Data Assurance Policy and Procedure
April 2009

Policy
The University is fully committed to a high standard of Data Assurance, including working to the best practices.

The University accepts its duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the accuracy and completeness of all data involved in the full range of the University's undertakings.

The University recognises its responsibilities regarding the management of data within the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998), the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the The HEFCE Financial Memorandum and Accountability and Audit Code of Practice.

It is the responsibility of every member of university staff to ensure that all data within their areas of responsibility are accurate and complete, appropriately coded in compliance with university requirements and properly managed and maintained.

Definitions
For the purposes of this report and this policy, Data Owners are those parties responsible for data provision/entry, who therefore have control over the quality of the individual data items entered into the IT systems that hold the university's data.

Statutory Return Owners are those parties responsible for extracting data from the university's IT systems and assembling that data into a format that is acceptable to the statutory body that requires it.

System Owners are those parties who have responsibility for maintaining and managing the data requirements of the university's data recording systems, defining the rules by which they operate and the data items/fields that must be completed for each data set.

Data ownership
Ownership of the majority of university data lies with the academic units, except for staff data where HR is the data owner, and finance data, where service units also do data entry. Sign-off on data quality must follow the accountability chain of command, with first assurance sign-off coming from the Head of School/Service -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance, Student, Programme &amp; Module, Estates, Business Activity and other data</th>
<th>HR, Estates and Finance data</th>
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<td>PVC (Planning &amp; Resources)</td>
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<td>on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor</td>
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<td>Head of School</td>
<td>Head of Service</td>
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<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>Faculty HR Teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services Data Entry Staff</td>
<td>Party Responsible for Data Entry</td>
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It is recognised that there are some university data systems that schools and institutes do not have direct access to amend (eg Research Grants, Postgraduate Student Records, Estates, Programme and Module data). However, the school/institute is still the data provider and is therefore also defined here as the data owner (or joint data owner, in partnership with the service). The school/institute must
take responsibility for ensuring that the data is correct in the system, by liaising with the data entry staff.

The sign-off form attached as Appendix A is to be completed each year, in September, through the accountability structure shown above, starting with the Head of School/Institute/Service.

Risk assessment

ISS maintain institution wide security processes for all electronically held data and these responsibilities are not part of this policy and procedure.

Statutory returns

The statutory returns are compiled by staff who are not the data owners (except in the case of the HESA HR return where the ownership of the data and the compilation of the return both reside in HR). In addition to the Data Quality sign-off, there must be assurance that the returns have also been compiled correctly.

The Statutory Return sign-off form, attached as Appendix B, will be completed by the Heads of Service and the Registrar, certifying completion of the statutory returns, as follows -

The person responsible for compiling the return takes action to check the quality of the data, requesting correction or assurance from the data owners, where errors reports have identified issues. The compiler maintains records of all such communications and of any changes to the data they make, themselves.

The person responsible for compiling the return provides assurance to their Head of Section, that all checks have been made. The Head of Section is the lowest level of accountability. The Head of Section signs-off assurance for the Registrar.

The Registrar provides assurance for all of the statutory returns to the PVC (Planning & Resources).

University systems

The system owners are the Heads of Service with responsibility for the overall integrity of the university's data sets:

- Finance: Executive Director of Finance
- Staff: Executive Director of Human Resources
- Student: Academic Registrar
- Module/Programme: Academic Registrar
- Estates: Director of Estate Support Service
- Research & Business Activity: Director of Business Development & Regional Affairs

Each Head of Service will affirm to the Registrar, annually, that the IT systems used to store the university's data have been maintained and managed in accordance with good data quality principles and the requirements of the university's statutory funding and moderating bodies. An example of the form of sign-off required is attached as Appendix C.

Professor Tony Stevenson
PVC (Planning & Resources)
April 2009
Appendix A - Sign-off for data quality from data owners (to be completed annually, in September)

To: The PVC (Planning & Resources) on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor

Newcastle University - Data Assurance 2009/10

Faculty PVC/Registrar, Name .................................................................

HEFCE has a requirement for Newcastle University to confirm that it has effective arrangements for the management of and quality assurance of data submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, HEFCE and other funding bodies. This includes, but is not limited to, financial, student, module, programme, space, business and research data.

1. I certify that for my area of responsibility:
   - There is/is not* a framework in place for the management and accountability of data quality, with a commitment to secure a culture of data quality.
   - That all Academic/Service* Units have/have not* got appropriate policies and procedures in place to secure the quality of the data it records and uses for reporting.
   - There are/are not* systems and processes in place which secure the quality of data as part of the normal business activity of the unit.
   - There are/are not* arrangements to ensure that staff have the knowledge, competencies and capacity for their roles in relation to data quality.
   - That all Academic/Service* Units have/have not* put in place arrangements that are focused on ensuring that data that support external reporting are also actively used in the organisation’s decision making process, and are subject to a system of internal control and validation.
   - That all Academic/Service* Units have/have not* got appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that data protection requirements are complied with.

* Delete as appropriate

2. Any material issues within my area of responsibility which may prevent you from making an unqualified confirmation to HEFCE are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (to be identified from the data quality spreadsheet)</th>
<th>Target date for full compliance</th>
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I recognise that you will rely on the statements made by myself and other members of the Executive Board, together with reports from Internal Audit and the Audit Committee when reaching your opinion of the adequacy of data assurance within Newcastle University.

Signed ................................................................................... Date...........................................

* Note - Faculty PVCs and the Registrar would in turn require similar declarations from Heads of School/Service
Appendix B - Sign-off structure for statutory returns

To: The Registrar

From:

- HESA Finance, TRAC  Executive Director of Finance
- HESA Staff  Executive Director of Human Resources
- HESA Student, HESES, RAS  Director of Planning
- HEBCIS  Director of Business Development & Regional Affairs
- EMS  Director of Estate Support Service

As Head of ................................................................. (service) I confirm that the data for the ................................................. return has been checked prior to submission, all queries and internal validation checks have been investigated and to the best ability of this section, I confirm that this submission is complete and correct.

The following items require further work to meet full assurance standards:

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<tr>
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Signed .................................................................  Date.........................................
Appendix C – Sign-off structure for University Data Systems

To: The Registrar

From:
FinanceExecutive Director of Finance
StaffExecutive Director of Human Resources
StudentAcademic Registrar
Module/ProgrammeAcademic Registrar
EstatesDirector of Estate Support Service
Research & Business ActivityDirector of Business Development & Regional Affairs

As Head of .................................. (service) I confirm that the data for the

................................................. data management systems have been maintained in a consistent
manner that complies with the requirements for good governance of the data they contain.

All queries have been investigated and to the best ability of this section, I confirm that this structure is
fir for purpose.

The following items require further work to meet full assurance standards:

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Signed ................................................................. Date.........................................