Appendix 9
Problems of fit with the RAS03 re-creation algorithms

Purpose

1. This appendix describes known problems of fit with the re-creation of forms R1a, R1b, R2a and R2b of the RAS03 when using HESA 2003-04 student data.

2. This appendix is aimed at expert readers with an in-depth knowledge of the data. Readers are advised to have copies of the 2003-04 HESA individualised student record coding manual and 'Research Activity Survey 2003' (HEFCE 2003/49) to hand when using this appendix. This appendix should be read in conjunction with Annex D and Appendices 7 and 8.

3. Throughout this appendix, fields taken from the HESA 2003-04 student return or derived as part of the re-creation are shown in capitals using the names given in Tables 10 and 11 of Appendix 7.

4. Where a problem of fit occurs, an override file to rectify the problem of fit may be submitted. Details of the nature of the problem of fit and override file should be explained in the action plan. We will only apply overrides where we agree that they are appropriate. The override file should only contain changes to derived fields. Further details are provided under each of the following descriptions of problems of fit; Annex J contains details about the format of the override files.

Description of problems of fit in algorithms

Writing-up students

5. For students recorded as writing-up we have assumed that they became writing-up on the date obtained by adding their course length (see paragraph 37 of Appendix 7 for details on the algorithm used to derive ELAPSED) to their commencement date (COMDATE). Therefore when students have taken time out from the course or have been active for longer than anticipated, and this caused them to be active on 1 December 2003 but writing-up on 31 July 2004, they will be excluded from the re-creation.

6. Where students were writing-up on 31 July 2004 and we have assumed they were active on 1 December 2003 we have assigned them to a mode using the mode returned in the HESA 2002-03 student return. This assumption will mean more students will be included as active where students started writing-up between 1 August 2003 and December 2003.

7. For the purposes of the override file, the description should be 'Writing-up RAS students' and the field to be over-written is MODEYPS.

FTE of part-time postgraduate research students

8. Assumptions were made when assigning FTE for part-time students on non-standard academic years. The assumptions affect the following groups of part-time students:

a. Those starting their programme between 1 August 2003 and 1 December 2003 and whose FTE is reported to HESA using the 0:100 FTE method.

b. Students whose anniversary of commencement date is between 1 August 2003 and 1 December 2003 and whose FTE is reported to HESA using the 0:100 FTE method.

c. Those starting their programme between 1 August 2003 and 1 December 2003 whose FTE is reported to HESA using the split FTE method.

d. Those neither starting nor ending their programme between 1 August 2003 and 31 July 2004 whose FTE is reported to HESA using the split FTE method.

e. Those ending a programme which originally started between 2 December and 31 July whose FTE is reported to HESA using the split FTE method.

9. For students in case a, we assume that the FTE for the year is the same as the FTE in the final year for similar students. For students in case b we assume that the FTE for the year is the same as the FTE for the student's previous year of programme

of study. For students in case c the FTE on the HESA record only reflects activity for part of the year; in order to estimate the FTE for a full year we have added the FTE from the final year for similar students. For students in case d we have assumed that the FTE for the year counted is the same as the FTE for the academic year. In general this will be true except where the student changes intensity of study during the course. For students in case e the FTE on the HESA record only reflects activity for part of the year; in order to estimate the FTE for a full year we have added the FTE from the first year.

10. In addition to the specific assumptions above, the FTE for students reported to HESA using the split FTE method may be inflated in the final year, where a student generates load due to writing-up.

11. For the purposes of the override file, the description should be 'FTE of part-time postgraduate research students' and the field to be over-written is RASFTE.

Unit of Assessment

12. The mapping of subjects to Units of Assessment (UoAs) is based on the normal practice for the sector. However, institutions have a great deal of choice about how they allocate staff, and hence students, to UoAs. Therefore, we expect some institutions will need to define a bespoke mapping from subjects to UoAs in order to generate a reasonable re-creation. Furthermore, there are a number of joint academic coding system (JACS) codes that may map to two UoAs; in these cases we have made a data driven decision about the most likely UoAs which in some cases may not be appropriate.

13. We assume that major/minor subject activity is split 65/35, balanced subject activity is split 50/50 and triple activity is split into thirds.

14. We have used the subject proportion indicator (SBJBID) to apportion activity between UoAs. However, students who are supervised across more than one UoA may have been returned to RAS03 either according to an agreed division of

supervision, or in proportion to the number of supervisors.

15. For the purposes of the override file, the description should be 'UoA' and the fields that can be over-written are RASUOA1-3 and UOAP1-3.

Year of programme

16. The YEARSTU field is used to allocate students to years. Where a student has been dormant for part of a year, YEARSTU will not be incremented, therefore students who were active on the RAS census date but subsequently became dormant will be assigned a lower year of study in the re-creation.

17. It is not possible to accurately record students that temporarily leave their course before the census date and return before HESA data is submitted. This may lead to inflated numbers of students returned with RASYEAR = 4 for full-time and RASYEAR = 7+ for part-time. For the purposes of the override file, the description should be 'Interruption of study' and the field to be over-written is RASYEAR.

18. For the purposes of the override file, the description should be 'RAS year of programme' and the field to be over-written is RASYEAR.

Students that are also returned as staff

19. Students that are also staff and that generate one staff FTE are not identifiable from the HESA student record, and therefore are incorrectly included in the RAS03 re-creation. This may lead to inflated numbers of students in the RAS03 re-creation.

For the purposes of the override file, the description should be 'RAS staff' and the field to be over-written is RSTUEXCL=32.