



Overview of the University Applications and Offers Collection

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Introduction

This document provides an overview of the University Applications and Offers Collection administered by the Department of Education and Training. It includes details on the establishment and purpose of the Collection, the principles underpinning it, and the reporting and data management associated with the Collection.

Establishment of the Collection

As there had been previously no nationally consistent, comprehensive data available on applications and offers, the University Applications and Offers data collection was established in 2008 after consultations with Tertiary Admissions Centres (TACs) and higher education providers. The department had committed to making the collection of maximum benefit to all stakeholders and imposing minimal burden on higher education providers and TACs. To make best use of data that had been already collected as well as allowing time for the development of data specifications and systems where required, the department adopted a phased approach to developing the collection. The first phase was a trial using enhanced data from the TACs in 2008. The collection was subsequently expanded in 2009 to include applications and offers made directly to higher education providers.

Purpose of the Collection

The University Applications and Offers Data Collection was established to provide comparable and comprehensive data on applications, offers and acceptances for university places. The Collection is used for policy formulation and advice and to produce a range of reports to stakeholders and other interested parties. The data collection is composed of individual records of applications by domestic applicants during the start of year admissions process for Commonwealth supported places in higher education undergraduate award courses. Records of offers made by universities and acceptances of those offers by students are also included in the Collection.

The department publishes a series of reports for each academic year. The final report for the year, the 'Undergraduate Applications, Offers and Acceptances' report, is [published](#) at the conclusion of the annual admissions process for the main intake at the start of the academic year. The report provides an analysis of applications with preferences, offers and acceptances data by state, field of education, applicants' prior educational participation and a range of demographic characteristics including socioeconomic status, regionality and Indigenous status. The reports form the basis of briefings to the Minister and the provision of information to other stakeholders and the media. The reports provide a comprehensive source of information for those with an interest in higher education.

Principles underpinning the Collection

- The Collection has been designed as a ‘national minimum dataset’ for university applications, offers and acceptances. The data elements collected are those which most higher education providers and TACs are able to provide without undue difficulty. A deliberately relaxed set of validations has been implemented for many data elements. Provisions of a number of data elements is specifically designed to be discretionary in the “limited” submissions scheduled in the early phase of the admissions period, when verification and assessment of qualifications have not been completed, and applicants have not yet finalised their sets of preferred courses of study.
- Maximal use is made of existing national code set standards, e.g. the Higher Education Student Data Collection and the ABS Australian Standard Classifications.
- Sufficient data is collected from HEPs to obtain baseline data on the number of direct applications made each year.
- The process involves capturing data records as at the **Reference date**. This process is repeated several times during the admission process to get updated snapshot data.
- Minimal personal information is collected to protect privacy of applicants.
- The data specifications are for the main intake at the start of the year, with the potential to expand specifications to include mid-year intakes.

It is acknowledged that there are differences in the policies and operational procedures of tertiary admission centres. The Collection aims to minimise the number of inconsistencies by collecting a core set of common elements with agreed definitions and by declaring provision of certain data elements discretionary in the preliminary submissions to maximise the comparability of the data by aligning reference dates to comparable stages in TAC processing cycles and to make the Collection as nationally consistent as possible through the use of common data element definitions adapted from those used in the student data collection.

Reporting and data management

Reporting requirements

The data to be provided by TACs and higher education providers for this Collection is detailed in the ministerial notice relating to that year. Under Subsection 19-70(1) of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(HESA\)](#), a higher education provider must give to the Minister such statistical and other information that the Minister by notice in writing requires. Generally one ministerial notice is released for each reporting year and covers the three higher education data collections: the student, the staff and the applications and offers collections.

TACs submit data on applications and offers processed by TACs on behalf of the higher education providers they service. Higher education providers only submit data in respect to applications made directly to their institution.

Where possible, the department notifies TACs and higher education providers of future changes to the specification at least 12 months in advance of implementation. A summary of changes is also advised to providers in the [HEIMS Data Collections eNews](#).

More information on the data requirements, including the scope and structure of files and associated elements can be found at [University Applications and Offers Data Collection - 2017 Reporting Requirements](#) (for higher education providers); and [Data requirements - Tertiary Admissions Centres](#) (for TACs).

Higher Education Information Management System

The Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) provides the mechanisms for the provision of the data by TACs and higher education providers as well as the data warehouse for the data collection. HEIMS has been designed to keep information secure.

Data transmission systems

TACs with the exception of the University of Tasmania (UTAS) Admissions Office submit application and offers data via requests to a departmental web service. These requests are structured in accordance with the published schema for that web service. Comprehensive documentation on the construction, compression and submission of requests, including a link to the schema can be found in the [technical specifications](#).

Data submission by higher education providers including the UTAS Admission Centre is via flat file(s) via the Higher Education Client Assistance Tool (HEPCAT).

Reporting schedule

Data submissions are provided according to an agreed schedule based on an annual schedule of reference and submission dates provided by the Australasian Conference of Tertiary Admission Centres (ACTAC). This takes into account key dates in the processing cycles of TACs. When available, this information is published on the [HEIMSHHELP](#) website.

Indicative TAC reference dates

An indicative timetable for the **reference dates** for TACs is as follows:

Submission Number	Indicative Reference Dates	Limited or Detailed submission
1	Early October: This date captures on time and some late applications.	Limited
2	Mid January: This date captures all main round undergraduate offers.	Detailed
3	February: This date captures all formal offer rounds and much manual offer activity before the commencement of teaching.	Detailed
4	March: This is the next working day after census date activity which captures all applications and offers.	Detailed
5	May: This date captures all applications and offer activity and where possible, confirmed enrolments.	Detailed

Indicative higher education provider reference dates

An indicative timetable for the **reference dates** for higher education providers is as follows:

Submission Number	Indicative Reference Date	Limited or Detailed submission
1	February: intended to capture applications data, the majority of offers data and early acceptance data.	Detailed
2	May: final data capture on all applications, offers and acceptances for the beginning of the academic year.	Detailed

Higher education providers provide data submissions at two points in the admissions process. The first is intended to give indicative progressive data on a limited number of items. Higher education providers have the option of providing 'detailed' data in the first submission.