

Office for  
Students



# Data collection to inform funding for 2021-22

Notification of changes

**Reference** OfS 2020.38

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**Publication date** 4 August 2020

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# Summary

1. This document provides notification of changes that we intend to make to the collection of data to inform funding for 2021-22.
2. A higher education provider registered, or applying to register, with the Office for Students (OfS) in the Approved (fee cap) category, and seeking the benefits of such registration for the 2021-22 academic year, must complete a data survey to inform the calculation of OfS grants for that year. These are as follows:
  - a. For a provider with which students are registered in the 2020-21 academic year, the 2020 Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES20) survey. The Department for Education will also use HESES20 to monitor compliance with its student number control for 2020-21, where this applies to a provider.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. For a provider that does not have students registered with it in the 2020-21 academic year, the Higher Education Students Forecast 2021-22 (HESF21) survey.<sup>2</sup>
3. This document summarises changes to these surveys but does not contain the full technical specification of our data requirements and definitions; we will confirm these in the data collection requests that we issue in autumn 2020. We welcome any questions or comments on the proposed changes, but we are not consulting on these changes. Please email any comments to [recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk). We intend to publish the full HESES20 and HESF21 guidance in September 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> For information, last year's guidance for the 2019 Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES19) survey can be found at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses19/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses19/).

<sup>2</sup> For information, last year's guidance for the Higher Education Students Forecast 2021-22 survey can be found at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/hesf20/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/hesf20/).

# Changes to data collection to inform funding for 2021-22

## The HESES20 data collection process

4. All higher education providers registered (or applying to register) in the Approved (fee cap) category that have students registered with them in the 2020-21 academic year are required to complete the HESES20 data survey. This includes further education and sixth form colleges and academies, but there are some differences in the data reporting requirements for colleges that need to be reflected.
5. Currently, we intend the HESES20 data return to use the following key dates:
  - a. Further education and sixth form colleges and academies will use a census date of 1 November 2020 and will be required to submit their data by noon on 12 November 2020.
  - b. All other providers will use a census date of 1 December and will be required to submit their data by noon on 10 December 2020.
  - c. All providers will be required to have their data signed off by their accountable officer by 2 February 2021.
6. This initial timeline is similar to the 2019-20 collection. However, the timeline may change subject to any further updates to regulatory requirements in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (following Susan Lapworth's letter of 30 July).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, providers may be required to provide information to the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to monitoring of their compliance with its student number control (SNC).<sup>4</sup> This could include a request for further data about the number of entrants counting against the SNC, who were admitted on the basis of offers that students had accepted by 1 June 2020 and fully met.
7. As with HESES19, we recognise that this timeline is not completely consistent in the way that it treats providers, and results in colleges having a longer time to verify and sign off their data. For HESES19 we consulted with sector representative bodies to explore the possibility of harmonising the collection dates, but the feedback was not in favour of such a move at that time and noted that it might overlap with other data returns. Though we may wish to explore this for future returns, a harmonised collection timetable will not be implemented for HESES20. This will ensure consistency in how the DfE's SNC has been set and is monitored. Because HESES collects data for the whole academic year (including forecasts of student numbers countable after the census date), the use of different census dates should not in itself have a material effect on the student numbers counted for OfS funding purposes.

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/update-on-the-office-for-students-approach-to-regulation-and-information-about-deadlines-for-data-returns/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/update-on-the-office-for-students-approach-to-regulation-and-information-about-deadlines-for-data-returns/).

<sup>4</sup> Guidance on the DfE's temporary student number control can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-number-controls>.

## Changes to the HESES20 workbook

8. We will be making a number of changes to the tables that need to be completed in HESES20. These are listed below.
9. Table 5 in HESES is used to collect further information on students for planning purposes. For HESES20 this will also be used to record information that will allow the DfE to monitor its temporary SNC. Section B: New entrants will now be split between Column 1 (years of instance for new entrants countable between 1 August 2020 and the relevant census date) and Column 2 (years of instance for new entrants countable after the relevant census date and before 1 August 2021). In addition, Table 5 will collect data on the number of new entrants that are subject to certain exemptions from the SNC. Further information about these exemptions is provided in paragraphs 19 to 20.
10. Since 2017-18, students starting undergraduate courses that on successful completion lead to first registration as a professional in nursing, midwifery and certain allied health professions (pre-registration courses) are supported through the main higher education finance system and are eligible to be counted towards our funding allocations. This was extended from 2018-19 to cover students starting undergraduate pre-registration courses in dental hygiene and dental therapy and to postgraduate pre-registration courses. The data provided on HESES Tables 6a, 6b and 6c allows us to identify the cohorts of students who need to be counted towards these calculations.
11. For HESES20, we are simplifying Tables 6a, 6b and 6c to identify years of instance for home and EU students in each profession, broken down between OfS-fundable and non-fundable categories. We do not require separate identification of these according to the year they started their courses, because we consider that the transitional arrangements to effect the transfer of funding responsibility with successive entry cohorts are complete. The definition of fundability status (including as it applies to pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions) is unchanged for HESES20. Tables 6a (full-time) and 6c (part-time) will also separately identify all home and EU years of instance, both fundable and non-fundable, for students who start in 2020-21. This is collected for planning, not funding, purposes.
12. HESES20 will include a table (Table 7 Location) to collect information about the teaching location of OfS-fundable students. (Previously, when required, this data has been collected in a separate workbook). This will only need to be completed by providers that were not receiving OfS funding for 2019-20. Data recorded in this table will allow us to calculate any location-based funding allocations.
13. In addition to the changes above regarding the tables for completion on HESES20, we would like providers to note that we will also be making adjustments to the comparison tables used for reference during the data verification process. We intend, where possible, to retain the structure of the comparison tables from HESES19 but will adjust them to reflect where aspects of providers' 2019-20 individualised data returns<sup>5</sup> may be affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

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<sup>5</sup> These are the Student and the Student Alternative returns submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the individualised learner record submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

## The HESF21 data collection process

14. All providers registered (or applying to register) in the Approved (fee cap) category that **do not** have students registered with them in the 2020-21 academic year are required to complete the HESF21 data survey. There are no changes to the structure of the HESF21 tables compared with HESF20.
15. As it is a forecast of student numbers in the 2021-22 academic year, no census date applies to HESF21. We will specify the deadline for submission when we notify any providers that they are required to complete the survey. Commonly, the submission and sign-off deadlines will be similar to those for HESES20, so that (subject to their entry onto the OfS register in time) such providers can be included in the grant announcements we make in spring 2021.

## Changes to funding definitions and guidance for HESES20 and HESF21

16. We are making a number of amendments to funding definitions and guidance that will apply equally to HESES20 and HESF21.

### Estimating non-completions

17. As initially set out in Nolan Smith's letter of 6 May 2020, we are clarifying the guidance for estimating non-completions in HESES20,<sup>6</sup> The HESES guidance notes that such estimates should:

- be based on historical non-completion data
- not be skewed by exceptional circumstances.

18. The coronavirus pandemic is such an exceptional circumstance, and we would expect providers to base their estimates of non-completions in HESES20 on data from years prior to 2019-20. We would also not expect estimates to be adjusted to reflect changes to delivery methods unless this can be supported by historical data.

### Student number control population

19. As set out in paragraph 9, data collected in HESES20 will be used by the DfE to monitor compliance with its temporary SNCs. Table 5 of HESES already collects the number of home and EU full-time undergraduate new entrants. In HESES20 we will also collect a subset of this population that is exempt from the student number control for the following reasons:

- a. Students taking A-level or equivalent Level 3 exams in autumn 2020 prior to registering or starting a course with a higher education provider.
- b. New entrants who are on apprenticeship programmes.
- c. New entrants recruited by a further education college that is part of an institute of technology, to meet the contractual obligations of that institute of technology's licence agreement.

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<sup>6</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/implications-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-for-ofs-funding/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/implications-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-for-ofs-funding/).

d. Students recruited to courses delivered as part of franchise arrangements that were agreed after a provider's annual financial return was signed off and submitted to OfS, but before 1 June.

20. The DfE has published guidance on these exemption categories,<sup>7</sup> and we will update our guidance on Table 5 to reflect this. Table 5 will collect the total number of students who are exempt from the SNC for one or more of the reasons set out in paragraph 19. As subsets of this total, Table 5 will also collect, for each exemption category individually, the numbers who are exempt **solely** for that reason. This means that these subsets will not sum to the total number of exemptions recorded if students are exempt for more than one reason.

## **Fundability status**

21. Although our definition of fundability is not changing, providers are reminded that students are classified as 'Home and EU' if they are defined as eligible in Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No 779), as amended. Amendments to these regulations have been made through the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2020, covering higher education student finance arrangements for the 2020-21 academic year in England.<sup>8</sup> These introduce two new categories from August 2020 in the definition of eligible students in the fees and awards regulations. They are:

- persons granted indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic violence or domestic abuse
- persons granted Calais leave.<sup>9</sup>

## **Changes to the HESSES20 seminars and training**

### **Webinars and other online training material**

22. Because of the coronavirus pandemic we will not run our usual seminar programme. We instead plan to offer a programme of webinars running from 28 September to 14 October 2020. Information on these webinars will be emailed to nominated student data contacts, released on the OfS website<sup>10</sup> and announced through the OfS email alert system.<sup>11</sup>

23. More information will be available in due course at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/heses/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/heses/).

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<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-number-controls/student-number-controls-further-guidance>.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/48/contents/made>.

<sup>9</sup> For an explanation of what Calais leave refers to, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-form-of-leave-for-children-transferred-during-calais-clearance-to-join-family>.

<sup>10</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/events/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/events/).

<sup>11</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/sign-up-for-email-alerts/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/sign-up-for-email-alerts/).



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