

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Higher Education Data Requirements 2020/21

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To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education institutions
in Wales
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This circular informs higher education providers of the higher education data used to calculate funding allocations; to monitor National Measures; to monitor equality and diversity; for publication; for provision to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; for the HESA student record data quality analysis; to monitor part-time fee waivers, degree apprenticeships, PGT Master's incentivisation bursary schemes and the PGT Master's bursary scheme for students aged 60 or over; to extract TRAC(T) FTE data and Research Wales Innovation Fund data; and to inform policy.

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Introduction

1. This circular informs higher education providers (HEPs) of the higher education (HE) data used for the following purposes:
 - the calculation of funding allocations;
 - monitoring National Measures;
 - monitoring equality and diversity;
 - providing data to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol about Welsh medium provision;
 - publication;
 - analysing HESA student record data quality;
 - monitoring part-time fee waivers;
 - monitoring degree apprenticeships;
 - monitoring PGT Master's bursaries;
 - extracting full-time equivalent (FTE) data for the Transparent Approach to Costing (Teaching) (TRAC(T)); and,
 - informing policy.

In this circular, HEPs comprise further education institutions (FEIs) providing higher education and higher education institutions (HEIs).

A description of the data extracted from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record via the HESA Information Reporting Interface Service (IRIS) for end of year monitoring (EYM) is not included in this circular. Instead Annex K of the circular [W20/25HE: End of Year Monitoring of Higher Education Enrolments 2019/20](#) should be referred to for details of the data extracted.

2. Funding methods for 2021/22 are not final at the time of publication of this circular. Therefore it should be noted that any assumptions about data and methods used to allocate funding set out in this circular are based on those used for 2020/21 funding which may change for 2021/22.

Main changes for 2020/21

3. The main changes included in this circular compared to [W19/26HE: Higher Education Data Requirements 2019/20](#), comprise:
 - Two new annexes which relate to Master's bursary schemes; one for incentivising Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) related subjects and study through the medium of Welsh, and the other for those aged 60 or over. See Annexes L and M.
 - Two other new annexes providing information on methods of allocation of the Research Wales Innovation Fund (see Annex O), and on TRAC(T) FTE calculations (see Annex N).
 - The annex providing information on HEFCW's previous Corporate Strategy targets (2013 to 2017) has been shortened, and it is possible that it will be removed for 2021/22. See Annex D.

- The implementation of [Higher Education Classification of Subjects \(HECoS\)](#) subject codes in the 2019/20 HESA student record has required all subject related descriptions to be updated. More information about this change can be found at paragraphs 14 to 17 below.

Sources of Data

4. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) uses data from its own surveys, data collected by HESA, data provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC) and data from the National Student Survey (NSS) in carrying out the purposes described in paragraph 1 above. Other data such as Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data are also used to inform policy and provide information about the HE sector in Wales.
5. HEFCW collects data from HEPs in Wales through:
 - the higher education students early statistics (HESES) survey; and
 - the student and finance forecasts requests (HEIs only).
6. HESA collects data from all HEIs in the UK on:
 - student activity, including graduate outcomes;
 - information for students through the Unistats return;
 - finance;
 - higher education business and community interaction (HE-BCI);
 - staff; and,
 - estates management.
7. Since the 2016/17 academic year, HESA collects the following data from Welsh FEIs providing HE directly funded by HEFCW:
 - student activity, including graduate outcomes;
 - information for students through the Unistats return
8. Readers of this circular are assumed to be familiar with the HESES and EYM surveys, the HESA records and surveys, and the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) (HEIs only). The latest HESES, EYM and forecasts circulars are available on the [HEFCW website](#); the latest HESA data manuals are available on the [HESA website](#) and REF circulars are available on the [REF website](#). Links to the HEFCW circulars can also be found in the '[Statistics and data](#)', '[HEFCW Data collection](#)' area of the HEFCW website.

Ensuring the accuracy of data

9. HESA data used in the allocation of teaching (HEIs and FEIs) and postgraduate research (PGR) training (HEIs only) funding are subject to confirmation by HEPs that HEFCW have correctly extracted the data from the HESA records. In general, HEPs are not permitted to make amendments to data during the confirmation process if their HESA data are incorrect. The

exception to this is when there are changes to the methods of extraction or the data used in funding, or where a different source of data is used. In these cases, it is likely that we will allow amendments in the first year of the changes. The funding methods and data to be used for 2021/22 funding are not yet final so it is possible there will be changes to methods and data. HEPs will be informed once methods and data being used are finalised whether or not amendments to data will be allowed during the confirmation process.

10. It is important that HEPs are confident that all their HESA data are correct before final returns are made to HESA and the data are signed off. HEPs should take note of any discrepancies in their HESA data that have been found in past years, including those flagged up as part of the data quality analysis carried out by HEFCW, issues found in HEPs' own scrutiny of the summaries output by IRIS, problems that HESA or HEFCW have brought to their attention, and issues and errors found through internal or external audits. In particular, HEPs should ensure that they study in detail the reports produced by HESA when they commit their data and make any necessary amendments as a result before signing off the data to ensure their data are credible.
11. A number of confirmation reports are made available in the IRIS system and are expected to be signed off and returned to HEFCW after the HESA student record submission has been signed off. For the 2019/20 HESA student record these include:
 - EYM
 - Part-time fee waiver
 - National measures
 - Degree apprenticeships monitoring
 - PGT Master's STEMM and Welsh medium incentivisation bursary schemes and the PGT Master's bursary scheme for students age 60 or over (all schemes are presented in one table for sign-off)

More information on what is required will be communicated separately and made available on the [IRIS web page](#).

12. For those data confirmations where amendments are not accepted, if there is an error in an HEP's HESA data, and this error would lead to the HEP being allocated funding greater than that to which it is entitled, the HEP will be expected to notify HEFCW so that the funding can be adjusted accordingly.
13. For 2019/20, HESA issued some exceptional guidance to assist HEPs in returning data on the student record for 2019/20, in light of the disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, there may be some instances where data are not returned as they might have been in previous years, and where data might not fit some of the assumptions about coding of variables used in this circular. HEPs should notify us of any circumstances where they think there may be an issue with any of the data extraction, monitoring and analysis that we carry out, as a result of coding changes in 2019/20 that are related to the pandemic.

Coding of subjects

14. As noted above in paragraph 3, a new subject classification system HECoS, which replaces the previous system, the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS), was implemented in the 2019/20 HESA student record. All subject related descriptions in this circular have therefore been updated.
15. HECoS comprises of a non-hierarchical coding frame where the code for each subject is a randomly generated six digit number.
16. The Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) was developed to provide standard subject groupings which can be applied to both HECoS and JACS enabling consistent analysis across both coding frames and providing indicative comparisons for time series analysis. There are three levels of aggregation, denoted as CAH1, CAH2 and CAH3, where CAH1 is the greatest level of aggregation and is a code denoted by CAHXX, CAH2 is the middle level of aggregation and is denoted by CAHXX-XX and CAH3 is the lowest level of aggregation denoted by CAHXX-XX-XX, where X is a single number. On the HESA student record the Common Aggregation Hierarchy is derived from the course subject field SBJCA and provided as the following derived fields XCAH01, XCAH02, and XCAH03.
17. The HECoS coding system, mappings between JACS and HECoS, the CAH and mappings between HECoS and CAH and between JACS and CAH are all available on the [HECoS webpage](#). Information relating to the [mapping of HECoS codes to HEFCW Academic Subject Categories \(ASCs\)](#) is available on the HEFCW website.

Data used in Funding Allocations

18. The credit-based teaching funding allocations for part-time (PT) undergraduate (UG) provision for 2020/21 were based on 2019/20 credit value data collected on the HESES 2019/20 survey. Per capita funding was allocated for all modes and taught levels of study and the disability premium was allocated for all modes and levels of study, including PGR. All other premium funding was allocated as follows:
 - Access and retention premium (PT UG only);
 - Welsh medium premium (PT UG only);
 - Expensive subjects premium (clinical medicine and dentistry and Conservatoire Performance Element, FT UG only)
 - Higher cost subjects premium (FT UG only)

This circular assumes:

- that the credit-based teaching funding allocations for PT UG provision for 2021/22 will be based on 2020/21 HESES credit value data and,
- that per capita funding and the same premiums are being allocated with respect to the same groups of students for 2021/22 as in 2020/21.

It should be noted that this may change pending any changes made to funding methods for 2021/22 (see paragraph 2).

19. The access and retention, disability, Welsh medium, expensive subjects and higher cost subjects premiums and the per capita allocation are based on retrospective data taken from the HESA student record.
20. End of year data extracted from the HESA student record are used to calculate any adjustment to teaching funding at the end of the academic year to which the funding relates. For example, EYM data relating to the 2021/22 academic year will be used to calculate any adjustment required to the 2021/22 credit based funding. Details of the end of year data extracted from the HESA record are contained within Annex K of the EYM circular (see paragraph 1) and are not reproduced here.
21. More information on data used in teaching funding, including the premium and per capita elements, is set out in Annex A.
22. The Quality Research (QR) funding allocation has remained unchanged between 2015/16 and 2020/21 and is based on data returned to the 2014 REF and data extracted from the HESA 2013/14 student and staff records. This circular sets out the QR funding method as for 2015/16 in Annex B. However, the QR funding allocation method for 2021/22 is yet to be finalised as indicated in paragraph 2, so it should be noted that the method set out in Annex B may change.
23. The PGR training allocation for 2020/21 was based on retrospective data taken from the HESA student record. Further information on the HESA fields used is provided in Annex C.

Data used to monitor targets from HEFCW's previous Corporate Strategy

24. HEFCW now monitors a set of national measures which were introduced in 2017/18, refer to paragraph 36. Therefore 2017/18 was the last year of data for which HEFCW monitored the targets from the [previous Corporate Strategy](#). However, for 2019/20 data, for HEPs own use, we continue to include the HESA student record based targets in IRIS. We do anticipate phasing out this IRIS report in future, therefore it is possible that 2019/20 is the last time this data will be available in IRIS.

The student record based targets provided in IRIS are:

- Widening access;
- Participation;
- Part-time;
- Welsh medium;
- Overseas students;
- Initial Teacher Training;

25. A description of the student record based targets and the data used to calculate them provided in IRIS is included in Annex D. For more information about our previous Corporate Strategy targets please refer to Annex D of [W18/20HE: Higher Education Data Requirements 2018/19](#).

Data provided to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

26. HEFCW provides data each year, under a data sharing agreement, to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The fields and criteria used to extract the data are detailed in Annex E.

Data used to monitor equality and diversity

27. HEFCW currently uses HESA data to monitor the ethnicity, disability status, gender and age of students at Welsh HEPs and staff at Welsh HEIs. A summary of the data is published on the HEFCW website under '[About Higher Education in Wales](#)', '[Statistics](#)', '[Equality and Diversity Statistics](#)'. Further information on the fields used is in Annex F.
28. In the near future, we anticipate being able to publish sector level analysis of HESA data relating to students at Welsh HEPs and staff at Welsh HEIs about gender identity, sexual orientation and religion and belief and for staff only, parental leave.

Data used for publication

29. HEFCW publishes statistical reports on an ad hoc basis. Details of the data used in any statistical reports will be included with the report. Publications can be accessed from the [Statistics and data](#) area of the HEFCW website.

HESA student record data quality analysis

30. HEFCW provides a summary (referred to as the 'HESA data quality analysis') to each HEP of its data compared with the sector's data for a variety of fields which are used for funding, analysis and monitoring, which is designed to aid improvement of the quality of the student record and to be useful to both HEFCW and HEPs.
31. These summaries are intended to complement the reports which are provided by HESA when HEPs submit their student record and to allow HEPs to compare their data with that for the sector.
32. The summaries produced by HEFCW, are included in the IRIS output so HEPs can see their own data for the current year and historic data for both their HEP and for the sector. Usually summaries with sector data for the latest year are issued to HEPs later in the year after sector data have been signed off and provided to HEFCW by HESA. However, this hasn't happened this year, so the

first time HEPs will see sector data for the 2018/19 student record, will be in the 2019/20 IRIS report.

33. Further information on the fields used in the HESA data quality analysis can be found in Annex G.

Part-time fee waiver

34. Data used to monitor the actual value of part-time fee waivers claimed by HEPs under the HEFCW scheme are extracted from the HESA student record via the IRIS system. Data extracted via the IRIS system will be signed off by HEPs to confirm the data are correct. The process for last year can be found in [W19/28HE: The HEFCW part-time undergraduate fee waiver scheme](#). The equivalent circular for this year is due to be published in September 2020. Details of the data extracted for HEPs to sign off can be found in Annex H.

Income analysis

35. As part of the work carried out to monitor income at Welsh HEPs, data relating to student numbers and FTE at Welsh HEPs were used. A summary of the data is included in the IRIS output for information. Details of the criteria used to extract the data can be found in Annex I.

National measures

36. A set of [national measures](#) for higher education performance was published in response to the following objective in HEFCW's [current Corporate Strategy](#) which covers the period 2017 to 2020:
 - develop measures by which to monitor the performance and delivery of higher education providers including publication where appropriate.
37. Data used to monitor national measures are taken from the HESA student, staff, finance and aggregate offshore records; the HESA DLHE and graduate outcomes surveys; the published UK HE PIs; and the HESA HEBCI survey. Other sources, such as the National Student Survey (NSS), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) are also used. Data for FEIs are included in a subset of the targets and these data are taken from the HESA student record, the HESA DLHE and graduate outcomes surveys; the published UK HE PIs, the NSS, the QAA and the OIA.

The measures monitored using these data are:

- Widening access;
- Participation;
- Retention;
- Part-time;
- National Student Survey;
- Welsh medium;

- Student mobility;
 - Quality;
 - Complaints
 - Employment;
 - Graduate employment;
 - Continuing Professional Development;
 - Total HE-BCI income per FTE of academic staff
 - Spin off activity;
 - Start - up activity (graduate);
 - Research Staff;
 - PGR students;
 - PhDs awarded;
 - Research income;
 - EU/Overseas students;
 - EU/ Overseas staff;
 - Transnational education
38. A description of each of these measures and the data used to monitor them is included in Annex J.
39. Other areas which are monitored and included in the list of national measures include
- Diversity of the student population;
 - REF impact outcomes;
 - REF outcomes;
 - Financial health;
 - Estates;
 - Senior staff pay and gender pay gap;
 - Equality and diversity staff data
- but individual measures are not specified, instead these are areas which are already analysed more widely and published by HEFCW. Information on where to find these analyses can also be found in Annex J.
40. The HESA student record based measures are extracted via the IRIS system and will be signed off by HEPs to confirm the data are correct.

Data used for monitoring degree apprenticeships

41. Circular [W19/04HE](#) announced funding arrangements for degree apprenticeships in Wales starting in 2019/20 and circular [W19/07HE](#) provided more information on the submission process for HEPs. Circular [W19/38HE](#) requested monitoring information about apprentices starting in 2019/20 plus those apprentices starting in 2018/19 and continuing in 2019/20. The in-year information returned was used to monitor the number of apprentices being recruited and to calculate the funding for those apprentices. It was also used to monitor and publish data about the characteristics of apprentices, and

shared with Welsh Government to track progress and compliance with delivery priorities. All published and shared data was aggregated and anonymised.

42. Data used to monitor the end of year picture for the number of students enrolled on degree apprenticeships at HEPs are extracted from the HESA student record via the IRIS system and will be signed off by HEPs to confirm the data are correct. Details of the data extracted for HEPs to sign off can be found in Annex K.
43. The HESA data provided in the IRIS system will be used to verify the data that were collected manually during the 2019/20 academic year which were used to allocate funding. It is possible that adjustments to funding will be required. If this is the case, information on how adjustments to funding will be implemented will be communicated with HEPs separately.

Data used for monitoring PGT Master's incentivisation bursary schemes for STEMM and Welsh medium provision

44. The funding for PGT Master's incentivisation bursary schemes was allocated to HEPs to provide to Welsh and EU domiciled Master's students entering study in 2019/20, undertaking a Master's degree in science, technology, engineering, mathematics or medicine, also known as 'STEMM' and/or undertaking their Master's through the medium of Welsh. The funding was announced in HEFCW circular [W19/27HE](#) and the scheme is intended to be run as a three-year pilot. We are monitoring the number of Master's students starting in 2019/20, included in the calculation of the funding, through the IRIS system. We require sign off of the numbers to confirm the data have been correctly extracted and reflect the recruited number of Master's students studying STEMM and/or studying through the medium of Welsh. Details of the data extracted for HEPs to sign off can be found in Annex L.
45. The extracted data will be used to calculate adjustments to funding where the recruitment of Master's students is less than the estimated recruitment used in the calculation of funding.

Data used for monitoring the PGT Master's bursary scheme for students aged 60 or over

46. The funding for a PGT Master's bursary scheme for students aged 60 or over was allocated to HEPs to provide to Welsh and EU domiciled Master's students entering study in 2019/20, aged 60 or over. We are monitoring the number of Master's students starting in 2019/20 included in the calculation of the funding through the IRIS system and will require sign off of the numbers to confirm the data have been correctly extracted and reflect the recruited number of Master's students aged 60 or over. Details of the data extracted for HEPs to sign off can be found in Annex M.
47. As the scheme is demand led, and all those entitled to receive a bursary should do so, we will be using the extracted data to calculate any adjustments

to funding where the recruitment of Master's students is different to the estimated recruitment used in the calculation of funding.

Data used in the calculation of the TRAC(T) FTE

48. FTE data by cost centre were included in the template for the pilot TRAC(T) data collection for 2018/19. FTEs were presented in total for each cost centre and for Welsh medium provision only. The TRAC(T) data collection is not going ahead for 2019/20 and so the data presented in the IRIS data extraction will not be included in a TRAC(T) data collection. It is being provided to inform discussions about the methodology used and the future collection of TRAC(T) data. The data used in the calculation of the TRAC(T) FTE calculation is described in Annex N.

Data used in the calculation of Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF)

49. Circular [W20/09HE](#) announced allocations of the Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF). Data used in the allocation is described in Annex P.

Other uses of data

50. Any of the data described may be used to inform policy. In particular, data on students taught in whole or in part through the medium of Welsh, and staff who teach or who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh will be used to inform policy on Welsh medium provision. Data relating to students at directly funded FEIs or franchised to FEIs from HEIs will be used to inform policy on HE in FEIs. We also use data to monitor information submitted on the fee and access plans and annual monitoring returns.
51. HESA data are used in the calculation of the indicators contained within the annual [Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK](#) (PIs) publication. HESA produce PIs on behalf of all the HE funding and regulatory bodies of the UK. HEPs should be mindful of the fields used in the calculation of the PIs when returning HESA student data as errors could potentially lead to suppression of PIs in the published tables.
52. HESA are committed to publishing as much of the data they hold as possible by 2021. They have an [open data strategy](#) which sets out their plans. HEPs should therefore be mindful that any of their data that fits the criteria of open data could be published.
53. HESA operate a [fixed database facility](#) which provides HEPs with the opportunity to make post-collection amendments to a dataset following closure of the live data collection. This facility is separate to the main data collection process, is subject to a charge and is only available at the express authorisation of HEFCW to a HEP. The fixed database is open for some time after the corresponding live data collection has closed, therefore providers should be aware that data they submit to the fixed database may not be used immediately and may only appear in future analysis of time series.

54. The data described are also used by WG in their analysis of the higher education sector, including analysis published in their statistical bulletins and data presented on the [StatsWales](#) website.
55. Data relating to forecast student numbers are collected through the forecasts requests circular. These data are used for HEFCW's internal monitoring and planning processes and are not published at provider level.
56. It should be noted that although this circular details HESA fields used by HEFCW, any of the fields that HEPs return on the HESA records may be used in future for funding, for monitoring purposes, to inform policy or for publication, and are also used by other organisations. Therefore, it is important that all HESA fields are completed fully and accurately to show a fair picture of the provision and activity at the HEP.

Audit

57. All data used for funding and monitoring are potentially subject to audit. Details of the audit process for higher education data can be found in circular [W18/33HE: Audit of Higher Education Data 2018/19 to 2021/22](#).

Use of HESA derived fields

58. Where HESA derived fields have been used they are shown in the coding details in each relevant section of the Annexes that follow. All HESA derived fields are capitalised and begin with the letter X. HESA derived fields specifications for the 2019/20 [student record](#) and [staff record](#) are published on the HESA website. Where a derived field has been used, the algorithm used to derive the field from the original HESA record fields is also displayed.

Contents

59. The contents of the annexes are as follows:

Annex A:	Data used in teaching funding allocations
Annex B:	Data used in research funding allocations
Annex C:	Data used in the PGR training funding allocation
Annex D:	Data used for monitoring the targets in HEFCW's previous Corporate Strategy
Annex E:	Data provided to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
Annex F:	Data used for publication and monitoring
Annex G:	Data provided to higher education providers in the HESA student record data quality analysis
Annex H:	Data used for monitoring the part-time undergraduate fee waiver scheme
Annex I:	Data used in income analysis
Annex J:	Data used for monitoring national measures

Annex K:	Data used for monitoring and adjustment of degree apprenticeship funding
Annex L:	Data used for monitoring PGT Master's incentivisation bursary schemes
Annex M:	Data used for monitoring the PGT Master's bursary scheme for students aged 60 or over
Annex N:	Data used in the TRAC(T) FTE calculation
Annex O:	Data used in the calculation of Research Wales Innovation Fund

Further information

60. Any significant updates to the information contained in this circular prior to next year's publication of this circular, will be communicated to data contacts at HEPs. Any queries regarding this circular should be directed to Liz Heal (email hestats@hefcw.ac.uk, telephone 029 2085 9722).