

Office for
Students



Monitoring capital funding allocated in financial year 2024-25

Guidance for higher education providers

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Enquiries to capitalgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Executive summary

Action: Higher education providers that have received either formula or competitive capital funding (or both) should upload their returns to the OfS portal by **Wednesday 16 April 2025**.

1. This document provides guidance for higher education providers on how to complete annual monitoring returns for formula and competitive capital funding.
2. The Office for Students (OfS) is required to provide assurance on the public grant funding that it pays to providers. The monitoring approach set out in this document is designed to meet these external requirements, which are audited by the National Audit Office at the end of each financial year.

Scope of this monitoring return

3. The OfS currently provides two types of capital funding:
 - a. Allocations of formula funding for eligible providers.
 - b. Competitive funding for three-year projects for those providers which submitted successful bids in summer 2022.
4. This monitoring return is only concerned with capital funding of either type **received during financial year 2024-25 (FY2024-25), from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**. This document is therefore relevant to:
 - a. Approximately 110 providers in receipt of an allocation of formula capital in July 2024.¹
 - b. Approximately 73 providers that received payment(s) toward a competitive capital funding project in the current round.

Key deadlines and actions

5. **Eligible providers will need to complete a monitoring workbook (Excel format) and return this to us by 16 April 2025**. The workbook should be uploaded to the OfS portal.
6. Individual workbooks will become available on the OfS portal on 26 March 2025; these will be prepopulated with data, including the capital allocations that we require providers to report on.

Further monitoring

7. As part of our monitoring of competitive capital funding, we're continuing to sample evidence of spending from selected projects throughout each financial year. We will contact the final selection of projects to be sampled separately in April 2025, with our instruction guidance and further information. This final round will then mean that we will have sampled spending for all projects and providers at specific points throughout the funding period. Completed returns for this strand of the monitoring process will also need to be uploaded to the OfS portal **by 16 April 2025**.

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/formula-capital-funding-2024-allocations/.

Introduction

8. The OfS's capital funding supports investment in higher education learning and teaching and is paid on a financial year basis (1 April to 31 March); therefore funds for FY 2024-25 must be spent in full by 31 March 2025.
9. We require all higher education providers in receipt of our capital funding during financial year 2024-25 (FY2024-25) to submit a monitoring return to account for their expenditure. This will allow us to satisfy the government's grant standards and audit requirements, which are audited and reviewed by the National Audit Office at the end of each financial year.
10. 'Capital funding' and 'capital grant' mean funding allocated in respect of capital expenditure incurred by the provider. Capital expenditure means money used to acquire or maintain fixed assets, such as land, buildings and equipment, that is normally itemised as capital in the provider's audited annual accounts. It does not include expenditure on renting, hiring or leasing of equipment and facilities. In describing money being 'spent' or 'used' in this document, we are using the two words synonymously.
11. There are two annexes to this document:
 - Annex A sets out the reporting requirements covering both types of capital funding.
 - Annex B provides further information on how to use our online portal for submission of the report.

Funding in scope of this monitoring return

12. The OfS provides two types of capital funding:
 - a. Formula funding allocations for eligible providers.²
 - b. Competitive project funding for those providers that submitted successful bids to us in 2022.³
13. This monitoring return is only concerned with capital funding of either type **received during financial year 2024-25 (FY2024-25), from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**. Both types of capital funding are subject to our general terms and conditions of funding.⁴
14. The April 2025 monitoring form requires a breakdown for the spend of both types of capital funding, as at the following dates:
 - a. Funds spent by 31 March 2025 and how the grant was used.
 - b. Funds not spent by 31 March 2025.

² We published the formula allocations for the financial year 2024-25 in July 2024 as part of this publication – see [Formula capital funding: 2024 allocations - Office for Students](#).

³ See [Capital funding for financial years 2022-23 to 2024-25 - Office for Students](#).

⁴ See [Terms and conditions of funding for 2024-25 - Office for Students](#).

- c. (For competitive project funding only) final reporting questions on initial impacts and outcomes, and any ongoing works.
15. Funding spent by 31 March 2025 includes contractually committed expenditure that is clearly identified as such. In accounting terms, you would expect to be able to accrue for this expenditure to reflect the point at which the contractual commitment was made. Providers **must not** include in this monitoring return for financial year 2024-25:
- a. Any capital expenditure that has already been attributed to OfS capital funding allocations for previous years. For example, if a provider included, in a capital monitoring return to the OfS for 2023-24, expenditure that was contractually committed, it must not include the payment during 2024-25 of that contracted sum in its monitoring return for 2024-25.
 - b. Any capital expenditure that the provider has attributed or will attribute to capital grants from any other UK public funding source.
 - c. Any costs which will be incurred after March 2025.
16. All capital funding must be spent in full and in accordance with our terms and conditions no later than 31 March 2025. This information will serve as the formal final report for the competitive capital funding projects. If there is a risk that any funding will not be spent in time, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss this with you.

Key deadlines

17. The capital funding monitoring templates, for completion by the relevant providers, will be available to download from the OfS portal after the final March 2025 competitive capital grant payments have been made.
18. Individual workbooks will become available on the OfS portal on **26 March**. These workbooks will be prepopulated with data, including the capital allocations that we require providers to report on. Ahead of this date, we have released a template copy of the monitoring workbook alongside this document, which is available to download from the OfS website.⁵ Providers can use this template to draft their formal submission.
19. Providers must ensure that their completed capital funding monitoring information is uploaded to the OfS portal by **Wednesday 16 April 2025**. Each provider must have monitoring and reporting information reviewed and approved by its accountable officer. The information has to provide assurance that the funding has been used in the year for the purposes awarded, and in compliance with our terms and conditions.
20. If you have any questions, please email capitalgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Submitting your monitoring return

21. The capital funding monitoring return is a Microsoft Excel workbook that will be available to download from the 'Capital funding monitoring 2024-25' section of the OfS portal

⁵ See [Monitoring of capital funding allocated in the financial year 2024-25: Guidance for higher education providers - Office for Students](#).

(<https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/data>). The workbook will be made available for access on 26 March 2025, after the final payments of competitive capital funding have been paid, to ensure all data is accurate for each provider.

22. **Please note that before you can access the workbook, an OfS portal user administrator at your provider will need to grant you access.**
23. Within the monitoring return workbook, the 'Formula allocation' worksheet is only displayed for providers that received a formula allocation. Similarly, the 'Competition funding' worksheets are only displayed for providers that received this funding during FY2024-25.
24. The tables contain two different cell types:
 - **white cells**, where we require data to be entered where appropriate to your provider
 - **blue cells**, which have been either pre-populated with data from another source, or pre-filled by an underlying calculation.
25. When completing the workbook, you may see automatic validation errors, highlighting where data is not feasible; for example, where a negative number has been entered in a column. Please correct and clear any validation errors before submitting the workbook to us.
26. When you are satisfied that the information is complete and credible, the workbook should be uploaded to the OfS portal by the deadline. Please note that the portal is usually very busy on the deadline day itself, which can cause the upload process to take longer than usual.
27. The workbook includes a validation check for the sign-off sheet. We do not require hard copy signatures; rather, we use this sheet to confirm that the submitted information has been reviewed and approved by the accountable officer at the provider. The sign-off sheet will be pre-populated with the name of the accountable officer, to ensure the correct person completes the approval of the monitoring return. If your accountable officer has changed or if there are any difficulties obtaining their approval by the deadline, please let us know via capitalgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk.
28. After the capital monitoring workbook has been successfully uploaded to the portal, you will be able to download it for your records. This will be the latest copy of your workbook.
29. You should keep a clear audit trail for the compilation of your data return for at least five years. It should be possible for you to provide a clear rationale for the figures, and to supply any underlying data used to support your return if for example requested by auditors.

How the information will be used

30. We will use the information gathered through the monitoring process to assess whether providers have met our requirements for the expenditure of capital funding and whether any funds should be reclaimed.

How the Freedom of Information Act affects monitoring returns

31. The OfS is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, data protection legislation and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.⁶ If we receive a request for information related to the capital funding monitoring, we will ensure any information that is exempt is protected and. We will consult with you as appropriate.

⁶ Further information on the Freedom of Information Act is available on the ICO website: [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

Annex A: Table-by-table guide to completing your monitoring return

Cover sheet

1. Your provider's capital funding allocation paid across in the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is shown. This sum includes, as appropriate:
 - OfS formula capital grant for the financial year 2024-25
 - OfS capital funding from the bidding competition for the financial year 2024-25.
2. Any workbook validation errors will be listed on the cover sheet, as well as some further instructions to help you to complete the workbook.

Assurance over formula capital funding for FY2024-25

3. The 'Formula allocation' worksheet is displayed only for providers that have received a formula capital allocation in this financial year.

Table F1: OfS formula capital funding total expenditure

4. Your provider's formula capital allocation in the financial year 2024-25 will be pre-filled.
5. You must complete OfS formula capital funding spent by 31 March 2025. This should include contractually committed expenditure as described in paragraph 15 of the main document.
6. The expenditure you report in Table F1 should only relate to that incurred in the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 that was met from OfS formula capital funding. Record your provider's expenditure to the nearest pound.
7. The OfS formula capital funding not spent by 31 March 2025 is automatically calculated based on the data entered into Table F1.

Table F2: Confirmation of funding spent

8. Table F2 collects information on how your OfS formula capital allocation for 2024-25 was spent. Please provide a breakdown of OfS funding used for each type of expenditure, using the options provided in Table F2. This will enable the OfS to collect consistent information across the sector to assess how the funding was used.

Table F3: Funding not spent commentary

9. The workbook automatically calculates the amount of OfS formula capital funding that has not been fully spent, based on the data entered into Table F1. If applicable, you should provide a short commentary to explain why any formula funding has not been spent.

Assurance over competition funding allocation for FY2024-25

10. The two 'Competition funding' worksheets are only displayed for providers that received this funding in financial year 2024-25.
11. Information is collected over two worksheets – one to provide us with assurances over delivery and project spend, and a second containing final reporting questions to help us understand and evaluate the impact of this funding programme. Both worksheets will need to be completed.
12. Capital grants paid during financial year 2024-25 through the bidding competition must have been used:
 - on expenditure items included in the provider's successful bid
 - in accordance with any other terms and conditions that we specified when we awarded the grant or as per any changes to projects approved by us.

Table B1: OfS bidding competition capital funding total expenditure

13. Your provider's OfS bidding competition capital funding for financial year 2024-25 will be pre-filled.
14. We understand that the OfS bidding competition capital may be only a proportion of your provider's total capital expenditure on the project. Table B1 should relate to expenditure met from OfS competitive capital funding provided within FY2024-25. Record your provider's expenditure to the nearest pound.
15. The OfS bidding competition capital funding not spent by 31 March 2025 is automatically calculated based on the data entered into Table B1.

Table B2: Confirmation of funding spent usage

16. Table B2 collects information on how this funding was spent during the financial year.
17. A commentary should be added to confirm that the funding provided was used for the purposes described in your provider's bid for capital funding or any subsequent changes agreed with us. We encourage providers to submit a concise response. Please include information that will give us a clear understanding of how capital funding has been used and achieved value for money. Providers could also include a brief summary of the main items of expenditure and how these relate to those included in their bid.
18. Providers should respond relative to the current position of their project.

Table B3: Funding not spent commentary

19. Table B1 will automatically any unspent competitive capital funding, based on the data entered. If applicable, you should provide a short commentary to explain why the funding has not been spent in full.

Assurance over competition funding outcome for financial year 2024-25

20. Tables O1 to O4 are used to collect information on what the supported capital project has delivered. This information will help us understand how providers have used OfS competitive capital funding and to understand the value of the overall investment for the sector. The responses provided here will be supplemental to the ongoing monitoring that providers have delivered between FY2022-23 and FY2024-25.

Table O1: Confirmation of project end date

21. Table O1 collects information on the completion status of your capital project.

22. A commentary should be added to confirm whether your capital project has been completed or if there are any works continuing beyond March 2025. We encourage providers to submit a concise response. Please include information that will give us a clear understanding of the current status of your capital project and when you expect the project to finish and be available for use by students.

23. Providers should respond relative to the current position of their project. If your project is now fully complete, please confirm or advise us if it will continue with other investment and conclude at a later date.

Table O2: Project adaptations commentary

24. Table O2 collects information on how the capital project compares to the proposed project included in your original bid, submitted in 2022.

25. A commentary should only be added to explain the changes that have been made if the capital project differs significantly from the project included in the original bid. We encourage providers to submit a concise response. Please include information that will give us a clear understanding of how the project differs and achieves the aims set out in the original bid.

Table O3: Final project progress commentary

26. Table O3 collects information on how the capital project progressed throughout the funded period.

27. A commentary should only be added to explain the delays encountered, as well as detailing the contributing factors and what actions were taken to overcome these. We encourage providers to submit a concise response.

Table O4: Environmental sustainability

28. We are seeking assurance that providers have considered environmental sustainability as part of their project and the works being undertaken. Please set out the actions you took to address environmental sustainability and reduction of energy usage, where relevant, throughout the project.

29. We are also interested in good practice case studies to showcase to government – so please indicate if you are content for us to share your information and if you have more details or examples that could be provided.

Validation sheet

30. Validation checks are shown on the validation sheet with explanatory text on any validation errors. Validation errors must be corrected before your monitoring return can be accepted as a submission by us. Please check your form carefully before uploading it. You will still be able to upload your workbook if it is invalid, but we will not be able to accept it as a submission.

Sign-off sheet

31. The capital funding monitoring return for financial year 2024-25 must be authorised by the accountable officer of the provider. As part of the declaration, the accountable officer must confirm there is no double counting of any capital expenditure.
32. To gain further assurance that the accountable officer has confirmed that the information provided is correct, we ask that the table on this sign-off sheet be completed in full, including the details of the accountable officer. It is also important that the box, 'Return has been checked by the accountable officer' is completed, to confirm agreement, and that a date is provided for audit purposes. If we need to clarify any of the information returned to us, we will contact the accountable officer in the first instance.

Annex B: FAQs for using the OfS portal

Assigning yourself to the 'Capital funding monitoring for the financial year 2024-25' survey area

1. You will need to be a registered user of the OfS portal to be assigned to the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 survey area, from which you will download your Excel workbook as a single zipped file.
2. If you have not registered on the OfS portal before, you will need to ask an OfS portal user administrator at your provider to create an account for you. Each person who requires access to the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 workbook will need to be registered with their own account. You will need to be assigned to the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 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 capital funding monitoring 2024-25 survey area.**
3. 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

4. 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.
5. 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 capital funding monitoring 2024-25 survey area has not appeared on my login page even after I have been assigned to it

6. 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 capital funding monitoring 2024-25 workbook

7. Once you have been assigned to the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 survey area, log in to the OfS portal and you will see a link for the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 area under the 'Home' section. This link will take you to the page to download and upload the capital funding

monitoring workbook. There are a number of pages of sections and groups that may be accessed on the portal – please scroll through these to reach the ‘Capital funding monitoring 2024-25’ section.

8. To download the workbook, click on the ‘Download’ button. You will receive a zipped file, which will contain your Excel document. 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.
9. Save the workbook to a memorable location on your computer. If there are any issues with downloading your workbook, please contact portal@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Completing your workbook

10. The data return 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 or text 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.
11. **We strongly 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 workbook

12. Once you have completed the workbook, you will need to submit it to the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 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.

13. Submit the workbook as follows:
 - a. Navigate to the capital funding monitoring 2024-25 area on the OfS portal.
 - b. Click on the ‘Upload’ button under the section named ‘Please download all files, and upload your completed Excel workbook here’.
 - c. Browse for your workbook, 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 whether your file is waiting to be processed, is 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 whether your workbook is valid and has successfully uploaded.
14. 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.
15. 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 workbook

My workbook contains validation errors

16. The monitoring form includes validation checks. Please check your form carefully and complete the sign-off fields on the 'Sign-off' sheet before uploading it.

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

17. 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 workbook but I cannot view the results package

18. The results package can only be downloaded and viewed from the same OfS portal account that uploaded that particular workbook. To view the results package for a specific workbook you will need to upload the same workbook using your own portal account. Note that this will increase the submission number.



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www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/