

Office for  
Students



# Changes to 2022 student data surveys to inform funding

Notification of changes

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# Contents

<b>Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Changes to 2022 student data surveys to inform funding</b>	<b>3</b>
The HESES22 data collection process	3
HESA Data Futures, HESES22 and guidance on returning FUNDCOMP	3
Changes to funding definitions and guidance for HESES22 and HESF23	5
Changes to the HESES22 workbook	9
The HESF23 data collection process	11
Changes to the HESF23 workbook	11
Seminars and training on HESES22	12
<b>Annex A: Guidance for providers on returning individualised student data under the Data Futures specification</b>	<b>13</b>
Background	13
Resolving the inconsistencies between HESES and Data Futures	13
OfS data assurance and FUNDCOMP	14
Implications for future development of the HESES return	14
Guidance for submitting individualised student data under the Data Futures specification	15

# Summary

1. To inform the calculation of Office for Students (OfS) grants, all higher education providers that are registered with the OfS in the Approved (fee cap) category must complete a data survey. The data surveys to inform funding for the 2023-24 academic year are:
  - a. For a provider that has students registered with it in the 2022-23 academic year, the **2022 Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES22) survey**.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. For a provider that does not have students registered with it in the 2022-23 academic year, the **Higher Education Students Forecast 2023-24 (HESF23) survey**.<sup>2</sup>
2. This document provides notification of the changes that we intend to make to these surveys from last year.
3. In addition to informing funding for the 2023-24 academic year, we will use the HESES22 survey to inform the allocation of the 'Level 4 and 5 skills' and 'Degree apprenticeship' recurrent grant allocations for the 2022-23 academic year. These allocations will be confirmed in February 2023, following signoff of the HESES22 data.
4. We welcome any questions or comments on the proposed changes, but we are not consulting on them. The main changes arise following the Secretary of State's notifications on grant funding and strategic priorities for the 2022-23 financial year.<sup>3</sup>
5. This document does not contain the full technical specification of our data requirements and definitions; we will confirm these when we publish the full HESES22 and HESF23 guidance in autumn 2022.

Please email any questions to [heses@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:heses@officeforstudents.org.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> For information, last year's guidance for the 2021 Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES21) survey can be found at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses21/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses21/).

<sup>2</sup> For information, last year's guidance for the Higher Education Students Forecast 2022-23 (HESF22) survey can be found at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/hesf22/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/hesf22/).

<sup>3</sup> See the Guidance to the Office for Students on strategic priorities for financial year 2022-23 and Guidance to the Office for Students on the Higher Education Strategic Priorities Grant for the 2022-23 financial year, both published in March 2022, at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/guidance-from-government/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/guidance-from-government/).

# Changes to 2022 student data surveys to inform funding

## The HESES22 data collection process

6. All higher education providers that are registered (or applying to register) in the Approved (fee cap) category, and have students registered with them in the 2022-23 academic year, are required to complete the HESES22 data survey. This includes further education and sixth form colleges and academies, but there are some differences in the data reporting requirements for this type of provider.
7. Currently, we intend the HESES22 data return to use the following key dates:
  - a. **Further education and sixth form colleges and academies** will use a census date of 1 November 2022 and will be required to submit their data by noon on Thursday 10 November 2022.
  - b. **All other providers** will use a census date of 1 December 2022 and will be required to submit their data by noon on Monday 12 December 2022.
  - c. **All providers** will be required to have their data signed off by their accountable officer by Monday 30 January 2023.
8. This initial timeline is similar to last year's funding data collection timetable. As with previous years, we recognise that this timeline is not completely consistent in the way that it treats providers, and results in further education and sixth form colleges and academies having a longer time to verify and sign off their data.

## HESA Data Futures, HESES22 and guidance on returning FUNDCOMP

9. From academic year 2022-23, providers that currently return individualised student data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) will be doing so through a 'new' student record under the Data Futures specification (replacing the Student and Student Alternative records).<sup>4</sup> Further education and sixth form colleges and academies will continue to return data to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) through the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).
10. There are some inconsistencies between the data model used in the Data Futures specification and the definitions used to return HESES. These have implications for:
  - the basis for returning HESES data
  - the definitions used in returning individualised student data under Data Futures, particularly the assessment of the funding completion status (FUNDCOMP) field
  - the OfS's capacity for gaining assurance on student data used for funding purposes.

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this document, this new student record will be referred to as 'Data Futures' or 'the Data Futures return', to avoid confusion with the existing Student record.

11. We have considered carefully how we might address these issues. In doing so, we have attempted to minimise the regulatory burden of data reporting on all providers and ensure consistency in the way we allocate funding. Further discussion on these issues, and additional guidance for providers that are returning data under Data Futures, are included in Annex A to this document.

### **Returning HESES22**

12. When completing HESES22 all providers will continue to return their student data using the existing HESES definitions. Students will still be returned in HESES with reference to their years of instance.

13. Providers will still need to include an assessment of non-completion in the HESES workbook. As in previous years this should be based on historical data.

### **Guidance on returning FUNDCOMP in 2022-23**

14. We will not use FUNDCOMP data submitted in 2022-23 individualised data returns for funding or data assurance purposes.

- a. **For further education and sixth form colleges and academies**, we may use FUNDCOMP to identify records that are specifically excluded from the HESES population. Colleges should return FUNDCOMP in a way that minimises burden, and may wish to return FUNDCOMP=3 for all or some students if this approach achieves this. FUNDCOMP=9 should not be returned except to identify students to be excluded from the HESES recreation.
- b. **For other providers**, we do not require FUNDCOMP to be returned in your Data Futures return for 2022-23 and will not use any values returned.

### **HESES re-creation and assurance**

15. We will still re-create HESES22 using 2022-23 individualised student data reported under Data Futures and in the ILR, though we recognise that this will involve more assumptions regarding completion status than in the current methodology. We will still select providers for assurance work where the recreation suggests that there are material differences in student numbers between HESES and HESA or ILR data, or that there are material differences in funding calculated on the basis of HESA or ILR data compared with HESES.

16. If a provider is selected for data reconciliation, we would expect to seek evidence in support of forecast completion rates only where a variation in these would make a material difference to funding. We would expect these to be reasonable, based on historical rates and taking into account any changes in the type of provision delivered. We would expect to see evidence in support of any substantial changes in forecast completion rates, such as evidence of changes in the number of students withdrawing or attempting assessments. We do not expect to test completion status for individual students, as providers will not be required to determine this for the HESA or ILR returns.

## Changes to funding definitions and guidance for HESES22 and HESF23

17. We are making a number of amendments to funding definitions and guidance that will apply equally to HESES22 and HESF23.

### Fee eligibility and fundability status

18. Our definition of fee eligibility is not changing, in that students are classified as 'Home fee' depending on whether they can be regarded as eligible, as defined in Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No 779), as amended. However, providers are reminded that changes to the legislation from 1 August 2022 will affect the eligible population. In particular, amendments to these regulations for 2022-23 have been made by the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 and the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2022.<sup>5</sup>

19. These changes to legislation mean that the following students will be eligible for home fee status from 1 August 2022:

- a. Students from Ukraine who are on a new year of instance (whether starting a new course or continuing a course from 2021-22), and who are in England under one of the three routes for those affected by the conflict in Ukraine (the 'Ukraine Family Scheme', the 'Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme' and the 'Ukraine Extension Scheme').<sup>6</sup>
- b. Persons granted leave under one of the Afghan Schemes who begin a new course on or after 1 August 2022.<sup>7</sup>
- c. British nationals evacuated or assisted from Afghanistan who begin a new course on or after 1 August 2022.
- d. Family members of all persons who would be settled when in the UK, who begin a new course on or after 1 August 2022 (subject to three years residence in the UK, Islands and specified British overseas territories, of which at least part was in the specified British overseas territories, immediately before the start of the course). Currently only UK nationals and their family members in the British overseas territories benefit from access to home fee status if they meet the residency requirements.
- e. Family members of all persons settled in the UK who begin a new course on or after 1 August 2022 (subject to three years residence in the UK and Islands immediately before the start of the course). Currently only the family members of UK nationals are eligible under this category.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/57/contents/made> and <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/534/made>.

<sup>6</sup> Further details of the schemes can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme>.

<sup>7</sup> This means persons granted leave under either the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme or the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy Scheme.

20. Student Finance England provides guidance on the eligibility for home fee status for students for 2022-23 on its website.<sup>8</sup>

### **Removal of criteria of non-fundability for pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health courses based on start date**

21. We are removing from Annex F of HESES the criterion that home fee students should be classified as non-fundable if they are on pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health courses that started before specific dates set out in the HESES21 guidance.<sup>9</sup> These are courses leading to first registration as a professional in nursing, midwifery, dietetics, speech and language therapy, podiatry, orthotics and prosthetics, occupational therapy, operating department practice, orthoptics, physiotherapy, radiography, radiotherapy, dental hygiene or dental therapy.

22. We are, however, retaining the criterion that applies where students are on courses commissioned and funded by an NHS organisation, where the course fee charged to the student is zero because an NHS organisation is meeting the full costs of the course. Such students should still be classified as non-fundable.

### **Clarification about 'attendance' for 'Mode of study'**

23. The concept of 'attendance' is used to assess the mode for a student year of instance, and we are clarifying the guidance in Annex H of HESES of what constitutes 'attendance'. This is necessary because of recent changes to the delivery of courses, particularly regarding the amount of 'in person' versus online content a course might contain. This guidance will allow providers to determine whether a given year is full-time or part-time for OfS funding purposes, and whether the course is classified as a 'distance learning course'.

24. Mode is assessed based on the amount of activity a student is undertaking and the duration across which they are undertaking that activity.

25. We will be including a definition in Annex H to clarify that 'attendance' means that the student is required to be at a provider location, or other specified location (such as a partner provider, or defined workplace) to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement. These locations are expected to be collective for all students on the course (that is, we do not consider virtual attendance to meet the definition of attendance), except where alternative arrangements are made because a student is unable to attend for a reason that relates to their disability.

26. This means that for HESES22, the definition of full-time will be as follows. A year of instance is counted as full-time if it meets all of the following criteria:

- a. The student is normally required to attend the provider, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks during the year of instance.
- b. Within the 24 weeks the student is expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement that do not meet the criteria to be a

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<sup>8</sup> See the guidance chapter 'Assessing Eligibility Guidance AY 2022 to 2023' at [www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy/](http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy/).

<sup>9</sup> See HESES21, Annex F paragraphs 14c, 14d and 14e.

sandwich year out, which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week. ('Guided learning hours' should not be used in isolation to determine how many hours each week a student spends studying. All guided learning hours count towards this total, but it is expected that higher education students will spend a significant amount of time each week in self-led individual learning, and an estimate of this time should also be included.) Time spent in study away from the specified locations noted in paragraph 26a can be included when determining if this criterion is met.

- c. Full-time fees are chargeable for the course for the year. Exceptionally, all or part of the fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular personal, rather than course-related, circumstances. This does not include cases where fees are reduced because students are studying less intensively than is normally expected for a full-time student. Fees should not be waived for all students on a course, and the criteria that determine whether fees may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving them for all students.

The guidance on full-time fees in paragraph 26c is unchanged.

27. We will also be adding a clarification to the guidance on mode of study about distance learning courses, in line with existing legislation. This states that:

'A "distance learning course" means a course on which a student undertaking the course is not required to be in attendance by the institution providing the course, where "required to be in attendance" is not satisfied by a requirement imposed by the institution to attend any institution:

- a. for the purposes of registration or enrolment or any examination;
- b. on a weekend or during any vacation; or
- c. on an occasional basis during the week.'<sup>10</sup>

28. Students on distance learning courses will therefore not meet the attendance requirement to be reported as full-time in HESES. Otherwise, our existing definitions of 'full-time', 'sandwich year out' and 'part-time' remain unchanged.

### **Subdividing undergraduate student numbers**

29. We will distribute £8 million for the 2022-23 academic year to encourage greater provision of Level 4 and 5 qualifications.<sup>11</sup> To enable this, we are subdividing the undergraduate (UG) level in HESES tables to allow students to be classified into two sub-levels:

- a. **UG (Level 4 and 5).** This applies to all undergraduate students on courses leading to qualifications at Level 4 or 5 of the Framework for higher education qualifications in

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<sup>10</sup> Regulation 2 of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (statutory instrument 2011/1986): [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2011/1986/regulation/2](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2011/1986/regulation/2).

<sup>11</sup> This reflects the Secretary of State for Education and Minister of State for Higher and Further Education's Guidance to the OfS on the Higher Education Strategic Priorities Grant for the 2022-23 Financial Year (March 2022) letter, available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/guidance-from-government/>.



England, Wales and Northern Ireland.<sup>12</sup> This does not include students who may be studying at Level 4 or 5, but whose course aim is credit, rather than a qualification.

- b. **UG (Other)**. This applies to all other students on undergraduate courses, including any students undertaking credit at Level 4 or 5 without a stated qualification aim.

30. Where students have stated multiple qualification aims as part of the same instance, they should be recorded against the lower aim. For example, a student who has stated qualification aims of both an HND and a BSc should be recorded as UG (Level 4 and 5).

### **Clarification regarding valid learning aims (guidance for further education and sixth form colleges and academies only)**

31. We are clarifying the guidance around learning aims, to make clear our expectation that further education and sixth form colleges and academies should ensure that all courses for which they intend to return instances in HESES have valid learning aims, and that the learning aim information for each course (including qualification type and the Learn Direct Classification System (LDCS) codes) is correct.

32. The ESFA provides a 'Find a learning aim' service (FaLA).<sup>13</sup> This returns the awarding body, qualification type and LDCS codes for a given learning aim. We expect all courses returned in HESES to have valid learning aims and correct learning aim information before the data is signed off.

33. Within HESES22, learning aims are primarily used to support the 'Courses' table, which collects a breakdown of years of instance countable between 1 August 2022 and the census date (1 November 2022) at course level. It is our expectation that for such courses colleges should ensure that the learning aims information held by the ESFA in their learning aims database is correct prior to the start of the course. Providers should therefore check the ESFA's database as early as possible to ensure all their learning aims are listed correctly.

### **Pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health courses on Table 6**

34. We are clarifying the guidance around Pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health courses, to make clear that only the activity for courses approved by, and leading to registration with, the relevant regulatory body should be included in Tables 6a or 6c. This clarification is for two reasons:

- a. To make clear that any additional activity related to such courses that does not contribute to registration with the regulatory body (such as integrated foundation years) is not to be returned on Tables 6a or 6c. However, this additional activity may still be eligible to be included on the other tables in HESES.
- b. To ensure that any courses that do not lead to registration in the specified professions are also excluded. For instance, courses leading to registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a nursing associate are not to be included on Tables 6a or 6c.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://findalearningaimbeta.fasst.org.uk/>.

## Price group and level for postgraduate courses in dental therapy

35. We have updated the guidance to set out that postgraduate taught (PGT) pre-registration courses that, on successful completion, lead to first registration with the General Dental Council as a professional in dental therapy, should be entirely attributed to price group B, irrespective of their LDCS or Higher Education Classification of Subjects code. They should be reported as PGT (Masters' loan), because they are not eligible for finance under the undergraduate student support arrangements.
36. There is no change regarding the price group attribution for equivalent undergraduate pre-registration courses.

## Level for Part 2 architecture students

37. We are clarifying the guidance around determining level of study for architecture students studying Part 2 of the qualification leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board. The clarification is as follows:
- a. Students undertaking Part 2 where it is being treated as a single course with Part 1 should be returned as PGT (UG fee).
  - b. Students undertaking Part 2 where it is **not** being treated as a single course with Part 1 should be returned as PGT (Masters' loan).
38. The attribution of Part 2 architecture students to these postgraduate levels should be determined on an individual student basis, and should be consistent with how they are treated for student finance purposes (where applicable). Further detail regarding when Part 1 and Part 2 can be considered as a single course is set out in section 4.16.9 of the Student Finance England guidance chapter 'Assessing Eligibility Guidance AY 2022 to 2023'.<sup>14</sup>

## Graduate-entry medicine, dentistry and veterinary science

39. The first criterion for determining postgraduate level of study in HESES remains unchanged in terms of whether or not it is a normal condition of entry that students are already qualified to degree level: that is, already qualified at Level 6 of the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'.<sup>15</sup> But we are clarifying the guidance to make clear that graduate-entry courses (including those in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science) are considered postgraduate, as it is a normal condition of entry that entrants are already qualified to degree level.

## Changes to the HESES22 workbook

40. We will be making a number of changes to the tables that need to be completed in HESES22. These are listed below (in paragraphs 41 to 50).

### Subdividing undergraduate level

41. As set out in paragraphs 29 and 30, we are splitting the undergraduate category between courses leading to qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 and all other undergraduate courses. We

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<sup>14</sup> Available at <https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy/>.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>.

have split the undergraduate rows in Tables 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 between UG (Level 4 and 5) and UG (Other), to enable providers to record their students accordingly.

### **Collection of data on degree apprenticeships**

42. We are introducing a new Table 7 to collect years of instance taken as part of degree apprenticeships. This is to enable us to collect the data required to calculate the distribution of £8 million to support the growth of Level 6 degree apprenticeship training programmes in 2022-23 and beyond.<sup>16</sup>
43. We will collect information on full-time and part-time home fee students (both OfS-fundable and non-fundable) on degree apprenticeship years of instance in the 2022-23 academic year. To be included in Table 7, a student must be on an apprenticeship at Level 6 and have a qualification aim of an undergraduate degree.
44. The structure of Table 7 will mirror that of Table 3, in having columns 1 to 4a collecting information on home fee counts of years of instance and the full-time equivalent for completed years. However, it will also ask for separate identification of degree apprenticeship 'Starters' across those same columns, in the same way we collect data on 'New entrants' in Table 5, via a section B. Students should be recorded as starters in the academic year in which they first start study towards a qualification aim of an undergraduate degree.
45. It is possible that a student on a degree apprenticeship may have a lower qualification aim (such as a foundation degree or HND) as well as a degree. As students are to be recorded in HESES against their lower qualification aim, we will be collecting data in both UG (Level 4 and 5) and UG (Other) categories on this new Table 7. This will enable providers to record years of instance for degree apprenticeship students against the same undergraduate level used on other HESES tables. However, in practice, we expect the recording of degree apprenticeship students as UG (Level 4 and 5) to be extremely unusual, and will question providers that do so.

### **Table 6a and 6c postgraduate dental therapy courses**

46. In line with the change set out in paragraph 35, we have included a row for postgraduate dental therapy courses to be returned on Tables 6a and 6c. As outlined in the changes to the definitions set out above, these are identified separately as price group B and PGT (Masters' loan).

### **Table 6b Health sandwich**

47. It was always our expectation that provision on pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health courses could not meet the definition to be sandwich years out. Following review of the data across multiple years, we have confirmed that no such provision has been returned by any providers. We are therefore removing 'Table 6b Health sandwich'. To maintain consistency between datasets across years, we are **not** renaming 'Table 6c (Health part-time)'
48. If providers feel they may have provision in 2022-23 that would meet the definitions to be a sandwich year out for a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health course, they should contact us at [heses@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:heses@officeforstudents.org.uk).

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<sup>16</sup> See paragraphs 25 and 26 of 'Funding for academic year 2022-23' (OfS 2022.28) [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/funding-for-academic-year-2022-23/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/funding-for-academic-year-2022-23/).

## **Courses table (further education and sixth form colleges and academies only)**

49. For HESES22, in line with the change outlined in paragraphs 29, 30 and 41, we will update the Courses table (which is for completion by further education and sixth form colleges and academies only) to enable providers to return undergraduate courses as either UG (Level 4 and 5) or UG (Other).

## **Comparison tables**

50. In addition to the changes to the tables for completion on HESES22, we would like providers to note that we will be making adjustments to the comparison tables used for reference during the data verification process. While some changes will be to factor in the above changes into existing comparison tables (such as the subdivision of undergraduate students), we are also likely to require new comparison tables to verify any new data being collected (such as on degree apprenticeships). We will also be seeking to adjust the comparison tables to improve the verification process (and, where possible, reduce burden). Full details of the comparison tables and thresholds will be published alongside the main HESES22 guidance.

## **The HESF23 data collection process**

51. All providers registered (or applying to register) in the Approved (fee cap) category that **do not** have students registered with them in the 2022-23 academic year, but that will offer higher education provision recognised for OfS funding purposes in 2023-24, are required to complete the HESF23 data survey. The changes to the structure of the HESF23 tables compared with HESF22 are set out below.

52. Please note that the HESF23 survey uses the definitions set out in the HESES22 guidance document. Therefore, providers should ensure they consult the HESES guidance document for further information when completing their HESF23 survey.

53. As it is a forecast of student numbers in the 2023-24 academic year, no census date applies to HESF23. We will specify the deadline for submission when we notify any providers that they are required to complete the survey. To be included in the main 2023 grant announcement, we would commonly use the same submission and signoff deadlines as for HESES22.

## **Changes to the HESF23 workbook**

54. We will be making a number of changes to the tables that need to be completed in HESF22. These are listed below in paragraphs 55 and 56.

### **Subdividing undergraduate level**

55. As set out in paragraphs 29, 30 and 41, we are splitting undergraduate numbers between those on courses leading to qualifications at Levels 4 or 5 and all other undergraduate courses. We have split the undergraduate rows in HESF23 between UG (Level 4 and 5) and UG (Other), to enable providers to record their students accordingly.

### **Collection of data on degree apprenticeships**

56. In line with the introduction of the new Table 7 on HESES22 (see paragraphs 42 to 45) we will be introducing a new Table 2 (Degree apprenticeship) into HESF23, to collect the relevant information from new providers.

## Seminars and training on HESES22

### Webinars and other online training material

57. Following the last two years' successful programme of webinars, introduced originally because of the coronavirus pandemic, we intend to offer a similar programme of webinars later this year. These will run from Tuesday 13 to Thursday 29 September 2022. Information on these webinars will be emailed to nominated student data contacts, released on the OfS website and announced through the OfS email alert system in mid-August.<sup>17</sup>

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

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<sup>17</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/events/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/events/) and [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/sign-up-for-email-alerts/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/sign-up-for-email-alerts/).

# Annex A: Guidance for providers on returning individualised student data under the Data Futures specification

## Background

1. As noted in paragraph 9 of the main document, from academic year 2022-23, providers that return individualised student data to HESA will be doing so under the Data Futures specification. In the initial years of the return this will be a single end-of-year data collection, but it will transition to two collections a year in 2024-25. It is not expected that in-year HESA data will be available until January 2025. This does not apply to further education and sixth form colleges and academies, because they do not return individualised student data to HESA.
2. Up to now, data has been returned in HESES based on the concept of the 'year of instance'. This is returned with reference to the anniversary of the date when the student commenced their course, which stays fixed even if their status changes (for example, if they suspend their studies, repeat part of a year, or transfer course). Various fields, including funding completion status and mode of study, are currently returned in HESA student data and the ILR in relation to the year of instance.
3. We do not intend to continue with the concept of years of instance under HESA Data Futures, which is instead returned on the basis of the 'student course session'. A key difference from the previous HESA returns is that when students change their status they start a new student course session. As a result, fields that are currently determined in respect of years of instance should be determined in relation to student course session in the HESA Data Futures record.
4. Concepts such as 'funding completion' (the FUNDCOMP field) may capture the status of an individual student differently when considered against their student course session, compared with their year of instance. Funding completion is used in the OfS funding method to determine whether or not a student is counted for funding purposes.

## Resolving the inconsistencies between HESES and Data Futures

5. We have considered carefully how we might address the implications of HESA Data Futures in our approach to HESES data collection for 2022-23, and how fields currently determined on the basis of year of instance should be determined under Data Futures. In doing so, we have attempted to minimise the regulatory burden of data reporting on all providers and to maintain consistency in our funding methods.
6. We have been mindful that the ILR, which further education and sixth form colleges and academies submit to the ESFA instead of a HESA student data return, does not have a concept of a student course session, but retains the existing approach to years of instance. We want consistency in the approach to data reporting for funding purposes so as to ensure fairness in the distribution of funding between providers. Further education and sixth form colleges and academies have not had to prepare their systems to engage with Data Futures, so any requirement to introduce these concepts for them would introduce considerable administrative burden.

7. Continuing to collect fields in data futures on the basis of years of instance would place considerable administrative burden on other providers, due to the need to maintain capacity within their data systems to return data on both a year of instance and student course session basis.
8. Rewriting HESES22 to count student course sessions instead of years of instance would introduce considerable administrative burden for all providers, as they would need to adjust their systems to accommodate the new return and rules. This additional burden would have the greatest impact on further education and sixth form colleges and academies, which have not had to prepare their systems to engage with Data Futures. Other providers will be in the process of changing their systems for the first full year of Data Futures in 2022-23, but requiring them to use these systems to deliver a HESES output early in 2022-23 would still introduce additional burden. Any such change would also require consultation, because of the implications on the volume of students counted for funding purposes: our view is that this should be done only as part of a wider consultation on our approach to funding.
9. As noted in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the main document, we will continue to collect HESES22 using the existing concept of years of instance for reporting data. We recognise that this will involve some burden for providers that return data to HESA, as they will need to retain HESES specific data fields, or maintain the ability to derive these, in parallel with those needed for Data Futures. However, the impact is reduced by the fact that their record systems are already set up to reflect the current basis for HESES.

## **OfS data assurance and FUNDCOMP**

10. The approach described in paragraphs 1 to 9 of this annex enables us to retain the existing student volume measure used for funding purposes, pending a wider review of our approach to funding. However, it also weakens our ability to re-create aspects of HESES from HESA data: in particular, we do not believe we will be able reliably to determine funding completion on a year of instance basis from student course session data reported under Data Futures.
11. As noted in paragraphs 10, 14 and 15 of the main document, we recognise this issue and we will not use the FUNDCOMP field submitted in 2022-23 data returns for our funding or data assurance purposes. This will also act to reduce the administrative burden on providers, which will not be required to keep data in their systems to allow us to audit and test completion status for individual students.
12. Though further education and sixth form colleges and academies could continue to return funding completion data based on years of instance, we do not believe that this would be appropriate, as it would result in their continuing to face the burden of determining completion status while this was removed from other providers. It would also mean that our assurance regime was not consistently applied to all providers. We want to ensure consistency in our approach to data reporting for funding purposes, so as to ensure fairness in the distribution of funding between providers.

## **Implications for future development of the HESES return**

13. As set out in our response to part one of the consultation on Data Futures and data burden, we anticipate consulting on proposals to reform our funding approach, including revising the

volume measure.<sup>18</sup> We will include proposals that would allow us to remove HESES. We expect to launch this consultation in the next academic year.

14. Decisions on the data required in HESES23 will be taken in 2023. However, as FUNDCOMP is not required in individualised 2022-23 returns, should a forecast of non-completions be required in HESES23, we will not expect providers to use completion status for individual students from 2022-23 to inform such a forecast.

## **Guidance for submitting individualised student data under the Data Futures specification**

15. HESA provides guidance on its website to define the fields returned under the Data Futures specification.<sup>19</sup> A number of these fields reference OfS funding definitions, which are defined in the HESES guidance. In these cases, providers should interpret the guidance to be returned on the basis of a student's active student course session, rather than year of instance.
16. We are also providing here expanded definitions for a small number of specific fields. These definitions can be used by providers to accompany the guidance on the HESA website. In the longer term, we will seek to produce a more comprehensive guidance document that no longer references HESES.

### **SCSMODE**

#### **01 Full-time**

17. For providers in England, a student course session should be counted as full-time if it meets all of the following criteria:
  - a. The student is normally required to attend the provider, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the student course session, and during that time they are expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement that does not meet the criteria to be a sandwich year out, which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.
  - b. Full-time fees are chargeable for the course for the student course session.
    - i. There may be scenarios where the student's regulated fee entitlement is assessed on a different basis to the student course session. For instance, a student might begin on a course with a September start and then transfer to another course with a January start. In such a case the Students Loans Company may continue to assess the student's fee entitlement by academic year. Providers should make their best estimate on whether a full-time fee applies to the student course session in question. This should be made on the intention for the student course session as a whole, when the student began studying.

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<sup>18</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/data-futures-and-data-collection-analysis-of-responses-to-part-one-of-consultation-and-decisions/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/data-futures-and-data-collection-analysis-of-responses-to-part-one-of-consultation-and-decisions/).

<sup>19</sup> See <https://codingmanual.hesa.ac.uk/22056/dataDictionary/>.



- ii. Exceptionally, all or part of the fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular personal, rather than course-related, circumstances. This does not include cases where fees are reduced because students are studying less intensively than is normally expected for a full-time student. Fees should not be waived for all students on a course, and the criteria that determine whether they may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving them for all students.

18. If a student leaves early, their mode should be recorded in accordance with planned fees and attendance. So, if the student intended to complete 24 weeks or more full-time study and would if they completed and been charged a full-time fee, they should be recorded with a mode of '01 Full time', even if they leave before they have completed 24 weeks.

## **02 Other full time**

19. Students who study at a full-time intensity but whose student course session does not involve 24 weeks' attendance should be recorded as '02 Other full time'.

## **03 Accelerated full-time**

20. Code '03 Accelerated full-time' is only valid for providers in England.

21. As defined in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (Schedule 2, para 4(2)), an accelerated course means a higher education course where the number of academic years applicable to the course is at least one fewer than would normally be the case for that course, or a course of equivalent content leading to the grant of the same or an equivalent academic award.<sup>20</sup>

22. An example would be a first degree completed in two years instead of the usual three, or an HND completed in 12 months instead of the usual two years (where the shorter completion time is for reasons other than topping up from a lower-level qualification such as an HNC).

23. A variety of terms are in use for accelerated qualifications, including 'fast-track', 'two-year', 'compressed', 'time-compressed', 'condensed' and 'intensive'.

24. Accelerated provision should be reflected in a higher ReferencePeriodStudentLoad rather than additional student course sessions. For example, a course which is delivered over two years instead of the usual three would be captured in two student course sessions, each with a higher RPSTULOAD to reflect the greater intensity of the provision, rather than three student course sessions condensed into two academic years, each with a regular RPSTULOAD.

## **31 Part-time**

25. A student course session is counted as part-time if it does not meet the requirements to be full-time.

## **FUNDLENGTH**

26. FUNDLENGTH should be re-evaluated for each student course session.

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<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/schedule/2/enacted>.

27. Valid entry 96 can be used where the student does not fall within the HESES population. Providers can, if they so wish, use the other valid entries for all student course sessions, irrespective of whether the students are in the HESES population.

### **01 Long (45 weeks or more)**

28. For **full-time courses**, the year of instance should be classified as 'long' if students are normally required to attend for 45 weeks or more within that student course session.

29. When determining length, students are deemed to be attending the provider if they are actively pursuing full-time studies towards the qualification. Student course sessions that are not long are referred to as standard length.

30. If the student course session is 45 weeks or more in length because of a period of work-based study, then the student course session is not counted as long. This applies to both learning in the workplace and work experience, including work placements. Sandwich years out cannot therefore be recorded as long, nor would we generally expect foundation degrees, qualifications taken as part of an apprenticeship or student course sessions for pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery and allied health to be recorded as long.

31. For undergraduate students, long years of instance typically occur in accelerated programmes where the qualification is achieved in a much shorter time than normal. The following are not criteria in defining a long StudentCourseSession:

a. The number of credit points studied in the year.

b. The eligibility of a full-time student under the undergraduate student support arrangements for a 'long courses loan'.

32. For postgraduate students, most long years of instance will be for higher degrees such as a masters' qualification.

33. For **part-time courses**, the distinction will depend on the number of weeks of study of each year for an equivalent full-time course. The number of weeks attended within the student course session for part-time students is irrelevant in determining whether the student course session is long.

### **02 Standard**

34. A student course session should be returned as standard if it does not meet the criteria to be returned as long.



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