

National Film and Television School (the “School”) External Data Policy

1. Introduction

The School is required to submit a number of data returns to its funding bodies and other agencies, including HEFCE and HESA. The information is used to inform funding and league tables, as well as providing a general picture of the School and its activities to the outside world.

The policy explains the School’s arrangements for the preparation and review of external data returns and identifies the significant roles and reporting lines. This list of returns covered by this policy is set out in the External Data Returns Schedule, annexed to this document.

2. Principles

The School recognises the importance of external reporting requirements with respect to funding and reputation and seeks to produce external data returns that present an accurate and coherent picture of the School and its activities. It seeks to ensure that:

- all data returns are prepared and submitted on a timely basis, and are supported by a clear and complete audit trail.
- data which are used for external reporting are subject to rigorous verification, and to senior management approval.
- responsibilities for the preparation of external data returns are clearly defined.
- responsibilities for the scrutiny of external data returns are clearly defined.

3. Roles

In accordance with the HEFCE Memorandum of Accountability and Assurance and the Audit Code of Practice, Audit Committee is required to give, as part of its annual opinion, an assurance about the management and quality assurance of

data provided by the School to HEFCE, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and other public bodies.

Audit Committee receives reports from the School Management Team. From 2015 the Internal Auditors will conduct an annual review of arrangements for the assurance of data quality and the preparation of external data returns.

Management are responsible for approving the policies relating to data quality and external returns. It receives reports about the status of returns and is advised about key issues arising from returns, with particular regard to funding implications and audit findings.

The Director of the NFTS is responsible for signing off each return before final submission to the relevant funding or statutory body.

The relevant Director according to their area of responsibility has strategic responsibility for ensuring that arrangements are in place for the preparation and review of external data returns. This includes assigning responsibility for the preparation of individual returns to the appropriate member of staff.

Current responsibilities are shown in Annex A.

All staff tasked with preparing returns must ensure that the data they input into external data returns are accurate, current, and reliable. They are responsible for ensuring that requests for information relating to statutory and funding body requirements are met promptly, and for assuring the quality of the data provided.

The HR Director is responsible for ensuring that at least two members of staff have been trained and are able to complete external returns, and that staff are available throughout the review period to respond to the questions posed as part of the scrutiny process and to make amendments to returns as required. They must ensure that all processes are documented and that audit trails are maintained.

The relevant Director is also responsible for ensuring that external data returns have been subject to management review before signoff by the Director of the NFTS.

4. External Data Returns Schedule

There is a schedule of returns showing the responsibilities for the preparation, review and signoff of returns (see Annex A). This will be maintained by the

Management Team, and stored on a shared drive accessible by all staff with responsibility for preparing returns and other staff as appropriate. This will be updated annually.

5. Preparation of returns

The relevant Director will assume responsibility for each external data return according to their area of responsibility. The manager that Director nominates in each of their departments is responsible for ensuring that:

- Data returns are completed according to agreed timetables, allowing sufficient time for the review and subsequent amendment of returns as required
- Data from corporate systems has been accurately transferred, input or transcribed, as appropriate into the format required by HESA, funding body or other agency
- Sufficient time and resource has been allocated to the preparation of returns
- Staff regularly attend training and information sessions held by HESA, funding bodies and other agencies, thus keeping abreast of changes to requirements and taking the appropriate action to ensure that data capture and transfer mechanisms remain current and relevant
- Staff are available to respond to requests for information and issues arising through the scrutiny, and to make amendments to returns as required.

6. Scrutiny of returns

Each return should be subject to scrutiny before final submission to HESA, funding body or other agency. The purpose of scrutiny is to provide an extra level of checking, to challenge assumptions and to provide assurance to senior management about the quality of the return. The scrutiny should be undertaken by staff not directly involved in the preparation of returns. Responsibilities for scrutinising returns are set out in the External Data Returns Schedule.

7. Reporting

The relevant Director will routinely receive reports from staff involved in the preparation of returns about their status. Reports will comment on any funding implications and highlight any areas of concern or issues that need to be addressed.

Following the completion of each return, the departments involved in the preparation and scrutiny, should arrange a review of the process and issues that have arisen and ensure that a plan is in place to address issues as appropriate. Audit reports and management responses will be presented by the relevant Director to the Management Team and the Audit Committee, and copied to relevant heads of department.

8. Documentation

The final submission or other appropriate output will be stored securely on a shared network drive.

All procedures relating to the preparation and scrutiny of external data returns should be documented. A copy of this documentation will be stored on a shared network drive.

Type of Return	Return	Submission Month	Lead	Verification	Internal Sign-Off
HESA	Institution Profile	June	Trevor Hall	Jon Wardle	Jon Wardle
	Student record	September	Katarina Kakpa	Registrar	Jon Wardle
	Staff Record	November	Gillian Carr	Philip Willatt	Jon Wardle
	Destinations of leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)	March	Gill Woods	Registrar	Jon Wardle
	Estates	February	Betty Key	Mark Tugwell	Jon Wardle
	Finance	December	Alex Gurney	Trevor Hall	Jon Wardle
	HE-BCI	December	Alex Gurney	Trevor Hall	Jon Wardle
HESES	HESES	December	Katarina Kakpa	Registrar	Jon Wardle