



## HESA DATA RETURNS POLICY

LSCI Policies 2026

HESA Data Returns Policy

Effective from: Jan 2026    Review Date: Dec 2026

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is a designated data body of Office for Students (OfS). HESA data submission is a statutory return of detailed student, staff, and course information that every registered higher education (HE) providers must supply to HESA at different scheduled dates every year.

### Why It Is Needed

Submitting this data is a mandatory condition of registration for OfS-regulated institutions. It is utilised for the following core purposes:

- **Regulatory Compliance & Funding:** The OfS uses the data to monitor institutional performance, calculate teaching funding allocations, and enforce baseline standards.
- **Transparency & Access:** It ensures accountability by tracking student retention, achievement, and widening participation across different demographic groups.
- **Public Information & League Tables:** It powers official resources for prospective students and the Teaching Excellence Framework, allowing them to make informed choices.
- **Sector Research:** It provides reliable, national statistics used by the government, researchers, and employers.

LSCI follows instructions on current reporting cycles, deadlines, and technical specifications, with reference to the HESA website and Coding Manuals. For a more detailed regulatory information on this theme, [Office for Students Data Guidance](#) page may be consulted.

### HESA Data Entry process at LSCI

1. After the student recruitment is completed, the student data are verified for consistency and accuracy and then entered to LSCI's Student Management System (SMS). A Unique student record is created capturing the relevant personal and academic information.
2. Next, student data from the student management system are extracted and entered into HESA XML editor as per schema required for the specific return.
3. The entered data is then run through HESA's built in validation tool to identify errors, missing fields and quality rules.
4. If the data files pass the validation run, they are submitted for an external auditor's checking. If the data file fails to pass, it is rechecked for correction of errors.
5. If the external auditor approves the data files, they are submitted to HESA submission platform and after the confirmation of successful submission, Principal signs off.

The above process has been summarised in a flowchart below:

