



Request for data
October **2016/26**

HEAPES16

Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics Survey 2016-17

This document asks alternative providers of higher education to complete a survey of 2016-17 students on those full-time, distance learning and part-time courses that have been designated for student support purposes.



Returns must be uploaded to the HEFCE extranet by **noon**
on **Thursday 15 December 2016**.

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HEAPES16: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics Survey 2016-17

To: Accountable officers of alternative providers with degree-awarding powers and those subject to student number controls

Of interest to those responsible for: Student data, Finance

Reference: 2016/26

Publication date: October 2016

Enquiries to: heapes@hefce.ac.uk

Executive summary

Purpose

1. This document asks alternative providers of higher education to complete a survey of 2016-17 students on those full-time, distance learning and part-time courses that have been designated for student support purposes.

Key points

2. The survey should be completed by any alternative provider that fulfils one of the following criteria:
- has degree-awarding powers
 - is subject to a full-time student number control (SNC)
 - is subject to a distance learning and part-time SNC.
3. The data gives an early indication, for purposes including government planning, of the number of students starting designated full-time, distance learning and part-time courses in the academic year 2016-17. It will also allow us to monitor whether providers subject to an SNC are likely to exceed their allocations. The Department for Education will use the data to inform SNCs for the 2017-18 academic year.
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. Workbooks will be available to providers in November 2016 to download from the HEFCE extranet. Returns must be uploaded to the HEFCE extranet by **noon on 15 December 2016**.

Section 1: Introduction

Why are we requiring providers to complete the HEAPES survey?

6. Students at alternative providers with designated courses can access public funding in the form of student support. The Department for Education (DfE) therefore has an interest in monitoring student numbers, and ensuring that they do not become unaffordable¹. DfE has therefore asked providers subject to a student number control (SNC) and those with degree-awarding powers to complete the HEAPES survey. DfE uses the data collected through the HEAPES survey to assess whether providers have exceeded their 2016-17 SNC allocations, to set 2017-18 SNC allocations, and to provide more general information about recruitment levels that can be used for planning purposes.

7. The HEAPES survey is a technical exercise that requires a detailed understanding of the populations it covers, and the ways in which these must be broken down. It is essential that those completing the survey familiarise themselves with this guidance, which has been updated from HEAPES15². Those with questions about the survey should contact heapes@hefce.ac.uk.

Note on terminology

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

9. We will refer to those courses that have been designated as distance learning or part-time by the Secretary of State as 'DLPT courses'. Only students on DLPT courses are in the DLPT HEAPES population.

HEAPES16 process

10. To complete the HEAPES survey, providers must complete up to four tables in a Microsoft Excel workbook, and submit it to HEFCE by **noon on 15 December 2016**. Further information on how the workbook should be downloaded, completed and submitted is provided in Section 3. Sample tables are provided in Annex A. In this document 'Table 1', 'Table 2', 'Table 3' and 'Table 4' refer to the tables in the workbook.

11. 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 is verified and finalised, we require the 'accountable officer', normally the head of the organisation, to sign off the data as correct.

12. Once the data has been signed off, we will inform DfE of the final HEAPES numbers. DfE will use the numbers to inform its policies, and to apply sanctions to any providers who have over-recruited. The data will also be used to inform SNCs for 2017-18.

¹ Further information about the Government's approach to student number controls at alternative providers can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-higher-education-providers-designation-guidance.

² 'HEAPES15: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics survey 2015-16' (HEFCE 2015/28), available online at www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201528/.

13. We will work with providers to support them in completing the survey. However, if a provider is unable to complete the HEAPES16 survey, or to provide credible data, we will advise DfE. This could lead to DfE imposing sanctions, as laid out in its guidance for alternative providers (www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-higher-education-providers-designation-guidance).

14. Table A sets out an outline timetable for the process.

Table A: Outline timetable

November 2016	HEFCE extranet keys issued to providers. HEAPES16 workbooks available to providers on the extranet.
1 December 2016	HEAPES16 census date.
Noon on 15 December 2016	Deadline for returning HEAPES16 data.
16 December to 16 January 2017	Data verification by HEFCE. We will contact alternative providers, asking them to answer any questions about the data. Providers will have up to three working days to answer questions.
16 January 2017	Deadline for signing off HEAPES16 data as correct.
Summer 2017	Comparative outputs available.
Spring 2018	Reconciliation with 2016-17 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data.

Queries and further information

15. Queries about this survey should be emailed to heapes@hefce.ac.uk. Soon after the publication of this guidance, we will publish the answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the HEAPES survey. These will be available at www.hefce.ac.uk/data/collect/heapes.

Section 2: Definitions

16. 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 populations

17. The HEAPES populations are the groups of students who are monitored through the HEAPES survey. There are two populations: one covering students on designated full-time courses and the other covering students on designated DLPT courses. Only students who are in a HEAPES population should be counted in the HEAPES survey.

18. The HEAPES populations consist, broadly, of all those students who are eligible for student support, are **starting** a specifically designated full-time, distance learning or part-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 definitions of the HEAPES populations therefore use conditions that are easier to apply. It is these conditions, and the accompanying explanations, that should be used to determine whether a student is in a HEAPES population.

19. Whether or not a student is in a HEAPES population does not generally depend on whether they are claiming or receiving student support. Students who meet the conditions

below should be included in the relevant HEAPES population, even if they have not in fact claimed or received student support.

20. Paragraph 21 sets out in brief the conditions a student must meet to fall into any HEAPES population. Paragraphs 22 and 23 set out the further conditions which determine the population that the student is part of. All these conditions are expanded on in paragraphs 24 to 64.

Definitions of the HEAPES populations

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

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

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

D. 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.

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

22. In addition to conditions A to E, to be in the full-time HEAPES population a student must meet these further conditions:

F1. The student's course is a designated full-time course.

G1. The student has not studied in the previous two academic years with the provider on a course that was, at the time, designated as a full-time course.

23. In addition to conditions A to E, to be in the DLPT HEAPES population a student must meet these further conditions:

F2. The student's course is a designated distance learning or part-time course.

G2. The student has not studied in the previous two academic years with the provider on a course that was, at the time, designated as distance learning or part-time course.

H. The student lived in the UK on the day they started the course, and they still live in the UK.

I. The student is not counted in the full-time HEAPES population for the relevant academic year.

Definitions of the HEAPES populations: further explanation

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

24. Students at alternative providers can access student support only if the course that they are studying is designated by the Secretary of State. Courses may only be designated as a full-time course, distance learning course, part-time course, or postgraduate course.

25. In the HEAPES survey we use the term 'designated courses' to refer to courses that have been designated for student support purposes by the Secretary of State for Education (England). We treat a course as designated only if new 2016-17 students on that course can receive student support³. Only students on designated courses are in the HEAPES populations.

26. However, students on courses designated for the postgraduate masters loans of for postgraduate courses only designated for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) are not in the HEAPES populations (see Conditions F1 and F2).

27. To be in a HEAPES population, a student must study with the provider on a designated course for at least two weeks, or have their attendance on such a course confirmed positively to the Student Loans Company (SLC) or the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). Students who withdraw (or transfer to a course that is not designated) before they have completed two weeks of study would not therefore be in a HEAPES population, unless the provider confirmed their positive attendance. If, through the SLC's or SAAS's systems for confirming attendance, a provider has only ever reported a student as absent, that student's attendance should not be treated as positively confirmed.

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).

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

29. The original version of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 is available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1986/contents/made. It prescribes 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

³ Some courses are designated in 2016-17 for 'teach out' only. The HEAPES populations do not include students on these courses as they are only open to continuing students.

- 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
- persons who are not settled in the United Kingdom but have been residing in the UK for a long time⁴.

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

30. 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/data/collect/heapes/HEAPES,2015-16/.

31. Student Finance England advises that, when determining eligibility, students from Gibraltar should be treated as EU nationals. 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.

32. 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).

33. 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.

34. A student is in a 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 a 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 a HEAPES population.

35. It may unusually be the case that a student does not meet HEAPES condition B and yet is receiving student support. In these circumstances they should be treated as meeting condition B. If a provider believes that a student is receiving student support despite not being eligible, they should inform the SLC of this immediately.

36. 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).

⁴ This follows an amendment to Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007 No. 779) - SI 2016/584 is available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/584/contents/made.

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

37. 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 HEFCE-funded higher education institutions (HEIs), and the Higher Education in Further Education: Students (HEIFES) survey for HEFCE-funded further education colleges.

38. It may be the case, unusually, that a student on a particular course is part of a 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

39. 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 conditions of the franchising agreement.
- b. The course is registered on the SLC's HEI course database in the name of the franchiser, is marked as a franchise 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.
- d. The student has a contractual relationship with the franchiser for delivering the course.
- e. The conditions 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.
- f. The student has access to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) through both the franchising institution and the franchisee.

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

41. Alternative providers are not generally permitted, under the conditions of specific course designation, to franchise courses to other providers. However, DfE may exceptionally permit this. Where the provider has such written consent from DfE, students should be treated as meeting condition C 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.

D. 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.

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

43. 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.

44. 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.

45. Student Finance England provides guidance on how to determine whether a student is studying for an ELQ in ‘Assessing Eligibility Guidance’ for 2016-17, which is available at www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy-information/guidance-chapters.aspx. 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 Student Finance England guidance)

Level	Qualification
E	Masters MBAs PGCE
D	Honours Degree LLB Integrated Masters Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary courses Scottish MAs Oxford and Cambridge MAs
C	Ordinary Degree
B	HNDs Dip HE Foundation Degrees
A	HNCs Cert HE

46. 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 whether the study was full-time, part-time or through distance learning.

Exceptions

47. 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 initial teacher training courses. This means that students on such courses can receive some student support even if they are studying for an ELQ. Condition D does not therefore exclude such students from the HEAPES populations: they will be in a HEAPES population provided they meet the other conditions.

48. In addition, a 2014 amendment to the Student Support Regulations prescribes that part-time students are not subject to the ELQ rules, and can therefore access student support, if they are studying for an honours degree in engineering, technology, or computer science. Such students will therefore be in the DLPT HEAPES population provided they meet the other conditions⁵.

49. It may unusually be the case that a student does not meet HEAPES condition D and yet is receiving student support. In these circumstances they should be treated as meeting condition D. If a provider believes that a student is receiving student support despite not being eligible, they should inform the SLC of this immediately via their Account Manager.

50. 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).

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

51. Student numbers on initial teacher training (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 either 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.

⁵ The relevant statutory instrument is SI 2014 no 2765. Further interpretation is provided by the Student Loans Company in the Student Support Information Notice 'Part-time ELQ exceptions', available here: www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy-information/student-support-information-notices.aspx.

F1. The student's course is a designated full-time course.

52. 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 full-time HEAPES population. Students on courses designated as part-time or distance learning are not in the full-time HEAPES population. Neither are students on postgraduate courses designated for DSA only, regardless of whether or not they are delivered full-time. Providers should refer to the HEFCE Register of Higher Education Providers for detailed information on the designation status of individual courses (www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/register/)

G1. The student has not studied in the previous two academic years with the provider on a course that was, at the time, designated as a full-time course.

53. 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 full-time HEAPES population⁶. Many of the students in the full-time HEAPES population will therefore be 'entrants' – students who are beginning a full-time course without having previously studied with the provider. However, the full-time 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 full-time HEAPES population will also include some students who are returning to a designated full-time course after an absence of more than two years.

54. The year of the course is not directly relevant to determining whether a student is in the full-time HEAPES population: some students in this population may be in the second or subsequent years of a course. This might happen, for instance, if a course gains full-time designation after a student's first year; if a student has 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.

55. Condition G1 means that if a student has studied in the previous two years on a course that was not designated, but which has since gained designation for the current academic year, they will be in the full-time HEAPES population provided the other conditions are met.

F2. The student's course is a designated distance learning or part-time course.

56. Only students on DLPT courses are in the DLPT HEAPES population. Students on courses designated as full-time are not in the DLPT HEAPES population. Neither are students on postgraduate courses designated for DSA only, regardless of whether or not these are delivered on a distance learning or part-time basis.

G2. The student has not studied in the previous two academic years with the provider on a course that was, at the time, designated as a distance learning or part-time course.

57. If in either of the previous two years the student has studied for at least two weeks with the provider on a distance learning or part-time designated course, they are not in

⁶ This excludes any course franchised from another organisation. For the definition of a franchised course, see paragraph 39.

the DLPT HEAPES population (see paragraph 56). Many of the students in the DLPT HEAPES population will therefore be 'entrants' – students who are beginning a distance learning or part-time course without having previously studied with the provider. However, the DLPT HEAPES population will also include other students, such as those who have previously studied with the provider but not on a distance learning or part-time designated course. The DLPT HEAPES population will also include some students who are returning to a designated distance learning or part-time course after an absence of more than two years.

58. The year of the course is not directly relevant to determining whether a student is in the DLPT HEAPES population: some students in this population may be in the second or subsequent years of a course. This might happen, for instance, if:

- a course gains distance learning or part-time designation after a student's first year
- a student has transferred from a course that is not designated as distance learning or part-time
- a student has been permitted to enter the course after the first year because of their prior educational attainments or experience.

59. Condition G2 means that if a student has studied in the previous two years on a course that was not designated, but which has since gained designation for the current academic year, they will be in the DLPT HEAPES population, provided the other conditions are met.

H. The student lived in the UK on the day they started the course, and they still live in the UK.

60. Students on a distance learning course who did not live in the UK when they started the course do not meet this condition. For example, a student who starts a distance learning course with an English provider while living in France and who then moves to the UK is not in the DLPT HEAPES population.

61. If a student begins a distance learning course while living in the UK and then moves outside the UK before the HEAPES census date, they do not meet this condition unless their attendance for the academic year has been confirmed to the SLC or SAAS.

I. The student is not counted in the full-time HEAPES population for the relevant academic year.

62. If, unusually, on the census date a student would meet both the conditions to be in the full-time HEAPES population and the conditions (excepting condition H) to be in the DLPT HEAPES population, they should be included in the full-time HEAPES population only. For example, if a student begins a full-time designated course and transfers to a distance learning or part-time designated course before the census date, they should be included only in the full-time HEAPES population (provided they meet the full-time HEAPES conditions).

63. More generally, if a student meets conditions A to E, F1, F2, G1, G2 and H before the census date, then condition I determines that for HEAPES purposes they will be treated as a full-time student, rather than a part-time student. This approach avoids any double counting of students.

64. It is possible that a student who is in the DLPT HEAPES population may transfer to a full-time designated course after the census date. We do not expect this to be taken into account in the forecasts of numbers who fall into the full-time HEAPES population. However, providers should be aware that students who transfer to a full-time course after the census date will be noted through analysis of data from the SLC and HESA, and may count against their full-time SNC.

Categories within the HEAPES populations

65. All and only students in the HEAPES populations should be included in the HEAPES survey. This section defines the terms used to break down these populations. A full understanding of these terms is required to complete this survey.

Qualification type

66. The HEAPES survey requires providers to categorise students by the following qualification types:

- a. HNC/HND
- b. UG ITT (undergraduate ITT)
- c. First degree (bachelors or integrated masters degree)
- d. Other UG (Other Undergraduate)
- e. PG ITT (postgraduate ITT).

67. We have assigned qualification types to courses to reflect their designation from DfE. This is illustrated in the Annex A samples for Tables 1 and 3.

Students receiving student support

68. The HEAPES survey requires providers to categorise 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 that held by the SLC. It is not relevant to monitoring the student number controls: whether or not a student counts against a provider's SNCs does not depend on whether they are receiving student support.

69. A student in a HEAPES population should be treated as receiving student support if the provider has positively confirmed the student's attendance or registration for 2016-17 to the SLC or SAAS on or before the census date. If the provider has not positively confirmed the attendance or registration of a particular student for 2016-17, 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 2016-17, or is likely to do so in the future.

Institutional level specific course designation

70. Alternative providers that have been awarded degree awarding powers (as set out in the government guidance and criteria for degree awarding powers and university title⁷, may apply for institutional level specific course designation⁸.

71. 'Institutional level specific course designation' is a variation on 'specific course designation', and means that all eligible courses at the specified institution at a specified campus are designated, and courses do not have to be approved on a course by course basis.

72. Institutional level specific course designation is location-specific, so if a provider with institutional level specific course designation opens a new campus or starts delivering at a new location they will have to seek – and gain – approval from DfE to extend the designation to new campuses or other locations.

73. When a provider holds institutional designation, all its eligible courses are designated and therefore must be recorded in HEAPES. This is regardless of whether or not the courses are registered with the SLC.

Section 3: Completing and submitting the HEAPES16 survey

Downloading the HEAPES16 workbook

74. An Excel workbook containing the four tables to be completed will be available on the HEFCE extranet (<https://data.hefce.ac.uk>) in mid-November 2016. In early November, we will send a letter to the accountable officer and the HEAPES contact of each provider, to notify you that the survey is available.

Completing the tables

75. The HEAPES16 workbook contains five worksheets as shown in Table C below. Providers required to participate in the HEAPES survey need to complete all relevant tables, regardless of whether the appropriate population is subject to an SNC. For instance, a provider with designated full-time and part-time courses should complete Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, even if only their full-time courses are subject to an SNC. However, a provider with only designated distance learning or part-time courses will need to complete only Tables 3 and 4.

⁷ Government guidance and criteria for degree awarding powers and university title – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-market-entry-guidance>.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-higher-education-providers-designation-guidance

Table C: Description of HEAPES16 tables

Name of worksheet	HEAPES16 tables
FT_1	Table 1: Students in the full-time HEAPES population present on or before 1 December 2016
FT_2	Table 2: Students in the full-time HEAPES population
DLPT_1	Table 3: Students in the DLPT HEAPES population present on or before 1 December 2016
DLPT_2	Table 4: Students in the DLPT HEAPES population

76. Providers may find it useful to take a snapshot of their SLC portal on 1 December, as this will help determine whether a student should be returned in either column 1a or 1b of Table 1 or Table 3 of HEAPES16. It will also help in responding to questions from HEFCE during the data verification period.

Completing Tables 1 and 3

77. You only need to complete Tables 1 and 3 when course information is pre-filled in these tables.

78. Tables 1 and 3 should contain all and only students who are in your HEAPES populations between 1 August 2016 and 1 December 2016.

79. Table 1 contains a list of all of your organisation's courses designated as full-time for 2016-17, broken down by location. The first six columns of this table are pre-filled with course identifier, qualification type, course name, awarding body, location identifier and location name. Table 3 contains equivalent information for distance learning and part-time courses along with a designation type indicator, which reflects the designations granted by DfE. If you believe this list is incomplete or inaccurate, please contact us as soon as possible at heapes@hefce.ac.uk.

80. The other columns of Tables 1 and 3 should be completed as follows (for the relevant HEAPES population).

SLC course code: Course identifier generated by the SLC when registering the course on its 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 2016 and 1 December 2016 who are receiving student support.

Column 1 (b): Number of students in the HEAPES population between 1 August 2016 and 1 December 2016 who are not receiving student support.

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

Completing Tables 2 and 4

81. You need to complete Tables 2 and 4 only when course information is pre-filled in the preceding table (Table 1 or 3, respectively), or when you have institutional designation. If you are a provider with institutional designation, you should complete column 1 of both tables as well as column 2.

82. Tables 2 and 4, when complete, provide summaries of all your students in the HEAPES populations for the 2016-17 academic year. For most providers (those without institutional designation), column 1 of Table 2 will be pre-filled from the data in Table 1, and column 1 of Table 4 from the data in Table 3.

83. You should complete column 2 with a forecast of students who will enter the relevant HEAPES population between 2 December 2016 and 31 July 2017. Columns 1 and 2 are mutually exclusive.

84. Students returned in column 2 will typically be studying on courses with start dates after 1 December. You should typically base your forecasts on past recruitment patterns, allowing for any known changes in the current academic year. Your forecasts should not be based on aspirations, ambitions or targets unless there is strong evidence that these will be achieved.

85. Your forecasts should exclude the number of students starting after 1 December who are estimated to withdraw within two weeks of starting (without having had their attendance positively confirmed to the SLC or SAAS), and therefore do not fall into a HEAPES population. Again, we would expect these estimates to be based on evidence (for instance, of previous withdrawal rates). In all cases, evidence should be kept for audit purposes for five years.

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

Validation checks and credibility checks

87. The HEAPES16 workbook includes a number of validation and credibility checks. Validation checks identify data that is clearly incorrect – workbooks which contain validation errors will not be accepted. Credibility checks identify data which might be correct, but which appears surprising or implausible.

Validation checks

88. Validation checks for each table are listed within each worksheet. In Tables 1 and 3 we check if:

- cells contain values that are not whole numbers
- cells contain negative values
- the SLC course codes contain letters
- courses have a missing SLC course code.

89. In Tables 2 and 4 we check if:

- cells contain values that are not whole numbers
- cells contain negative values
- students are reported against qualification types for which the organisation has no designated courses.

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

91. Such validation errors **must be corrected** before submitting the completed workbook: we will not accept workbooks that contain them. If the source of the error cannot be identified, you should email us for advice at heapes@hefce.ac.uk.

Credibility checks

92. Credibility checks for each table are shown within each worksheet. There are no credibility checks for Tables 2 and 4. On Tables 1 and 3 we check if the total number of students returned is greater than 50, and 10 per cent or fewer are not receiving student support.

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

94. When a credibility warning appears, you should check that the data you have entered is correct and meets the guidance and definitions set out in the relevant section of this publication. If you are satisfied that the data is correct, you may still submit it, but when you submit your data you should also email heapes@hefce.ac.uk explaining why it is correct. We will consider these explanations as part of our data verification process (see paragraphs 99 to 105).

95. Our credibility checks are not exhaustive, and passing them should not be taken as confirmation that your data is accurate. We expect you to carry out your own specific checks as well.

Recruitment against the 2016-17 student number controls

96. The HEAPES16 workbook also contains a pre-populated SNC worksheet relating to recruitment against the 2016-17 SNCs. DfE guidance states that any provider recruiting above an SNC may face sanctions which could include recovery of funds. DfE retains the right to make decisions about over-recruitment and the level and type of sanction imposed.

Uploading the workbook to the extranet

97. Your completed HEAPES16 workbook must be uploaded to the HEFCE extranet no later than **noon on Thursday 15 December 2016**. We will not give extensions to this deadline. A key for accessing the extranet for the purposes of HEAPES16 will be sent to your accountable officer and named HEAPES contact (and only them) in early November 2016.

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

Data verification

99. A small team of data verification specialists at HEFCE will verify the data for HEAPES16. After you submit your HEAPES workbook we will process the data and generate a number of specific queries that highlight areas of your data that we want to explore further. We will then contact you to discuss these queries as part of a conversation that will help both HEFCE and your institution have confidence in the data supplied. We usually have queries on nearly all institutions' data.

100. When credibility warnings are highlighted in Tables 1 and 3 you should email explanations for these to heapes@hefce.ac.uk at the same time as you submit your data. During data verification we check your data, along with any explanations that have been given for any credibility warnings, as detailed in paragraph 94. We will also check your submitted data against other data sources, including the SLC, Pearson Education Limited and HESA.

101. The data contact at your institution will receive an email from a data verification specialist at HEFCE within five working days of the submission deadline. This will contain full instructions and an attachment containing specific data queries. You will usually have three working days to respond to queries.

102. When you receive this email you should read all of the documents carefully and consider the queries. We will require a full response to each query, which should be emailed back to your data verification specialist at HEFCE.

103. If you need to amend your data, you will need to amend your workbook then upload it to the HEFCE extranet. For this to happen you will need to inform your data verification specialist, who will then open the extranet; you will not be able to upload the revised workbook before that. Workbooks must **not** be emailed under any circumstances. Full instructions for resubmitting a survey workbook will be included in our initial email.

104. During the verification process, we will sometimes ask you to send us additional information about student numbers. In providing such information, you should respect the confidentiality of your students. In particular, **you should not send individual student data to us** (for example, data from the SLC), as this could allow specific students to be identified.

105. It is sometimes necessary to go through several rounds of queries. When all the queries have been resolved and the data has been verified, your data verification specialist will ask that your accountable officer signs off the data, by signing the verification form in the final version of the workbook. The signed verification form should be scanned and emailed to your data verification specialist at heapes@hefce.ac.uk. The final deadline for receiving the sign-off form is **noon on 16 January 2017**.

Comparison of HEAPES data against other data sources

SLC data (SHEAPESPOP)

106. As mentioned above, during the data verification process, we compare your HEAPES data with data from the SLC. We focus on the number of students returned in HEAPES as receiving student support on or before 1 December (Table 1, Column 1a and Table 3, Column 1a). We expect the total number of students returned in these columns to be broadly comparable with numbers derived from the SLC data.

107. In order to compare the two data sets, we identify students within the SLC data who meet all the following conditions to be in the HEAPES population – we call these students the SHEAPESPOP. These students should be:

- studying on a full-time or DLPT designated course (identified using the SLC course codes supplied in Table 1 and Table 3 of the HEAPES survey)
- starting a course.

108. We treat a student as starting a course if both of the following are true:

- a. They have not received student support while studying at the same provider, with the same study mode, during academic year 2014-15 or 2015-16.
- b. They are shown in the SLC data with either a course year of 0 or 1, or a course start date which falls between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017.

109. During HEAPES verification, we focus on students in the SHEAPESPOP whose registration or attendance you have confirmed to the SLC on or before 1 December 2016. For these students, we compare the total who are on:

- full-time designated courses with the Table 1, Column 1a total
- DLPT designated courses with the Table 3, Column 1a total.

In either case, we will ask a query if the SHEAPESPOP and HEAPES numbers differ by more than 5 students and 5 per cent.

110. If your data verification specialist tells you that there is a significant difference between the numbers in HEAPES and the SLC population, you should check your HEAPES numbers. You should check that:

- the HEAPES conditions have been used correctly
- students are returned in Column 1a of Tables 1 and 3 if, and only if, you have positively confirmed registration or attendance to the SLC or SAAS.

If this does not explain the difference, your data verification specialist will work with you to understand why it is occurring. During this process, please do not send individual student details to them unless asked to do so, as this raises data security issues.

Pearson data (PHEAPESPOP)

111. For providers who offer higher national provision (HNDs and HNCs) only, we compare HEAPES data with data from Pearson Education Limited. We focus on the total number of students returned on HNC and HND courses in Tables 1 and 3.

112. In order to compare these two data sets, we identify students in the Pearson data who appear to be in the HEAPES population (we call these students the PHEAPESPOP). A student is considered to be in the PHEAPESPOP if they meet at least one of the following conditions:

- a. In the Pearson data, both of the following are true for the student:
 - i. They do not appear as registered with the same provider in Pearson data from previous academic years.
 - ii. They have a commencement date during the 2016-17 academic year.
- b. We have identified the student in the SLC and Pearson data, through linking on personal details, and the SLC data shows the student to be starting a course. We take the SLC data to show that a student is starting a course if both of the following are true:
 - i. They have not received student support while studying at the same provider, with the same study mode, during academic year 2014-15 or 2015-16.
 - ii. They are shown in the SLC data with either a course year of 0 or 1, or a course start date which falls between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017.

113. The Pearson data we use for this comparison will be generated on 1 December 2016, and so should be broadly comparable with the numbers on HND and HNC courses returned on Tables 1 and 3. We will raise queries with you if the numbers in the PHEAPESPOP differ from the total number of students on HNC and HND courses by more than 15 per cent and 10 students.

114. If your data verification specialist tells you that there is a significant difference between the numbers in HEAPES and the Pearson data, you should check your HEAPES numbers. You should check that:

- the HEAPES conditions have been used correctly
- students have been returned against the correct course.

If this does not explain the difference, the HEFCE data verification specialist will work with you to understand why it is occurring. During this process, do not send individual student details to them unless asked to do so, as this raises data security issues.

Data sign-off

115. By **noon on Monday 16 January 2017**, you must have signed off your HEAPES data as having been correct as of 1 December 2016. We will provide a form that will need to be signed by your accountable officer, who is expected to have enough understanding of the HEAPES survey to confirm that your systems are capable of producing an accurate and complete return.

116. If the accountable officer will be unavailable to sign off the data because they are absent during the data verification period, you should email heapes@hefce.ac.uk as soon as possible to agree interim arrangements. We will then expect the accountable officer to sign off the data when they return.

117. It is DfE's expectation that providers completing the HEAPES survey do so to an appropriate standard. If a provider fails to submit the survey on time, to provide credible data, or to sign off their data on time, we will inform DfE. This could ultimately lead to DfE imposing sanctions.

Data assurance

118. In addition to the data verification process described above, we may audit the HEAPES16 return. The audits may involve desk-based work and visits to providers to review how the return was produced. You should therefore keep an adequate audit trail recording how the data has been derived. This is 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 Tables 2 and 4.

We will compare the HEAPES16 survey with further data provided by the SLC and Pearson Education Limited, and with data returned to HESA for 2016-17.

Higher Education Statistics Agency

119. All providers with 2016-17 specific course designation (including at institutional level) are required to submit an alternative provider student record for 2016-17 to HESA. Further information about this is provided by HESA at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16054/>.

120. During the submission process, to help you return accurate data to HESA, we will provide 'comparative outputs' comparing your HEAPES16 return with a re-creation of your HEAPES16 made from your HESA data, allowing you to identify and correct potential errors in your HESA data before final submission. Where differences between the two returns occur above set thresholds, we will discuss the data with you as part of the data assurance process.

121. In spring 2018, once your final data has been submitted to HESA, we will produce a final re-creation of your HEAPES16 workbook using this data. This will be used to determine which providers have recruited above their 2016-17 SNCs.

Self-check questions

Please ensure that you can answer 'Yes' to all these questions before submitting the completed HEAPES16 return to HEFCE.

1. Have you checked your data internally?
2. Have you completed all relevant tables?
3. Have you complied with the definitions set out in Section 2?
4. Have you kept an effective audit trail?
5. Have you passed all of the validation checks on each table?
6. Where the workbook shows credibility warnings:
 - a. Have you checked your data to make sure it is correct?
 - b. Have you checked that you are using the definitions set out in this guidance?
 - c. Have you emailed us, to explain why the data is correct?
7. If you have included any forecast students in column 2 of Tables 2 or 4, do they meet the criteria to be included in column 2?
8. Where you have made forecasts in Tables 2 or 4, are they based on past recruitment data, not targets? Have you kept an audit trail for these decisions?
9. Have you excluded any students who are contracted-in (franchised) from another institution?

Annex A: Sample HEAPES16 tables

HEAPES16: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics (HEFCE 2016/26)

Provider:
UKPRN:

Contact:
Phone:
Email:
Date loaded:

Table 1: Students in the full-time HEAPES population (present on or before 1 December 2016)

							Validation: OK First stage credibility: OK	Validation: OK First stage credibility: OK	Validation: OK First stage credibility: OK
							1	2	
							Students present on or before 1 December 2016		Total
							Students receiving student support	Students not receiving student support	
							(a)	(b)	
Course identifier	Qualification type	Course name	Awarding body	Location identifier	Location name	SLC course code			
NXXXX1	HND	Business Management	Pearson Education Limited	L1	London				
NXXXX2	First degree	BA Business	Avonbridge University	K1	Kent				
NXXXX3	First degree	Bfin Finance	Avonbridge University	L1	London				
NXXXX4	HND	Event management	Pearson Education Limited	L1	London				

HEAPES16: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics (HEFCE 2016/26)

Provider:
UKPRN:

Contact:
Phone:
Email:
Date loaded:

Table 2: Students in the full-time HEAPES population

Validation: OK

Validation: OK

Validation: OK

First stage credibility: OK

First stage credibility: OK

First stage credibility: OK

	1 Students present on or before 1 December 2016	2 Forecast of students starting after 1 December 2016 and before 1 August 2017	3 Total
Qualification type			
HNC/HND	0	0	0
UG ITT	0	0	0
First degree	0	0	0
Other UG	0	0	0
PG ITT	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

HEAPES16: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics (HEFCE 2016/26)

Provider:
UKPRN:

Contact:
Phone:
Email:
Date loaded:

Table 3: Students in the DLPT HEAPES population (present on or before 1 December 2016)

								Validation: OK	Validation: OK	Validation: OK
								First stage credibility: OK	First stage credibility: OK	First stage credibility: OK
								1	2	
								Students present on or before 1 December 2016	Total	
								Students receiving student support	Students not receiving student support	
								(a)	(b)	
Course identifier	Qualification type	Designation type	Course name	Awarding body	Location identifier	Location	SLC course code			
NXXXX1	HND	Part-time	Business Management	Pearson Education Limited	L1	London				
NXXXX2	First degree	Part-time	BA Business	Avonbridge University	K1	Kent				
NXXXX3	First degree	Part-time	BFin Finance	Avonbridge University	L1	London				
NXXXX4	HND	Distance Learning	Event Management	Pearson Education Limited	L1	London				

HEAPES16: Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics (HEFCE 2016/26)

Provider:
UKPRN:

Contact:
Phone:
Email:
Date loaded:

Table 4: Students in the DLPT HEAPES population

Validation: OK Validation: OK Validation: OK
 First stage credibility: OK First stage credibility: OK First stage credibility: OK

	1 Students present on or before 1 December 2016	2 Forecast of students starting after 1 December 2016 and before 1 August 2017	3 Total
Qualification type			
HNC/HND	0	0	0
UG ITT	0	0	0
First degree	0	0	0
Other UG	0	0	0
PG ITT	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

Annex B: List of abbreviations

DfE	Department for Education
DLPT	Distance learning part-time
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
ELQ	Equivalent or lower qualification
EU	European Union
HEAPES	Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HEIFES	Higher Education in Further Education: Students
HESES	Higher Education Students Early Statistics
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ITT	Initial teacher training
LLB	Bachelor of Laws degree
MBA	Master of Business Administration
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