



Condition of registration F1: transparency information

Guidance for providers on submitting the
Transparency return 2020

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The following annexes are published as separate documents:

Annex A: Example transparency return 2020

Annex B: Example transparency return 2020 tables for publication

Summary

Purpose

1. This document sets out guidance for English higher education providers that are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) on completing the Transparency return that is a condition of registration.

Key points

2. The Transparency return 2020 must be completed by English higher education providers that are registered with the OfS up to and including **Monday 3 February 2020**.
3. The deadline for the submission of the Transparency return 2020 is **noon on Thursday 23 April 2020**.
4. This technical guidance must be read in conjunction with 'Regulatory advice 8: Guidance for providers about condition of registration F1: transparency information'¹.
5. The data collected in the Transparency return 2020 relates to:
 - the number of applications for admission on to higher education courses starting in 2019-20 (in-year data) and 2018-19 (full-year data) that the provider has received
 - the number of offers made by the provider in relation to those applications
 - the number of those offers accepted and the number of those who go on to register at the provider.
6. In each case, the information must include those numbers by reference to the following:
 - the gender of the individuals to which they relate
 - their ethnicity
 - their socioeconomic background, measured using the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
7. Providers will be supplied with information on the completion of 2018-19 entrants and attainment of 2018-19 qualifiers. This is based on 2018-19 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student data, HESA Alternative Provider student data and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data. Providers must publish on their websites the information on applications, offers, acceptances and registrations, along with the completion and attainment data. More information about this is available in Section 3.
8. Where a provider does not have any relevant applications to report in the Transparency return 2020, they are required to submit a nil return.
9. Providers who are required to complete the Transparency return 2020 but were not required to complete the Transparency return 2019 should submit their 2019-20 in-year data and submit a nil return for their 2018-19 full-year data.

¹ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-8-guidance-for-providers-about-condition-of-registration-f1-transparency-information/

Action required

Workbooks to complete will be available to providers in February 2020 to download from the OfS portal². The Transparency return 2020 must be uploaded to the OfS portal Transparency return 2020 area by **noon on Thursday 23 April 2020**.

A data verification phase will then run, during which the OfS will review returns, and contact providers where potential data quality issues have been identified. Data verification will run until **noon on Thursday 21 May 2020**, by which time all data queries raised by the OfS must be resolved and sign-off sheets, signed by the accountable officer, must be uploaded to the OfS portal and the completion of the return confirmed.

Providers must prepare and publish their final signed-off Transparency return 2020 information on their website by **5 June 2020**.

Section 1: Introduction

Why are we requiring providers to complete and submit the Transparency return 2020?

10. Providers are required to complete and submit transparency information to satisfy condition of registration F1, as set out in the OfS regulatory framework³. Section 9 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) and the Higher Education (Transparency Condition and Financial Support) (England) Regulations 2018, require the OfS to ensure that the ongoing conditions of registration includes a transparency information condition. The transparency information may contribute to, but does not replace, the requirement for a self-assessment within an access and participation plan, as set out in Regulatory notice 1⁴.

Notes on terminology

11. All references to years in this document are to academic years (from 1 August to 31 July) unless otherwise specified. We acknowledge that providers will have a variety of admission points for their students; however, we require the data to be returned on the basis of the academic year running from 1 August to 31 July.

Transparency return data collection process 2020

12. To complete the Transparency return 2020, providers must download, complete and upload a Microsoft Excel workbook containing tables populated with data relating to applications, offers, acceptances and registrations (AOAR) for the academic years 2019-20 (in-year data) and 2018-19 (full-year data). For the 2019-20 in-year AOAR data, only applications with a known final outcome before **31 January 2020** should be included. Providers must also provide a link to the location on their website where their transparency information will be published. The

² See <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/data>

³ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/the-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/

⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance/

Transparency return 2020 workbook can be downloaded and, once completed, uploaded using the OfS portal⁵. The completed workbook must be uploaded to the OfS portal by **noon on Thursday 23 April 2020**. An example of the tables that providers are required to complete and upload is provided in Annex A, available alongside this document⁶.

13. Once the Transparency return 2020 has been uploaded to the OfS portal, a results file will be made available for download which will contain the uploaded data and a sign-off sheet. The sign-off sheet must be signed by the provider's accountable officer once all data verification queries (if any) have been addressed. It must then be uploaded to the portal and the completion of the return confirmed⁷ by **noon on 21 May 2020**. We advise providers to upload their data to the OfS portal as soon as possible. The results file will also contain the uploaded AOAR data in the format for publication. Attainment and completion data in the format that providers are required to publish on their website by **5 June 2020** will also be supplied through the OfS portal. Details of how to access this data will be available in due course. An illustrative sample of the tables that providers are required to publish is provided in Annex B, available alongside this document⁸.
14. Further information on how the Transparency return 2020 workbook should be downloaded, completed and uploaded is provided in Section 3.
15. For further information about publishing the transparency information see Section 3 of this document and page 8 of Regulatory advice 8: Guidance for providers about condition of registration F1: transparency information⁹.
16. Failure to provide the required data and the sign-off sheet by the deadline may constitute a breach of conditions F1 and F3 of the Regulatory framework.

Timetable

Table A: Outline timetable

February 2020	Transparency return 2020 workbooks available to providers on the Transparency return 2020 area of the OfS portal.
Noon on 23 April 2020	Deadline for uploading completed Transparency return 2020 to the OfS portal.
24 April 2020	Sign-off page and completion confirmation available on the OfS Transparency return 2020 portal area and data verification period begins.

⁵ See <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/data>

⁶ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-on-submitting-the-transparency-return-2020/

⁷ Details on how to confirm completion of the Transparency return 2020 are given in Section 3 and will be included on the main page of the Transparency return 2020 area of the OfS portal.

⁸ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-on-submitting-the-transparency-return-2020/

⁹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-8-guidance-for-providers-about-condition-of-registration-f1-transparency-information/

Noon on 21 May 2020	Deadline for resolving data verification queries, uploading completed sign-off sheet and confirming completion of the return on the OfS portal.
5 June 2020	Deadline for providers to publish transparency information on their website (see Section 3 for further information).
Summer 2020	OfS publication of sector analysis.

Queries and further information

17. If you have general queries relating to the Transparency return 2020, please email regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk. For technical queries, please email transparency@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Section 2: Definitions

18. This section defines the terms that we use in Section 3 in the guidance on how to complete the applications, offers, acceptances and registrations (AOAR) tables required as part of the transparency information condition.

The student population

19. You must include applications from UK-domiciled¹⁰ students to start study in 2018-19 (full-year data) and 2019-20 (in-year data) that would, if successful, lead to registration with your provider:

- for courses which lead to a recognised¹¹ undergraduate higher education award. Undergraduate awards are first degrees (including foundation degrees), integrated masters' programmes, and other awards at, or below, the level of a first degree that do not normally require a previous undergraduate qualification. This includes medical degrees.
- for apprenticeship programmes, where these include a recognised higher education award at Levels 4, 5 or 6.
- for a foundation year where these are integrated into a full higher education qualification.
- for the 2019-20 in-year data, only applications with a known final outcome on or before **31 January 2020** should be included.

20. You must **not** include applications for:

- courses where you teach students who are registered with another provider under a subcontractual arrangement. A subcontractual arrangement (sometimes described as a 'franchise arrangement') is a relationship, based on a formal contract, in which a body with degree awarding powers (the lead provider) allows another provider (the delivery provider) to deliver all or part of a programme which has been designed, approved and owned by the

¹⁰ A student is UK-domiciled if their permanent home address is in the UK.

¹¹ For definition of 'recognised' see paragraph 34 of 'Funding for academic year 2019-20: Approach and data collection' available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/funding-for-academic-year-2019-20-approach-and-data-collection/

degree awarding body. The lead provider or subcontracting provider retains overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements

- postgraduate courses
- postgraduate apprenticeships
- the study of credit only
- courses that will be delivered wholly overseas.

Additionally, for 2019-20 in-year AOAR data, applications should not be included where the final outcome of the application is not known. For example, where:

- an application has been received but an offer or rejection is yet to be made
- an offer has been made but the applicant is yet to accept or decline
- an acceptance has been confirmed but the applicant is yet to register or confirm they will not be registering.

Applications for entry in the 2019-20 academic year with unknown final outcomes at 31 January 2020 should be included in the Transparency return **2021** as part of the 2019-20 full-year AOAR data.

Progression agreements

21. Sometimes a progression agreement is in place, for example from a foundation degree delivered by the delivery provider to an honours degree at the lead provider, and the agreement offers guaranteed progression on successful completion of the foundation degree. In this case, you should record students progressing from one to the other as a new application, if those students take up the option to continue on to the full degree programme. For other agreements, which do not include guaranteed progression, students should be counted as a new application if they are offered a place on the degree programme.

Joint courses

22. 'Joint courses' are courses made available by two (or more) providers with degree awarding powers, in which each provider has responsibility for the provision of education to students. On successful completion, these courses lead to a joint award, or dual or multiple awards, from each provider involved. Teaching may be provided in varying proportions by the providers involved.
23. For joint courses, the provider a student is registered with is the provider to which the student is assigned for data reporting purposes when they start their course. Providers should determine at the outset what proportion of the initial entry cohort should be reported by each provider. Reflecting this proportion, each student should then be assigned to a single provider when they start their course, and retain this assignment until they finish it.
24. Applications, offers and acceptances that do not lead to a registration should be returned by the provider to which they would have been assigned for data reporting purposes had they led to a registration. Where this is not clear, the records should be split between the relevant providers by determining the aggregate data and then splitting this data between the providers, according to the proportion mentioned in paragraph 23. For example, in the case of a joint course between two providers where each provider reports half of the students that register, if there were 300 applications from females, each provider would include 150 of these

applications in their data. This may result in a non-whole number of applications being reported for each provider and could also lead to the acceptance column containing a slightly different split of students than end up being assigned to your provider on registration. The same application must not be recorded multiple times by different providers, and providers should ensure they record how they determined which applications would be reported by each provider.

Applications

25. An application is any formal, documented request to be considered for a place at the provider. Typically, this will be either through UCAS or through a formal application process hosted by the provider. Sometimes application processes are more informal, and discussions with providers may lead to an offer of a place. When this is the case, you should record the discussions as an application only if an offer has been made. Similarly, informal discussions with potential students in the context of the UCAS clearing process should not be counted as applications unless the potential student adds you as a clearing choice through UCAS.
26. For the purposes of the transparency information, we are interested in the number of applications rather than the number of individuals making an application. For example, a single individual who applies for two courses at a single provider would be counted in the data as two applications.
27. Only applications to start in the relevant academic year should be included (2018-19 for the full-year data and 2019-20 for the in-year data). Deferred applications should be included in the data for the year in which the student intends to start the course.
28. For the 2019-20 in-year AOAR data, only applications with known final outcomes on or before **31 January 2020** should be included.

Offers made

29. You should record an application as leading to an offer when you have formally offered a place to the student for the relevant academic year, regardless of whether or not this is conditional on forthcoming results. If a prospective student applies for two courses and you offer a place on a single course, this should be recorded as a single offer. All offers must be linked to applications, so the number of offers recorded cannot be greater than the number of applications.

Offers accepted

30. You should record an offer as accepted when the prospective student formally accepts a place at the provider for the relevant academic year. If a prospective student formally accepts an offer but defers taking up their place until a later year, their application should not be included in the table but instead recorded in the data for the year they intend to start the course. For UCAS applications, an offer is defined as accepted when an applicant is placed to that application choice at the end of the cycle. All acceptances should be linked to offers, and so the number of acceptances cannot be greater than the number of offers.

Registrations

31. You should record an application as leading to a registration if the student begins their course and does not leave within two weeks of the start date. This ensures that the number of registrations for a given year will align with the number of entrants as calculated by the OfS

and HESA in various other analyses. All registrations must be linked to accepted offers, and so the number of registrations cannot be greater than the number of offers accepted.

Ethnicity

32. You should group applications into the following ethnic groups: Asian, black, mixed, other, white or unknown, as per the applicant's self-declaration. The unknown category should be used only exceptionally, typically where applications for the 2018-19 year (full-year data) or 2019-20 (in-year data) were not accepted and therefore ethnicity data never gathered or where the information has been refused. We will require justification where a large number of unknown applicant ethnicities are submitted in your Transparency return 2020, as we expect providers to gather complete data about the ethnicity of applicants. Where new data is acquired for a previously unknown ethnicity, for example if the ethnicity of an applicant is acquired at the registration stage but was unknown at the application stage, then the newly acquired known ethnicity data for that application should be used across all AOAR stages.
33. Table B presents the ethnic groupings used by UCAS and in the Transparency return 2020 and how these groupings map to the HESA and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) ethnicity codes.

Table B: Mapping of ethnic grouping to HESA and ILR codes

Ethnic grouping	HESA codes	ILR codes
Asian	31, 32, 33, 34, 39	39, 40, 41, 42, 43
Black	21, 22, 29	44, 45, 46
Mixed	41, 42, 43, 49	35, 36, 37, 38
Other	50, 80	47, 98
White	10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19	31, 32, 33, 34
Unknown	90, 98	99

The Index of Multiple Deprivation

34. For the purposes of the Transparency return 2020 the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) will be used. The English IMD measures relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Super Output Areas, LSOAs) in England, and ranks LSOAs in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). Further information about the English IMD is available on the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government website.¹²
35. Due to the Transparency return 2019 submission date being close to the end of the 2018-19 academic year, providers who completed the Transparency return 2019 should use the English IMD **2015** for their 2018-19 full-year AOAR data.
36. For all providers submitting the Transparency return 2020, the English IMD **2019** should be used for all 2019-20 in-year AOAR data.

¹² Available at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019 and www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015

37. Similar measures of deprivation are available for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland but these are not directly comparable with the English IMD. We therefore require English IMD to be returned only for applications from English-domiciled applicants; students domiciled in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should be placed in the IMD 'N/A' category.
38. For applications through UCAS, both English IMD 2015 and English IMD 2019 are included in the End of Cycle Provider EXACT record supply (PERS) extract. The English IMD 2019 should be used for the 2019-20 in-year AOAR data and the English IMD 2015 should be used for the 2018-19 full-year AOAR data. For applications that do not come through UCAS, providers will need to derive the English IMD quintile from the applicant's postcode. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) offers free English IMD 2019 and 2015 lookup tools¹³. This provides English IMD data in a single download for up to 10,000 postcodes. The tool requires an Excel file or CSV file containing the relevant postcodes to be uploaded and the relevant English IMD information, along with several other data items, will be returned. Note that the MHCLG tool groups English IMDs into deciles, which will need to be converted into quintiles in for the Transparency return 2020. The mapping of English IMD deciles to quintiles is given in Table C.

Table C: Mapping of English IMD deciles to quintiles

English IMD deciles	English IMD quintiles
1, 2	1
3, 4	2
5, 6	3
7, 8	4
9, 10	5

39. The English IMD quintile reported for an application should be based on the postcode of the applicant at the application stage. If the postcode linked to an application is known at the application stage but is updated at any stage after application, the English IMD quintile linked to the application should be based on postcode at the application stage.

Gender

40. Applications should be returned in the following gender groups: female, male, or other, as per the applicant's self-declaration. The 'unknown' category should be used only exceptionally, typically where applications for the 2018-19 year (full-year data) or 2019-20 (in-year data) were not accepted and therefore gender data never gathered or where the information has been refused. We will require justification where a large number of 'unknown' applicant genders are submitted.
41. Following guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit, we advise the use of 'other' for people who associate with the terms intersex, androgyne, intergender, ambigender, gender fluid, polygender and genderqueer.

¹³ Available at <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/imd/2019> and <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/imd/2015>

42. Only the gender categories of male and female are available in the PERS extract for UCAS applicants, although providers may adjust the data provided by UCAS if they are made aware of different information to that held by UCAS. Where the gender linked to an application is corrected, then the corrected gender data for that application should be used for the application, offer, acceptance and registration stages.

Mode

43. Applications through UCAS or directly to the provider for apprenticeships should be returned in the 'Apprenticeship' section of the AOAR tables, regardless of mode.
44. All other applications should be returned in either the 'full-time' or 'part-time' section of the table.
45. An application should be returned as full-time if the student would normally be expected to attend the provider, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the course year, and during that time they are expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement.
46. An application should be returned as part-time where the applicant has not applied for an apprenticeship and the course applied for does not meet the above definition for full-time.

Section 3: Completing and submitting the Transparency return 2020

Compiling the data

47. For providers that use UCAS, much of the data required for the Transparency return 2020 is collected by UCAS and shared with providers through the PERS End of Cycle extract. The 2019 PERS End of Cycle extract, which includes the English IMD 2015 and 2019 fields, will be available to download from UCAS between 19 December 2019 and 23 January 2020. We advise providers to download their PERS as soon as possible after it becomes available.
48. The undergraduate scheme PERS extract only contains data relating to full-time applications submitted via UCAS and full-time direct applications that lead to a registration with the provider which will have been reported to UCAS as a 'Record of Prior Acceptance' (RPA).
49. The conservatoire scheme PERS extract contains data relating to full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate applications submitted via UCAS and direct applications that lead to registration with the provider which will have been reported to UCAS as a RPA.
50. The UCAS PERS data will not contain all applications. For example, part-time applications (for the undergraduate scheme PERS), direct applications that do not lead to a registration (for example, because the student does not receive an offer) and applications after clearing will not be included. Offers made after 30 June in a UCAS cycle will also be excluded from the PERS extract. In compiling your AOAR data you will need to add the information about these individual students to the data provided in the UCAS PERS extract.
51. The OfS, working with UCAS, has developed a data collection tool for providers for recording applications, which is available to download from the OfS website¹⁴. The tool allows you to copy your UCAS PERS extract data into it and also record applications not present in the

¹⁴ See <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/transparency-return-2020/>

PERS extract. The tool compiles the aggregate data on applications, offers, acceptances and registrations that you are required to submit.

52. Use of the PERS extract and data collection tool is not mandatory. You can use your own systems, as long as the way in which you record the application data enables you to provide aggregated data in the format required by the OfS for submission.

Downloading the workbook

53. The Microsoft Excel workbook containing the tables to be completed for 2019-20 in-year and 2018-19 full-year AOAR data will be available on the OfS portal in February 2020. We will contact the accountable officer of each provider to notify them that the workbook is available.

Completing the workbook

54. Providers will be required to copy their aggregate application data (either from the OfS data collection tool or from their own systems) into the workbook which will need to be submitted to the OfS.
55. The downloadable workbook will contain three worksheets, as shown in Table D.

Table D: Worksheets included in the Transparency return 2020

Name of worksheet	Description
AOAR1920InYearRawData	Contains the in-year table for applications, offers, acceptances and registrations data for students applying to start studying in 2019-20, which needs to be completed.
AOAR1819FullRawData	Contains the full-year table for applications, offers, acceptances and registrations data for students applying to start studying in 2018-19, which needs to be completed.
Definitions	Contains definitions to assist with completing the tables.

56. When copying and pasting the aggregate AOAR data into the workbook, the 'Paste Special - Values' option should be used to ensure the formatting of the workbook is not corrupted, as corrupted workbooks may fail to upload to the OfS portal successfully.
57. Where a provider does not have any relevant applications (for example, postgraduate-only providers) for either the 2019-20 or 2018-19 academic years they are still required to submit a nil return for that year. There is a dropdown menu for each table in the workbook to indicate the submission of a nil return for the 2019-20 in-year data and 2018-19 full-year data.
58. Where a provider was not required to complete the Transparency return 2019 but is required to complete the Transparency return 2020, they should submit a nil return for the 2018-19 full-year data.
59. Where a provider submits a nil return but has relevant attainment or completion data, they must publish the attainment or completion data on their website.

Workbook data validation errors and warnings

60. The workbook has a number of built-in data validation checks to ensure the data entered in the tables are valid.

61. Where validation errors are present in the workbook you will be unable to upload your return to the OfS portal.
62. Where validation warnings are present in the workbook but the data entered is correct, there are boxes in which text must be entered justifying the data entered.

Uploading the workbook

63. Once completed, providers must upload their Transparency return 2020 workbook to the Transparency return 2020 area of the OfS portal by **noon on Thursday 23 April 2020**. Once the return has been successfully submitted to the portal, a results file will be produced which contains a sign-off sheet. We advise providers to upload their data to the OfS portal as soon as possible.
64. Providers may upload their data as many times as they like. Only the final upload before the deadline will be considered by OfS.
65. All nil returns must be uploaded to the OfS portal.

Data verification phase

66. The data verification phase will run from the submission deadline until **Thursday 21 May 2020**.
67. During the data verification phase we will review provider returns and any validation warnings along with the provider commentary. We will contact providers where we require further information on their data.
68. It is not expected that we will need to contact a provider if their uploaded return does not raise any validation warnings, but if we become aware of any issues with their data we will contact them.
69. All queries raised by the OfS must be resolved, a completed sign-off form submitted and completion of the return confirmed on the OfS portal by the end of the data verification phase.

Signing off the data returns

70. All finalised data returns must be signed off by the accountable officer, the sign-off form uploaded to the OfS portal, and the completion of the return confirmed by the end of the data verification period.
71. Providers will be able to submit a completed sign-off form and confirm completion of their submission through the OfS portal from **Friday 24 April 2020** until **noon on Thursday 21 May 2020**.
72. Providers should be aware that if they upload a completed sign-off form and confirm their submission during the data verification phase, we may still contact them regarding their data. If a resubmission of the return is required as a result of a query from the OfS, the updated data must be uploaded to the OfS portal, a new sign-off form completed by the accountable officer and uploaded to the OfS portal, and the completion of the return confirmed again.

Confirming completion of the Transparency return 2020

73. Once the completed Transparency return 2020 workbook and sign-off sheet have been uploaded to the OfS portal, providers must confirm the completion of their Transparency return 2020 by checking the box and clicking the 'Submit' button on the main page of the Transparency return 2020 portal area. This is illustrated in the screenshot below.

By checking this box and clicking 'Submit', you are confirming that the Transparency return 2020 is complete. Once submitted, you will be unable to submit further information unless you contact us to ask to do so.

Submit

Downloading the data for publication on your website

74. The results file which will be generated after successfully submitting your data will contain your uploaded data and the information that you are required to publish on your website by **5 June 2020**. This includes:

- Table 1a – Summary of in-year applications, offers, acceptances and registrations for 2019-20
- Table 1b – Detailed information on in-year applications, offers, acceptances and registrations for 2019-20
- Table 1c – Summary of full-year applications, offers, acceptances and registrations for 2018-19
- Table 1d – Detailed information on full-year applications, offers, acceptances and registrations for 2018-19
- Table 2a – Percentage of first degrees at grade 2:1 or above by characteristic for 2018-19 qualifiers
- Table 2b – Detailed information on attainment for 2018-19 qualifiers
- Table 3a – Percentage of 2018-19 entrants who completed their course or are continuing by the end of 2018-19, by mode of study
- Table 3b – Detailed information on completion of 2018-19 entrants in 2018-19, by mode of study.

75. The data in the tables listed above will be rounded and suppressed ready for publication.

76. Tables 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b may not be immediately available or present in the results file when providers submit their data. The availability of these tables and how to access them will be confirmed in due course.

Publishing the data on your website

77. Information about publishing the transparency information can be found on page 8 of Regulatory advice 8: Guidance for providers about condition of registration F1: transparency information¹⁵. Paragraphs 78 to 80 below seek to add clarity to the information on publishing your transparency information presented in Regulatory advice 8.

78. Providers are required to publish the data in Tables 1a, 2a and 3a directly on a webpage on their website. This webpage should be linked directly from the provider's website homepage or admissions page. The data and table headings should be presented exactly as they appear in

¹⁵ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-8-guidance-for-providers-about-condition-of-registration-f1-transparency-information/.

the tables in the results workbook, but they may be displayed in a styled HTML table (or similar) for improved accessibility.

79. Providers are also required to prepare and make available for download on the webpage their full results workbook (in Microsoft Excel or portable document format). Instructions on how to prepare the results workbook for publication will be included in the results workbook downloaded from the OfS portal.
80. Providers should ensure that they publish the final version of their Transparency return 2020 information on their website. Only a provider's latest transparency information must be published. Where a provider had previously published their Transparency return 2019 information on their website, this should be replaced with their Transparency return 2020 information.

Data assurance

81. Data assurance is an essential part of how we can ensure that our approach to regulation is appropriate and effective. The requirement to permit verification of information is set out in condition F3, which applies to all registered providers. More information on condition F3 is set out on pages 127-131 of the Regulatory framework¹⁶.
82. We may audit your transparency data. Therefore, it is essential to keep an audit trail when completing your Transparency return, recording how your decisions have been made and the data used to support them. Our audits may involve desk-based work and visits to providers to review how the return was produced, including testing the systems and processes used by a provider to prepare specific aspects of their data.

Data amendments

83. If a provider wishes to amend their Transparency return 2020 after the submission, sign-off and confirmation deadline then they must follow the data amendments process¹⁷.

Good practice

Audit trail

84. We recommend that you keep an audit trail between raw data and the Transparency return for at least five years. This should include any relevant electronically stored data, printouts and working papers used in completing the return. Source documents such as application forms should also be retained.

Knowledge management and staff training

85. It is advisable to have at least two people who have access to the Transparency return 2020 OfS portal area and know how to prepare and submit the Transparency return data. This reduces the risk that in a person's absence, particularly at crucial times of the year, the provider may not be able to prepare the return on time and to the appropriate standard. A good audit trail and documentation on how to compile the Transparency data also help to reduce this risk.

¹⁶ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/the-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/

¹⁷ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/amendments-to-data/data-amendments-process/

Submission self-check questions

Please ensure that you can answer 'Yes' to all these questions before submitting the completed Transparency return 2020 to the OfS.

1. Have you checked your data internally?
2. Have you completed the applications, offers, acceptances and registrations tables (2019-20 in-year and 2018-19 full-year) in full? Or selected the option to indicate the submission of a nil return for the relevant years?
3. Have you complied with the definitions set out in Section 2?
4. Have you kept an effective audit trail?
5. Have your applications, offers, acceptances and registrations data passed all of the validation checks?
6. Where the workbook shows warnings relating to your data:
 - a. Have you checked your data to make sure it is correct?
 - b. Have you checked that you are using the definitions set out in this guidance?
 - c. Have you explained why the data is correct in the box provided in the template?
7. Have you included a URL for the webpage where you will publish your Transparency return 2020 data?

Publication self-check questions

Please ensure that you can answer 'Yes' to all these questions to ensure the correct publication of the Transparency return 2020 data on your website.

1. Does your Transparency return 2020 data reside on a webpage (at the URL supplied in your Transparency return 2020 workbook uploaded to the OfS portal) linked directly on your homepage or admissions page?
2. Is the compulsory introductory text (see page 8 of Regulatory advice 8) present on the webpage?
3. Are Tables 1a, 2a and 3a displayed on the webpage and do they contain the exact data and headings as in the results workbook?
4. Are Tables 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b available within a file downloadable directly from the webpage?



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