

**Office for
Students**



Interim Financial Data Collection

Submission process guidance

Enquiries to FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Overview

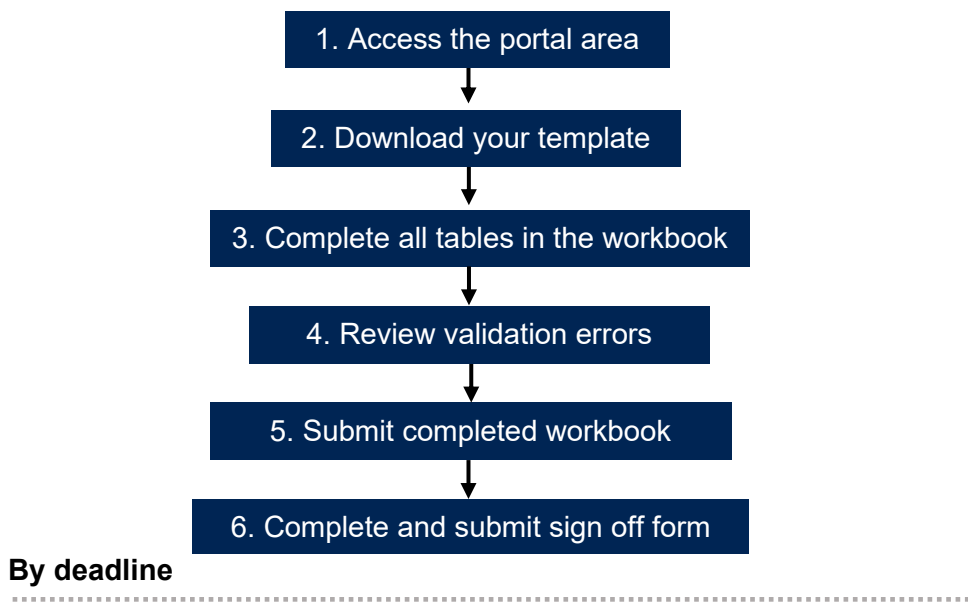
1. This document provides detailed information on submitting your Interim Financial Data Collection. It covers all stages of the submission process for the Interim Financial Data Collection, including downloading your template and submitting your workbook and sign off form.
2. You should read '[Regulatory Advice 14: Guidance for providers for the financial monitoring returns](#)', which gives an overview of the Interim Financial Data Collection, before reading this document.
3. The Interim Financial Data Collection process operates to a deadline of **noon on Friday 30 October 2020**. You are required to submit a valid workbook, ensure that the collection is signed off by the Accountable Officer and the sign off form submitted to the OfS by this deadline. This return is only applicable to providers with a 2020 financial year end on or after 1 April 2020. Those providers with a deadline before 1st April 2020 do not have to complete the return.
4. Please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk if you have any questions regarding the submission process.

Details of the submission process

5. The following section gives detailed information of the submission process for the Interim Financial Data Collection.

Submission process diagram

6. Below is a diagram of the submission process. You can click on any text in the diagram to be taken to the relevant section of this guidance.



1. Access the portal area

7. In order to download the template and submit your return, you will need access to the 'Financial monitoring returns' area on the OfS portal (<https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data>). Each portal user will need to be granted access to this area to download the templates and submit the return.
8. Once you have been granted access to this area, you will then be able to view all financial monitoring returns, including the Interim Financial Data Collection.

Obtaining access to the 'Financial monitoring returns' portal area

9. If you previously had access to the 'Annual financial return 2019' area, you have automatically been granted access to the 'Financial monitoring returns' area. You will see the area on the homepage of the OfS portal.
10. If you do not have an OfS portal user account, you will need to ask the nominated OfS portal user administrator at your provider to create an account for you. Each person who requires access to the 'Financial monitoring returns' area will need to be registered with their own account. Instructions on how the user administrator creates an account can be downloaded from the log in page of the portal (see the link in paragraph 7).
11. If you already have an OfS portal user account, but do not have access to the 'Financial monitoring returns' area, you will need to be assigned to it by the nominated OfS portal user administrator at your provider. Instructions on how the user administrator assigns users to an area can be downloaded from the log in page of the portal (see the link in paragraph 7). If you are the user administrator, you will also need to assign yourself to the area.
12. 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.

Navigating the Interim Financial Data Collection portal area

13. Once you have been granted access to the 'Financial monitoring returns' portal area, it will be available on the homepage of the OfS portal (<https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data>).

Financial monitoring returns

Here you can submit your financial monitoring returns (including the Annual Financial Return and Interim Financial Data Collection)

14. Within the 'Financial monitoring returns' portal area is a list of all of the current and previous financial monitoring returns. Please note that all returns are listed but may not be applicable to your provider either previously or at the current time.

15. Click on the link under the 'Interim Financial Data Collection' section.

Interim Financial Data Collection

This return is only applicable to providers with a 2020 financial year end on or after 1 April 2020.

We have introduced an additional targeted Interim Financial Data Collection to allow us early sight of a provider's expected year-end position for the financial year ending in 2020 and key elements of its forecasts for 2021, including any new agreed or forecast borrowing. The deadline for this return is **noon on Friday 30 October 2020**. Click the link below to access the portal area for the Interim Financial Data Collection.

Interim Financial Data Collection

16. This will take you to the Interim Financial Data Collection page. This page contains several sections which you should familiarise yourself with:
 - a. **Overview** – This section contains links to the guidance for the Interim Financial Data Collection.
 - b. **Downloads** – This section contains a series of download files which will be updated as you progress your return. Click the 'Download' button next to each to download the relevant package. The download packages are:
 - i. **Template** – This download contains the blank template for the Interim Financial Data Collection workbook. See the section '[Download your template](#)' for further information.
 - ii. **Latest successfully submitted workbook** – This download contains the latest workbook successfully submitted by your provider.
 - iii. **Unsuccessful files** – This download contains files submitted that have not been successful (such as invalid workbooks and files submitted using the incorrect naming conventions).
 - iv. **Sign off form** – This download contains the sign off form for your return, to be signed by the Accountable Officer. This will be available once your workbook has been submitted successfully. See the section '[Complete and submit sign off form](#)' for further information.
 - c. **Files to be submitted** – This section contains a list of the files that you must submit as part of the return. The naming conventions that are required for each file to be successfully uploaded are also listed here.
 - d. **Submit files** – This section allows you to submit the necessary files for the return.
 - e. **History of submissions** – This section lists the submissions that you have made.

Common issues with the portal

I cannot log into the OfS portal.

17. 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.

18. 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 ‘Financial monitoring returns’ area has not appeared on the portal home page.

19. Ensure that the user administrator at your provider has assigned you to the area first. If you are the user administrator, you will need to assign yourself to the area to view it.
20. Once you have been assigned to a survey, you may need to log out and then log back into the portal for the area to appear.

The download files have not updated after I have uploaded a file.

21. You may need to refresh your browser for the download packages to update with the latest files.
22. Some files may not yet be available to your provider. This may be because a required action has not yet been completed. Download your return information file for details as to what your current required actions are.

2. Download your template

23. Before you begin the submission of your Interim Financial Data Collection, you will need to download the bespoke template for your provider.
24. A template is provided for the workbook file that is required to be submitted. The workbook is bespoke to your provider, containing data that was returned in the Annual financial return 2019 (where applicable).
25. The ‘Template’ download package contains your provider’s bespoke workbook. This will be given the file name as detailed in the table below. This includes your provider’s UKPRN.

Template	File name
Workbook	InterimFinancialReturn2020_Blank_[UKPRN]

26. Save the template to a memorable location on your computer or shared drive. You can download this as many times as required. Please note that it can sometimes be necessary for the OfS to update the template. The OfS will notify the Finance Strategic contacts at your provider if the template is updated.

Common issues with the template

My workbook does not contain or contains incorrect prefilled data.

27. Your workbook has been populated with the latest data signed off for the Annual financial return 2019. If you were not required to complete this return or have not yet signed off the return (or an updated return), the prefilled data will not be populated (or may reference a previously signed off return).

My workbook contains the incorrect financial year ends.

28. Please alert the OfS as soon as possible by contacting FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk. We will need to reissue your workbook template with the correct financial year ends.

I cannot edit my workbook template

29. You may need to click on 'Enable editing' on the yellow banner if it appears on your screen to edit your template.
30. Some elements of the workbook template are locked, and you will not be able to edit these.

3. Complete all tables in the workbook

31. Once you have saved your workbook template, you should review all rows and columns on each worksheet and complete the white cells in all tables, as necessary.
32. You should not attempt to alter the format of the worksheets by adding or deleting columns or rows. Only cells where data is required should be edited. The workbook is protected to ensure that the data submitted is accurate and is only entered into the relevant cells. Worksheets contain information that is critical for loading the data accurately, and it is essential that this is preserved. The workbook should not be knowingly unprotected (by using an unofficial macro downloaded from the internet, or otherwise). We will refuse to accept any workbooks which have been tampered with. If you would like to view an unprotected version of the workbook, you can [download a sample workbook from the OfS website](#). This sample workbook must **not** be used for your final submission.
33. If you wish to copy and paste data in the workbook, ensure that you use the 'paste values' option. This will not copy the formatting of the data you are pasting and will preserve the formatting of the workbook.

4. Review validation errors

34. Several validation error checks are built into each table of the workbook which help to ensure that incorrect data is not submitted. Once you have input all of the required data into the tables, you must then review these validation checks.
35. If an error is detected in a table, the validation error cell above the table will turn red and show '**Validation errors: see below table**'. The cell corresponding to the failed check below the table will show '**ERROR**' in red, next to a description of the error. If there are no errors, the cell above the table will show '**No validation errors**', and the cells below will show '**Pass**'.

36. Validation errors **must be corrected** before the submission of your workbook. We will not accept workbooks containing validation errors. If an invalid workbook is uploaded to the portal, you will receive error messages, and your upload will not be accepted.

A list of tables that have errors present can be viewed on the 'Information' tab of the workbook.

Validation information	
Tables with validation errors:	No validation errors

Common issues with the validation checks

My workbook contains validation errors, but I believe the data is valid.

37. Please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk where we will discuss any outstanding validation errors with you. If the OfS accepts that the data is valid, then an arrangement will be made to bypass any affected validation errors.

5. Submit completed workbook

38. By noon on Friday 30 October 2020, you must submit a completed workbook to the OfS portal. This workbook must not contain any validation errors.

39. The workbook needs to be given a specific file naming convention for the portal to recognise that it is the workbook that needs to be processed. This is detailed in the table below.

File to be submitted	Naming convention for upload file
Interim Financial Data Collection workbook	Workbook

40. You should submit your workbook by clicking the 'Upload' button under the 'Submit files' heading on the Interim Financial Data Collection page.

Submit files

Click the 'Upload' button below to submit the files specified [above](#). You must use the specified file naming convention before submitting a file, as listed [above](#).

Upload	Upload the files for Interim financial data collection
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41. This will take you to another page. Click the 'Choose files' button, select the 'Workbook' file, and click 'OK'. Clicking the 'Upload' button on this page will then upload the workbook to the portal.

File to upload

Browse...

Upload
Cancel

42. The file may take a few minutes to process. Once processed, you will be presented with one of two outcomes as detailed in the table below.

Outcome	Description
Success	The file has successfully been submitted.
Errors	The file has failed to upload. If there were validation errors present in your workbook before it was uploaded, then the file has been rejected as it is invalid, or it may be that the submission of the workbook may be currently closed for your provider. Please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk if you require assistance in identifying the reason for your workbook not being uploaded.

43. If the outcome was 'Success', then a processed version of the workbook will now be available in the 'Latest successfully submitted workbook' download package. The file will be given the file name as detailed in the table below. This includes your provider's UKPRN, the number of the submission, and the date and time it was processed.

File submitted	Processed file name
Interim Financial Data Collection workbook	InterimFinancialReturn2020_[UKPRN]_[Submission number]_[Date]_[Time]

44. If the outcome was 'Errors', then the file uploaded will be available in 'Unsuccessful files' download package. The file will be given the file name as detailed in the table below. This will be followed by your provider's UKPRN, and the date and time it was processed.

Issue	Processed file name
Workbook is invalid	INVALID_InterimFinancialReturn2020_[UKPRN]_[Date]_[Time]
Submission of the workbook is currently closed	CLOSED_InterimFinancialReturn2020_[UKPRN]_[Date]_[Time]

Common issues with uploading the workbook

The portal shows that there were errors when I uploaded the workbook.

45. Your workbook was not accepted. Check that there are no validation errors in your workbook. If you are still having issues, please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk.

The portal is closed for workbook submissions, but I need to upload a workbook.

46. Depending at what stage you are at in the return process, you may not be able to submit a workbook (for example, if your submission deadline has passed). If you are unable to upload a workbook, please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk.

6. Complete and submit sign off form

47. Once you have submitted a valid workbook, you will then be able to arrange the sign off of your return.

48. Your sign off form will automatically be made available to download when you are able to sign off your return. It can be downloaded from the 'Sign off form' download package. The file will be given the file name as detailed in the table below. This includes your provider's UKPRN, and the date and time it was created.

File	File name
Blank sign off form	InterimSignOff2020_Blank_[UKPRN]_[Date]_[Time]

49. You should ensure that the sign off form contains the correct , date and time of when the workbook was submitted. This will be the workbook that is present in the 'Latest successfully submitted workbook' download package. The sign off form should then be signed by the Accountable Officer at your provider.

50. You must submit your signed sign off form by noon on Friday 30 October 2020.

51. The sign off form needs to be given a specific file naming convention for the portal to recognise that it is the sign off form that needs to be processed. This is detailed in the table below.

File to be submitted	Naming convention for upload file
Sign off form	SignOff

52. You should submit the sign off form by clicking the 'Upload' button under the 'Submit files' heading on the Interim Financial Data Collection page.

Submit files

Click the 'Upload' button below to submit the files specified [above](#). You must use the specified file naming convention before submitting a file, as listed [above](#).

Upload	Upload the files for Interim financial data collection
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53. This will take you to another page. Click the 'Browse' button, select the 'SignOff' file to upload (with the correct naming convention), and click 'OK'. Clicking the 'Upload' button on this page will then upload the workbook to the portal.

54. The file may take a few minutes to process. Once processed, you will be presented with one of two outcomes as detailed in the table below.

Outcome	Description
Success	The sign off form has successfully been submitted.
Errors	The file has failed to upload. The submission of the file type may be currently closed for your provider (possibly as you have outstanding actions), or the naming convention of the file has not been recognised. Please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk if you require assistance in identifying the reason for your file not being uploaded.

55. If the outcome was 'Success', then a processed version of the file will be now available in the 'Sign off form' download package. The file will be given the file name as detailed in the table below. This includes your provider's UKPRN, the number of the submission, and the date and time it was processed.

File submitted	Processed file name
Sign off form	InterimSignOff2020_[UKPRN]_[Submission number]_[Date]_[Time]

56. If the outcome was 'Errors', then the file uploaded will be available in 'Unsuccessful files' download package. The file will be given the file name as detailed in the table below. This will be followed by your provider's UKPRN, and the date and time it was processed.

Issue	Processed file name
Submission of the Sign off form is currently closed	CLOSED_ InterimSignOff2020_[UKPRN]_[Date]_[Time]

Common issues with completing the sign off form

The sign off form is not available to download.

57. You must have submitted a valid workbook in order to download your sign off form.

The portal shows that there were errors when I uploaded a file.

58. Your file was not accepted. Check that you have given the file the correct naming convention. If you are still having issues, please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk.

The portal is closed for the sign off form, but I need to submit it.

59. Depending at what stage you are at in the return process, you may not be able to submit a file (for example, if your submission deadline has passed). If you are unable to upload a file, please contact FinanceData@officeforstudents.org.uk.

The return has been signed off, but I need to resubmit a file.

60. If you have signed off your return before the deadline, then you are still able to resubmit the workbook as required. Please note that the resubmission of the workbook will result in a new sign off form being generated, and you will need to arrange for this to be signed and submitted before we can accept your return.



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