

20 July 2023

Dear Accountable Officer

Monitoring of recurrent funding allocations for the 2022-23 academic year

I am writing to you about the monitoring process for several recurrent funding allocations made for the 2022-23 academic year. The allocations are:

- £15 million of additional student hardship funding, announced to providers on 26 January 2023¹
- £8 million of funding to support Level 4 and 5 qualifications, announced on 9 March 2023
- £8 million of funding for degree apprenticeship programmes, announced on 9 March 2023.²

When these allocations were announced, we noted that we would require providers in receipt of any of these funding allocations to complete a monitoring return after the end of the academic year. This letter announces the details of that monitoring return.

The monitoring return will allow us to:

- collect and analyse information on providers' use of the allocations of the funding to support degree apprenticeships and Level 4 and 5 provision
- gain assurance that funding allocations have been used in accordance with the terms and conditions placed on their use

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/additional-student-hardship-funding-for-academic-year-2022-23/.

² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/mid-year-allocations-of-recurrent-funding-for-2022-23/.

- reclaim any hardship funding that has not been distributed to students by 31 July 2023.

We have prepared a short template for this exercise, which can be downloaded from the 'Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding' area of the OfS portal. Further information on how to do this can be found in Annex A to this letter. The template contains four worksheets:

- monitoring for hardship
- monitoring for Level 4 and 5
- monitoring for degree apprenticeships
- sign-off form.

The template for your provider will only show monitoring worksheets for the funding allocations received by your provider. Further details on how to complete these worksheets can be found in Annex B.

Once completed, the monitoring template should be uploaded to the same section of the OfS portal by **1200** on **5 October 2023**.

Further information

If you require further information about the monitoring process, please contact recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

John Blake
Director for Fair Access and Participation

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 template and how you should submit the completed return. Some common issues are also listed for each stage of the process.

Assigning yourself to the ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ portal survey area

To access your monitoring template, 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 ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ survey area, from which you will download your monitoring template.

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 monitoring template will need to be registered with their own account.

You will need to be assigned to the ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ 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 ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ 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 ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ 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 monitoring template

Once you have been assigned to the ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ survey area, log in to the OfS portal and you will see a link for the survey area under the ‘Home’ section. This link will take you to the monitoring template.

To download the template, click on the ‘Download’ button. You will receive a zipped file, which will contain your monitoring template. 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 template

The monitoring template 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 template

Once you have completed the monitoring template, including the ‘Sign_off’ sheet, you will need to submit the workbook to the ‘Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding’ 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 'Summer monitoring of 2022-23 recurrent funding' survey area on the OfS portal.
- b. Click on the 'Upload' button.
- c. Browse for your monitoring template 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 template

My workbook contains validation errors

The monitoring template includes a number of validation checks. The 'Sign_off' sheet indicates the status of each validation check. Please check your template 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 template 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.

Annex B: Guidance on the monitoring return

This annex lists the worksheets within the monitoring return workbook, and provides further guidance on the fields in each worksheet.

Student hardship

Allocation of additional student hardship funding for academic year 2022-23 (announced January 2023)

This field shows the hardship funding allocation received by your provider. It is prefilled in pounds.

Amount of hardship funding distributed to students between 17 January and 31 July 2023, in line with OfS terms and conditions

This should be completed by the provider with a figure in pounds.

Amount of undistributed funding to be repaid to the OfS

This is calculated automatically using the figures in the cells above.

Commentary on any undistributed funding

If the amount of undistributed funding is greater than zero, a brief commentary (maximum of 2000 characters) should be provided on why some of the allocation was not distributed.

Commentary on processes followed to distribute funds

A brief commentary should be provided on the processes your provider followed to distribute the funds and ensure that it was carried out in accordance with the OfS terms and conditions of funding. You may want to cover:

- a. How funds were distributed, e.g. through a bespoke process or through your provider's existing hardship funding mechanism.
- b. If applicable, how you ensured that funds were equally available to students on courses where teaching is subcontracted out to another provider.
- c. Which groups of students were able to access the funds, e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate, home students, overseas students.)
- d. How funds were made available to students, e.g. were they paid directly to students, made available as vouchers or equipment, etc.

Mitigating circumstances

If the amount of undistributed funding is greater than zero, a brief commentary should be provided to record any mitigating circumstances that you think we should consider before the funds are reclaimed.

Level 6 degree apprenticeship

Allocation received by provider

This field shows the funding allocation received by your provider to support Level 6 degree apprenticeships (first announced in March 2023 and updated in July 2023). It is prefilled in pounds.

Brief commentary on funding use

Provide a brief commentary on how you have used this funding allocation to support activities related to the growth and development of Level 6 degree apprenticeship training programmes at your provider within the 2022-23 academic year. Please discuss how this meets the purposes set out in paragraphs 38 and 39 of the [OfS terms and conditions of funding for 2022-23](#).³

Impact of funding

Provide a brief commentary on the impact that you think this funding has had on your Level 6 degree apprenticeship provision.

Areas on which funding has been spent

Indicate if you have spent any of your allocation on any of the following five areas:

- i. Development of new degree apprenticeship programmes
- ii. Refreshing existing programmes
- iii. Upskilling academic and non-academic staff to deliver degree apprenticeships
- iv. Growing the pipeline of new degree apprenticeship vacancies, such as identifying current and future skills needs, forming employer and skills body partnerships and ensuring provision aligns with local employer needs
- v. Other.

Level 4 and 5 qualifications

Allocation received by provider

This field shows the funding allocation received by your provider to support Level 4 and 5 provision (first announced in March 2023 and updated in July 2023). It is prefilled in pounds.

Brief commentary on funding use

Provide a brief commentary on how you have used this funding allocation to support activities related to the growth of Level 4 and 5 qualifications at your provider within the 2022-23 academic year.

Impact of funding

Provide a brief commentary on the impact that you think this funding has had on your Level 4 and 5 provision.

³ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/terms-and-conditions-of-funding-for-2022-23/.

Sign-off worksheet

Validation checks for the above sheets are assessed and pass/fail displayed.

Several fields at the top of the worksheet list a number of validation checks performed on the individual worksheets. Please make sure the data you have entered has passed all validation checks before submitting your monitoring workbook.

The lower section of the worksheet contains fields used to record who has signed off the monitoring data as accurate. The name and position of the accountable officer (AO) are pre-filled and cannot be overwritten; please email recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk to request changes to the information in these cells. Please enter the date on which the AO signed off the monitoring return as accurate.