

# Royal College of Music Data Quality Statement

## 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, DLHE, 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 DLHE 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 & 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 capture).

## The following code has been circulated to relevant members of the Royal College of Music staff

### HESA code of practice for higher education data collections

All the UK higher education funding bodies, working with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), follow a code of practice for higher education data collections.

### HESA standards and principles

Data submitted by higher education providers needs to meet certain standards. The explicit rules and checks that apply to data collections, and the principles of data protection, set out many of these standards.

We expect that the data must be prepared with honesty, impartiality and rigour, and should not intentionally mislead or otherwise lack integrity.

These principles have always been implicit. But we have brought them together in a code of practice to make it easier to refer to them, and to support those preparing and managing data collections.

### HESA scope

The code applies to all data collections submitted to HESA and the four UK higher education funding bodies.

The HESA website includes a list of relevant contacts at each body who can be contacted where there are concerns about adherence to the code.

All OfS-funded institutions must comply with the code of practice. Funding agreements will confirm that this is a condition of receiving OfS grants. Each higher education institution will be required to confirm in its annual assurance return that it complies with the code of practice.