

Westward House
Lime Kiln Close
Stoke Gifford
BRISTOL
BS34 8SR

0117 931 7317

www.officeforstudents.org.uk

9 March 2023

Dear Accountable Officer

Monitoring of Ukrainian student hardship funding allocations

I am writing to you about monitoring of Ukrainian student hardship funding allocated to your provider for the financial year 2022-23.

On 31 March 2022, the government issued guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on the Higher Education Strategic Priorities Grant for the 2022-23 financial year. This included the provision of up to £4 million across the 2022-23 financial year to support Ukrainian nationals and Ukrainian-domiciled students whose financial means have been impacted by events in Ukraine.¹ On 28 April 2022, I wrote to providers² to announce an initial distribution of funding totalling £2 million and the terms and conditions that applied to the use of this funding. I wrote again on 9 June 2022 to announce final funding allocations and the distribution of the remaining £2 million.³

The terms and conditions attached to these monies stated that:

- The funding could not be used to meet providers' own costs.
- The funding had to be distributed by 31 March 2023 to Ukrainian nationals or Ukrainian-domiciled students registered with English higher education providers and who were facing hardship because their financial means had been affected by events in Ukraine.
- We would recover any funding not used in the time available for the purposes intended.

In that letter we noted that we intended to monitor providers' use of this funding as required. The monitoring approach is designed to meet the external requirements imposed on the OfS, which are audited by the National Audit Office at the end of each financial year.

We have prepared a short template for this exercise, which can be downloaded from the '2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring' area of the OfS portal. Further information on how

¹ Available from www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/guidance-from-government/.

² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/funding-to-support-ukrainian-students/.

³ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/distribution-of-funding-to-support-ukrainian-students/.

to do this can be found in Annex A to this letter. Once completed, the monitoring template should be uploaded to the same section of the OfS portal **by 1700 on Monday 17 April 2023**.

On the monitoring template we have confirmed the total amount of Ukrainian student hardship funding allocated to your provider by the OfS. Please use the template to provide the following information:

- a. Confirmation of the total OfS hardship funding distributed by your provider to Ukrainian nationals and Ukrainian-domiciled students by 31 March 2023 in line with the our terms and conditions.
- b. Confirmation of any OfS hardship funding not distributed by 31 March 2023 and therefore to be repaid to the OfS.
- c. Brief commentaries on the reason for any unspent funding and the processes that your provider has used to ensure that it has distributed the funding in accordance with our terms and conditions.
- d. Any mitigating circumstances for the unspent funding that you would like us to consider before any funding is reclaimed. Such circumstances might include temporary delays in processing payments of funding to students.

We will seek to reclaim any unspent funding against upcoming OfS recurrent grant payments.

Further information

If you have any questions about the monitoring process, please email recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Nolan Smith OBE
Director of Resources and Finance

Annex A: Downloading and submitting the monitoring form

This annex gives guidance on how to access the Office for Students (OfS) portal to download your monitoring form and how you should submit the completed return. Some common issues are also listed.

Assigning yourself to the ‘2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring’ portal survey area

To access your student hardship funding monitoring form, you will need to download it from the OfS portal: <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/>.

You will need to be a registered user of the OfS portal to be assigned to the ‘2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring’ survey area, from which you will download your monitoring form.

If you have not registered on the OfS portal before, you will need to ask the nominated OfS portal user administrator at your provider to create an account for you. Each person who requires access to the student hardship funding monitoring form will need to be registered with their own account.

You will need to be assigned to the ‘2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring’ survey area by the nominated OfS portal user administrator at your provider. The user administrator can find guidance on how to add portal users to portal areas on the main portal login page. If you are the user administrator, you will still need to assign yourself to the ‘2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring’ survey area.

If you do not know who your user administrator is, you can view the user administrators at your provider by logging onto the OfS portal. Select ‘My account’ towards the right-hand side of the yellow banner, and then click ‘Activate an access key’. The names and contact details of the user administrators at your provider will be at the top of the page. If you are not registered and do not know who your user administrator is, please contact portal@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Common issues with accessing the portal

I cannot log in to the OfS portal

If you receive an error message while trying to log in, you may be entering the wrong email address or password, or your account may be locked. Ensure that the email address you are using is correct, and then request a new password. You will be sent a new password, which you will be asked to change when you log in. You can also ask your user administrator to reset your password.

If this new password does not grant you access, it is likely that your account is locked. Contact your user administrator, who can unlock your account for you. It is advisable that you also request a password change at the same time. If you or your user administrator have any problems, please contact portal@officeforstudents.org.uk.

The '2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring' survey area has not appeared on my login page even after I have been assigned to it

Once you have been assigned to a survey, you may need to log out and then log back into the portal for the survey to appear under 'Home'.

Downloading your student hardship funding monitoring form

Once you have been assigned to the '2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring' survey area, log in to the OfS portal and you will see a link for the monitoring form under the 'Home' section. This link will take you to the monitoring form.

To download the form, click on the 'Download' button. You will receive a zipped file, which will contain your monitoring form. You may need to unzip the file before accessing the workbook. You may also need to click on 'Enable editing' on the yellow banner if it appears on your screen when you open your workbook. You can download this empty workbook as many times as required.

Save the workbook to a memorable location on your computer. If there are any issues with downloading your workbook, please contact us at portal@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Completing your monitoring form

The monitoring form is provided as an Excel workbook with the file extension '.xlsx'. You should not attempt to alter the format of the worksheets by adding or deleting columns or rows. Only cells where data is required should be edited. The workbook is protected to ensure that the data submitted is accurate and is only entered into the relevant cells. Worksheets contain information critical to accurate loading of the data; it is essential that this is preserved. We will refuse to accept any workbooks that have been unprotected or tampered with.

We recommend that you do not copy and paste data into your workbook, as this can cause formatting issues. If you wish to copy and paste data, ensure that you use the 'Paste values' option instead. This will not copy the formatting of the data you are pasting and will preserve the formatting of the workbook.

Uploading your monitoring form

Once you have completed the monitoring form (note that the workbook has two sheets), you will need to submit the workbook to the '2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring' survey area on the OfS portal. You should ensure that:

- your workbook has not been saved so that zero values are displayed as blanks
- links to other spreadsheets are removed
- only one worksheet is selected when the completed workbook is uploaded
- the workbook is **not** zipped.

Otherwise the workbook may not upload successfully.

Submit the workbook as follows:

- a. Navigate to the '2022-23 Ukrainian student hardship funding monitoring' survey area on the OfS portal.
- b. Click on the 'Upload' button.
- c. Browse for your monitoring form which is saved in your memorable location.
- d. Click 'Upload'.
- e. The workbook may take some time to upload if the portal is busy. The page will automatically refresh to show if your file is waiting to be processed, being processed or has completed successfully.
- f. Check below the status bar for the log of your submission. The 'Outcome' will display as a 'Success' if there are no issues with the uploaded workbook.
- g. Check the 'Comments' to see if your workbook is valid and has successfully uploaded. See below for a description of some of the messages that may appear.

Once you have successfully submitted your workbook, check the results package by clicking on the 'Results' button. The results package contains the workbook that you have submitted, which has now been processed.

Completed workbooks can be uploaded any number of times until the deadline for submissions, when we will take the latest uploaded version as the final version for submission.

Common issues while uploading the monitoring form

My workbook contains validation errors

The monitoring form includes a number of validation checks. Please check your form carefully and complete the sign-off fields on the 'Sign-off' sheet before uploading it. You will still be able to upload your workbook if it is invalid, but we will **not** accept it as a submission.

The 'Comments' section of the portal shows errors and no results package is generated

Your workbook has failed to process. There can be many reasons for the workbook not processing correctly. One common error is that the file has been zipped. Before uploading, please ensure that the file is not zipped as this will make it more likely to process successfully. A second common error is a change in the file extension of the workbook; it must end with '.xlsx'. If you have unprotected the workbook in any way, this may also cause the upload to fail.

My colleague has uploaded a monitoring form but I cannot view the results package

The results package can only be downloaded and viewed from the same OfS portal account that uploaded that particular workbook. In order to view the results package for a specific workbook you will need to upload the same workbook using your own portal account.