaded to the HEFCE extranet by **noon on 10 November 2014**.

This document asks alternative providers of higher education to complete a survey of 2014-15 students on full-time courses that have been designated for student support purposes.

HEAPES14

Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics survey

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HEAPES14: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics survey

To	Heads of alternative providers subject to the student number control and any newly designated providers who have chosen to complete HEAPES14
Of interest to those responsible for	Student data, Finance
Reference	2014/16
Publication date	September 2014
Enquiries to	heapes@hefce.ac.uk

Executive summary

Purpose

1. This document asks alternative providers of higher education to complete a survey of 2014-15 students on full-time courses that have been designated for student support purposes.

Key points

2. The survey should be completed by all alternative providers subject to the student number control (SNC), and any newly designated providers who have chosen to complete HEAPES14.
3. The data will:
 - enable us to monitor recruitment against the 2014-15 SNC allocations
 - enable us to set, if necessary, SNC allocations for 2015-16
 - give an early indication, for purposes including government planning, of the number of students (including exempt students) starting study on designated full-time courses in the academic year 2014-15.
4. This document provides the following.
 - a. In Section 1, an introduction to the Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics (HEAPES) survey.
 - b. In Section 2, the definitions used in the HEAPES survey.
 - c. In Section 3, guidance on completing and submitting the HEAPES survey and an explanation of how the survey is finalised.
 - d. In the Annexes, examples of the survey tables and a list of abbreviations.

Action required

5. The HEAPES14 survey should be completed by all alternative providers subject to the SNC, and by any newly designated alternative providers who have chosen to complete HEAPES14. Returns must be uploaded to the HEFCE extranet by **noon on 10 November 2014**. Workbooks will be available to providers in October 2014.

Note on terminology

6. All references to years are to academic years (1 August to 31 July) unless otherwise specified.

Section 1: Introduction

Why are we requiring providers to complete the HEAPES survey?

7. Student numbers at alternative providers are controlled by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Working on its behalf, we use the Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics (HEAPES) survey to monitor recruitment at providers with student number control (SNC) allocations, to ensure that they have not exceeded them. For these providers, completing the HEAPES survey is a condition of specific course designation. If a provider exceeds its SNC allocation, BIS may apply sanctions¹.

8. The HEAPES survey is a technical exercise that requires a detailed understanding of the population it covers, and the ways in which this must be broken down. Those completing the HEAPES survey should familiarise themselves with this guidance. Those with questions about the survey should contact heapes@hefce.ac.uk.

HEAPES14 and the SNC: an overview

9. To complete the HEAPES survey, providers must complete two tables in an Excel workbook, and submit it to HEFCE by **noon on 10 November 2014**. Further information on how the workbook should be downloaded, completed and submitted is provided in Section 3 of this guidance. Sample tables are provided in Annex A. In this document 'Table 1' and 'Table 2' refer to the tables in the workbook.

10. Once the HEAPES survey has been submitted to HEFCE, we will check the data for credibility and will contact providers with any questions. This verification process may lead to changes to the data. Once the data are verified and finalised, we require the 'accountable officer', normally the head of the organisation, to sign off the data as correct.

11. Once the data have been signed off, we will inform BIS of any over-recruitment so that it can apply sanctions if necessary. The data may also be used to inform SNC allocations for 2015-16.

12. The completion of the annual HEAPES survey is a condition of full-time specific course designation for providers subject to the SNC. We will work with providers to support them in this. However, if a provider is unable to complete the HEAPES14 survey, or to provide credible data, we will advise the BIS that that provider is in breach of the conditions of specific course designation. This could lead to BIS revoking the designation.

13. Providers with a 2014-15 SNC allocation are also required to submit an alternative provider student record 2014/15 to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Further information about this is provided by HESA at www.hesa.ac.uk/c14054. To help providers return accurate data to HESA, we will provide a web-site to which they can upload provisional HESA data. The web facility will use these data to create an output that can be compared with each provider's HEAPES14 return, allowing providers to identify potential errors in their HESA data, for correction before final submission to HESA.

¹ Further information about the BIS's approach to student number controls at alternative providers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-providers-specific-course-designation-guidance-for-applicants>.

14. In spring 2016, once the final data have been submitted to HESA, we will produce a further re-creation of the HEAPES14 workbook using these data. We will compare this workbook with the original HEAPES14 return, and where discrepancies occur above set thresholds we will discuss the data with the provider as part of the data assurance process. Where discrepancies are found, these will be referred to BIS, who may impose sanctions as set out in their guidance (see paragraph 7 for further information).

15. Table A sets out a provisional timetable for the process.

Table A: Provisional timetable

October 2014	HEFCE extranet keys issued to providers. HEAPES14 workbooks available to providers on the extranet.
Noon on Monday 10 November 2014	Deadline for returning HEAPES14 data.
November 2014	Data verification by HEFCE. We will write to providers, asking them to answer any questions about the data. Providers will have up to five working days to answer questions.
Monday 8 December 2014	Deadline for signing off HEAPES14 data as correct.
Summer 2015	Web facility available
Spring 2016	Reconciliation with HESA data

Queries and further information

16. Queries about this survey should be e-mailed to heapes@hefce.ac.uk. Soon after the publication of this guidance, we will also publish the answers to frequently asked questions about the HEAPES survey. These will be available at www.hefce.ac.uk/faq/.

Section 2: Definitions

17. This section defines the terms that we use when explaining how to fill in the HEAPES survey. These terms are technical, and we recommend that providers familiarise themselves with the definitions before they attempt to complete the survey.

The HEAPES population

18. The HEAPES population is the group of students who are monitored in order to control student numbers. Only students in the HEAPES population should be counted in the HEAPES survey.

19. The HEAPES population consists, broadly, of all those students who are eligible for student support, are **starting** a specifically designated full-time course, and are not subject to other controls. However, eligibility for student support is complex, and ultimately only to be determined by the Secretary of State. The definition of the HEAPES population therefore uses conditions that are easier to apply. It is these conditions, and the accompanying explanation, which should be used to determine whether a student is in the HEAPES population.

20. Whether or not a student is part of the HEAPES population does not depend on whether the student is claiming or receiving student support. Students who meet the conditions below should be included in the HEAPES population, regardless of whether or not they have in fact claimed or received student support.

21. Paragraph 22 gives a brief definition of the HEAPES population. Paragraphs 22 to 46 expand on this.

Definition of the HEAPES population

22. For HEAPES purposes, the academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July. A student is in the HEAPES population of a provider in a given academic year if and only if, in that academic year, they meet all the following conditions.

A. The student studies with the provider on a designated full-time course for at least two weeks, or has their attendance on such a course positively confirmed by the provider to the Student Loans Company (SLC) or the Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).

B. On the date they start their course, the student is in one of the categories set out in Schedule 1, Part 2 of The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

C. The student has not studied in the previous two academic years with the provider on a course that is, or has been, designated as a full-time course.

D. The student is not being counted by any other organisation in relation to the same course.

E. The student is not studying for an equivalent or lower qualification, unless they are on a course that is treated as an exception in the Student Support Regulations.

F. The student is not studying on an initial teacher training course which leads towards Qualified Teacher Status.

Definition of the HEAPES population: further explanation

A. The student studies with the provider on a designated full-time course for at least two weeks, or has their attendance on such a course positively confirmed by the provider to the SLC or the SAAS.

23. Students at alternative providers can access student support only if the course that they are studying on is designated by the Secretary of State. Courses may be designated as full-time courses, distance learning courses, part-time courses or postgraduate courses. Only students on courses designated as full-time can access both full-time maintenance loans and grants, and full-time fee loans.

24. We will refer to courses that have been designated as full-time by the Secretary of State as 'designated full-time courses'. Only students on designated full-time courses are in the HEAPES population. Students on other courses, whether or not they are full-time, are not in the HEAPES population. We treat a course as a designated full-time course only if new 2014-15 students on that course can receive student support. Most

designated full-time courses are undergraduate, although designated full-time postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) courses are included.

25. To be in the HEAPES population, a student must study with the provider on a designated full-time course for at least two weeks, or have their attendance on such a course confirmed positively to the SLC or the SAAS. Students who withdraw (or transfer to a course that is not a designated full-time course) before they have completed two weeks of study would not therefore be in the HEAPES population, unless the provider confirmed their positive attendance. Students are not treated as having had their attendance positively confirmed if the provider has only completed an attendance confirmation reporting the student's absence.

B. On the date they start their course, the student is in one of the categories set out in Schedule 1, Part 2 of The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

26. This condition relates to the residency and nationality of the student.

27. The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 are available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1986/contents/made. They prescribe that a student may receive student support only if they fall into one of the categories given in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These categories are currently:

- persons who are settled in the United Kingdom
- refugees and their family members
- persons granted humanitarian protection and their family members
- workers, employed persons, self-employed persons and their family members
- persons who are settled in the United Kingdom and have exercised a right of residence elsewhere
- European Union (EU) nationals
- children of Swiss Nationals
- children of Turkish workers.

Each category is strictly defined in the schedule, and these definitions should be used when determining whether a student is in the HEAPES population.

28. To assist with interpreting the Student Support Regulations, HEFCE will provide a list of EU countries in the HEAPES frequently asked questions, available at www.hefce.ac.uk/faq/. Student Finance England advises that, when determining eligibility, students from Gibraltar should be treated as EU nationals. Nationals of countries which are in the European Economic Area but not the EU (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) should not be treated as EU nationals (although they may fall under one of the other categories in Schedule 1). Students from Cyprus, including Turkish Cypriots, should be treated as EU nationals only if they are recognised as Cypriot nationals by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. A student is not eligible solely by virtue of being from a UK or EU overseas territory, although some students from

overseas territories may fall into one of the other categories in Schedule 1, for instance by being settled in the UK.

29. A student is in the HEAPES population only if they are in one of the categories on the date they start their course. When a country accedes to the EU during the academic year, students from that country are in the HEAPES population only if they began studying the course on or after the date of accession. If they begin studying before this date they are not in the HEAPES population.

30. The SLC provides a practitioner helpline to give advice and guidance on the Student Support Regulations (including eligibility). When providers are unsure whether an individual student is in one of the categories, they should contact the practitioner helpline (tel 0300 100 0618).

C. The student has not studied in the previous two academic years with the provider on a course that is, or has been, designated as a full-time course.

31. If in either of the previous two years the student has studied for at least two weeks with the provider on a full-time designated course, they are not in the HEAPES population². Many of the students in the HEAPES population will therefore be ‘entrants’ – students who are beginning a full-time course without having previously studied with the provider. However, the HEAPES population will also include other students, such as those who have previously studied with the provider but not on a full-time designated course. The HEAPES population will also include some students who are returning to a designated full-time course after an absence of more than two years.

32. The year of the course is not directly relevant to determining whether a student is in the HEAPES population: some students in the HEAPES population may be in the second or subsequent years of a course. This might happen, for instance, if they have transferred from a course that is not designated as full-time, or if they have been permitted to enter the course after the first year because of their prior educational attainments or experience.

33. Condition C applies regardless of when designation took place, or for how long it endured. For example, a student who is in their second year of study on a full-time course which is currently designated, but which was not designated in the previous two years (because designation has only recently been achieved), would **not** be in the HEAPES population as they would not meet condition C.

D. The student is not being counted by any other organisation in relation to the same course.

34. In general, a student counted in the HEAPES survey will not be counted on any other organisation’s early statistics return to HEFCE. The early statistics returns are the HEAPES survey, the Higher Education Students: Early Statistics (HESES) survey for higher education institutions (HEIs), and the Higher Education in Further Education: Students (HEIFES) survey for further education colleges.

² This excludes any course franchised from another organisation. For the definition of a franchised course, see paragraph 36.

35. It may be the case, unusually, that a student on a particular course is part of the HEAPES population at one provider, but is simultaneously studying a different course at a different organisation. If so, it may be appropriate for the student to be counted in more than one survey, with the activity relating to each distinct course counted by the appropriate organisation.

Treatment of franchises

36. A franchised course, for purposes relating to specific course designation, HEAPES and SNCs, is a course subject to an agreement by one organisation (the franchiser) that another (the franchisee) may deliver all or part of a course approved and owned by the first. The franchiser retains overall control of the course's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements. To qualify as franchised for the purpose of specific course designation and HEAPES, all the following conditions must be met.

a. A written legally binding agreement is in place between the franchiser and the franchisee which sets out the terms of the franchising agreement.

b. The course is registered on the SLC's HEI course database in the name of the franchiser, and the fee loan is paid to the franchiser.

c. The student is a student of the franchiser, is included within their HESA or Individualised Learner Record and other data returns and, when appropriate, counts against their SNC allocation.

d. The student has a contractual relationship with the franchiser for delivering the course.

e. The terms of the franchise agreement meet the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education in respect of managing higher education provision with others.

37. Students who are franchised from a HEFCE-funded HEI or further education college are not in the HEAPES population, as their data must be returned in the HESSES or HEIFES survey of the franchiser.

38. Alternative providers are not generally permitted, under the conditions of specific course designation, to franchise courses to other providers. However, BIS may exceptionally permit this. Where the provider has such written consent from BIS, students should be treated as meeting condition D for the franchiser, and not the franchisee. This means that, where the student also meets the other HEAPES conditions, they should be included in the HEAPES return of the franchiser, and not the franchisee.

E. The student is not studying for an equivalent or lower qualification, unless they are on a course that is treated as an exception in the Student Support Regulations.

39. Most students studying for an equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) are not entitled to tuition fee loans or to maintenance grants or loans, and are excluded from the HEAPES population.

40. A student is studying for an ELQ if either of the following applies:

- they are studying for a qualification which is equivalent to or lower than a qualification they already hold

- they hold an honours degree from a UK institution.

41. In most cases, whether or not a student is studying for an ELQ will be clear. For instance, a student who has an honours degree and is studying for a second honours degree is studying for an ELQ, as is a student who has an honours degree and is studying for an HND. In contrast, a student who has an HND and is studying for an honours degree would not be studying for an ELQ, as they are progressing from a lower qualification to a higher one.

42. The SLC provides guidance on how to determine whether a student is studying for an ELQ in 'Assessing Eligibility Guidance' for 2014-15, which is available at www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy-information/guidance-chapters.aspx (paragraphs 150 to 155). This guidance includes the table reproduced here as Table B, which shows academic levels. Providers may wish to use this when determining whether a student is progressing to a higher level of study.

Table B: Table showing academic levels (from SLC guidance)

Level	Qualification
E	Masters MBAs PGCEs
D	Honours Degrees LLB Integrated Masters Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Courses Scottish MAs Oxford and Cambridge MAs
C	Ordinary Degree
B	HNDs DipHE Foundation Degree
A	HNCs CertHE

43. Whether or not a student is studying for an ELQ depends solely on their previous qualifications and the qualification they are aiming for. It does not in general depend on where the previous qualification was studied (although, as noted above, students who already hold an honours degree from a UK institution always count as studying for an ELQ), and it never depends on whether the previous qualification was publicly funded or self-funded, or on whether study for the previous qualification was full-time, part-time or through distance learning.

Exceptions

44. The Student Support Regulations make exceptions for students taking courses that lead to a qualification as a social worker, medical doctor, dentist, veterinary surgeon, or architect, and for ITT courses. This means that students on such courses can receive some student support even if they are studying for an ELQ. Condition E does not

therefore exclude such students from the HEAPES population: they will be in the HEAPES population provided they meet the other conditions³.

45. The final decision as to whether a student is studying for an ELQ falls to the Secretary of State, with the SLC acting on their behalf. If a provider is unsure whether a student is studying for an ELQ, or whether a student studying for an ELQ is treated as an exception by the Student Support Regulations, they should contact the SLC using the practitioner helpline (tel 0300 100 0618).

F. The student is not studying on an initial teacher training course which leads to Qualified Teacher Status.

46. Student numbers on ITT courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status are separately controlled by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, which is why we do not include them in the HEAPES population. The HEAPES survey includes students on ITT courses only when these do not lead to Qualified Teacher Status. Such courses include:

- Postgraduate or Professional Graduate Certificates in Education (PGCEs) for the post-compulsory education sector.
- Level 5 Diplomas in Education and Training.

Categories within the HEAPES population

47. All and only students in the HEAPES population should be included in the HEAPES survey. This section defines the terms used to disaggregate this population. A full understanding of these terms is required to complete this survey.

Qualification type

48. The HEAPES survey requires providers to disaggregate students by the following qualification types:

- a. HNC/HND (Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma)
- b. UG ITT (Undergraduate ITT)
- c. Other UG (Other Undergraduate)
- d. PG ITT (Postgraduate ITT)

49. We have assigned qualification types to courses to reflect their designation from BIS. This can be seen in Table 1.

The exempt population

50. As part of the Government's policy to increase student choice, students with certain entry qualifications and/or qualification aims are exempt from the student number control. These students need to be identified in the HEAPES survey as being in the exempt population.

³ The exceptions are slightly different from those that HEFCE uses when allocating funding and controlling numbers for HEFCE-funded institutions. For the purpose of the HEAPES survey, only the exceptions given in the Student Support Regulations should be applied.

51. We provide a list, which is reviewed each year, of the qualifications and qualification aims that exempt students from the student number control. When completing both tables in HEAPES14, providers should refer to the list for 2014-15, which is available at www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/it/howfund/studentgrades/. Only students with qualifications and/or qualification aims which appear on this list should be treated as in the exempt population. Students in the HEAPES population between 1 August and 10 November 2014 (the HEAPES14 submission date) whose entry qualifications are unknown should be returned as non-exempt. We will check reported numbers of exempt students against other data sources, including the National Pupil Database.

52. Exempt students studying at undergraduate level will not be counted when monitoring recruitment against SNC allocations, meaning that they can be recruited without restriction. The exemptions do not apply to PG ITT students. Exempt students can draw on student support, which is why we need to continue to monitor this population. Many exempt students will be part of the HEAPES population, and their data will need to be returned in the HEAPES survey.

Students receiving student support

53. Table 1 of the HEAPES survey requires providers to disaggregate students based on whether or not they receive student support. This information is required so that HEFCE can compare the data submitted in the HEAPES survey with those held by the SLC. It is not relevant to monitoring the student number control: whether or not a student counts against a provider's SNC allocation does not depend on whether they are receiving student support.

54. A student in the HEAPES population should be treated as receiving student support if the provider has positively confirmed the student's attendance or registration for 2014-15 to the SLC or the SAAS. If the provider has not positively confirmed the attendance or registration of a particular student for 2014-15, the student should be treated as not receiving student support, even if the provider believes that the student is in the process of claiming student support for 2014-15, or is likely to do so in the future.

Section 3: Completing and submitting the HEAPES14 survey

Downloading the HEAPES14 workbook

55. An Excel workbook containing the tables to be completed will be available on the HEFCE extranet (<https://data.hefce.ac.uk>) in mid-October 2014. In early October, we will send the 'accountable officers' of organisations a letter containing a unique key for accessing the workbook and instructions on how to use the extranet.

Completing the tables

56. The HEAPES14 workbook contains three worksheets, of which only the first two are for completion. Table C details these.

Table C: Description of HEAPES14 tables

Name of worksheet	HEAPES14 tables
Table 1	Table 1: Students monitored for student number control purposes on or before 1 November 2014
Table 2	Table 2: Students monitored for student number control purposes
SNC	Recruitment against the 2014-15 student number control allocation

Completing Table 1

57. Table 1 should contain all and only students who are in the HEAPES population between 1 August 2014 and 1 November 2014.

58. Table 1 contains a list of all courses designated as full-time for 2014-15 at your organisation, broken down by location. The first five columns of the table are pre-filled with course identifier, qualification type, course name, awarding body and location. This reflects the designations granted by BIS. If you believe this list is incomplete or inaccurate, please contact us as soon as possible by e-mail at heapes@hefce.ac.uk.

59. The other columns of Table 1 should be completed as follows.

SLC course code: Course identifier generated by the SLC when registering the course on their system. When a course taught at a particular location is associated with more than one SLC course code (for instance, because it has multiple start-dates), all relevant SLC course codes should be entered, separated by a comma.

Column 1 (a): Number of students in the HEAPES population between 1 August 2014 and 1 November 2014 who are in the exempt population and are receiving student support.

Column 1 (b): Number of students in the HEAPES population between 1 August 2014 and 1 November 2014 who are in the exempt population and are not receiving student support.

Column 1 (c): Number of students in the HEAPES population between 1 August 2014 and 1 November 2014 who are not in the exempt population and are receiving student support.

Column 1 (d): Number of students in the HEAPES population between 1 August 2014 and 1 November 2014 who are not in the exempt population and are not receiving student support.

Column 2 is the total of columns 1 (a), (b), (c) and (d) and will be calculated automatically.

Completing Table 2

60. Table 2, when complete, is a summary of all students who are in the HEAPES population in the 2014-15 academic year. It is disaggregated by qualification level and by whether or not students are in the exempt population. Column 1 will be pre-filled from the

data you have entered into Table 1. You are required to complete column 2 with a forecast of students who will enter the HEAPES population between 2 November 2014 and 31 July 2015. Columns 1 and 2 are mutually exclusive.

61. The columns of Table 2 should be completed as follows.

Column 2 (a): Number of students in the HEAPES population forecast to start after 1 November 2014 and before 1 August 2015 who are in the exempt population. PG ITT students cannot be returned in this column. Any PG ITT students forecast to start after 1 November 2014 and before 1 August 2015 should be returned in column 2 (b).

Column 2 (b): Number of students in the HEAPES population forecast to start after 1 November 2014 and before 1 August 2015 who are not in the exempt population.

62. Students returned in column 2 will typically be studying on courses with start dates after 1 November. Providers should ensure that these forecasts are made on a reasonable basis (for instance, of numbers recruited to courses starting after 1 November). This forecast should exclude the number of students starting after 1 November who are estimated to withdraw within two weeks of starting (without having had their attendance positively confirmed to the SLC or the SAAS), and therefore do not fall into the HEAPES population. Again, we would expect this estimate to be based on evidence (for instance, of previous withdrawal rates). Where providers know the entry qualifications of students forecast to start after 1 November, they should use these to determine whether students are in the exempt population or not. When providers do not know the entry qualifications of students, typically because they have not yet been recruited, they should use evidence to estimate the number of students who will be in the exempt population. In all cases, evidence should be kept for audit purposes for five years.

63. Column 3 is the total of columns 1 and 2 and will be calculated automatically.

Validation checks and credibility checks

64. The HEAPES14 workbook includes a number of validation and credibility checks. The validation checks are for data that are clearly incorrect. Workbooks which contain validation errors will not be accepted. The credibility checks are for data which may be correct, but which appear surprising or implausible. Although providers may submit workbooks which generate a credibility warning, they should accompany their submission with an explanation of why the data are in fact correct.

Validation checks

65. The validation checks for each table are listed within each worksheet. There are two validation checks for each of Table 1 and Table 2:

- all cells must contain whole numbers
- all cells must contain positive values or zero.

66. If an error is detected in a completed worksheet, a message reading '**Validation: Failure**' will appear above the column in the table which contains the validation failure,

and the figures in the cells which are causing the error will turn red. The error will be described in more detail under the description of each validation check.

67. Validation errors **must be corrected** before submitting the completed workbook: we will not accept workbooks containing validation failures. If the source of the error cannot be identified, providers should e-mail us for advice at heapes@hefce.ac.uk.

Credibility checks

68. The credibility checks for each table are shown within each worksheet. There are two credibility checks for Table 1, and one for Table 2.

- a. For Table 1, a credibility warning applies if:
 - i. The total number of students is greater than 50, and 10 per cent or fewer are not receiving student support.
 - ii. No students have been recorded as being in the exempt population.
- b. For Table 2, a credibility warning applies if:
 - i. The proportions of students reported as exempt in columns 1 and 2 differ by more than 10 percentage points, and this percentage equates to more than 10 students.

69. If the data entered generate a credibility warning, a message reading '**First stage credibility: Warnings**' will appear above the column in the table which contains the credibility issue. The credibility issue will be described in more detail under the description of each credibility check.

70. When a credibility warning appears, providers should check that the data they have entered are correct and meet the guidance and definitions set out in the relevant section of this publication. If the provider is satisfied that the data are correct, they may submit them but should accompany the submission with an e-mail to heapes@hefce.ac.uk explaining why they are correct. We will consider these explanations as part of our data verification process (see paragraphs 75 to 78).

71. Our credibility checks are not exhaustive, and passing them should not be taken as confirmation that the data are accurate. We expect providers to carry out checks specific to their own circumstances.

Recruitment against the 2014-15 student number control allocation

72. The HEAPES14 workbook also contains a worksheet relating to recruitment against the 2014-15 SNC allocation. This worksheet shows an indicative payment to BIS for any over-recruitment, at a rate of £5,000 for each student recruited above the SNC allocation. The calculations will be amended if BIS later specifies a different rate. If, on completion of Tables 1 and 2, this worksheet shows an indicative payment, you should check that this is not as a result of data error.

Uploading the workbook to the extranet

73. Completed workbooks for the HEAPES14 survey must be uploaded to the HEFCE extranet no later than **noon on Monday 10 November 2014**. We will not give extensions to this deadline. A key for accessing the extranet for the purposes of HEAPES14 will only

be sent to each provider's 'accountable officer' and named HEAPES contact in early October 2014.

74. The data do not need to be formally signed off by the accountable officer at this stage. However, we recommend that a senior member of the organisation reviews the HEAPES return for accuracy, prior to submission.

Data verification

75. A small team of data verification specialists at HEFCE will verify the data for HEAPES14 in November and December 2014. The specialist responsible for checking your HEAPES14 return will liaise with the HEAPES contact once the survey has been submitted and the 10 November deadline has passed.

76. During data verification, we check the data and the explanations that have been given for any credibility warnings. We will also check the data submitted against other data sources, including from the SLC, Pearson Education Limited, the National Pupil Database and HESA. We will contact providers asking them to:

- answer any questions we may have about the data and the explanations already provided
- make corrections to the data if necessary.

77. The timetable for this process is tight, and we therefore expect providers to answer any questions about data within five working days.

78. During the verification process, we will sometimes ask providers to send us additional information about student numbers. In providing such information, providers should respect the confidentiality of their students. In particular, providers should not send to us individual student data – such as data from the SLC – which could allow HEFCE, or a third party, to identify students.

Data sign-off

79. By **noon on Monday 8 December 2014**, each provider must have signed off its HEAPES data as having been correct as of 1 November 2014. The data must be signed off by the accountable officer by completing the form that we provide. The accountable officer is expected to have enough understanding of the HEAPES survey to confirm that the provider's systems are capable of producing an accurate, complete return and that it has been compiled competently.

80. If it is anticipated that the accountable officer will be unavailable to sign off the data because they are absent during the data verification period, providers should e-mail heapes@hefce.ac.uk as soon as possible to agree interim arrangements. We expect the accountable officer to sign off the data when they return.

81. For providers subject to the SNC, completing the HEAPES survey to an appropriate standard is a condition of full-time course designation. If a provider fails to submit the survey on time, to provide credible data, or to sign off their data on time, we will advise BIS that the provider is in breach of the conditions of course designation. This could ultimately lead to BIS revoking its designation, or to other sanctions.

82. For a new provider that has chosen to complete HEAPES14, failing to complete the survey to an appropriate standard will mean that it cannot receive an SNC allocation for 2015-16 and will therefore continue to be subject to the allowance for small providers.

Data assurance

83. In addition to the data verification process described above, we may, on behalf of BIS, audit the HEAPES14 return. The audits may involve desk-based work and visits to providers to review how the return was produced. Providers should therefore keep an adequate audit trail recording how the data have been derived. This will be likely to include records of:

- attendance, enrolments and withdrawals
- engagement with the SLC (to determine which students should be returned as receiving student support)
- any assumptions underpinning the forecasts required in Table 2.

84. We will compare the HEAPES14 survey with further data provided by the SLC and Pearson Education Limited and with data returned to HESA for 2014-15.

Annex A: HEAPES14 sample tables

Table 1: Students monitored for student number control purposes on or before 1 November 2014

Validation: OK

Validation:
OK

First stage credibility: OK

First stage
credibility:
OK

Course identifier	Qualification type	Course name	Awarding body	Location	SLC course code	1				2 Total	
						Students present on or before 1 November 2014		Students not in the exempt population			
						Students in the exempt population	Students not in the exempt population	Students receiving student support	Students not receiving student support		
						Students receiving student support (a)	Students not receiving student support (b)	Students receiving student support (c)	Students not receiving student support (d)		
NXXX1	HND	Course 1	Awarding body 1	Location 1							
NXXX2	Other UG	Course 2	Awarding body 2	Location 2							
NXXX3	Other UG	Course 3	Awarding body 2	Location 1							
NXXX4	HND	Course 4	Awarding body 1	Location 1							

Table 2: Students monitored for student number control purposes

Validation: OK
First stage credibility: OK

Validation: OK
First stage credibility: OK

Validation: OK
First stage credibility: OK

Qualification type	1 Students present on or before 1 November 2014		2 Forecast of students starting after 1 November 2014 and before 1 August 2015		3 Total
	Students in the exempt population (a)	Students not in the exempt population (b)	Students in the exempt population (a)	Students not in the exempt population (b)	
HNC/HND	0	0	0	0	0
UG ITT	0	0	0	0	0
Other UG	0	0	0	0	0
PG ITT		0		0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0

Annex B: List of abbreviations

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
ELQ	Equivalent or lower qualification
EU	European Union
HEAPES	Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics
HEI	Higher education institution
HEIFES	Higher Education in Further Education: Students
HESES	Higher Education Students Early Statistics
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ITT	Initial teacher training
LLB	Bachelor of Laws degree
PG	Postgraduate
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education or Professional Graduate Certificate of Education
SAAS	Student Awards Agency for Scotland
SLC	Student Loans Company
SNC	Student number control
UG	Undergraduate