

Office for  
Students



# Regulatory advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers

Guidance for providers about the application  
process

**Reference** OfS 2018.46

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**Publication date** 24 October 2018

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# Introduction

1. Students who successfully complete a higher education course usually receive a certificate, diploma, or degree. If they are awarded a degree, it can be a foundation degree, a bachelors' degree, a masters' degree, or a doctorate. To award these degrees, a higher education provider needs to have authorisation to use degree awarding powers (DAPs). The Office for Students (OfS) has the power to grant such authorisations.
2. A provider that is currently authorised for DAPs does not need to apply to the OfS to retain this authorisation. Such providers are, however, required to register with the OfS<sup>1</sup>.
3. This regulatory advice sets out guidance for existing and new providers of higher education in England that wish to apply to the OfS for authorisation for DAPs. It provides information to help a provider to understand:
  - a. Whether it is eligible to apply for DAPs.
  - b. What evidence it will need to submit in support of its application.
  - c. How its application will be assessed.
  - d. The role of the designated quality body in the assessment process. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the designated quality body<sup>2</sup>.
4. This regulatory advice should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
  - a. The OfS's regulatory framework (OfS 2018.01)<sup>3</sup> which sets out in full the approach the OfS will take to the registration and regulation of providers. If there are any inconsistencies between the regulatory framework and this document then the regulatory framework will prevail.
  - b. The QAA publication Degree awarding powers in England: Guidance for providers on assessment by QAA<sup>4</sup> which explains the QAA's role in providing advice to the OfS as part of the DAPs assessment process.

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the OfS registration process can be found at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/how-to-register/>

<sup>2</sup> More information about the designation of a quality body can be found at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/quality-and-standards/quality-assessment-and-monitoring/>

<sup>3</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/)

<sup>4</sup> This publication is available for download at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england)

## Section 1: Introduction to DAPs

5. The OfS may authorise a registered higher education provider to grant taught awards, or research awards, or both, under section 42 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA). Such an authorisation may allow a provider to grant:

- taught awards or research awards of any description
- specified taught awards or research awards (for example, BSc Maths)
- taught awards or research awards of a specified description (for example, only at bachelors' level, or only in specified subject areas)

6. The OfS may authorise providers to grant different types of degrees. Providers will be able to apply for authorisation to grant:

- foundation degrees only (Level 5 or the FHEQ)<sup>5</sup>
- awards up to, and including, bachelors' degrees (up to and including Level 6)
- all taught awards (up to and including Level 7)
- research awards (Level 8 and research masters' degrees at Level 7)

7. Providers may apply for these authorisations on a subject-specific basis, or covering all subjects. Providers authorised to grant taught awards of any description will be authorised to grant all taught awards that fall within the definition set out in section 42(3) of HERA.

8. The OfS may grant a New DAPs authorisation to a provider that has been delivering higher education for less than three years. It may grant a Full DAPs authorisation to a provider that has been delivering higher education for three or more years. In each case, the authorisation will be time-limited for three years. A provider that has held a Full DAPs authorisation for three years may seek an authorisation without a time limit – the OfS will separately publish its approach to such 'indefinite DAPs'.

### Criteria for authorisation for degree awarding powers

9. The criteria for authorisation for degree awarding powers are designed to ensure that a provider with DAPs has demonstrated a firm guardianship of academic standards, a firm and

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<sup>5</sup> Only a registered provider that is also an English further education corporation may obtain a foundation degree only authorisation. An English further education provider is: (a) is an institution incorporated under Section 15 or 16 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 or which has become a further education provider by virtue of section 33D or 47 of that Act; (b) has been designated under Section 28 of that Act; or (c) is a sixth form college conducted by a sixth form corporation (as defined in section 191(1) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992).

systematic approach to the assurance of the quality of the higher education that it provides, and the capacity to contribute to the continued good standing of English higher education.

10. The overarching criteria for the authorisation for DAPs are:

For New degree awarding powers (New DAPs)	An <b>emerging</b> self-critical, cohesive academic community with a <b>clear commitment</b> to the assurance of standards supported by effective <b>(in prospect)</b> quality systems.
For Full degree awarding powers (Full DAPs)	A self-critical, cohesive academic community with a <b>proven</b> commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems.

11. Guidance on the underpinning criteria for the authorisation for DAPs is set out in Annex C of the OfS's regulatory framework (OfS 2018.01).

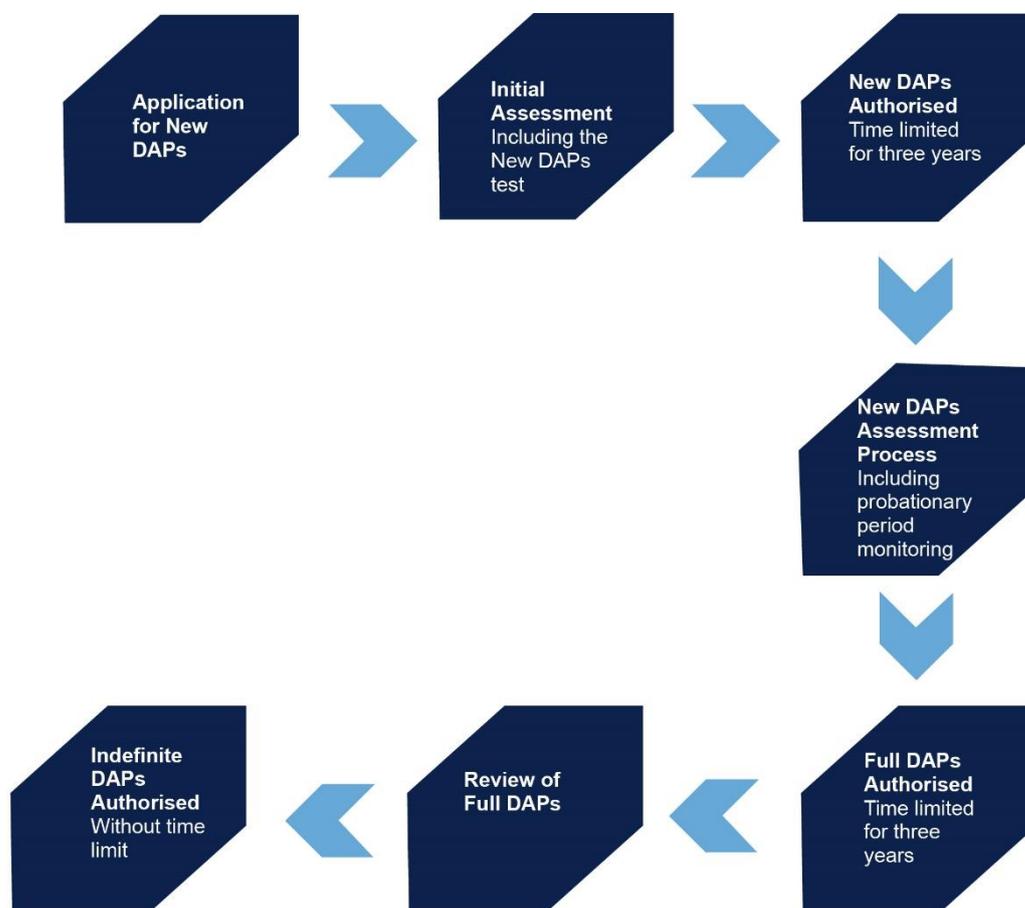
## **Fees for DAPs applications**

12. Providers registered with the OfS are required, as a condition of their registration, to pay an annual registration fee to the OfS from 1 August 2019. The OfS will make no additional charge for applications for authorisation for DAPs.

13. The OfS is required by HERA to request advice from the QAA (in its role as the designated quality body) before the OfS makes a decision about an authorisation for DAPs. This means that the QAA has an extensive role in the assessment process and is permitted by section 28 of HERA to charge fees to providers to cover the costs of its work in this area. The QAA will publish on its website information about the fees it intends to charge for the assessment of applications for DAPs.

## Section 2: New degree awarding powers (New DAPs)

Figure 1: Overview of the New DAPs process



### Eligibility requirements

14. A provider that has been delivering higher education for less than three years does not have a sufficient track record to apply for a Full DAPs authorisation. It may instead apply for an authorisation on a probationary basis. This type of authorisation is referred to as New DAPs.
15. A provider that does have a sufficient track record to apply for a Full DAPs authorisation may nevertheless apply for New DAPs if it prefers to do so.
16. A provider may seek authorisation for New DAPs for the following taught awards only:
  - a. Foundation degrees<sup>6</sup>.
  - b. Awards up to, and including, bachelors' degrees.
  - c. All taught awards.

<sup>6</sup> Applications for New FDAPs are expected to be rare given that most providers in the further education sector will already have a track record of delivering level 5 qualifications.

17. Providers may apply for these authorisations on a subject-specific basis, or covering all subjects.

18. To apply for a New DAPs authorisation, a provider must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- be or become registered with the OfS
- satisfy all of its ongoing conditions of registration
- normally have registered or intend to register more than 50 per cent of its higher education students on courses at Level 6 of the FHEQ or above, or at Level 5 or above for foundation degree only authorisation<sup>7</sup>.

19. All providers are encouraged to discuss the application process for degree awarding powers – whether for New DAPs or Full DAPs – with the OfS at an early stage, to ensure that the organisation is eligible to apply and has a clear understanding of the criteria, documentation requirements and assessment processes. The OfS can provide factual information and clarify requirements and the process but cannot provide advice about the content of an individual application and its likely success.

### **Making an application**

20. A provider must make a correct application to the OfS that contains all of the evidence set out in Table 1.

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<sup>7</sup> The method that the OfS will use to calculate student numbers for these purposes will be published in November 2018.

**Table 1: What do I need to send to make a correct application for New DAPs?**

Evidence requirements for authorisation for New degree awarding powers		Type of degree awarding powers sought			
What you need to submit	Why we need it	Foundation	Bachelors'	All taught	More information is available from
<b>Application form</b>	To tell us which type of DAPs you are applying for	Yes	Yes	Yes	Annex A sets out the information required for the application form and tells you how to download the form
<b>Progression statement</b>	To provide evidence that you are promoting clear progression routes for learners wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree	Yes			Template available at Annex B
<b>Updated student protection plan</b>	To ensure that your student protection plan sets out measures to preserve the continuation of study for your students if DAPs are revoked or not authorised beyond the end of the probationary period	Yes	Yes	Yes	Update the student protection plan that was agreed as part of your registration with the OfS and re-submit it
<b>Data on student numbers</b>	To provide evidence that you meet the eligibility requirement for student numbers	For existing providers we will use data that has already been collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For new providers, we will need you to provide additional student number Information by level of study, because this will not have been provided as part of the information for registration or be held by HESA or the ESFA.			Template available at Annex C

21. Annex A provides instructions about how to submit an application for DAPs to the OfS.

## Initial assessment of an application

22. The OfS will consider its existing risk assessment for the provider to determine the provider's suitability for DAPs. In particular, the OfS will consider its assessment of the provider's financial viability and sustainability, and its management and governance arrangements to ensure that the provider has understood and planned for the resources and governance necessary to set and maintain academic standards securely. A provider is not required to submit any additional information in these areas with its DAPs application. The OfS may, however, request further information should it deem this necessary.
23. Where a provider is subject to enhanced monitoring, or has one or more specific ongoing conditions of registration, and the OfS considers these to be relevant, for example because they have been imposed to mitigate increased risk of a breach of an ongoing condition relating to quality, standards, financial viability and sustainability, and management or governance, an application for New DAPs may be less likely to succeed.

## Updated student protection plan

24. A registered provider must have in place a student protection plan that has been agreed with the OfS. As part of its application for New DAPs, a provider must update and resubmit its student protection plan. This is to mitigate the risk to students that the provider's New DAPs authorisation may be revoked or not extended beyond the initial three-year authorisation.
25. As part of its application for New DAPs, a provider must submit the student protection plan approved by the OfS, updated to specifically address the risk of the provider failing to achieve, or maintain, authorisation for DAPs. A revised student protection plan is more likely to be approved if:
  - a. It provides a credible and evidence-based assessment of the risks to the continuation of study for the provider's students if authorisation to award degrees is not retained through and beyond the probationary period.
  - b. It provides a credible set of mitigations for the risks identified and, where these mitigations are not currently in place, the provider has a credible plan to ensure that they are put in place before the New DAPs authorisation is made. In most cases this will require a provider to demonstrate that it has sufficient funds to pay for the refund of tuition fees and transfer for students. It might also include the identification of other providers which students could transfer to if a New DAPs authorisation was revoked.
26. The revised student protection plan must be approved by the OfS before a provider's application for DAPs can proceed.

## Progression statement

27. A provider seeking an authorisation to award foundation degrees only must also include in its application a progression statement. This statement should demonstrate that it is promoting clear progression routes for learners wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree. A progression statement is more likely to be approved if:
  - a. It sets out the progression arrangements that are in place for each foundation degree course offered at the time of application.

- b. It provides credible and evidence-based proposals for how it intends to secure access to opportunities for more advanced study for any student awarded a foundation degree.
  - c. It identifies clearly how the provider is promoting progression routes for students wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree.
28. The progression statement must be approved by the OfS before a provider's application for DAPs can proceed.

## **The New DAPs test**

29. The OfS will ask the QAA to undertake an initial assessment (the 'New DAPs test') when the OfS is satisfied that the provider:
- a. Has submitted a correct application.
  - b. Meets the eligibility requirements set out in paragraph 18.
  - c. Appears to the OfS to be suitable for DAPs as set out in paragraphs 22 and 23 above.
  - d. Has in place a suitable student protection plan, agreed by the OfS.
  - e. Has provided a satisfactory progression statement as part of an application for a foundation degree only authorisation.
30. The QAA has published guidance about the New DAPs test in Degree awarding powers in England: Guidance for providers on assessment by QAA<sup>8</sup>.
31. The outcome of the New DAPs test will be advice provided by the QAA to the OfS and will be one of the following:
- Ready now
  - Not ready now
32. The OfS will have regard to the advice and the supporting reasons and evidence provided by the QAA. Where the OfS accepts the advice that a provider is 'ready now', it will make an order granting authorisation on a probationary basis for a three-year period.
33. Where the OfS accepts advice that a provider is 'not ready now', it will not make an order under section 42 of HERA and will provide the reasons for this decision. A provider may reapply for New DAPs and must set out in its new application the changes that it has made to address the reasons for its previous unsuccessful application. The OfS will determine whether or not it will accept an application in these circumstances.

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<sup>8</sup> This publication is available for download at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england)

## Monitoring and assessment during the probationary period

34. A provider that has been granted a New DAPs authorisation will be required to implement its agreed probationary plan and to engage in monitoring and scrutiny activities during the probationary period. The QAA has published guidance about the monitoring and scrutiny arrangements for New DAPs in Degree awarding powers in England: Guidance for providers on assessment by QAA<sup>9</sup>.
35. QAA will provide a quarterly update to the OfS about the provider's progress during its probationary period. The QAA will also notify the OfS of any issues that may arise during the probationary period that may affect the OfS's assessment of the risk of a breach of one or more of the provider's ongoing conditions of registration. The OfS will take this information into account as it undertakes its routine monitoring activities for the provider. It will consider the use of its intervention powers, including the variation and revocation of the New DAPs authorisation, if it considers that this is desirable in light of any of its primary regulatory objectives.
36. Before the end of the probationary period, the QAA will undertake an assessment of the provider's arrangements against the Full DAPs criteria. The assessment will be designed to provide the same degree of confidence as the assessment of a provider seeking Full DAPs. The QAA will provide this assessment in its advice to the OfS together with its view about whether the provider has the ability:

- to provide, and maintain the provision of, higher education of an appropriate quality
- to apply, and maintain the application of, appropriate standards to that higher education

37. The OfS will have regard to the advice provided by the QAA. It may also seek, and have regard to, advice from others in relation to quality or standards. It will also consider its own risk assessment for the provider and will decide whether or not the provider meets the criteria for Full DAPs. The OfS may decide:
- a. That the provider meets the Full DAPs criteria. In such cases, the OfS will vary the provider's DAPs authorisation to lift the probationary restrictions and to put in place a new time-limited order for Full DAPs authorisation which may also include restrictions.
  - b. That the provider does not fully meet the DAPs criteria, but that it is likely to do so within the next 12 months. In such cases, the OfS will extend the New DAPs authorisation for a period of not more than 12 months, at the end of which there will be a further assessment and decision about whether the provider does or does not meet the Full DAPs criteria. A New DAPs authorisation may only be extended in this way once.

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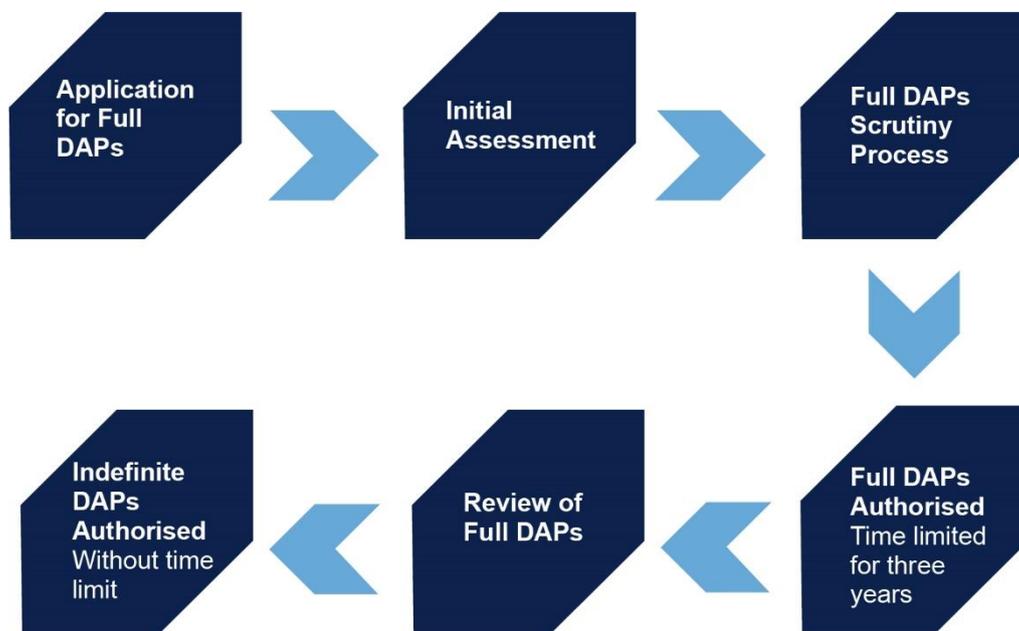
<sup>9</sup> This publication is available for download at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england)

c. That the provider does not meet the DAPs criteria, and is unlikely to do so within the next 12 months. In such cases the OfS will either revoke the New DAPs order, or allow the order to expire, and require the provider to implement the provisions of its student protection plan.

38. Where the OfS decides that the provider does not meet the DAPs criteria, it will provide the reasons for this decision. The OfS would, on request, review that it had followed its procedures correctly. A provider may reapply for New DAPs but it must set out, in its new application, the changes that it has made to address the reasons for its previous unsuccessful application. The OfS will determine whether or not it will accept an application in these circumstances.

## Section 3: Full degree awarding powers (Full DAPs)

Figure 2: Overview of the Full DAPs process



### Eligibility requirements

39. A provider that has been delivering higher education for three or more years may apply for a full authorisation to award DAPs, with a time limit of three years. This type of authorisation is referred to as Full DAPs. At the end of the three-year period, the provider will be able to apply for an authorisation to grant awards without a time limit; this is referred to as Indefinite DAPs. The OfS will separately publish its approach to such 'indefinite DAPs'.
40. A provider may seek authorisation for Full DAPs for the following awards:
- Foundation degrees only.
  - Awards up to, and including, bachelors' degrees.
  - All taught awards.
  - Research awards (if Full DAPs for taught awards are already held or are applied for at the same time).
41. Providers may apply for these authorisations on a subject-specific basis, or covering all subjects.
42. To apply for a Full DAPs authorisation, a provider must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- be registered with the OfS.
- satisfy all of its ongoing conditions of registration.
- have had no fewer than three consecutive years' experience, immediately preceding the year of application, of delivering higher education courses in England at a level at least equivalent to the level of the DAPs authorisation for which the provider is applying.
- normally have registered more than 50 per cent of its higher education students on courses at Level 6 of the FHEQ or above, or at Level 5 or above for foundation degree only authorisation.

43. All providers are encouraged to discuss the application process for degree awarding powers - whether for New DAPs or Full DAPs - with the OfS at an early stage, to ensure that the organisation is eligible to apply and has a clear understanding of the criteria, documentation requirements and assessment processes. The OfS can provide factual information and clarify requirements and the process but cannot provide advice about the content of an individual application and its likely success.

### **Making an application**

44. A provider must make a correct application to the OfS that contains all of the evidence set out in Table 2.

**Table 2: What do I need to send to make a correct application for Full DAPs?**

Evidence requirements for authorisation for Full degree awarding powers		Type of degree awarding powers sought				
What you need to submit	Why we need it	Foundation	Bachelors'	All taught	Research	More information is available from
<b>Application form</b>	To tell us which type of DAPs you are applying for	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Annex A sets out the information required for the application form and tells you how to download the form
<b>Progression statement</b>	To provide evidence that you are promoting clear progression routes for learners wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree	Yes				Template available at Annex B
<b>Evidence of three year track record</b>	To provide evidence that you meet the eligibility criteria for track record	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Submit as part of supporting evidence
<b>Data on student numbers</b>	To provide evidence that you meet the eligibility requirement for student numbers	For existing providers we will use data that has already been collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For new providers, we will need you to provide additional student number Information by level of study, because this will not have been provided as part of the information for registration or be held by HESA or the ESFA.				Template available at Annex C

45. Annex A provides instructions on how to submit an application to the OfS.

## **OfS Initial assessment of an application**

46. The OfS will consider its existing risk assessment for the provider to determine the provider's suitability for DAPs. In particular, the OfS will consider its assessment of the provider's financial viability and sustainability, and its management and governance arrangements to ensure that the provider has understood and planned for the resources and governance necessary to set

and maintain academic standards securely. A provider is not required to submit any additional information in these areas with its DAPs application. The OfS may, however, request further information should it deem this necessary.

47. Where a provider is subject to enhanced monitoring, or has one or more specific ongoing condition of registration, and the OfS considers these to be relevant, for example because they have been imposed to mitigate increased risk of a breach of an ongoing condition relating to quality, standards, financial viability and sustainability, and management or governance, an application for Full DAPs may be less likely to succeed.

### **Progression statement**

48. A provider seeking an authorisation to award foundation degrees only must also include in its application a progression statement. This statement should demonstrate that the provider is promoting clear progression routes for learners wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree. A progression statement is more likely to be approved if:

- a. It sets out the progression arrangements that are in place for each foundation degree course offered at the time of application.
- b. It provides credible and evidence-based proposals for how it intends to secure access to opportunities for more advanced study for any student awarded a foundation degree.
- c. It identifies clearly how the provider is promoting progression routes for students wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree.

49. The progression statement must be approved by the OfS before a provider's application for DAPs can proceed.

### **Evidence of three year track record**

50. A provider seeking Full DAPs must demonstrate that it has had no fewer than three consecutive years' experience, immediately preceding the year of application, of delivering higher education courses in England at a level at least equivalent to the level of the DAPs authorisation for which the provider is applying.

51. This evidence of delivery of higher education courses will typically be demonstrated via a validation or subcontractual arrangement with a degree awarding body for the delivery of a full degree programme. Where a provider's evidence of a track record does not take the form of a typical validation or subcontractual arrangement for full degree provision, this should be discussed with the OfS before an application is submitted.

### **QAA Initial assessment of an application**

52. The OfS will ask the QAA to undertake an initial assessment when the OfS is satisfied that the provider:
- a. Has submitted a correct application.
  - b. Meets the eligibility requirements set out in paragraph 42.

- c. Appears to the OfS to be suitable for DAPs as set out in paragraphs 46 and 47 above.
  - d. Has provided a satisfactory progression statement as part of an application for a foundation degree only authorisation.
53. The QAA has published guidance about their initial assessment in Degree awarding powers in England: Guidance for providers on assessment by QAA<sup>10</sup>.
54. Where the QAA determines that the provider's self-assessment is suitable, it will notify the OfS that it intends to begin the scrutiny process.
55. Where the QAA determines that the provider's self-assessment is not suitable, it will provide such advice to the OfS and provide the reasons for this. The OfS will have regard to the advice from the QAA and, if it agrees with the advice, will inform the provider that its application for Full DAPs has been unsuccessful. A provider may reapply for Full DAPs. If it does so within one year of the OfS's decision that an application was unsuccessful, it must set out in its new application the changes that it has made to address the reasons for its previous unsuccessful application. The OfS will determine whether or not it will accept an application in these circumstances.

## Monitoring and scrutiny process

56. The QAA will conduct a scrutiny process to assess the extent to which the provider's arrangements meet the DAPs criteria. The scrutiny process will extend over a number of months and will include visits to the provider and meetings with its governors and senior managers and with staff and students. The QAA has published guidance about its scrutiny in Degree awarding powers in England: Guidance for providers on assessment by QAA<sup>11</sup>.
57. A provider that is already authorised to grant taught awards (including where such authorisation was not granted under section 42 of HERA), and that applies for Research DAPs, is required to provide evidence through the scrutiny process that it satisfies all the criteria for authorisation to grant taught awards and that it continues to meet these criteria. In the event, for example, that a provider that was authorised to make taught awards in specific subjects applied for authorisation to grant unrestricted research awards, the OfS would need to be satisfied that the applicant could satisfy the DAPs criteria for unrestricted taught awards as part of its consideration of an application for authorisation to grant unrestricted research awards.
58. The OfS will continue to undertake its routine monitoring activities in relation to the provider during the scrutiny process, to ensure that the provider's ongoing conditions of registration and any specific conditions of registration imposed by the OfS are satisfied. The QAA will notify the OfS of any issues that may arise during the scrutiny process that may affect the OfS's assessment of the risk of a breach of one or more of the provider's ongoing conditions of registration.

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<sup>10</sup> This publication is available for download at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-england)

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## Outcome of the scrutiny process

59. At the end of the scrutiny process, the QAA will undertake an assessment of the provider's arrangements against the Full DAPs criteria. If the application is for an authorisation to award research degrees, its assessment will be informed by the views of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

60. It will provide this assessment in its advice to the OfS together with its view about whether the provider has the ability:

- to provide, and maintain the provision of, higher education of an appropriate quality
- to apply, and maintain the application of, appropriate standards to that higher education

61. The OfS will have regard to the advice provided by the QAA. It may also seek, and have regard to, advice from others in relation to quality or standards. It will also consider its own risk assessment for the provider, and will decide whether or not the provider meets the criteria for DAPs. The OfS may decide:

- a. That the provider meets the relevant Full DAPs criteria. In such cases, the OfS will make a time-limited DAPs order under section 42 of HERA and will decide whether any additional restrictions are necessary to the order.
- b. That the provider does not meet the relevant Full DAPs criteria. In such cases, the OfS will not make an order under section 42 of HERA and will provide the reasons for this decision. The OfS would, on request, review that it had followed its procedures correctly.

62. Where the OfS makes a decision that a provider does not meet the relevant Full DAPs criteria, the provider may re-apply for Full DAPs, but it must set out in its new application the changes that it has made to address the reasons for its previous unsuccessful application. The OfS will determine whether or not it will accept an application in these circumstances.

## Section 4: Annexes

### Annex A: How to submit an application for degree awarding powers to the Office for Students

This annex provides step-by-step guidance on how to submit your application for degree awarding powers.

<b>Part 1</b>	<b>How do I access the OfS online application portal?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to log in to the OfS portal</li><li>• How to create an account</li><li>• What to do if you do not have access to the degree awarding powers section of the OfS Portal or have lost your access key</li></ul>
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>How do I download the application form and templates?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to download the application form</li><li>• How to download the progression plan and student numbers templates</li></ul>
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>How do I complete the application form?</b>
<b>Part 4</b>	<b>How do I upload the application form and supporting evidence?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to upload your application form</li><li>• How to upload your supporting evidence</li><li>• What to do if you need to change the supporting evidence you have uploaded</li><li>• What to do if you need help uploading</li></ul>
<b>Part 5</b>	<b>How do I confirm my application for degree awarding powers is complete and submit it to the OfS?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS</li><li>• How will you know that the OfS has received your application</li><li>• What do you do if you want to submit further evidence</li><li>• What happens next</li></ul>

## Part 1: How do I access the OfS online application portal?

1. All applications for degree awarding powers must be submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) via the online application portal. The login page for the portal can be accessed at <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data>. This is same portal that you will have used when you applied to register with the OfS.
2. To access the portal you will require an access key. This is the same access key that you were given when you applied to register with the OfS. If you require assistance accessing the portal please contact [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk).
3. To access the OfS portal, you also require an account. If you have used the OfS portal (for example, to apply to register with the OfS) or were previously a user of the HEFCE extranet you will already have an account and can use your existing login details as described in paragraph 5. If you need to create an account please follow the instructions in paragraph 9.
4. We suggest that your nominated contact for degree awarding powers should collate and submit the full application at one time.

### How to log in to the OfS portal

5. To log in to the portal go to <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data> and enter your email address and password.
6. If you have forgotten your password, click the '[Forgotten password?](#)' link and enter your email address. You will then be emailed a link to a page where you can reset your password.
7. Once you have logged in click on '[Degree awarding powers](#)'.
8. This will take you in to the degree awarding powers section of the portal (shown below). From here you can download the application form and templates, upload the application form and supporting evidence, and submit your application to the OfS.

# Degree awarding powers

Welcome to the Office for Students degree awarding power application portal.

The portal allows you to:

- Download the application form and the student protection plan template
- Submit your application for degree awarding powers.

Full guidance on how to use the portal can be found in Annex A of [Regulatory Advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers](#).

If you need assistance completing your application for degree awarding powers please contact [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk)

Please complete the following sections:

- [Application form](#)
- [Supporting evidence](#)
- Confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS

The OfS will not begin to assess your application until you have checked the yellow box below and clicked 'Submit'.

## Confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS

Once you have uploaded your completed application form and supporting evidence you need to confirm that the application is complete and ready to be assessed by the OfS. You do this by checking the box below and then by clicking on the 'Submit' button.

Once submitted, you will be unable to submit further information unless you contact us to ask to do so. Confirmation of receipt of your application will be provided to you by email – this email is not automatically generated and so there may be a delay between your upload and receiving the email confirmation.

By checking this box and clicking 'Submit', you are confirming that the application for degree awarding powers for your provider is complete and that the OfS can begin its assessment.

**Submit**

## How to create an account

9. If you have **not** previously used the OfS portal or were **not** previously a user of the HEFCE extranet, please follow these steps to create an account:
  - a. Click on the '[Create account](#)' button on the login page (accessed from <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data>)
  - b. Enter your name and email address and choose a password. Your password must be at least six characters, containing at least one upper case letter, one lower case letter and one number.
  - c. Enter the access key in the email sent to you by the OfS degree awarding powers team.
  - d. Click the '[Create account](#)' button.
  - e. You will be told whether registration was successful. If you have successfully registered click '[Continue](#)' to navigate back to the login page.

- f. Log in using your registered email address and password.

### **What to do if you do not have access to the degree awarding powers section of the OfS Portal or have lost your access key**

10. If you do not access to the degree awarding powers section of the OfS portal or have lost your access key, please contact [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk) and we will email you the key.
11. Once you have the key log in to the portal. Click on 'My account' and then 'Activate an access key'. Enter the key and click 'Activate'. You will be told that you have successfully joined the section of the OfS portal.

## Activate key

To access an area of the portal, enter your access key exactly as provided in your letter or email.

**Access key**

-  -  -

Having problems? Contact [portal@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:portal@officeforstudents.org.uk) providing details.

## **Part 2: How do I download the application form and templates?**

### **How to download the application form**

12. To download your provider's application form:
  - a. Log in to the OfS portal and click on 'Degree awarding powers' this will take you to the degree awarding powers section of the portal.
  - b. Click on 'Application Form'.
  - c. Then click on the 'Download' button at the bottom of the page, selecting 'Save' if prompted.
  - d. Save the zip file (compressed folder) onto your system.

# Degree awarding powers: Application form

Full guidance on how to use the portal can be found in Annex A of [Regulatory Advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers](#).

If you need assistance completing your application for degree awarding powers please contact [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk)

## Download the application form

By clicking on the 'Download' button below you can download the application form. When you are presented with a choice to save or open the file, choose **save**.

## Upload your completed application form

Once you have completed your application form please upload this by pressing the 'Upload' button below and browsing for the location of your file and then choosing upload. Your file will be processed automatically. Processing the file may take up to a few minutes, depending on how busy the server is.

A 'Success' message will appear on this page below and in the 'History of submissions' section when the document has uploaded successfully.

When the submission process has completed successfully you can save a copy of the application form that has been uploaded. To do this click the 'Result' button and save the file onto your own network.

**The OfS will not begin to assess your application until you have confirmed that the application is complete.**

<a href="#">Download</a>	Download the files required for Degree awarding powers: Application form
<a href="#">Upload</a>	Upload the files for Degree awarding powers: Application form

13. The zip file contains the following file:

Name of file	Type of file
DAPsApplicationForm_XXXXXXXX (where the suffix is your provider's 8-digit UKPRN).	Excel file

14. To complete the application form you will need to unzip the package. Windows 7, 8 and 10, Vista, XP and Windows ME can perform this task without a third party tool. Other operating systems will need an additional program.

15. Guidance on how to complete the application form can be found in part 3 of this annex. Guidance on how to upload your application form can be found in part 4 of this annex.

## How to download the progression plan and student numbers templates

16. To download the templates:

- Log in to the OfS portal and click on '[Degree awarding powers](#)' this will take you to the degree awarding powers section of the portal.
- Click on '[Supporting evidence](#)'.
- Then click on the '[Download](#)' button, selecting '[Save](#)' when prompted.
- Save the zip file (compressed folder) onto your system.

# Degree awarding powers: Supporting evidence

The evidence that you are required to submit will depend on the type of authorisation and level of degree awarding powers for which you are applying, and the evidence that we already hold for you. Please see [Regulatory Advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers](#) for guidance on the evidence requirements.

Full guidance on how to use the portal can be found in Annex A of [Regulatory Advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers](#).

If you need assistance completing your application for degree awarding powers please contact [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk)

## Download the template

By clicking on the 'Download' button below you can download the student protection plan template. When you are presented with a choice to save or open the file, choose **save**.

## Upload your supporting evidence

Once you have compiled your supporting evidence please upload each file by pressing the 'Upload' button below and browsing for the location of your file and then choosing upload. Your file will be processed automatically. Processing the file may take up to a few minutes, depending on how busy the server is.

A 'Success' message will appear on this page below and in the 'History of submissions' section when the document has uploaded successfully.

Repeat the process to upload further files. There is no limit to the number of files that can be uploaded.

This page can be printed as a record of files submitted; the 'History' section below includes the file names, the date and time they were submitted, and whether they were successfully uploaded.

**The OfS will not begin to assess your application until you have confirmed that the application is complete.**

<a href="#">Download</a>	Download the files required for Degree awarding powers: Supporting evidence
<a href="#">Upload</a>	Upload the files for Degree awarding powers: Supporting evidence

17. The zip file contains the following files:

Name of file	Type of file
OfSProgressionPlanTemplate.docx.	Word file
OfSStudentNumbersTemplate.xlsx	Excel file

18. To access the templates you will need to unzip the package. Windows 7, 8 and 10, Vista, XP and Windows ME can perform this task without a third party tool. Other operating systems will need an additional program.

19. The evidence that you are required to submit will depend on the type of authorisation and level of degree awarding powers for which you are applying, and the evidence that we already hold for you. As a result you may not need to complete these templates. Please see Tables 1 and 2 within the main document for guidance on the evidence requirements.

20. Guidance on how to upload your supporting evidence can be found in part 4 of this annex.

### Part 3: How do I complete the application form?

21. The application form is an Excel document. Detailed guidance and an explanation of why we are requesting this information is set out in the table below.

22. Some of the application form will be pre-populated with information that we already hold about your provider.

Application form field	Notes/guidance
UKPRN	These cells are pre-populated and you will not be able to amend the information. If the information is incorrect email <a href="mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk">DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk</a> .
Legal name	
Trading names	
Contact details for your application for degree awarding powers	<p>The contact for your application for degree awarding powers should be someone with whom we can discuss your application, and who is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• receive and act on detailed guidance about the application process</li> <li>• attend briefing events</li> <li>• coordinate the production of the supporting evidence that we require</li> <li>• respond to queries that we may have during the assessment of your application.</li> </ul> <p>The contact can be the same individual as your OfS registration contact and we have pre-populated this in the application form. If your contact for your application for degree awarding powers is different to your registration contact please provide their details.</p>
Type of degree awarding powers for which you are applying	<p>Using the drop-down menu please select the type of degree awarding powers you wish to apply for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation degrees only (up to and including Level 5)</li> <li>• Awards up to, and including, bachelors' degrees (up to and including Level 6)</li> <li>• All taught awards (up to and including Level 7)</li> <li>• Research awards (Level 8 and research masters' degrees at Level 7)</li> </ul>
Type of authorisation for which you are applying	<p>Using the drop-down menu please select the type of authorisation you wish to apply for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New DAPs</li> <li>• Full DAPs</li> </ul>
Are you applying for subject-specific degree awarding powers?	Using the drop-down menu please select Yes/No
If you are applying for subject-specific degree awarding powers, identify the subject area(s) in which you wish to be able to award degrees	<p>Using the drop-down menus please identify the subject areas in which you wish to be able to award degrees. The drop-down list uses Level 2 of HESA's Common Aggregation Hierarchy to identify subject area(s). This can be found on the HESA website <a href="http://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos">www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos</a>.</p>

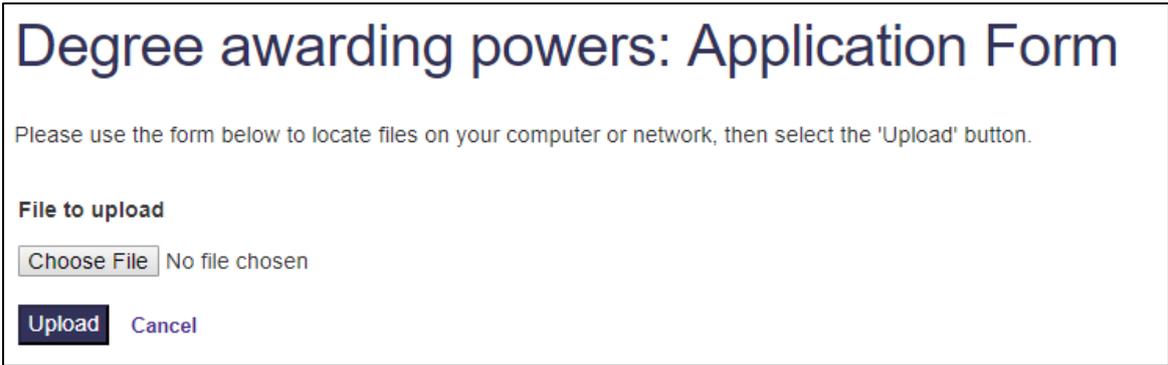
## Part 4: How do I upload the application form and supporting evidence?

Note that the OfS will not begin to assess your application for degree awarding powers until you have confirmed that the application is complete – details of how to do this can be found in part 5 of this annex.

### How to upload your application form

23. When you have completed your application form and are ready to submit it:

- a. Log in to the OfS portal and click on '[Degree awarding powers](#)' this will take you to the degree awarding powers section of the portal.
- b. Click on '[Application form](#)'.
- c. Then click the '[Upload](#)' button.
- d. Use the '[Choose file](#)' button to locate the application form file on your computer or network. If you have selected the wrong file there is an option to cancel the submitted file.
- e. Click on '[Upload](#)'.



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Degree awarding powers: Application Form". Below the title, there is a instruction: "Please use the form below to locate files on your computer or network, then select the 'Upload' button." Underneath, there is a section labeled "File to upload" which contains a "Choose File" button (with "No file chosen" text next to it) and two buttons: "Upload" and "Cancel".

24. A 'Success' message will appear on the page when the document has uploaded successfully.

25. When the submission process has completed successfully you can save a copy of the uploaded application form. To do this click the '[Result](#)' button and save the file onto your own network.

### How to upload your supporting evidence

26. The evidence that you are required to submit will depend on the type of authorisation and level of degree awarding powers for which you are applying, and the evidence that we already hold for you. Please see Tables 1 and 2 within the main document for guidance on the evidence requirements.

27. When you have compiled all your supporting evidence and are ready to submit it:

- a. Log in to the OfS portal and click on '[Degree awarding powers](#)' this will take you to the degree awarding powers section of the portal.
- b. Click on '[Supporting evidence](#)'.

- c. Then click the 'Upload' button.
  - d. Use the 'Choose file' button to locate the application form file on your computer or network. If you have selected the wrong file there is an option to cancel the submitted file.
  - e. Click on 'Upload'.
28. Repeat the process to upload further files. There is no limit to the number of files that you can upload.

## Degree awarding powers: Supporting evidence

Please use the form below to locate files on your computer or network, then select the 'Upload' button.

**File to upload**

No file chosen

29. A 'Success' message will appear on the page when each document has uploaded successfully. This page can be printed as a record of files submitted; the 'History' section below includes the file names, the date and time they were submitted, and whether they were successfully uploaded.

### **What to do if you need to change the supporting evidence you have uploaded**

30. If you have not yet completed part 5 (Confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS), please re-upload the file (with the same file name) to the portal and we will assess your application based on the most recent version of the file submitted.
31. If you wish to delete a file that has been uploaded (and not replace it with a newer version) or if you have already completed part 5 (Confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS) email [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk).

### **What to do if you need help uploading**

32. If you have any difficulty with uploading the documents, email [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk).

## **Part 5: How do I confirm my application for degree awarding powers is complete and submit it to the OfS?**

### **How to confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS**

33. Once you have uploaded your completed application form and all supporting evidence required to apply for degree awarding powers, you need to confirm that the application is complete and ready to be submitted to and assessed by the OfS. To do this:
- a. Log in to the degree awarding powers section of the OfS portal using your email address and password.
  - b. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and tick the box.

c. Then click on 'Confirm'.

34. This will notify the OfS degree awarding powers team that your submission has been completed. **Once you submit your application, you will be unable to submit further information unless you specifically request to do so.** For this reason, we suggest that your nominated degree awarding powers contact should collate and submit the full application at one time.

**Confirm your application is complete and submit it to the OfS**

Once you have uploaded your completed application form and supporting evidence you need to confirm that the application is complete and ready to be assessed by the OfS. You do this by checking the box below and then by clicking on the 'Submit' button.

Once submitted, you will be unable to submit further information unless you contact us to ask to do so. Confirmation of receipt of your application will be provided to you by email – this email is not automatically generated and so there may be a delay between your upload and receiving the email confirmation.

By checking this box and clicking 'Submit', you are confirming that the application for degree awarding powers for your provider is complete and that the OfS can begin its assessment.

**Submit**

### How will you know that the OfS has received your application

35. As soon as you submit your application, the degree awarding powers application portal will provide you with an onscreen confirmation that you have successfully submitted. We will also email you to confirm that we have received your documents; **this email is not generated automatically, so there will be a delay between your upload and receiving an email confirmation.**

### What do you do if you want to submit further evidence

36. Once you have submitted your application, the portal will be locked and you will be unable to make changes to the documents submitted. This is to ensure that we have an audit trail of documents submitted and that we are assessing the correct version of your evidence.
37. If you wish to change any of the submitted documents after you have finalised your submission, you should email [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk). We can reopen the degree awarding powers application portal to allow you to upload a new document.

### What happens next

38. Once your application is submitted, a member of the OfS degree awarding powers team will check that we have all the information we need to assess your application. We will contact you as soon as possible after your submission if we believe any information is missing from your application. If you have any queries about your application for degree awarding powers please contact us at [DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPs@officeforstudents.org.uk).

## Annex B: Template for producing a progression statement

A provider seeking foundation degree awarding powers (FDAPs) must include in its application a progression statement. Only a registered provider that is also an English further education corporation may obtain a foundation degree authorisation.

Provider's name:

Provider's UKPRN:

### **Your overall approach to ensuring access to opportunities to more advanced study for any student awarded a foundation degree**

Explain here your approach to ensuring progression routes for any student awarded a foundation degree who wishes to progress to an Honours degree course. Set out the specific progression routes, either within your provider or to courses offered by other providers, for each foundation degree course you offer at the time of your application for DAPs. Below are some examples of areas you might want to address, but this is not, and is not intended to be, exhaustive or prescriptive.

For example:

- any guaranteed progression route to an honours degree where the time required to complete the qualification is comparable to that for completion of a traditional bachelors' degree programme and any arrangements with partner organisations to deliver such a progression route.
- any mapping of your foundation degrees to final year honours degree provision.
- any arrangements to accommodate students accessing 'top up' programmes in related, but different, subject areas.
- any bridging arrangements to other qualifications you propose to put in place to ensure that students progressing onto the next programme of study are adequately prepared.
- any arrangements where students can gain additional professional qualifications or accreditation during their studies and the involvement of professional bodies in accrediting these.
- the outcome of your monitoring and review processes for these progression arrangements, including where changes have been implemented as a result of monitoring and review.

### **Your approach to providing information to applicants and students on progression routes**

Explain here how you will ensure that applicants and students are provided with accurate and clear information about progression routes for those wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree.

For example:

'We publish a prospectus containing information on x, y, z.'

'We also provide the following information...'

'We ensure this is accurate and clear by...'

'We know when information is not accurate or clear because... and we take these steps to improve it.'

In this section, evidence you might want to refer to includes:

- links to your website, student handbook or other prospectus course descriptions
- letters supporting offers to applicants
- policies relating to sources of information for staff and students on progression routes, with examples of how and when this information is provided
- details of reviews (planned or actual) into information management and provision.

There is no need to submit any of this evidence but we may ask to see it if we have concerns that you do not satisfy this requirement.

A version of this annex in Word format is available alongside this document on the OfS website at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-12-how-to-apply-for-degree-awarding-powers/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-12-how-to-apply-for-degree-awarding-powers/).

## **Annex C: Student numbers template for applications for degree awarding powers**

This template is available as an Excel file alongside this document on the OfS website at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-12-how-to-apply-for-degree-awarding-powers/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-12-how-to-apply-for-degree-awarding-powers/).

### **Please read the following notes before completing the template**

1. You should include all active higher education students registered at your provider in the relevant academic year(s) who follow courses that lead to the award of a qualification or credit. You should not include:
  - students studying wholly overseas
  - incoming exchange students
2. You should not include students that you teach as part of a subcontractual arrangement as these students will be registered with another provider. You should not include students who are not actively studying, for example because they are taking a break from study.
3. Higher education includes all courses or credit at level 4 or above of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) or courses or credit of an equivalent level. The FHEQ can be found at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>.
4. For these purposes, academic years run from 1 August to 31 July.
5. You should record both the total headcount and total FTE, where FTE is your best academic judgement of the full-time equivalent of the student during the academic year. For example, a part-time student who is studying at half the intensity of a full-time student should be returned as 0.5 FTE.
6. If you are a new provider, with no track record of providing higher education prior to this academic year, you should provide student number data for the first three years in which you will be delivering higher education. Do this by completing the worksheet 'Template - New provider'. If we require any additional information we will contact you.
7. If you are an existing provider of higher education, and have not previously provided data returns to HESA or the ESFA, you should provide student number data for the academic year which has most recently ended. Do this by completing the worksheet 'Template - Existing provider'. If we require any additional information we will contact you.
8. If you are an existing provider of higher education, and have previously provided data returns to HESA or the ESFA, you do not need to complete this template as we are likely to already hold this data. If we require any additional information we will contact you.
9. You should retain a record of how you have arrived at the figures you are submitting for at least five years, as they may be audited by the OfS.
10. If you require further information please email [DAPS@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:DAPS@officeforstudents.org.uk).

## Template for existing providers

<b>Provider name:</b> Enter provider name here						
<b>Provider UKPRN:</b> Enter UKPRN here						
	Students on courses at FHEQ level 4	Students on courses at FHEQ level 5	Students on courses at FHEQ level 6 or above	<b>Total HE students</b>	Percentage of HE students at FHEQ level 5 or above	Percentage of HE students at FHEQ level 6 or above
Headcount	0	0	0	0		
FTE	0	0	0	0		

## Template for new providers

<b>Provider name:</b>		Enter provider name here																	
<b>Provider UKPRN:</b>		Enter UKPRN here																	
<b>Which academic year does Year 1 relate to (use the drop-down list to select)?</b> <input type="text"/>																			
	Students on courses at FHEQ level 4			Students on courses at FHEQ level 5			Students on courses at FHEQ level 6 or above			<b>Total HE students</b>			Percentage of HE students at FHEQ level 5 or above			Percentage of HE students at FHEQ level 6 or above			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Headcount	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
FTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				



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