

Summary of findings from KIS audits

1. HEFCE has carried out audits of the Key Information Sets (KIS) since 2012. This document summarises the key findings which remain applicable to the Unistats collection from 2017 onwards.
2. The main issues encountered in the work are as follows:
 - a. We found that most institutions had processes in place to review and check KIS data prior to submission. In most cases we found the data was reviewed by an individual not involved in compiling it. We generally expect a segregation of duties between these roles.
 - b. In most cases we have found clear reporting lines to senior management, and to governors usually through the audit committee or similar. However, at some institutions there were limited or no reporting lines. We would expect these reporting lines, and an appropriate level of oversight, to be in place.
 - c. We found that the process of compiling and submitting KIS data was documented at most institutions. Some institutions had not documented the process, increasing the risk that should key personnel be unavailable at the time of the KIS submission the submission might not be made in a timely manner and to the required data standards.
 - d. We found many cases where KIS data was not updated to reflect the introduction of new courses or to remove courses that are no longer advertised. Courses should be included in the Unistats return as soon as a new course is advertised and courses which are no longer offered should be removed as soon as possible. Some institutions had robust processes in place to ensure that KIS data was resubmitted as soon as possible to reflect changes to the courses being recruited to, and to amend data for courses where necessary (for example to reflect a change to whether a sandwich year is offered). We consider it good practice for such processes to be in place.
 - e. We frequently found discrepancies between information on whether the course is available full-time or part-time and whether sandwich years, foundation years or years abroad are available as returned in the KIS and information on institutions websites and/or programme specifications. Institutions should ensure that processes are in place to accurately capture this information and to ensure that it is kept up-to-date throughout the year.
 - f. We found that at most institutions some 'potential KIS' courses (courses in the HESA or ILR record, whose characteristics indicate a KIS should be submitted) were incorrectly not linked to the courses in the KIS. The inclusion of historical links is essential to ensure that relevant NSS and other data is published. Institutions should design processes to ensure that links to all relevant courses in the HESA or

ILR record are included. We would consider it good practice for the list of 'potential KIS courses' within the check documentation to be checked to ensure there is a legitimate reason any links that are not included.

g. We found high levels of errors in accreditation data across the institutions audited. The inclusion of accreditations which are not in place is of particular concern and institutions should take particular care to ensure that provisional accreditations are not returned. In addition we have found errors in the type of accreditation returned.

h. A common error identified through our audits is the use of the accreditation dependency flag to indicate that the number of professional exemptions gained depends on students' option choices. This is not in line with the guidance and the accreditation should not be shown as dependent on student choice if all students will gain at least one exemption through completion of core modules. Institutions should note that guidance on the accreditation fields has been amended this year and should be reviewed thoroughly. Institutions should ensure that accreditation data is subject to thorough checks and that it is amended throughout the year as necessary.

HEFCE Data Assurance Team
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