2018-19 access agreements and student premium funding

Guidance on how to complete your monitoring return

Contents

Introduction

What this document is about

1. This document sets out the information that we require from higher education providers that had an access agreement approved by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) for 2018-19 and from providers that received student premium funding from the Office for Students (OfS) for 2018-19. This applies to the following premiums:

   - premium to support successful student outcomes – full-time

   - premium to support successful student outcomes – part-time

   - disabled students' premium.

2. Providers that had an OFFA-approved access agreement and OfS student premium funding in 2018-19 should follow all the guidance in this document about what to submit and how. Providers that did not have an access agreement but received student premium funding and had more than 100 full-time equivalent directly OfS-funded student numbers need to follow the guidance for Table 1 only. A separate monitoring return will be made available for these providers.

Deadline for action

3. All monitoring returns should be submitted via the OfS provider portal at https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/ by **noon on 28 February 2020**.

Why we ask providers to do this

4. We are collecting information through this monitoring return for the purposes of:

   a. Understanding whether providers have met the provisions of the access agreements in force in 2018-19.

   b. Transparency, in the interests of students.

5. Providers in receipt of the student premium, disabled student premium funding or both are expected to submit a monitoring return so that we can ensure that the funds are accounted for and have been used appropriately.

6. It is your responsibility to ensure that correct data is returned to us. Where data does not match our expectations, based on access agreements and previous monitoring returns, we are likely to contact you for further detail and clarity.

7. In line with our approach to transparency, we will seek to publish sector- and provider-level outcomes from the information provided in the monitoring returns.

What has changed since the previous monitoring return?

8. We have made changes to the monitoring of access agreements in light of the changes in the regulation of access and participation. These changes sit alongside the introduction of a new approach to annual monitoring for access and participation plans from 2019-20 and beyond.

9. The 2018-19 monitoring return asks providers to submit high-level information on expenditure within the broad categories[1] needed for public reporting. We are asking for this information to understand historical investment in access and participation and to inform the development of our key performance measure (KPM 7) relating to the association between investment in access and participation and the outcomes achieved.[2] In the interest of proportionality, we are not expecting you to report information on fees, student numbers, progress made against targets, and evaluation of activities and measures in this return. We may ask providers separately to provide further information on the evaluation of their financial support in the future.

10. In reducing the reporting requirements for 2018-19, we expect you to continue to assure yourselves that funds have been used for the purposes intended, and that you have taken all reasonable steps to ensure you meet your commitments. We will seek assurance on this through our broader monitoring and interventions operations, including notifications and random sampling.

11. We have written separately to providers about the requirements for access and participation monitoring and intervention for 2019-20 onwards, details of which can be found on the OfS website.[3]

Partnership arrangements

12. The type of partnership arrangement in place should determine which provider is responsible for the students included in the access agreements and associated monitoring returns. Further information on the types of partnership arrangements can be found in the OfS's regulatory framework.

    a. **In a validation arrangement**, responsibility for reporting rests with the provider that delivers and designs the validated course, and with which the student will have the full contractual relationship for the provision of education, not with the validating partner. It is the responsibility of this provider to ensure that its own access agreement is fully adhered to.

    b. **In a sub-contractual arrangement**, responsibility for reporting rests with the provider that makes the course available and with which the student will have the full contractual relationship for the provision of education (the lead provider). Any other provider (the

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[1] The broad categories needed for public reporting are spending relating to access, success, progression, financial support, the disabled student premium, and collaborative activity.

[2] See 'www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/.

[3] See the 'Letters to providers' at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/2018-19-access-agreements-and-student-premium-funding-guidance-on-how-to-complete-your-monitoring-return/.

delivery provider) that is contracted to provide some or all teaching on a course would not require an access agreement relating to that course. It is the responsibility of the lead provider to ensure that its own access agreement is fully adhered to.

c. **For joint courses**, responsibility for reporting rests with all the higher education providers in England within the partnership that together have responsibility for the provision of educational services to the student. Providers should determine at the outset what proportion of the initial entry cohort should be reported by each provider.[4]

What do you need to do now?

13. Download the monitoring return from the OfS provider portal at https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/.

14. Complete all relevant parts of the monitoring return, checking it carefully against this guidance. If in doubt, please contact app@officeforstudents.org.uk. Detailed guidance on filling in the return is given in this document; there are also prompts on the tables themselves.

15. Further instructions on how to submit the monitoring return using the OfS provider portal are available in paragraphs 74 to 76. For reference, a PDF copy of the monitoring return template is available to download alongside this document at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/2018-19-access-agreements-and-student-premium-funding-guidance-on-how-to-complete-your-monitoring-return/. All monitoring returns should be submitted via the OfS provider portal by **noon on 28 February 2020**.

Table-by-table guide to completing your monitoring return

Contact information

Action

16. Please read the fair processing notice on the front page of the monitoring return.

17. Complete the details of two provider contacts who have been involved in the completion of the monitoring return. One of these should be your provider's accountable officer. If we need to clarify any of the information returned to us, these two people will be contacted in the first instance.

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[4] More information about joint courses is included in 'Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2019-20 (HESES19): Guidance for providers' (OfS 2019.32), available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses19/.

Table 1: Access and participation activity expenditure and hardship expenditure

Action

18. In Table 1a, record your expenditure on access, success and progression activity in 2018-19 from all funding sources[5], using the categories provided. This will enable us to collect consistent information across the sector to assess and understand the areas in which investment across the student lifecycle is being made.

19. Please also indicate how much of the access, success and progression activity expenditure in 2018-19 was funded through investment countable under the access agreement (if applicable), and how much from the student premium funding.

20. In Table 1b, please provide your expenditure to support disabled students against the expenditure categories provided. This table will enable us to understand providers' expenditure on core, ongoing work to support disabled students and on work to expand and improve their provision towards an inclusive model of support for disabled students. Please also indicate how much of the support for disabled students was funded from the disabled students' premium in 2018-19.

21. In Table 1c, please report the expenditure on supporting students experiencing financial hardship from all funding sources. You should indicate how much of the hardship expenditure was funded through the access agreement countable funding (if applicable) and how much from the student premium funding in 2018-19. Please also indicate the total number of students receiving hardship funds.

22. Please ensure that the total 'of which uses student premium funding' figure in Table 1d does not exceed the total student premium funding your provider received in 2018-19; this figure is provided above Table 1a.

23. In Table 1e, please report all expenditure on access and participation activity that was delivered collaboratively. Collaborative activity does not just mean collaboration between providers of higher education. We would normally expect collaborative activity to include a number of partners rather than being between a single higher education provider and schools, colleges or other stakeholders receiving outreach activity. Collaboration could be formed in a number of ways, for example between a higher education provider and several further education colleges, other higher education providers, employers, third sector organisations, schools, colleges, training providers, or local authorities.

24. All cells in the monitoring return shaded grey will be automatically calculated.

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[5] All sources of funding can include funding from higher fee income under access agreements, student premium funding, funding from other sources such as fee income (over and above that included in access agreements), other teaching funding, and external sources such as charitable funds or funds from other organisations.

Explanatory notes for Table 1

25. The expenditure reported on access, success, progression and hardship under the access agreement should only relate to funds committed from higher fee income and other new and additional sources of funding. It should relate to:

- expenditure on activities that you previously funded through other means where these funding streams have been reduced or discontinued

- expenditure from new and additional sources other than fee income, such as charitable donations.

26. You may include relevant staffing and overhead costs. Please do not apply full economic costing.

27. Please do not include any funding allocated under the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, as this funding is being monitored separately.[6]

28. We appreciate that much of the work that providers do to improve access, success and progression is embedded in the core activities of many providers, so it may be difficult to disaggregate access and participation expenditure into the categories and apportion spending against their access agreement and the student premium funding. We appreciate, therefore, that estimates may need to be used.

29. While most providers will be undertaking activity covering all of the categories, we understand that some, in particular smaller providers, may not carry out work that falls under every category.

Examples of activities in each category

Access activity (Table 1a)

30. Examples of access activities include:

a. **Outreach work with schools and young people** – Mentoring programmes with schools and young people; summer schools, campus visits, taster days and masterclasses; compact programmes and progression agreements with schools and colleges; work with looked-after children and care leavers.

b. **Outreach work with communities and adults** – Taster days and visits for adults; community projects; progression agreements aimed at adults progressing from further education; work with employers aimed at progressing adults into higher education.

c. **Outreach work with disabled students** – Mentoring programmes with disabled students; summer schools, campus visits, taster days and masterclasses; compact programmes and progression agreements aimed at disabled students progressing from further education.

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[6] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/national-collaborative-outreach-programme-ncop/resources-for-partnerships/.

d. **Strategic relationships with schools** – Strategic partnerships between schools and higher education providers such as sponsoring of an academy or trust, university technical college or free school.

e. **Staffing and administration (access activity)** – Staffing costs that cannot be allocated to directly delivering an outreach activity, such as monitoring costs; partnership support costs in relation to outreach activities.

Student success activity (Table 1a)

31. Examples of student success activities include:

a. **Support for current students (academic and pastoral)** – Activity to improve continuation and equality of outcomes for different groups; induction and transition programmes; provision of study skills; student services expenditure for the benefit of access and participation target groups (for instance on financial or mental health advisers); peer mentoring programmes; developing inclusive curricula and learning resources.

b. **Support for disabled students** – Provision of advice and support to disabled students; developing accessible learning resources and inclusive learning and teaching environments.

c. **Staffing and administration (student success activity)** – Staffing costs that cannot be allocated to directly delivering a student success activity, such as monitoring costs; partnership support costs in relation to student success activities.

Progression activity (Table 1a)

32. Examples of progression activities include:

a. **Support for progression from higher education into employment or postgraduate study** – Support with internships for students from access and participation target groups; mentoring programmes designed to facilitate entry into employment or postgraduate study.

b. **Support for progression of disabled students** – Support with internships for disabled students; provision of advice and support to help disabled students into employment or postgraduate study.

c. **Staffing and administration (progression activity)** – Staffing costs that cannot be allocated to directly delivering progression activity, such as monitoring costs; partnership support costs in relation to progression activities.

Expenditure for support for disabled students (Table 1b)

33. Examples of student success expenditure for support for disabled students include:

a. **Ongoing, core work to support disabled students** – Ongoing, core work to support disabled students throughout their student lifecycle; from before entry into higher education through to the support they receive while on their course of study, including to help them progress into postgraduate study or employment.

b. **Expansion of disability services (additional staff, training and resources)** – Expansion to faculties and departments to increase capacity and resource to support disabled students. For example: the recruitment of additional staff for particular responsibilities such as accessibility, disability support, disability tutoring, development of inclusive curricula, mental health, non-medical help such as peer mentoring, study skills, developing and promoting assistive technology, dyslexia; particular training for staff on inclusive design and understanding mental health; resources for supporting disabled students and resources for staff to become more inclusive.

c. **Expansion of assistive technologies** – Expansion of assistive technologies for lecture capture, assistive software and voice recorders. For example: induction loops; speech recognition software or transcription packages (changing voice to text); text-to-speech software; mind mapping software (to help organise ideas graphically and with planning and organisation); word prediction software; software to enlarge text and zoom in; programs to support essay writing (guides with animated tutorials and tools such as subject dictionaries and bibliographic references); recording software; note-taking software; document conversion software; document reading software.

d. **Improvement of inclusivity of teaching and learning** – Staff specialising in inclusive support such as providing training, raising awareness and promoting the aims of inclusive learning and teaching across faculties; strategies to assure quality and embed inclusive practices including learning walks, observations of teaching (including peer observations), filming of teaching for self-evaluation and self-improvement and sharing of good practice; inclusivity review built into course design and curriculum development.

e. **Creation or extension of learning support posts** – Learning support posts to enable the provision of wider support for students such as study skills workshops that complement one-to-one sessions. For example: help with academic literacy; critical and reflective writing; research skills; finding, using and referencing resources; effective study technique; assignment planning and structuring; time management and organisational skills; optimising memory; revision and examination techniques; communicating in different media; coping strategies.

f. **Other** – Accessibility of estates; wellbeing interventions with students such as regular events, workshops and courses focused on particular issues (such as stress management); development of a mental health strategy; peer mentoring; supporting student transition to higher education; financial support for students for purchasing IT equipment or software.

Hardship expenditure (Table 1c)

34. Examples of hardship expenditure include:

a. **Support for students in hardship** – Provision of information, advice and guidance for students with ongoing financial problems; financial support for students in unexpected hardship that might impact on their participation in higher education, in the form of grants or loans for general living cost such as rent, food, and utility; course-related costs such as childcare costs, books, materials, and travel.

b. **Staffing and administration (hardship)** – Staffing costs that cannot be allocated to directly delivering a hardship activity, such as monitoring costs; admin support costs in relation to finance activities such as making payments.

Activities spanning multiple categories

35. If some activities undertaken could fall under more than one of the predetermined categories (such as an outreach programme that targets both young people and adults), please make a judgment on which category is most appropriate and ensure that the activity is consistently placed under this category in future monitoring returns. The activity should not be double-counted.

Using the staffing and administration category

36. Examples of expenditure under 'staffing and administration' include:

- non-staffing costs of running access and participation activity

- staff development costs for staff running access and participation activity

- costs related to supporting collaborative partnerships

- costs of evaluation and monitoring activity.

37. Where possible, record expenditure on staff working directly on a particular activity, and on hardship, against the appropriate category. Please only record expenditure under staffing and administration where the activity cannot be allocated to other categories. This will enable us to understand the expenditure on staff that cannot be attributed to an expenditure category.

38. This may mean that costs for some members of staff are split between different categories, where some but not all of their work involves directly delivering particular activities. In these circumstances, please judge the percentage of staff time allocated to activities.

Table 2a: Expenditure on financial support for underrepresented groups

Action

39. State the total expenditure between 1 August 2018 and 31 July 2019 on financial support for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. A definition of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups relating to the 2018-19 access agreements can be found on the archived OFFA website.[7]

40. Record the expenditure by the following types:

a. Bursaries, scholarships and support in kind (for example, discounts on accommodation or other institutional services such as providing laptops for students).

b. Fee waivers (including free or discounted foundation years).

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[7] See https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180511111508/https://www.offa.org.uk/.

41. Split the expenditure into the student categories listed in the return, and only record expenditure on financial support for these students:

    a. Students with a household residual income up to £25,000.

    b. Students from other underrepresented groups. Only include students in this category when either:

        i. Household income is unknown and you can't make estimates.

        ii. Household income is between £25,001 and £42,875.

        iii. Household income is above £42,875 but the student was from another underrepresented or disadvantaged group.

Explanatory notes for Table 2a

42. Where possible, record financial support expenditure by the income group of the beneficiary (e.g. those with a household income of less than £25,000), rather than as 'students from other underrepresented groups'.

43. Please ensure that you are recording figures for all students receiving financial support in 2018-19 and not just 2018-19 entrants.

44. In order to comply with the provisions of your access agreements, you will need to have provided students with the financial support you committed to in the relevant access agreement for the duration of their studies. For example, the fees and financial support set out in your 2014-15 access agreement applies to 2014-15 entrants in subsequent years of study.

45. If the beneficiary's household income is not known, but they have been awarded financial support based on other measures of underrepresentation that are countable as part of the access agreement, or if it is awarded regardless of a student's household income, you may still be able to make estimates. For example, if students who are care leavers are awarded financial support, information on household income may not be available, but you may still be able to estimate expenditure for each category. There may be a need to apply a weighting if previous experience indicates that beneficiaries are unlikely to be evenly distributed across the different categories.

Expenditure to include

46. Lead providers in a sub-contractual arrangement should include financial support for students on their subcontracted courses.

Expenditure to exclude

47. The following should not be included in Table 2a:

    a. Expenditure on financial support for students with residual household incomes above £42,875 who aren't from an underrepresented group.

    b. Any payments reported to the OfS and OFFA in previous monitoring returns. Please only count expenditure in the year in which the benefit was received.

c. Expenditure that is not awarded directly to students in order to provide a financial benefit, for example, expenditure on the overall improvement of services for students and broader retention measures.

d. Ring-fenced funding received from the government.

e. Expenditure on historical bursaries and scholarships where funding was established before the introduction of variable fees and has continued, and which are not funded through higher fee income or your own fundraising.

f. Expenditure on students not covered under the Student Fees (Qualifying Courses and Persons) (England) Regulations 2007, such as students not eligible for student support on the basis that they were eligible to apply for a healthcare bursary.

g. Hardship expenditure. This is captured in Table 1.

Table 2b: Number of students receiving financial support, by underrepresented group

Action

48. Record the total number of students from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups who received financial support in 2018-19.

49. Allocate students to the student categories listed in the return, using estimates where necessary in the same way as set out in paragraph 41.

50. In some cases, a student's circumstances may have changed after they received an award; for example, their residual household income may have been reassessed during the academic year, or they may not have completed a full year or programme of study. Please include these students in the return based on their household income at the time they were originally assessed for financial support.

51. Please include beneficiaries who received financial support in the form of bursaries and fee waivers, through the access agreement.

52. Please report the number of beneficiaries rather than the number of awards, so if a student received more than one award, they should only be counted once. Where a student receives an award based on income plus a non-income-related award, you should record them only once based on their income-related award.

53. The 'Total number of students in receipt of financial support, as a proportion of the total number of students' row will automatically calculate the proportions of students receiving financial support. The total number of students used for this calculation is based on the total number of students reported in the 2018-19 resource plan. Please check these to ensure they are in line with your expectations. A validation check will flag if the proportions exceed 100 per cent.

Table 3a: Access agreement expenditure summary

54. Table 3a pre-populates with the predicted levels of expenditure from the 2018-19 access agreement resource plan and auto-populates the actual levels of expenditure from the information recorded in Tables 1 and 2. The difference between the predicted and actual levels of expenditure is shown in cash terms and as a proportion of higher fee income. This table shows the provider-level data that we may include in the publication of the monitoring outcomes for providers with access agreements.

Action

55. Please include the total amount of higher fee income you received in 2018-19 in cell F20.

56. Please check that the figures shown are in line with your expectations.

Explanatory note for Table 3a

57. The higher fee income for each student is the difference between the basic fee cap and the approved fee set out in the approved access agreement. For example, the difference between the basic fee cap (£6,000 – without a Teaching Excellence and Students Outcomes Framework (TEF) award) and an approved fee in an access agreement (£9000) would be £3000 per student. Please see paragraph 67 for further information on the fee caps for 2018-19.

Table 3b: Explanation of differences between predicted and actual expenditure

58. Table 3b indicates whether the total expenditure, access, success and progression expenditure and the financial support expenditure are in line with the predictions set out your 2018-19 access agreement. This is considered both in cash terms and as a percentage of your higher fee income.

59. The statements in Table 3b auto-populate. If the recorded expenditure is more than 5 per cent below or 20 per cent above the prediction, either in cash terms or as percentage of higher fee income, you are required to provide an explanation. For example, if predicted expenditure was £100,000 and the actual expenditure was lower than £95,000 or higher than £120,000, or the proportional expenditure was predicted to be 10 per cent of higher fee income and the actual expenditure was lower than 9.5 per cent, we require you to give a commentary.

60. When providing a commentary, please use the free text boxes to explain the broad reasons for this difference and the impact this has had on your ability to deliver access agreement commitments. Where there have been significant levels of variation from the amount or proportions of expenditure agreed in past access agreements, we may investigate this further.

Sign-off

61. This worksheet will indicate whether or not the validation checks included throughout the workbook have all been passed. If this worksheet shows validation errors outstanding, you must review the validation checks detailed on each of the individual tables to clear these. A validation or credibility check that is not passed will be flagged as red on the relevant worksheet, and you should check that the information provided is correct.

62. You should ensure that the data returned to us is accurate and has been compiled in accordance with our guidance, and indicate using the drop down whether the accountable officer has assured the return.

63. Providers with an access agreement in 2018-19 should also indicate by using the dropdown menu whether their governing body has monitored their compliance with the provisions of the access agreement in force in 2018-19.

64. Further guidance on validating the return can be found in paragraphs 77 to 82.

Meeting commitments in access agreements

65. As set out in paragraph 10, we expect providers to meet the commitments set out in their 2018-19 access agreements.

66. As we will not be collecting historical fee information or progress against targets, the information in paragraphs 67 to 73 sets out our expectations.

Fees

67. You should ensure that you do not charge above the prescribed maximum fee caps for 2018-19 as shown in Table A.

Table A: Basic and maximum prescribed fee caps

Course type	Basic fee	Maximum fee
Full-time	£6,165 (with TEF award) £6,000 (without TEF award)	£9,250 (with TEF award) £9,000 (without TEF award)
Part-time	£4,625 (with TEF award) £4,500 (without TEF award)	£6,935 (with TEF award) £6,750 (without TEF award)
Erasmus year/study abroad year	£920 (with TEF award) £900 (without TEF award)	£1,385 (with TEF award) £1,350 (without TEF award)
Sandwich year	£1,230 (with TEF award) £1,200 (without TEF award)	£1,850 (with TEF award) £1,800 (without TEF award)

68. Providers that included an inflationary statement in their 2018-19 access agreement were able to apply an inflationary increase of 3.2 per cent (Retail Price Index) to 2018-19 entrants.[8]

69. We are able to identify some potential fee breaches through data flows, e.g. through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) quality checking period and subsequent analysis of the signed off student-level data returns, and may contact you to investigate further.

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[8] See further information on the archived OFFA website:
https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180511112454/https://www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/guidance/fee-and-bursary-limits-including-exceptions-and-state-support-thresholds/.

70. If a student identifies that they may have been charged above the amount advertised to them, they can notify notifications@officeforstudents.org.uk. We may contact the student that made the notification again if further information is required. We do not normally provide updates on the progress or outcome of notifications to the source of the notification, and we are not able to intervene in individual complaints made by students. More information about notifications can be found on the OfS website.[9]

71. Furthermore, a student may wish to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) as a complaint if they have not been able to resolve the matter with their provider. Further guidance on how to make a complaint can be found on the OIA website.[10]

Targets

72. Our access and participation reforms[11] (published in December 2018) set out a new approach for access and participations plans from 2020-21 onwards. The reforms required providers to set a smaller number of outcome-based targets which align with the key gaps identified in their assessment of performance.

73. We are aware that you may have changed your approach during 2018-19 to align activity and resource to where data suggests there are gaps. Therefore, to align with the new approach, we will not collect information relating to targets for 2018-19 access agreement monitoring.

How to submit your return

Where to find your return template

74. The tables for you to fill in are available to download from the OfS provider portal at https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/. A sample return is available alongside this document at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/2018-19-access-agreements-and-student-premium-funding-guidance-on-how-to-complete-your-monitoring-return/.

75. To download the monitoring return, your OfS provider portal user administrator will need to give you access to the relevant group. We will email step-by-step instructions on accessing the return once it is available to download.

76. If you have any technical queries relating to the use of the OfS provider portal that cannot be resolved by your OfS provider portal user administrator, please email portal@officeforstudents.org.uk.

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[9] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/contact/complaints-and-notifications/.

[10] See https://www.oiahe.org.uk/.

[11] See 'A new approach to regulating access and participation in English higher education: Consultation outcomes' (OfS 2018.53), available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/a-new-approach-to-regulating-access-and-participation-in-english-higher-education-consultation-outcomes/.

Validating your monitoring return

77. Your provider's accountable officer, as listed under condition E3 of the OfS's regulatory framework, should assure the monitoring return. The accountable officer is expected to confirm that the information provided is accurate and has been compiled in accordance with our guidance.

78. The accountable officer will also need to declare that the provider's governing body[12] has monitored its compliance with the provisions of its access agreement, as set out in the Higher Education Act 2004, as amended.

79. The accountable officer should complete the requested contact details to indicate that assurance has been provided.

80. If you have not registered with the OfS, an appropriate senior manager should assure the submission.

81. All information is subject to audit (see Annex F of 'Regulatory notice 2[13]').

82. We do not require you to submit a signed paper copy.

Submitting your return

83. Submit your completed monitoring return via the OfS provider portal at https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/ by **noon on 28 February 2020**.

84. If you have any technical queries relating to the use of the OfS provider portal, use the contact details in paragraph 76.

Returning your monitoring templates on time

85. You should inform us in advance of the deadline if you are unable to submit on time. You should set out the reasons why you believe you are unable to meet the deadline and formally request an extension. We will consider the request and if agreed, we will set a revised date for submission.

86. Tables 1a, 1b and 1c of the return will collect the monitoring information we need to ensure that the student premium funding is accounted for and used appropriately.

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[12] 'Governing body' is defined in the glossary to the regulatory framework as: 'Persons responsible for the management of the provider. As defined in section 85 of HERA, this will be any board of governors of the institution or any equivalent controlling body, for example the board of a company, the trustees of a charity, etc.'.

[13] Regulatory notice 2: Regulation up to 31 July 2019 of providers that were previously funded by HEFCE' (OfS 2018.12), available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-2-regulation-up-to-31-july-2019-of-providers-that-were-previously-funded-by-hefce/.

What happens once you have submitted your form

How to tell your return has been submitted successfully

87. When you have successfully uploaded your return, you will see an automated message on the OfS provider portal confirming this.

We will collect and share some information centrally

88. In order to inform our monitoring, we will use information from the Student Loans Company on the number of students from lower-income backgrounds at each provider. We will also use sector data from the OfS access and participation dataset, HESA, UCAS, and others to monitor progress across the sector and identify any emerging patterns over time.

89. Where relevant, we may share information with other partners, such as the Department for Education.

We may need to contact you for further information

90. We may need to ask you for further information about your return if, for example, some of the information or data:

- is unclear

- does not seem to make sense from our knowledge of your access agreement or student premium funding

- is inconsistent with centrally collected data.

The results of the monitoring process will be published

91. In the interests of transparency, we will seek to publish information on the outcomes of 2018-19 access agreements and student premium funding later in 2020. You can see what was published last year at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/monitoring-data-and-outcomes-2017-18-access-agreements-and-student-premium-funding/.

How the Freedom of Information Act affects monitoring returns

92. We are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, data protection legislation and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. If we receive a request for information related to your return then we will consider whether any exemptions apply. Where appropriate we will consult with you. Further information about the Freedom of Information Act is available at www.ico.gov.uk.

How the information will be used

93. The data gathered through the monitoring process supports a number of important functions in the OfS. In addition to the information in paragraph 4, we will use the information from monitoring returns for:

a. Improving our understanding of trends in access agreement expenditure across the sector.

b. Informing our continuing dialogue with providers, and assessment of risk.

94. We will use the access and participation activity and hardship expenditure data to understand the activity providers are engaged in, its cost and how the student premium funding is used towards funding it. This data is an essential element of demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of student access, success and progression,[14] through which the higher education sector will be able to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of its access and participation activity.

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[14] For more information on the outcomes framework see the archived HEFCE website at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180319115455/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/inequality/effect/.

Abbreviations

HESA   Higher Education Statistics Agency

KPM   Key performance measure

OFFA   Office for Fair Access

OfS   Office for Students

OIA   Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

TEF   Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework