Data Quality Statement and Assurance for 2025/26

The Importance of Data Quality

Data Quality is particularly important to the RCM in respect of:

- **Statutory returns** – student, staff, alumni and financial data is used in a number of statistical returns which the College is required to make to OfS and other funders (returns include HESES, RAS, HESA Student, HESA Staff, HESA Finance, Graduate Outcomes, TRAC and National Student Survey). These returns themselves are then in turn used in a variety of ways.
- **Funding** - the data contained in the HESES and RAS returns are used by OfS to determine RCM's grant, and as such the quality of our data has a direct relationship to the income the College will receive.
- **Equality and diversity** – data derived from the College's data sources is used for equal opportunities and diversity monitoring in order to comply with the College statutory duties and its stated policy objectives.
- **Data protection** – data security is an important objective in data processes.
- **League tables & Performance Indicators** - data from the HESA student return (as well as data from the staff, finance and Graduate Outcomes returns and the National Student Survey) are used by The Times Higher Education and The Guardian newspapers to compile their league tables. Returning inaccurate data to HESA may result in disappointing rankings in the league tables, and misleading performance indicator information.
- **Planning** - data from Student Records System is used internally throughout the year in the recruitment and budget-setting process, particularly in monitoring the recruitment and enrolment performance against targets and forecast student numbers. TRAC is used by the Directorate to better understand the College's income and expenditure and to inform the efficient and appropriate deployment of resources.
- **Customer service** - poor data could potentially result in students being awarded incorrect degree certificates, inaccurate transcripts and receiving correspondence containing the wrong details.

Ensuring and Improving Data Quality

The College is committed to ensuring good Data Quality through:

- **Governance, People & Skills**: The responsibility for data quality lies with all staff, and as such the commitment to data quality is communicated from the Directorate throughout the College as a whole. Staff with particular responsibility for data quality receive appropriate training and support (for instance in the Student Records System, pertinent data protection issues, and the application of the College's own internal data quality policies). Staff roles and responsibilities in respect of each statutory return and the quality of data contained therein, are clearly delineated.
- **Systems & Processes**: The College has a number of established systems and processes in place for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of data, such as the HESES/HESA Student/HESA Protocols, which clearly set out the procedures entailed in producing, checking and submitting these returns and the data contained therein. Internal auditors have a key role in monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness of systems and processes for data quality.

- **Data Use & Reporting**: In ensuring that data, in the form of both statutory returns and various other internal management information formats, is relied upon and used regularly to inform decision making and planning, the inherent value and importance of the data itself, and therefore its quality is promoted to staff throughout the organisation.

Data Quality Objectives

- To maintain and develop documentation and procedures to ensure data is checked regularly and robustly
- To ensure that data is used effectively to manage and improve the student recruitment, registration and assessment processes
- To support a culture of valuing high quality data
- To ensure that all data is accurate (in terms of correctness), valid (in an agreed format which conforms to recognised standards), reliable (reflects consistent processes), timely (available when needed), relevant (in terms of the purpose(s) it is to be used for) and complete (in terms of all data being captured).

Data return						
Discover Uni 25-26 (Formerly Unistats)	DDB	A provider will need to submit information about courses that it will offer to its students. This helps prospective higher education students to make decisions about what and where to study https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c25061/	Registry Information & Systems Manager (Nicholas.seager@rcm.ac.uk)	22 August 2025	22 August 2025	Y
Student Record 24-25	DDB	A provider will need to submit details of individual students and the courses they are studying. The data collected underpins the OfS's regulatory approach.	Registry Information & Systems Manager (Nicholas.seager@rcm.ac.uk)	5 November 2025	17 October 2025	Y

Data return	Organisation	Information and purpose of collection	Submitting manager	Sign-off deadline	Date Submitted	Receipt
Graduate Outcomes Survey 24-25	DDB	A provider will need to engage with the Graduate Outcomes survey, including submitting and approving contact details for students who have completed their studies, who will then be surveyed by the DDB. For further education and sixth form colleges, initial contact details will be sourced from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) but will still need checking. The Graduate Outcomes survey is used to understand student progression and outcomes, including to inform student choice.	Creative Careers Centre Manager (Diana.roberts@rcm.ac.uk)	14 November 2025	12 August 2025	Y
Staff record 24-25	DDB	A provider will need to submit demographic and contract information for academic staff it employs and its governors. The data is used by the OfS and by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Department for Education, to understand the makeup of the academic and research workforce	Head of HR (Jennifer.allison@rcm.ac.uk)	18 November 2025	18 November 2025	Y
Aggregate offshore record 24-25	DDB	A provider will need to submit information about the number of students studying overseas who are either registered with it or studying towards its awards. The data is used to understand the nature and extent of providers' offshore activity and for general monitoring purposes.	Registry Information & Systems Manager (Nicholas.seager@rcm.ac.uk)	25 November 2025	26 September 2025	Y

Data return	Organisation	Information and purpose of collection	Submitting manager	Sign-off deadline	Date Submitted	Receipt
National Student Survey (NSS) 2026	Contractor	A provider will need to: a. Populate its NSS 2026 sample templates with contact details for all students on its target list. b. Review and/or update its NSS provider contact details. c. Submit its "My survey options" form. Instructions on how to supply this information will be included in the NSS 2026 set-up guide to be issued in late October 2025 by the contractor working on behalf of the OfS and the UK funding and regulatory bodies. The NSS is used to improve the student experience and inform student choice, It is a key component of the quality and regulatory landscape in UK higher education and is used to support public accountability.	Registry Information & Systems Manager (Nicholas.seager@rcm.ac.uk)	28 November 2025	28 November 2025	Y
Prevent accountability and data return	OfS	A provider will need to submit a set of declarations that it has continued to show due regard to the Prevent duty. It will also need to submit data on key areas of the Prevent duty: welfare, events, and external speakers, and training. These are used to provide assurance that providers continue to demonstrate due regard to the Prevent duty.	Deputy Director/Assistant to the Deputy Director (Lauren.pountney@rcm.ac.uk)	1 December 2025	27 November 2025	Y

Data return	Organisation	Information and purpose of collection	Submitting manager	Sign-off deadline	Date Submitted	Receipt
Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 25-26	OfS	A provider will need to submit data on the number of higher education students studying in the 25-26 academic year. The data is used to inform funding allocations. Updated guidance on submission requirements will be published on the OfS website in the autumn.	Registry Information & Systems Manager (Nicholas.seager@rcm.ac.uk)	30 January 2026	12 January 2026	Y
TRAC 24-25	OfS	A provider will need to submit a Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return that has been reviewed and approved as set out in guidance. The data is used to understand the application of costs across activity, including cross subsidies in higher education. It is also used by UKRI and other public funders for funding purposes.	Director of Finance / Finance Planning & Reporting Manager (Andreia.sangalli@rcm.ac.uk)	30 January 2026	22 January 2026	Y
Capital monitoring 25-26	OfS	This is used to provide assurance that capital funding has been used in line with OfS terms and conditions of funding, and to evidence the impact of capital grants at individual providers. Further information about annual reporting will be published in spring 2026. The format will be similar to previous years. If the monitoring information is not submitted by the deadline, the OfS will seek to reclaim the capital funding provided during the year.	Finance Planning & Reporting Manager (Andreia.sangalli@rcm.ac.uk)	14 April 2026	15 April 2026	Y

Data return	Organisation	Information and purpose of collection	Submitting manager	Sign-off deadline	Date Submitted	Receipt
Annual Financial Return 2025	OfS	Submitted documents are: - Signed audited financial statements applicable to the accounting period subject to reporting. - Completed Annual Financial Return 2025 workbook, in the template from the OfS. For all providers this must include year 1 to year 7 (covering the two most recent audited years, the current year, and four subsequent years). - Commentary in the template from the OfS. - A management letter from the provider's external auditor. - Audited financial statements from the entity giving financial support to the provider, where legally binding obligation of such support is in place. These must be for the legal entity's most recent financial reporting period	Director of Finance / Finance Planning & Reporting Manager (Andreia.sangalli@rcm.ac.uk)	31 December 2025	12 December 2025	Y
Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction survey 24-25	DDB	A provider will need to submit details of the volume and direction of interactions between the provider, business, and the wider community. The data is used by UKRI to allocate Higher Education Innovation Funds and to generate metrics for the Knowledge Exchange Framework	Research and Knowledge Exchange Manager (Emma.hewett@rcm.ac.uk)	30 January 2026	7 January 2026	Y

Data return	Organisation	Information and purpose of collection	Submitting manager	Sign-off deadline	Date Submitted	Receipt
Charity Commission Return	Charity Commission		Director of Finance/Head of Finance (luke.hollander@rcm.ac.uk)	31 May 2026	20 January 2026	Y
Provider profile 25-26	DDB	A provider will need to submit information about the location of its campuses and its internal organisation. This data allows the OfS and others to understand the geographic distribution of higher education.	Registry Information & Systems Manager (Nicholas.seager@rcm.ac.uk)	24 June 2026	18 May 2026	Y
Audit & Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report	RCM	This will be published on the RCM's website in accordance with the HE Audit Committee's code of practice published by CUC.	Governance Services Administrator & Clerk to Council (Sharon.moloney@rcm.ac.uk)	10 November 2026	N/A	N/A