

Appendix 1: Downloading and submitting HESES24

1. This appendix gives guidance on how to access the Office for Students (OfS) portal to download your Higher Education Students Early Statistics 2024-25 (HESES24) survey workbook and how you should submit your HESES24 survey. There are also some common issues listed.

Assigning yourself to the HESES24 OfS portal survey area

2. To access your HESES24 workbook, you will need to download it from the OfS portal: <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/Data/>.
3. You will need to be a registered user of the OfS portal to be assigned to the HESES24 survey area, from which you will download your HESES24 workbook.
4. If you have not registered on the OfS portal before, you will need to ask the nominated portal user administrator at your provider to create an account for you. Each person who requires access to the HESES24 return will need to be registered with their own account.
5. Each survey that we collect is assigned to a portal survey area. For the purpose of this document, we will refer to this as the 'HESES24 survey area' which will be shown on the portal as the following:
 - HESES24_FEC – for further education and sixth form colleges and academies
 - HESES24_OTH – for all other providers.
6. You will need to be assigned to the relevant HESES24 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 relevant HESES24 survey area.
7. 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

8. 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.

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9. 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 HESES24 survey area has not appeared on my login page even after I have been assigned to it**

10. Once you have been assigned to a survey, you may need to log out and then log back in to the portal for the survey to appear under 'Home'.

Downloading your HESES24 workbook

11. Once you have been assigned to the HESES24 survey area, log in to the OfS portal and you will see a link for the HESES24 survey under the 'Home' section. This link will take you to the HESES24 survey.

12. To download the HESES24 workbook, click on the 'Download' button. You will receive a zipped file which will contain your HESES24 workbook. 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.

13. Save the workbook to a memorable location on your computer. If there are any issues with downloading your workbook, please contact us at portal@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Completing your HESES24 workbook

14. HESES24 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 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 which have been unprotected or tampered with.

15. We recommend that you **do not copy and paste data** into your workbook, as this can cause formatting issues. If you do copy and paste and cells become locked, you will need to download the workbook again (please see paragraph 19 below). 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.

16. For more information on how to complete your HESES24 workbook, see the document 'Completing the HESES24 workbook', available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/heses/.

Common issues while completing the HESES24 workbook

➤ **The workbook is slow to process when I enter information**

17. As the workbook contains a lot of information, there may be times when it may appear slow to process information that has been entered. Please be patient when you are completing the

workbook; the workbook will process the information. You can speed up the processing time by closing any other Excel workbooks you have open.

➤ **A cell has locked after I have copied and pasted data into it**

18. Unfortunately, if you have copied and pasted data into the workbook without using the 'paste values' option, you will not be able to unlock any cells that may have become locked. You will need to download another empty workbook from the portal and start again.

Uploading your HESES24 workbook

19. Once you have completed the HESES24 return, you will need to submit the workbook to the HESES24 survey area on the OfS portal. You should ensure that the following checks are met otherwise the workbook may not upload successfully:

- your workbook has not been saved with the setting that displays zero values as blanks
- links to other spreadsheets are removed
- only one worksheet is selected when the completed workbook is uploaded
- the workbook is **not** zipped.

20. Submit the workbook as follows:

1. Navigate to the HESES24 survey on the OfS portal
2. Click on the 'Upload' button
3. Browse for your HESES24 workbook which is saved in your memorable location
4. Click 'Upload'
5. The workbook may take some time to upload if the portal is busy. The page will automatically refresh to show if your file is waiting to be processed, being processed, or has completed successfully
6. 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
7. Check the 'Comments' to see if your workbook is valid and has successfully uploaded. See below for a description of some of the messages that may appear.

21. 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. This workbook will display the date submitted and the submission number that we have assigned to it.

22. 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. The deadline dates are:

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- for further education and sixth form colleges and academies: **noon on 13 November 2024**
- for all other providers: **noon on 11 December 2024**.

23. Any workbook uploaded before the census date will need to be resubmitted after the census date. The census dates for HESES24 are as follows:

- for further education and sixth form colleges and academies: 1 November 2024
- for all other providers: 1 December 2024.

24. After the submission deadline, the portal process will automatically become the amendments process and the results package will no longer be available. To get a copy of your latest processed workbook you will need to click on the 'Download' button.

Common issues while uploading the HESES24 workbook

➤ **My workbook contains validation errors**

25. See Appendix 2 of the HESES24 guidance for descriptions of validation errors. You will still be able to upload your workbook if it is invalid, but we will **not** accept it as a submission. Once you have uploaded your workbook, download the results package. The workbook will contain an additional 'Validation' sheet, which will detail the specific validation errors.

➤ **My workbook contains credibility warnings**

26. See Appendix 3 of the HESES24 guidance for descriptions of credibility warnings. You will still be able to upload your workbook if there are warnings; however, these will be queried during the data verification process. We strongly recommend that you send in explanations for any warnings with your submission, by emailing them to dataverification@officeforstudents.org.uk. This will shorten the data verification process.

➤ **The 'Comments' section of the OfS portal shows validation errors**

27. Your workbook is invalid. The results workbook will contain an additional 'Validation' sheet, which will detail the specific validation errors. We will not accept any workbooks with validation errors.

➤ **My workbook is invalid but shows no errors**

28. All workbooks submitted before the relevant census date (see paragraph 24) will be invalid. There may still be changes to the student numbers at your provider until the census date, so we ask that you review your workbook and resubmit after the census date. We will not accept any workbook uploaded before the census date.

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

29. 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.

➤ **The submission number of the workbook in the results package is different from the submission number that I submitted the workbook with**

30. When the workbook is submitted for processing, our systems will assign a submission number to that particular workbook. This correlates to the number of workbooks that have been submitted to the portal for your provider, and is unique to the provider, not to the individuals who upload the workbook.

➤ **My colleague has uploaded a HESES24 workbook but I cannot view the results package**

31. The results package can only be downloaded and viewed from the same OfS portal account that uploaded that 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.

➤ **I need to make an amendment to the HESES24 workbook after the submission deadline, but I cannot download the HESES24 results package**

32. After the submission deadline the process on the portal changes for the amendments process. The results package is no longer available; however, you will be able to download a copy of your latest processed workbook through the 'Download' button. If you need to re-submit your workbook after the submission deadline, please liaise with your data verifier to arrange this. They will notify you when the subsequent revised processed workbook is available for download.

➤ **There is no sign-off form in my HESES24 results package workbook**

33. We will only provide the sign-off form once we have verified the HESES24 data. This will be emailed to the student data contact at your provider by the OfS data verifier.