

OfS data assurance and the ILR: a quick guide

Anthea Beresford and Alastair Kendall
OfS Data Assurance Team
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Definitions and guidance

All the concepts discussed today are defined in the HEIFES survey guidance.

Updated annually:

- current version is HEIFES17 (released September 2017), available from the HEFCE website (www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs)
- HEIFES18 is being developed for release in September 2018 on the OfS website

These slides will also identify some **specific ILR fields** that relate to these concepts.

Why data assurance?

- To seek to gain assurance over sector wide data;
- To help to ensure provision of reliable information to students and prospective students;
- To help ensure high quality data is used to inform policy decisions and intelligence to government;
- To help ensure funding is distributed correctly.

OfS data assurance work with further education colleges

- ILR data verification during the period of data cleansing before formal sign-off or submission of data to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA);
- Audit of any aspect of data;
- Reconciliation between HEIFES and a re-creation of HEIFES generated from ILR data.

General expectations

- Systems and processes designed to create accurate HEIFES and ILR data returns;
- Robust underlying data governance and management;
- No over-reliance on key individuals;
- Comprehensive systems and process notes;
- Good understanding of the definitions for HEIFES and the ILR;
 - Follow OfS definitions – different from further education fields;
- Segregation of duties between compilers and reviewers to include thorough checking of data and an effective oversight and sign-off process;
- Robust audit trail.

Common mistakes with key fields

- Mode of study (**MODESTUD**) and student FTE (**STULOAD**)
 - Failure to follow HEIFES definition of full-time (HEIFES17 Annex H);
 - Failure to return an estimate of full-time equivalence for part-time students or those who withdraw early (HEIFES17 Annex E).
- Personal data (Names, date of birth, **DOMICILE**)
 - Not returning full names and date of birth as shown on identity documents;
 - Using nationality instead of permanent home address prior to beginning study to code **DOMICILE**.

Common mistakes with key fields

- Highest qualification on entry (**QUALENT3**):
 - Returning the qualification required for course admission instead of the highest qualification achieved prior to commencing study;
 - Failing to consult the NARIC database to determine UK equivalence of international qualifications.
- Price group (**LEARNAIMREF**):
 - Failing to check that the correct LDCS code is saved in LARS

Common mistakes with key fields

- Standard and non-standard years (**TYPEYR**):
 - Failing to return students whose study year crosses into the next report year as non-standard;
 - Incorrectly changing the type of year when a student withdraws.
- Learning start date (**LEARNSTARTDATE**) and learning planned end date (**LEARNPLANENDDATE**):
 - Returning generic term dates rather than the actual engagement of the student with the taught or structured part of the course;
 - The planned end date should be returned at the start of the learning aim and not be changed.

Common mistakes with key fields

Withdrawals – deal with promptly (**LEARNACTENDDATE**, **STULOAD**):

- The date of last engagement with the taught or structured part of the course should be returned and not the withdrawal date or generic end of term date;
- **STULOAD** should be adjusted when a student withdraws or starts later in the reporting year and undertakes less activity than the full-time equivalence.

Common mistakes with key fields

Non-completions (**FUNDCOMP**)

To complete a module the student must undergo the final assessment or pass within 13 months of the start of the year of programme of study.

For full definition see HEIFES17 Annex D).

- Incorrect definition used, (e.g. **COMPSTATUS** or academic progression);
- Initial study intentions not recorded or changed later in the year;
- Final assessments not identified or dates of submission not recorded;
- Difficulties in identifying whether assessments submitted.

Assurance tools

- ILR data verification process:
 - Data checking tool/ HEIFES comparison. Can be used to review forecasting and find errors e.g. missing students; incorrect assignment to price group;
 - Use of data checking tool can help ensure ILR data is accurate at the point of sign-off.
- HEIFES verification process.
- HEIFES and ILR training and guidance.

**Thank you
for listening**

Email:

anthea.beresford@officeforstudents.org.uk

alastair.kendall@officeforstudents.org.uk



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