How to submit an application for registration on the OfS portal

Introduction

1. This document provides information and instructions about how to submit your provider's application for registration with the Office for Students (OfS). It provides:

   - technical information about how to submit your application and supporting evidence using the OfS portal (**part 1**)

   - a checklist to assist you with submitting an application. It also outlines the sections of the OfS portal where each piece of evidence must be submitted (**part 2**).

2. This document should be read alongside the following documents:

   - the application requirements notice[1]

   - Regulatory advice 3: How to register with the OfS.[2]

---

[1] See Annex A: Application requirements notice at Supporting documents.

[2] OfS, 'Regulatory advice 3: How to register with the Office for Students'.

Part 1: How do I submit my application?

3. Applications to register with the OfS must be submitted via the OfS portal. The login page for the portal can be accessed by the following link: extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data.

4. To access the OfS portal you will need an 'access key'. Please contact us at regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk to ask for an 'access key request form'. When you have completed and returned your 'access key request form', we will write to you providing instructions about how to use the registration portal, including login information (access keys). Please note that these access keys are specific to your provider and give access specifically to the OfS registration area (and, where applicable, the access and participation plan area) of the OfS portal. The access keys should not be shared with other providers. The access key should only be shared with colleagues within your provider who are responsible for uploading the data.

5. To request an access key and register with the OfS, every provider must have a UK provider reference number (UKPRN). If you do not already have a UKPRN, you can apply for one from: www.ukrlp.co.uk.

6. Templates for application forms 1 and 2 are available in sections 1a and 1b of the OfS portal, respectively. The template for fees, investments, and targets information is in section 2, and the financial and student number tables template is in section 5a. The access and participation plan template is included in the guidance on preparing these plans.[3] All other relevant templates can be downloaded from the Regulatory advice 3 page on the OfS website.[4]

How to access the OfS portal

7. To access the OfS portal, you will first need to create an account:

   a. Click on the 'Create account' button on the login page (accessed from extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data)

   b. Enter your name, email address and choose a password. Your password must be at least six characters, containing at least one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter and one number.

   c. Enter the access key shown in the email sent to you by the OfS registration team.

   d. Click the 'Create account' button.

---

[3] See Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan - effective practice advice.

[4] OfS, 'Regulatory advice 3: How to register with the Office for Students'.

e. You will be told whether registration of your access key was successful. If you have successfully registered your access key, click 'Continue' to navigate back to the login page.

8. Log in using your registered email address and password.

What to do if you have lost your access key?

9. If you lose your access key, please contact regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk and we will be able to re-send the access key to your nominated registration contact.

How to upload your application and supporting evidence

10. Once you have successfully logged in to the OfS portal you will see a link to the registration area: extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data.

11. Within the registration portal area, you will find seven sections relating to the registration process:

- Section 1a – Application form 1

- Section 1b – Application form 2

- Section 2 – Access and participation resource plan – this section is only applicable to providers registering in the Approved (fee cap) category and intending to charge higher fees

- Section 3 – Condition B7 and B8 evidence

- Section 4 – Condition C5 evidence

- Section 5a – Financial tables

- Section 5b – Other financial information for condition D

- Section 6 – Condition E7, E8 and E9 evidence

- Section 7 – All other supporting evidence

12. The application is split into sections in this way so that it is easier for you to submit the required documents for each condition, and because we need to ensure the information submitted is easily transferable to our relevant data and information systems.

13. The table below provides detailed instructions about how to download and upload evidence for each part of the registration process. If at any time you forget your password for the OfS portal, click the 'Forgotten password?' link and enter your email address. You will then be emailed a link to a page where you can reset your password. If you have any specific questions about completing your application to register with the OfS, please contact regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Submitting your evidence

Section of registration process	How to submit your evidence
Section 1a: Application form 1 **Section 1b: Application form 2** Please use the links within the registration area of the portal to download the application forms for your provider and upload them when they have been completed. Full guidance on how to complete the forms is provided at Annex C: 'How to complete application forms 1 and 2'.	To download your provider's application form, click on 'Section 1a - Application form 1'. Click on the 'Download' button and select 'Save' when prompted. Save the zip file (compressed folder) OfSApplication_package_XXXXXXXX.zip (where the suffix is your provider's 8-digit UKPRN) in a location on your network where you can access it later. The zip file/package contains one file: • ApplicationForm1_XXXXXXXX.xlsx (where the suffix is your provider's 8-digit UKPRN). This is a Microsoft Excel file. To complete the return, you will need to unzip the package. Microsoft Windows can perform this task without a third-party tool. Other operating systems will need an additional programme. When you have completed your application forms, and are ready to submit them, log in again using your email address and password, and follow the instructions below. Once you have logged in to the OfS portal, click on 'OfS registration' Click on 'Section 1a - Application form 1' Click the 'Upload' button, and then use the 'Browse'\'Choose file' button to locate files on your computer or network. Click on 'Upload'. Submitting the file may take up to a few minutes, depending on how busy the server is. A message will appear on the screen to tell you the status of your submission. You may see one of the following messages: • Your files have been submitted and are waiting to be processed;

	• Your files are being processed; • Completed successfully. If you wish to make changes to your application form after it has been uploaded, and you have not yet confirmed your submission is complete, then please re-upload the file to the portal and this will overwrite the previous submission and a new results file will be generated. To submit application form 2, download your provider's application form from 'Section 1b - Application form 2' and repeat the steps above.

Section 2: Access and participation plan
If you are applying in the Approved (fee cap) category and intend to charge qualifying persons on qualifying courses fees above the basic amount and up to the higher amount, you must submit the following documents:
 	
    • **Access and participation plan – template downloadable from the OfS website** alongside our **guidance on how to prepare access and participation plans**
 	
    • **Fees, investments and targets information (Excel document) – template downloadable via the portal**
 	
You will need an additional access key for this area of the portal. If you think you need to access to this area and have not received a
	The access and participation plan template can be downloaded as part of our guidance on how to prepare access and participation plans.[5]
	
	To download your provider's template for the Fees, investments and targets document click on 'Section 2 – Access and participation plan 2021-22 onwards', this will take you to the access and participation plan OfS portal area.
	
	Within this area, click on the relevant links in the 'Access and participation plan 20YYYY'(where YYYY represents the academic year) area. Click on the 'Download' button within the Fees, investments and targets document section and select 'Save' when prompted.
	
	Save the zip file (compressed folder) in a location on your network where you can access it later.
	
	The zip file/package will contain one file:

---

[5] See Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan - effective practice advice.

separate access key, please contact regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk to request this.

You will only need to access this area if you are applying in the Approved (fee cap) category and intending to charge higher fees. If you are not required to provide evidence for this condition, you will not have an access key to access this area of the portal.

FeesInvestmentsTargets _YYYY_XXXXXXXX.xlsx (where YYYY represents the academic year and the suffix is your provider's 8-digit UKPRN). This is a Microsoft Excel file. To complete the returns, you will need to unzip the package. Microsoft Windows can perform this task without a third-party tool. Other operating systems will need an additional programme.

When you have completed all your documents, and are ready to submit them, log in again using your email address and password, and follow the instructions below.

Once you have logged in to the OfS portal, click on 'OfS Registration'.

Within this area click on the relevant links in the Access and participation plan 20YY-YY area e.g 'Upload your 20YY-YY to 20YY-YY access and participation plan'.

Click the 'Upload' button, and then use the 'Browse'\'Choose file' button to locate files on your computer or network. Click on 'Upload File'. **Please note:** the written access and participation plan, and the fees, investments and targets template must be submitted to separate areas of the portal. Follow the individual links to submit these to the correct area.

Submitting the files may take up to a few minutes, depending on how busy the server is. A message will appear on the screen to tell you the status of your submission. You may see one of the following messages:

- Your files have been submitted and are waiting to be processed

- Your files are being processed

- Completed successfully.

	When the submission process has completed successfully, click the 'Results' button and save your results files (for the Targets and investment plan and Fee information document) on your own network. The results file will show a copy of the data that has been uploaded. There will be no 'results' file generated for the upload of the access and participation plan itself.
	If you wish to make changes to your documents after it has been uploaded, and you have not yet confirmed your submission is complete, then please re-upload the files to the portal and this will overwrite the previous submission, and a new results file will be generated (for the Targets and investment plan and Fee information document).
Section 3: Condition B7 and B8 evidence	To upload B7 and B8 evidence, click on 'Section 3'. Click the 'Upload' button, and then 'Browse\Choose file' to find the location of the file you wish to upload, and then click on 'Upload'.
	Repeat this process to upload further files. When you have selected all your files to be uploaded click the 'Submit' button. A 'Success' message will appear on the screen when the file(s) has/have been uploaded successfully.
	There will be no 'results' file generated for the upload of B7 and B8 evidence.
Section 4: Condition C5 evidence	To upload condition C5 evidence, click on 'Section 4'. Click the 'Upload' button, and then 'Browse\Choose file' to find the location of the file you wish to upload, and then click on 'Upload'.
	Repeat this process to upload further files. When you have selected all your files to be uploaded click the 'Submit' button. A 'Success' message will appear on the screen when the file(s) has/have been

	uploaded successfully. There will be no 'results' file generated for the upload of C5 evidence.
Section 5a: Financial tables Please use the link within the portal to download the template for the financial tables relating to Condition D, and to upload it once it has been completed. Please use this link to download the template for financial and student number forecast tables, complete and upload it. You should submit your audited financial statements, financial commentary and any other evidence as separate documents in the supporting evidence section outlined below (Section 4).	To download your provider's template for the financial tables click on the 'Section 5': Financial tables link. Click on the 'Download' button and select 'Save' when prompted. Save the zip file (compressed folder) OfSFinancialTables_XXXXXXXX.zip (where the suffix is your provider's 8digit UKPRN) in a location on your network where you can access it later. The zip file/package contains one file: OfSFinancialTables_XXXXXXXX.xlsx (where the suffix is your provider's 8-digit UKPRN). This is a Microsoft Excel file. To complete the return, you will need to unzip the package. Microsoft Windows can perform this task without a third-party tool. Other operating systems will need an additional programme. When you have completed your application form, and are ready to submit it, log in again using your email address and password, and follow the instructions below. Once you have logged in to the 'OfS registration' page, click on 'Section 5a - Financial tables'. Click the 'Upload' button, and then use the 'Browse'\'Choose file' button to locate files on your computer or network. Click on 'Upload'. Submitting the file may take up to a few minutes, depending on how busy the server is. A message will appear on the screen to tell you the status of your submission. You may see one of the following messages:

	• Your files have been submitted and are waiting to be processed • Your files are being processed • Completed successfully. When the submission process has completed successfully, click the 'Result' button and save your results file on your own network. The results file will show a copy of the data that has been uploaded. If you wish to make changes to your financial tables after they have been uploaded, and you have not yet confirmed your submission is complete, then please re-upload the file to the portal and this will overwrite the previous submission and a new results file will be generated.
Section 5b – Other financial information for condition D	To upload condition D evidence, click on 'Section 5b'. Click the 'Upload' button, and then 'Browse\Choose file' to find the location of the file you wish to upload, and then click on 'Upload'. Repeat this process to upload further files. When you have selected all your files to be uploaded click the 'Submit' button. A 'Success' message will appear on the screen when the file(s) has/have been uploaded successfully.
Section 6 – Condition E7, E8 and E9 evidence	To upload condition E7, E8 and E9 evidence, click on 'Section 6'. Click the 'Upload' button, and then 'Browse\Choose file' to find the location of the file you wish to upload, and then click on 'Upload'. Repeat this process to upload further files. When you have selected all your files to be uploaded click the 'Submit' button. A 'Success' message will appear on the screen when the file(s) has/have been

	uploaded successfully. There will be no 'results' file generated for the upload of E7, E8 and E9 evidence.
Section 7: All other supporting evidence Please use the link within the portal to upload all other supporting evidence as part of the registration process. (Please note that if the links do not appear you may need to refresh the page or log out and log in again). Please ensure that evidence related to the initial conditions should be uploaded to the relevant sections above. Section 7 is for providers to upload the corporate structure and ownership diagram, investigations declaration form and, where applicable, the letter of non-objection from the Department of Education. If providers need to upload any other supporting documents which are not related to an initial condition but support the application, these can be uploaded here.	To upload other documents as part of the registration process, log in to the 'OfS registration' page and click on the link 'Section 7 – All other supporting evidence'. Click the 'Upload' button, and then 'Browse\Choose file' to find the location of the file you wish to upload, and then click on 'Upload'. Repeat this process to upload further files. When you have selected all your files to be uploaded click the 'Submit' button. A 'Success' message will appear on the screen when the file(s) has/have been uploaded successfully. There will be no 'results' file generated for the upload of supporting evidence.

Part 2: OfS registration checklist for providers

This checklist is designed to assist you in submitting a complete application and to help ensure that you have completed all the relevant documents in line with the application requirements notice. You can use the tick box function to keep track of which documents you have submitted.

By submitting your application via the OfS portal, you are confirming that:

- your application complies with the application requirements notice

- you have read this document

- you have uploaded all your documents, as set out below

- you have followed the necessary steps to make a valid submission, as set out below.

Documents

Have you uploaded **all** your documents according to:

- The category of registration you are applying for (see condition A1/A2)?

- The date you are submitting your application (see condition B7)?

- The length of time you have been in operation and providing higher education (see condition D)?

This checklist is not an exhaustive list of all the documentation you will be required to submit during the registration process. There is additional information we will require from you as your application progresses. For a detailed list of this, please see the application requirements notice.

Element of registration	Applicable to	What is required (for detailed submission requirements see the application requirements notice)	How to submit	Submission check
General	All providers	Completed application form 1	Section 1a of the OfS portal	☐
General	All providers	Completed application form 2	Section 1b of the OfS portal	☐
Use of sensitive term 'University' or 'University College'	Any provider proposing to be registered with a name containing 'University' or 'University college' in its business, or trading, name	Letter of non-objection from the Department of Education	Section 7 of the OfS portal	
General	All providers	A diagram showing the provider's corporate structure and ownership	Section 7 of OfS portal	☐
General	All providers	Completed investigations declaration form	Section 7 of OfS portal	☐
Condition A1	Providers applying in the Approved (fee cap) higher category	Access and participation plan	Section 2 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition A1	Providers applying in the Approved (fee cap) higher category	Supporting information about fees, targets and investment	Section 2 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition A2	Providers applying in the Approved (fee cap) category and intending to charge basic fees **and** providers in the Approved category	An access and participation statement and a link to where this is published	Section 2 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition B7	All providers	Quality plan	Section 3 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition B7	All providers	Evidence to support the quality plan	Section 3 of the OfS portal	☐

Condition B7	All providers	Itemised list of evidence to support the quality plan	Section 3 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition B8	All providers	Provider information form	Section 3 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition C5	All providers	Template contract(s) that set out terms and conditions for the provision of higher education.	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition C5	All providers	Template contracts (including terms and conditions) between a student and the provider for ancillary services	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition C5	All providers	Policies relating to the circumstances in which the provider may make changes to courses, qualifications or modes of study, teaching location and facilities, course fees and other related fees or charges	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition C5	All providers	Complaints process(es) related to the provision of higher education - where there are different processes for different categories of student, all must be submitted	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition C5	All providers	Any policy (or policies) that set out the terms for refund and compensation for higher education students	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition C5	All providers	A completed initial condition C5 declaration form	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐

Condition C5	All providers	A completed initial condition C5 submission checklist	Section 4 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition D	All providers	Financial and student number tables including scenario planning	Section 5a of the OfS portal	☐
Condition D	All providers	Financial commentary	Section 5b of the OfS portal	☐
Condition D	Providers which have financial support guaranteed by a third party	A legally binding obligation of financial support from that third party	Section 5b of the OfS portal	☐
Condition D	All providers	Financial scenario planning and accompanying commentary	Section 5b of the OfS portal	☐
Condition D	Providers that have been in operation and providing higher education for **more than three years**	Full audited (and where providers have subsidiaries consolidated) financial statements for the three most recent years	Section 5b of the OfS portal	☐
Condition D	Providers that have been in operation and providing higher education for **fewer than three years**	Full audited (and where providers have subsidiaries consolidated) financial statements for as many of the last three years as the provider has been providing higher education	Section 5b of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E7	All providers	All documents that establish the provider as an institution including (where applicable to the provider's legal form) its Royal Charter, memorandum and articles of association or trust deed	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E7	All providers	Governing body documents	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E7	All providers	Risk and audit documents	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐

Condition E7	All providers	Decision-making documents	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E7	All providers	Conflict of interests policy	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E7	All providers	Any other documents (including shareholder agreements) which contain rules which govern the operation of the provider's governing body	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E7	All providers	Business plan	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E8	All providers	A completed Fraud and public funding declaration form	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E8	All providers	Any documents that set out the provider's internal control processes relating to the prevention of fraud and protection of public funds	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E8	All providers	Any document(s) that identify risks and corresponding mitigations relating to the prevention of fraud and protection of public funds	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E8	All providers	A whistleblowing policy	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E8	All providers	An anti-bribery policy	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E8	All providers	Any other documents that set out how the provider prevents fraud or the inappropriate use of public funds	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E9	All providers	Any policies and/or procedures that explain how the provider ensures	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐

		individuals are fit and proper, including at least one of: • a description of its procedures for checking relevant individuals are fit and proper • a policy that sets this out		
Condition E9	All providers	Any policies and/or processes that the provider has in place to ensure that relevant individuals are able, by reason of their physical and mental health, to properly perform the tasks of the office or position to which they are appointed	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐
Condition E9	All providers	A completed fit and proper persons declaration form stating whether the provider is aware of any indicative matters as listed in E9.5 and E9.7 of initial condition E9 for any relevant individuals	Section 6 of the OfS portal	☐

Necessary steps to make a valid submission

Have you taken the following actions to make a valid submission?

Section	Steps	
Section 1a	Checked that your application form 1 does not contain any validation errors (if there are errors, you have rectified this before uploading).	☐
	Uploaded and submitted your application form 1 and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐
Section 1b	Checked that your application form 2 does not contain any validation errors (if there are errors, you have rectified this before uploading).	☐
	Uploaded and submitted your application form 2 and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐
Section 2 (where applicable)	Uploaded and submitted your access and participation form documents and received a 'completed successfully' message. **As set out above, only providers applying in the Approved (fee cap) category and intending to charge higher fees will have access to this section and are required to submit documents here.**	☐
Section 3	Uploaded all relevant condition B7 and B8 documents (as set out in the application requirements notice).	☐
	Submitted documents by clicking submit within Section 3 and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐
Section 4	Uploaded all relevant condition C5 documents (as set out in the application requirements notice).	☐
	Submitted documents by clicking submit within Section 4 and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐

Section 5a	Checked that your financial and student number tables do not contain any validation errors (if there are errors, you have rectified this before uploading).	☐
	Uploaded and submitted your financial and student number tables and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐
Section 5b	Uploaded all relevant condition D documents (as set out in the application requirements notice).	☐
	Submitted documents by clicking submit within Section 5b and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐
Section 6	Uploaded all relevant condition E7, E8 and E9 documents (as set out in the application requirements notice).	☐
	Submitted documents by clicking submit within Section 6 and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐
Section 7	Uploaded any other relevant documents.	☐
	Submitted any relevant other documents by clicking submit within Section 7 and received a 'completed successfully' message.	☐

Finalising and submitting your application

14. Once you have uploaded all the supporting evidence for your application, you should confirm that all information is accurate and complete and ready to submit. To do this:

    - navigate to the OfS registration homepage (extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/OfSReg)

    - click the check box in the section highlighted in yellow

    - click the 'Submit' button.

15. This will notify the OfS registration team that your submission has been completed.

16. You can upload individual documents when they are ready but they will not be submitted to us until you have followed the steps above.

17. Once you submit your application, the portal will be closed and you will be unable to submit further information unless you specifically request to do so. For this reason, we suggest that your nominated registration contact should collate and submit the full application at one time.

18. We require providers to submit information throughout the application process. We will engage with you when further information is required during the application process and reopen the portal to receive these submissions.

How will I know that you have received my application?

19. When you submit your application, the registration portal will provide you with an on-screen confirmation that you have successfully submitted, and you will receive an automatically generated email confirmation.

20. Once you have submitted your application, the portal will be locked, and you will be unable to make changes to the documents submitted. This is to ensure that we have an audit trail of documents submitted, and that we are assessing the correct version of your evidence.

21. If you have any queries or wish to change any of the submitted documents after you have finalised your submission, you should contact us at regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk as soon as possible. If you need to change any of the submitted documents, we will then reopen the registration portal to allow you to upload a new document to ensure that we use the latest version in assessing your application. Please note that the automated email confirmation will only be generated when you submit your application for the first time and will not be repeated if you subsequently submit further documents via the portal through the assessment process.

What happens next?

22. A member of the OfS registration team will check that we have all the information we need to assess your application. We will contact you if we believe any information is missing from your application.