

July 2008/03

This document sets out OFFA's requirements for annual monitoring of access agreements.

All HEIs with an OFFA approved access agreement for 2007-08 will need to submit a monitoring return by Friday 26 September 2008.

Access agreement monitoring 2007-08

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Access agreement monitoring 2007-08

To	Heads of higher education institutions in England
Of interest to those responsible for	Implementation of access agreements, Widening Participation, Heads of Finance
Reference	2008/03
Publication date	July 2008
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Executive summary

What this document is about

1. This document sets out what we need from institutions in order to carry out our annual monitoring of access agreements. It asks all higher education institutions with an OFFA approved access agreement for 2007-08 to send us a monitoring return.

The information we need

2. Institutions must provide financial data on:
- additional fee income
 - actual expenditure on bursaries and scholarships to students from lower-income and other under-represented groups (where such information cannot be collected from the Student Loans Company)
 - actual expenditure on additional outreach activities covered in access agreements.

3. Institutions **must** also provide:

- the number of lower-income students in receipt of a bursary or scholarship and the number of students eligible for a bursary (where this information cannot be collected from the Student Loans Company)
- a report on progress against milestones
- confirmation that the information in monitoring returns has been validated and approved as correct.

Additional information

4. We may also require the following additional information:

- an explanation of any significant differences between estimated and actual expenditure
- any shortfall in bursary expenditure reallocated to other access measures
- a report on bursary awareness raising activities where there is a significant difference between the number of eligible students and the number of awards paid.

How we will use the information you give us

5. We will use the information you provide to consider the extent to which your institution has broadly met the commitments set out in its access agreement. The information will also inform our annual report to Parliament and provide evidence for both the 2009 Independent Commission and our work on good practice.

Action required

6. We have emailed a template for your monitoring return to our OFFA contact. Please complete this template – using the guidance in this document – and return it to us by **Friday 26 September 2008**. For further details see paragraphs 97-98.

7. If your institution subscribes to the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) full administration service, we will email you a further template by the end of August which will include expenditure paid through HEBSS, the number of

bursary holders and a consent to share rate. If your institution subscribes to the information only service we will email you with a consent to share rate. This will give you the opportunity to verify the information we will be using in our assessment. For further details, see paragraphs 70-74.

Background information

Why you need to complete a monitoring return

8. There is a legal requirement for institutions to let us know about the extent to which they have met the obligations set out in their access agreements, and to report on the progress they have made with their objectives and milestones. We need sufficient information in order to:

- monitor that institutions are meeting their commitments to individual students and are moving towards the milestones set out in their access agreements
- provide an annual report to Parliament containing an overview of progress with access agreements
- collect evidence for the 2009 Independent Commission. This will report on all aspects of the new fee and student support arrangements based on the first three years' operation of the policy
- identify emerging trends and best practice.

Evaluation of the 2006-07 monitoring process

9. Following the first round of monitoring we commissioned an evaluation in order to improve the process in future years. This evaluation found that in general the process worked well but that:

- the requirement to report at the academic year end had caused some problems and did not fit easily with institutions' internal processes
- some areas of the guidance required further clarification
- where data is received from the Student Loans Company (SLC), institutions would like the opportunity to verify this
- public presentation of the expenditure data should more clearly demonstrate where unused funds have been reallocated
- expenditure figures should be contextualised with the number of students receiving bursaries.

10. We have therefore made some changes to the process for 2007-08 to reflect the recommendations of the evaluation.

Common problems with reporting in 2006-07

11. The main problems we found with the 2006-07 monitoring process were as follows:

- some institutions in the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) full service giving us expenditure data that was also reported by the SLC leading to double counting and requiring additional verification and amendment of data
- including expenditure in the finance return that was not countable by OFFA, such as bursaries paid to students above the specified income levels or payments made from the Access to Learning Fund
- not providing an explanation for differences between estimated and actual expenditure
- reporting on milestones that were not set out in the access agreement
- not completing the validation and assurance statement correctly.

12. It was burdensome and time-consuming for both us and institutions to resolve these issues and to follow up missing information. We have tried to make the guidance clearer this year and to provide examples. We have also produced a template to capture the main areas of information. If your institution has its own reports that cover the relevant information you can email these to us but please make sure that the reports cover all the information we request in the template.

13. To avoid the need for follow-up queries and additional verification, please check your institution's return carefully against the guidance in this document before submitting it. If in doubt, ask us for clarification.

How to complete the monitoring return

Financial data

You must complete and submit financial data on:

- **additional fee income (paragraphs 14-15)**
- **expenditure on bursaries and scholarships to students from lower-income and other under-represented groups (paragraphs 16-25)**
- **expenditure on additional outreach (paragraphs 33-36)**

If your institution subscribes to the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) full administration service, you should NOT provide expenditure on bursaries and scholarships UNLESS this is expenditure paid outside of the HEBSS system (paragraphs 26-32)

We have emailed a template showing estimates of income and expenditure for your institution to our main OFFA contact.

Additional fee income

14. The figure provided in your monitoring return should include:

- all fee income above the basic fee (£1,225 in 2007-08) for Home/European Union, full-time undergraduates (including full and part-time PGCE and full-time undergraduate social work students) and
- all fee income above the basic fee from full-time undergraduate franchised courses.

15. The additional fee income figure provided to us should be based on actual additional fee income received by 31 July 2008. It should not include fee income from courses not covered under the 2004 Higher Education Act. These are:

- courses provided under NHS contracts (such as nursing, midwifery and allied health professions)
- part-time courses.

Expenditure on bursaries and scholarships

16. You should report on actual expenditure from additional fee income on bursaries and scholarships as set out in your access agreement.

Splitting expenditure by income thresholds

17. Following a recommendation from the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Select Committee, the monitoring template asks you to split your expenditure on bursaries and scholarships between income thresholds as follows:

- Up to £17,910
- £17,911 - £38,330
- £38,331 - £48,330 (this is optional).

18. This will allow us to more accurately identify the amount of money being directed to the lowest income group (that is, with a residual household income of up to £17,910 in 2007-08).

19. We recognise that institutions may see students above the income threshold for state support (that is, £38,330 in 2007-08) as an important target group. We are therefore happy for you to report on expenditure to students with a residual household income of up to £48,330, if you are able to do so. **This is optional**; if your institution cannot provide data at this level you do not have to.

20. For the purposes of our assessment we will count any expenditure on bursaries and scholarships paid to students from all of the above household income brackets.

21. For institutions subscribed to the HEBSS full administration service, we will ask the SLC to provide this information. Please see paragraphs 26-32 for further details.

22. If your institution provides bursaries or scholarships regardless of a student's household income and you cannot provide the data in the way we have asked, you should calculate it as an estimate based on the proportion of students who fall into these income groups applied to your total expenditure. If you do not have your own information about the numbers of students at your institution who fall into the different income groups, please contact us for assistance. Where figures are based on estimates, you must declare this in the monitoring return with a brief explanation of your calculations.

23. If your institution provides bursaries or scholarships awarded on measures of under-representation that are countable by OFFA (such as first in family, compact scheme awards or bursaries to students from low-participation postcodes), but you are unable to attribute these to the income bands as requested there is a separate field for recording this. This expenditure will also be included in our assessment of monitoring returns.

What your expenditure data should include

24. Your data should include actual expenditure from 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2008:

- on bursaries and scholarships paid to students from the requested household income groups or from other under-represented groups
- at franchise institutions, and
- on 'in-kind' awards such as discounts on accommodation and provision of laptops (where these are specifically set out under the access agreement).

What your expenditure data should not include

25. Your data should not include:

- any payments made after 31 July 2008. These will be included in the following year's monitoring

- ring-fenced funds which are to be carried forward. There is a separate field for reporting any reallocated funds
- expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students above a household income of £48,330 who are not from another under-represented group
- expenditure that is not paid directly to students as an award with a financial benefit, for example expenditure on the overall improvement of services for students and broader retention measures
- Access to Learning Fund payments; this funding is received by all institutions from the Government and does not form part of any access agreement
- expenditure on historic bursaries and scholarships that were well established before the introduction of variable fees and which are not funded through additional fee income.

Collection of data for institutions in the HEBSS full service

26. We will ask the SLC to provide information on the money that has been disbursed through the HEBSS. If your institution subscribes to the HEBSS full administration service, you **should not** provide any data on expenditure paid through HEBSS.

27. We will ask the SLC to tell us the expenditure paid from 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2008 to Home/EU students with assessed household incomes described in paragraph 17 above. This will include any scholarship payments paid through HEBSS.

28. The SLC will also tell us the expenditure on awards paid to students above these household income levels and awards made to students where no income data was available. This expenditure is not normally countable in OFFA monitoring unless you can confirm that the awards were made on the basis of other measures of under-representation (see paragraph 23 above).

29. We expect to receive expenditure data from the SLC towards the end of August. We will send you these figures before our deadline for receiving your monitoring return so that you can verify them with your own records.

30. Last year several institutions queried the SLC figures – the main reason for identified differences was the inclusion in institutional data of HEBSS service charges and our exclusion of expenditure made to students above the £48,330 level or where no income data was available. The data we request meets our reporting requirements and is the figure that will be published unless you can provide evidence that additional expenditure should be included.

Expenditure paid outside of HEBSS

31. If your institution subscribes to the HEBSS full administration service but also makes OFFA countable payments outside of the system you will need to enter this expenditure in the monitoring return. For example, if you award bursaries through HEBSS but not scholarships, you will need to complete the relevant expenditure on scholarships. You must ensure that you **do not** include any expenditure that has been paid through HEBSS or this will lead to double counting.

32. You should also include any expenditure from franchise partners if they are not covered by HEBSS.

Expenditure on outreach

33. We asked institutions to set out in their access agreement whether any additional fee income would be specifically set aside for additional outreach work. We define outreach as any activity that involves raising aspirations and attainments and encouraging students from under-represented groups to apply to HE. This might mean funding specific new activities or enhancing and growing existing programmes.

34. The expenditure you report on outreach should only relate to funds committed from additional fee income and should relate to additional outreach activities.

35. If your institution did not commit itself in its access agreement to spending part of its additional fee income on additional outreach activity and did not give an estimate of this expenditure, but additional expenditure has been made, this can be reported on. To be countable it must be additional to activities or costs that existed before the introduction of variable fees and should meet the definition in paragraph 33. This can include staffing and overhead costs.

36. We are aware that in many institutions outreach is embedded in the core of their activities, including marketing, and that it is difficult to separate out the money from additional fee income that is specifically used on additional outreach. If this is the case, you can compare year on year budgets for activities that fall within our definitions of outreach and include any increase (above inflationary increases) as expenditure.

Optional expenditure reporting

37. Administration costs associated with the implementation of bursary schemes, such as the cost of subscribing to HEBSS, or additional staffing costs can be included in your financial return. The return of this data is optional and does not form part of our assessment. Some institutions requested the opportunity to provide this information when first submitting agreements to demonstrate that bursary schemes are not cost neutral. We will use the data we have as evidence for the 2009 review of fees and student support but will not publish it as part of our monitoring outcomes document.

Explanation for differences between estimated and actual expenditure

38. You must give us an explanation if your actual expenditure is more than 10 per cent below your estimates for financial support and outreach. These explanations are exclusive of each other and are not based on total expenditure. For example, if you have a shortfall in expenditure on financial support but have spent more on outreach, we still need an explanation from you on the reasons for the difference in expenditure on financial support.

39. We have emailed a template including your institution's estimates to our main OFFA contact. This allows you to see the figures that we are monitoring against.

40. Your explanations do not need to be lengthy but should provide a real sense of the reasons for expenditure differences, including any relevant statistical assumptions. We've provided space for your explanations in our monitoring template. We anticipate that most institutions will have produced

the information we need as part of their own internal management processes and may have an existing report which can be used for this purpose. If it is easier to submit an existing report, or an excerpt from it, that is acceptable.

41. We reserve the right to ask you for further information and clarification if the explanation you give does not provide sufficient assurance that your institution is satisfactorily delivering the commitments in its access agreement.

Explaining the difference in bursary and scholarship expenditure

You must provide an explanation where the proportion of additional fee income spent on bursaries and scholarships is more than 10 per cent below your estimate.

Where expenditure is less than 10 per cent below the original estimate there is no need to provide any explanation or further information.

42. We recognise that your expenditure will shift according to the actual make-up of your student cohort and therefore this year we are requesting reports based on **proportions** of additional income rather than actual amounts. For example, if your institution estimated that expenditure on bursaries and scholarships would be 15 per cent of its additional fee income, we would only need an explanation if the actual proportion of expenditure was below 13.5 per cent.

43. In any explanation you should demonstrate the extent to which the difference is due to forecasting difficulties by including your calculations of estimates compared to actual figures and any assumptions that you made. Some of this information may be covered in the bursary holders and bursary take-up sections (see paragraphs 57-69) of the monitoring return, in which case there is no need to set out the information twice.

Explaining the difference in outreach expenditure

You must provide an explanation where the actual amount of expenditure on outreach is more than 10 per cent below your estimate.

Where expenditure is less than 10 per cent below your estimate, there is no need to provide any explanation or further information.

44. Where actual expenditure on outreach is more than 10 per cent below your estimate, you must give us an explanation for the difference. For example, if you estimated that your expenditure on additional outreach would be £100,000, we would need an explanation from you if actual expenditure was below £90,000.

45. Some institutions set out detailed outreach plans in their access agreements and we recognise that these plans will need to be managed flexibly. We are interested in general progress and knowing that outreach commitments have been broadly met. Your explanation should focus on the reasons for any difference. You don't need to give us detailed information about changes in the levels or types of activity.

46. We are asking for an explanation of changes in outreach expenditure based on actual amounts rather than the proportion of additional fee income. This is because generally this will be a fixed budget for specific activities with a less obvious link to additional fee income. However if your additional fee income was substantially less than forecast we think it is reasonable that you may have needed to reduce your financial commitment to additional outreach. In this situation our assessment and requirement for an explanation will be based on the proportion of additional fee income spent on outreach. We are not in a position to know or judge at what level a reduction in fee income would warrant a reduction in outreach budget. We therefore ask you to apply a test of reasonableness and to set out the reasons for outreach budget reductions as part of your explanation.

Reallocation of funds

47. Where significant numbers of eligible students have failed to claim their bursaries, or if you make an explicit commitment to spend a minimum proportion of fee income in your access agreement and do not do so, we think the reallocation of funds to other access or widening participation measures would normally be an appropriate response.

48. Even if any difference between your predicted and actual expenditure is primarily due to forecasting difficulties, if there is a substantial shortfall you might also want to consider whether a reallocation of funds would be appropriate.

49. You should include any shortfall in bursary expenditure that has been redirected to additional outreach and spent within the academic year in the outreach expenditure section of the monitoring template (see paragraphs 33-36).

50. Any expenditure reallocated to wider access measures within the academic year, or carried forward to future years, should be recorded in the reallocation of funds section of the monitoring template. You should set out the amounts of any reallocated funds and a brief explanation of what the money has, or will be, spent on.

51. Any reallocated funds that are countable by OFFA will be included in our outcome report. If you do not think it is appropriate to reallocate some, or all, of your underspend, you should set out the rationale for this in your monitoring return.

52. If you have an underspend and do not give us a figure showing how you have reallocated funds, we will assume that any difference in expenditure has been put into general budgets that are not countable by OFFA.

What is OFFA countable expenditure for reallocated funds?

53. If you spent reallocated funds on any other access or widening participation measures, for example, increasing funding for targeted financial awareness campaigns and other outreach activities, this expenditure is 'countable'. This includes underspend reallocated to improving retention of under-represented groups, such as additional pastoral support. You should not include expenditure

on general measures to improve the overall student experience or expenditure on activities that are not targeted at under-represented groups.

54. In considering how any reallocated funds might be used we would like to encourage institutions, if they have not already done so, to consider how they can address the needs of care leavers. For example, introducing additional bursaries for care leavers and the costs of pursuing the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark would be OFFA countable expenditure. We are also keen to encourage more work that reaches out earlier to groups of potential students, in particular in 11 to 16-year-old schools where there is no sixth form. Money redirected to fund hands-on engagement with schools targeting major improvements in their educational offer would also be countable. This includes investment in Academies and Trust schools.

55. If you have increased the generosity or eligibility for your bursary scheme for 2008-09 to adjust for shortfalls in expenditure this should be shown as funds that are being carried forward.

Reporting on underspend from 2006-07

56. If you reported in your 2006-07 monitoring return that you had reallocated funds and ring-fenced them to be carried forward for use in future years, you should provide a brief report on progress with the use of these funds.

Reporting on the number of bursary holders and take-up of bursaries

You must provide information on the number of students in receipt of a bursary or scholarship and the total number of students who were eligible for a bursary.

You must give us a report on awareness raising activities if less than 95 per cent of the total number of eligible students have been paid a bursary.

Number of bursary holders

57. As well as considering your overall level of expenditure, we are concerned to see that you have met your commitments to individual students. In our evaluation of the 2006-07 monitoring, institutions indicated that that they would be able to tell us how many of their students were receiving bursaries and that this information would provide context to the expenditure figures. The evaluation also indicated that it would be useful to publish this information as a proportion of total students. We therefore ask you to tell us how many of your students receive a bursary or scholarship and what proportion of the student population this represents.

58. Where possible, you should tell us how many bursary holders there are in each income band specified in the monitoring template. We are interested in the number of beneficiaries rather than the number of awards. Therefore, if you give a student more than one bursary, you should only count them once.

59. For institutions subscribed to the HEBSS full administration service we will ask the SLC to provide this data. See paragraphs 70-74 for further details.

60. We've provided a space for this information in the monitoring template. However, if it is easier to submit an existing report, provide the information in a different format or adapt the template to suit the income thresholds at your institution that is acceptable.

61. As set out in paragraph 22 above, if your institution provides bursaries or scholarships regardless of a student's household income and you cannot provide the data in the way we have asked, you should calculate the numbers of bursary holders as an estimate, based on the proportion of students who fall into these income groups applied to the total number of bursary holders. If you do not have your own information about the numbers of students at your institution who fall into the different income groups, please contact us for assistance. Where figures are based on estimates, you must declare this in the monitoring return with a brief explanation of your calculations.

62. Because of the variety of income thresholds used at different institutions and to provide

consistency and comparability of information, if you are unable to provide the information in the requested bands we may only be able to publish the proportion of bursary holders from the lowest household income group at your institution and an estimate for the other income groups.

Bursary take-up/consent to share rates

63. The first year of monitoring highlighted that the failure of some students (and/or their parents/carers) to consent to share their financial information was a significant problem for institutions subscribed to HEBSS, resulting in lower than expected bursary take-up.

64. However, this problem was not restricted to HEBSS subscribers and HEIs outside of the HEBSS system also reported fewer students than expected coming forward to collect their bursaries.

65. We therefore need to continue to monitor this and ask you to set out the estimated number of eligible students compared to the number of bursary holders to provide a bursary take-up rate.

66. For institutions that are subscribed to the HEBSS full and information only administration service we will request the data from the SLC. See paragraphs 71-74 for details.

67. Where a lack of bursary take-up has resulted in underspend, you may have already explained this in the section detailing differences between predicted and actual expenditure. If this is the case there is no need to set out the information again. However, it may be possible that you have broadly met expenditure commitments but still have issues with bursary take-up.

68. If your take-up rate for students entitled to the minimum bursary is below 95 per cent you should tell us what steps you took, particularly during the academic year, to make eligible students aware of their entitlement to financial support. There is a space in the monitoring template to do this but you can give us a separate report if this would be easier.

69. After the first year of monitoring we asked every institution to make further efforts to actively manage bursary take-up. If you have made all reasonable efforts to make students aware of their eligibility, we

will still consider that you have met the commitments under your access agreement. However, if a significant number of eligible students have failed to take up their bursaries, we consider that it would normally be appropriate for you to reallocate any unused funds to other widening access measures (as set out in paragraphs 47-55). If you decide not to reallocate some or all of your unused funds in this way, you should provide an explanation.

Collection of data from SLC

70. For institutions that subscribe to the HEBSS full service we will request data on the number of bursary holders and consent to share rates from the SLC. We will also collect consent to share rates for institutions subscribed to the information only service.

71. The data we request will:

- cover the full academic year
- be split between new entrant and continuing 'new system' students
- show the number of students receiving bursaries split between the different income groups
- show the number of students and parents/sponsors within each income group who consented or did not consent to share their financial information.

72. We will calculate the consent to share rate based on the proportion of students entitled to full state support where both the student and their parent/sponsor have consented. The information we request cannot be tailored to the eligibility thresholds at each institution, therefore if you have an eligibility threshold that is below £38,330 the information will only be an indication of the consent to share rate for students within this household income bracket.

73. We expect to receive data from the SLC towards the end of August. Where relevant, we will send you these figures before our deadline for receiving your monitoring return so that you can verify them with your own records.

74. If your consent to share rate for students who are entitled to the minimum bursary is below 95 per cent you should tell us what steps you took,

particularly during the academic year, to make eligible students aware of their entitlement to financial support. There is a space in the monitoring template for this information. Alternatively, you can give us the information in a separate report if this would be easier.

Reporting on milestones and objectives

You must submit a summary report on progress against the milestones set out in your access agreement.

75. You must give us an update on your progress with the milestones set out in your institution's access agreement. This update should only cover the milestones and objectives detailed within the milestone section of your access agreement.

76. We have not provided space in the monitoring template for this update; this is because each institution sets its own milestones which makes it difficult to provide a standard template. However, you should re-state each milestone as it exists in your access agreement (including any baseline figure), set out the current position and provide any commentary as necessary.

77. Last year many institutions also provided information about the progress they had made with the outreach plans detailed in their access agreements. This is not necessary unless such progress specifically forms part of your institution's milestones.

78. We anticipate that you will have already produced information on your progress with milestones as part of your own internal management processes and may have existing reports. If it is easier to submit an existing report, that is acceptable. However, the milestones should clearly relate to whatever was approved in the access agreement for 2007-08.

79. If the information you give us is not sufficient to allow us to gauge your progress against the milestones set out in your access agreement, we reserve the right to ask you for more information.

80. We recognise that it is possible that you may meet all your financial commitments and outreach plans under your access agreement but not achieve your milestones. When we are analysing progress with milestones we will consider whether you have met your commitments and if there is a positive direction towards milestones. We will also take into account the position of the HE sector as a whole.

81. Where progress has been significantly less than expected, or there has been movement away from milestones, you should briefly explain what plans and strategies are in place to review the arrangements under your access agreements and what changes might be necessary in order to make progress. We may also wish to talk to you to gain a better understanding of the situation.

Validating your monitoring return

You must confirm that the monitoring return has been checked and validated as correct.

82. The monitoring return provides a section for you to confirm that all information in the return has been subject to an internal validation process and has been signed off and approved as correct. The purpose of the sign-off is to provide assurance that the information has been validated independently from the person responsible for compiling the return.

83. The monitoring return should be signed by an appropriate senior manager. This could be the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Finance Director.

84. It is for institutions to determine their own process for checking the accuracy of the information they provide – this could be through internal audit, or a report to the head of the institution, a governors group or a steering committee. All information is subject to audit and you should ensure that your method of validating the information meets your own internal audit requirements.

How we will assess your monitoring return

85. We will compare your expenditure return against your additional fee income to monitor whether the proportions of expenditure are broadly similar to those set out in your financial estimates.

86. We will look to see that you have broadly met your financial commitments and, where you have not done so, that there is a reasonable explanation and/or appropriate review and re-adjustment of plans.

87. Where consent to share or bursary take-up has been an issue we will consider what efforts you have made to raise student awareness of bursaries and improve take-up rates.

88. We will also look at the progress you have made towards your milestones. We will look for a positive direction and will not penalise institutions for not meeting their milestones where they can demonstrate that they have broadly met the commitments made in their access agreements.

89. We also recognise that progress in year two of the new arrangements may be limited. We are more concerned with trends over time. If central or institutional returns indicate that year on year, progress at your institution continues to be negative, or less than expected, then we will want to discuss this with you to understand the issues and investigate possible solutions.

90. Within this context, we may still wish to ask you about your return if, for example, some of the information or data:

- is unclear
- does not make sense from our knowledge of the access agreement and the institution
- is inconsistent with centrally collected data.

91. We will email institutions to confirm that monitoring returns have been received. We hope to have completed all assessments by mid-December and to communicate outcomes to institutions in January 2008.

92. We will publish a short report on the outcomes of the monitoring process in February/March 2009. This will include the proportions of fee income spent on bursaries and scholarships to lower-income students, the amount spent on additional outreach, any underspend that has been reallocated and the

proportion of students receiving a bursary at each institution.

We will collect some information centrally

93. We will request information from the SLC on the number of students from lower- income backgrounds at each institution. This is so we can monitor progress across the sector and look to identify any emerging patterns. We will ask for this information in or around July of each year to inform our monitoring. Data collected for 2006 as part of last year's monitoring process will be used as a baseline.

94. To allow us to monitor any sector trends, each year we will also ask UCAS for data on the numbers of applications and acceptances from different socio-economic classes across groups of institutions, according to bursaries provided and type of institution.

We may audit your monitoring return

95. We reserve the right to audit your monitoring return and the way you are implementing your access agreement. If, before taking this step, we identify significant concerns with delivery or progress towards milestones, we will invite you to discuss any emerging issues with us and provide further information if necessary.

How the Freedom of Information Act affects monitoring returns

96. We will publish a short report each year regarding the outcomes of the annual monitoring process. Additionally, individual monitoring reports may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). The Act gives a public right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case OFFA. We have a responsibility to decide whether any monitoring returns should be made public or treated as confidential. We can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. This means individual monitoring returns are unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. Further information about the FOI Act is available at

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

Submitting your return

97. You should email your monitoring returns and milestone reports to returns@offa.org.uk by Friday 26 September 2008.

98. One hard copy of the return, signed by a senior manager, should be sent to:

Richard Smith
Office for Fair Access
Northavon House
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QD

Late returns

99. Please note, it is a legal obligation to report on progress with your access agreement and it is important to submit your return by the deadline. If your return is late we cannot guarantee that your data will be included in the published outcome report.

100. If your monitoring return needs to be approved at a meeting of your governing body or other relevant committee after the deadline of 26 September 2008 we will accept the submission of a draft electronic copy of your monitoring return with a request for a limited extension to the deadline for final versions.

Annex A

Access agreement monitoring return academic year 2007-08

This annex is for reference only. We have sent a template to our main OFFA contact.

Institution	
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Financial estimates provided by your institution

We have emailed a template including your institution's estimates to our main OFFA contact. This allows you to see the figures that we are monitoring against.

	2007-08 (£)
Estimated additional fee income	<i>Data for your institution will be provided</i>
Estimated expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students with household incomes up to £38,330	<i>Data for your institution will be provided</i>
Estimated expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students with household incomes between £38,331 and £48,330	<i>Data for your institution will be provided</i>
Total bursary and scholarship expenditure	<i>Data for your institution will be provided</i>
Estimated amount of additional income to be spent on outreach	<i>Data for your institution will be provided</i>

Financial data

The financial data **must** be completed in the format requested. See paragraphs 14-37 of the guidance.

	2007-08 actual (£)
Additional fee income	
Expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students with household incomes up to £17,910	<i>Figures should exclude any expenditure paid through HEBSS.</i>
Expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students with household incomes between £17,911 - £38,330	<i>Figures should exclude any expenditure paid through HEBSS.</i>
Expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students with household incomes between £38,331 - £48,330	<i>This is optional information Figures should exclude any expenditure paid through HEBSS.</i>
Expenditure on bursaries and scholarships for students from other under-represented groups	<i>Figures should exclude any expenditure paid where income data was available.</i>
Total bursary and scholarship expenditure	<i>This should be the sum of the figures above.</i>
Expenditure on additional outreach	
Expenditure on administration costs associated with the implementation of the bursary scheme	<i>This is optional information.</i>

Please show your calculations for any estimated expenditure figures on bursaries and scholarships.

Explanation for differences between estimated and actual expenditure

Bursaries and scholarships

Please provide an explanation if the proportion of additional fee income you spent on bursaries and scholarships is more than 10 per cent below your estimate. See paragraphs 42-43 of the guidance.

For example: if you estimated that expenditure on bursaries and scholarships would be 15 per cent of additional fee income you need to provide an explanation if the actual proportion of expenditure was below 13.5 per cent.

Separate reports can be emailed to OFFA.

Outreach

Please provide an explanation if your actual expenditure on outreach is more than 10 per cent below your estimate. See paragraphs 44-46 of the guidance.

For example: if you estimated that expenditure on outreach would be £100,000 you need to provide an explanation if actual expenditure was below £90,000.

Separate reports can be emailed to OFFA.

Reallocation of funds

See paragraphs 47-56 of the guidance.

Reallocation of funds from 2006-07

If you reported in 2006-07 that underspend was carried forward for use in future years, please provide a brief update on progress with the use of these funds, including amounts. To avoid double counting please indicate if any of these figures have been included in the expenditure reported above.

Amount (£)	Progress

Reallocation of funds from 2007-08

Please provide details of any underspend in 2007-08 which has been reallocated to other access measures, including amounts. Please indicate if any of these figures have been included in the expenditure reported above and/or whether amounts are being carried forward. See paragraphs 47-55 of the guidance.

Amount (£)	Description of what the underspend was/will be used for

Please provide an explanation if underspend has not been reallocated. See paragraphs 47-52 of the guidance.

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Number of bursary holders

A separate report in a different format can be emailed to us or you can adapt the template to suit the income thresholds used at your institution. See paragraphs 57-74 of the guidance.

Household income	Number of students in receipt of a bursary/scholarship	As a proportion of the total number of new system students	Estimated number of students eligible for a bursary	Bursary take up rate
Up to £17,910	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full and info only service we will request this from the SLC</i>	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>
£17,911 - £38,330	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full and info only service we will request this from the SLC</i>	
£38,331 - £48,330	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>	<i>For HEIs in the HEBSS full service we will request this from the SLC</i>		
Other under-represented groups	<i>Only expenditure that is not attributable to the above income thresholds should be included.</i>			

Please show the calculations for any estimated figures on the number of eligible students.

What steps did you take to ensure that eligible students were made aware of and took up their entitlement to a bursary? See paragraphs 68-69 of the guidance.

You do not have to provide this information if your consent to share or bursary take up rate was 95 per cent or above for students entitled to full state support

Franchise partners

Have you included data for franchise partners in this return? If so, please list the relevant partners.

Milestones

Please email us a separate report on your progress with milestones. See paragraphs 75-81 of the guidance.

Validation of monitoring return

In submitting this monitoring return you are confirming that all the information you have provided (both in the return and in your report on milestones) has been compiled in accordance with our guidance, subject to an independent internal validation process, and signed off and approved as correct. See paragraphs 82-84 of the guidance.

In the event of any uncertainties with the information provided we will contact the people named below as responsible for completing and validating the information.

Contact details for person compiling the monitoring return:

Name	
Post	
Telephone	
email	

Contact details for senior manager responsible for validating the monitoring return:

Name	
Post	
Telephone	
email	

Signed

Date

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