



# HEIMS Quality Assurance Plan

## Reducing your workload

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## Purpose

The purpose of the HEIMS Quality Assurance Plan is to help you:

- submit high quality data to the department on time
- reduce your workload at peak times including during the formal verification periods
- meet your timeframes for data requirements.

The HEIMS Quality Assurance Plan is available in the [Checking & verifying your data toolkit](#) on HEIMSHelp.

## What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance is simply – checking your data. It is the process of analysing data to highlight any inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the data and to revise the data as needed.

This can be done on an ongoing basis. If you find something that is wrong it can be fixed by revising the data.

## Why do I need to check my data?

You are an approved provider under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the Act). Depending on your approval the Australian Government pays you to offer a range of initiatives that may include (to name a few):

- Commonwealth Supported Places and HECS-HELP
- FEE-HELP
- VET-FEE-HELP

As an approved provider you have responsibilities.

Responsibilities to your students that they know how much assistance they have accepted and how much they can expect to repay through their taxation.

And you have responsibilities to the Australian Government.

You need to provide estimates to the department of how many students you think will take up assistance. Your payments are based on this estimate and we pay you in advance.

Your payments are reconciled against the data you submit. If you are paid too little during the year we will need to pay you more. If you are paid too much you will need to pay the overpaid amount back.

You need to report certain information that will allow us to manage this and to ensure your accountability under the Act. You need to send your data to us as required by the due dates. You also need to formally verify your data by the due dates (from 2013 verification is included in the data requirements). This is very important.

Reporting high quality data is essential for your students and your business.

## How do I check my data?

The department provides a range of tools and aids to help you check your data.

The HEIMS Data Checking guide in the [Checking & verifying your data toolkit](#) on HEIMSHelp provides a range of common issues that have been identified in reporting by providers. This is a good starting point for you when checking your data.

HEIMS Online Data View Reports (the blue reports) are in the same format as the formal Verification Reports (the pink reports) that you will need to use during formal verification periods.

Getting to know the HEIMS Data View Reports and using them on a regular basis will ultimately cut down on your work load during formal verification periods. You may check your submitted data the next day after you have received notification that your submission is accepted in HEIMS.



The HEIMS Data View reports are a good starting point when checking your data. The reports compare current data (“live data” as of the day before) to data from the previous year and highlights variations that may need investigation.

For more information about HEIMS Online Data View reports please refer to the [HEIMS Online Data View User Guide](#).

The department will also run regular checks on the data after each submission using the issues identified in the HEIMS data checking guides as a base. We will conduct these checks after each submission.

[Higher Education HEIMS data checking guide](#)

[VET FEE-HELP HEIMS data checking guide](#)

If we find unusual or significant variance in your data we will contact you. If you are contacted as a result of these checks, the department will expect you to check your data against the data you have reported and revise it if and where appropriate.

It is important that you revise your data as soon as possible. It is also essential to check your student systems or enrolment processes and amend them where appropriate so that the same issue is not as likely to reoccur.

## When do I check my data?

You can review your data at any time using the HEIMS Online Data View Reports. Ideally this is undertaken as part of a continuous improvement process in your normal course of business.

We often have providers phoning us the day a submission is due or the verification process is ending who are trying to revise data at the last minute. Incorrect data can be fixed. But remember that revising data can take time.

When you revise your data it needs to be accepted by the system. Reports need to be regenerated in an overnight batch process. You will not be able to check your data until the next business day and this may be too late. The deadline is missed and you are officially in breach of the legislation.

Don't go there – give yourself time.

Checking your data early can reduce your work load later. If you check your data as soon as you submit you have the opportunity to pick up issues that may otherwise perpetuate throughout the year.

## What is the verification process?

You are required to formally verify your data. The reports that you verify is on HEIMS Online and these are activated at certain times of the year.



There are two formal verification periods a year for higher education student data and one for staff data (Table A and B higher education providers only). You may already be familiar with these.

Formal verification is the last opportunity for you to ensure that your data is accurate. It is the formal verification processes which are now included in the reporting schedule from 2013.

Don't leave checking your data to the last minute. It is better to check your data regularly than to leave the first check of your data to formal verification.

Your verified data is used in publications and reconciliation. Verified data is also used for certification for Universities.

Table 1 shows the scheduled dates for verification of higher education data.

**Table 1 – Verification timeframes**

Verification	Provider type	Completion date
<b>First half year student verification (last submission 31 August)</b>	Higher education	15 September - 15 October
<b>Full year student (last submission 31 March)</b>	Higher education	15 April - 15 May
<b>Student Completions (Annual submission 30 April)</b>	Higher education	1 May - 15 May
<b>Staff (Annual submission 30 June)</b>	Table A & B providers	15 July - 15 August

*Note: VET providers should refer to HEIMSHelp for the latest verification timeframes.*

## Revising your data

So you have checked your data and found some problems. Now what?

You can fix errors at any time. It is important to revise your data in HEIMS as soon as you have identified inconsistencies in your data. This is important for the students but also for you as it may impact on your payments.

Checking your data early and revising your data if necessary after each submission will reduce your workload during formal verification.

When you formally verify your data, you are indicating to the department that your data and all records underlying that data are accurate and ready for publication and reconciliation. Once you have formally verified your data it can still be revised in HEIMS. However it is important to be aware that data revised after formal verification is completed will not be reflected in subsequent publications for that year. However these revisions will be reflected in the HEIMS Data View “live” reports.

Information about revising data that you have submitted to HEIMS is available in the in the [Revising your data toolkit](#) on HEIMSHelp.

## Checking and revising your data during formal verification

If you find that you need to revise your data after you have checked your verification reports (the pink reports on HEIMS Online) during a formal verification period, you will need to press **Refresh Reports** before you can “Sign Off”. Pressing **Refresh Report** will refresh your documents overnight.

It is important to refresh your reports to reflect the new data you have submitted.

For detailed information about the formal verification process see the HEIMS Online Verification User Guide in the [Checking & verifying your data toolkit](#) on HEIMSHelp.

## Conclusion

The HEIMS Quality Assurance Plan provides you with some strategies to help you submit and verify your data by the deadlines and to avoid the last minute rush that ultimately can lead to inaccurate data being used in publications and program management.

Regularly checking your data will ensure that you have up to date information in HEIMS, publications accurately reflect your courses and students and reconciliation of your payments and assessment of estimates are completed in a timely way.

If you have a comment or would like to know more about checking your data or using HEIMS Online Data View Reports please email [HEIMS.datacollections@education.gov.au](mailto:HEIMS.datacollections@education.gov.au).