

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Annual TRAC return for academic year 2011/12

Date: 23 October 2012
Reference: W12/33HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Response by: **31 January 2013**
Contact: TRAC reporting queries should be directed towards either:
Bethan Owen
Telephone: 029 2068 2215
Email: bethan.owen@hefcw.ac.uk; or
Neil Hempstead
Telephone: 029 2068 2286
Email: neil.hempstead@hefcw.ac.uk ;

This circular requests institutions to submit their annual Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) Return for 2011/12.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please telephone us on (029) 2068 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



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Annual TRAC return for academic year 2011/12

1. This circular asks you to submit your institution's annual Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) Return by **31 January 2013**.
2. The template incorporates in a single return:
 - a. the annual TRAC reporting requirements
 - b. the charge-out rates for research collected on behalf of Research Councils UK (RCUK), which will be used for benchmarking purposes. To help improve the quality of the data submitted, a number of automatic and self-validation checks have been introduced, as well as a free format template for institutions to explain any unusual movements when comparing their data with the previous year.
3. In reporting these data, please confirm that:
 - the costs reported have been prepared in accordance with the TRAC requirements – as set out in Section B (minimum requirements) of Part III of the TRAC Guidance, issued by the Joint Costing and Pricing Steering Group in June 2005, and subsequent revisions and updates as published at www.jcpsg.ac.uk under TRAC guidance
 - income has been prepared in accordance with the Funding Councils' requirements set out in the updated Annex 16 of that guidance
 - tests for reasonableness have been carried out and the results of these have been presented to a Board Committee to give assurance that the outcome is fair and reasonable, as required in part II, Chapter C.1.
4. In September 2011 the TRAC Support Unit issued its latest guidance documents and an enhanced statement of requirements, all of which are available on the [JCPSG website](#) under Guidance / Statement of Requirements. Your return and supporting documentation should conform to these requirements.
5. The annual TRAC return also asks institutions to provide details of the committee, authorised by the governing body, responsible for confirming compliance with the costing standards. These standards are set out in Part II of the TRAC Guidance, Chapter B.2. The relevant committee should seek assurance from the internal auditors to confirm:
 - that they have reviewed progress on meeting the annual TRAC requirements
 - that the processes in place comply with the TRAC Guidance
 - that the institution has implemented TRAC methods on a robust basis.
6. We are aware that in certain institutions the calendar of meetings does not coincide with the TRAC return submission dates and therefore the relevant Board-appointed committee may not have reviewed and approved the results

in strict accordance with the TRAC guidance; in this instance we ask that the person signing the TRAC return confirms that proper authority has been given to approve and sign off, and that the result of any subsequent review by committee is confirmed back to us.

Submitting returns for 2011/12

TRAC Returns

7. A sample PDF version of a TRAC return form can be downloaded from the TRAC Guidance web pages at www.jcpsg.ac.uk/guidance/annexes.htm (Annex 16); in addition, a list of peer groups that will be used for the 2011-12 TRAC benchmarking and an updated income allocation schedule can be found there. Your institution's individualised template for completion of the TRAC data return should be downloaded and submitted through the secure area of the HEFCE website. As recently advised to your Head of Finance by email the individual organisational keys for 2011-12 have been amended for the new secure database and require only a single key rather than the previous additional 'group' key. If your Head of Finance or TRAC manager has difficulty accessing the HEFCW website, they should contact either of the names given at the top of this circular.
8. A scanned copy of the completed TRAC return, signed by you (as head of institution) should be emailed by 31 January 2013 to neil.hempstead@hefcw.ac.uk. We will treat the information provided as strictly confidential. We will report to the Welsh Government on the sector aggregate TRAC return data, which we expect to publish.
9. Benchmarking feedback reports will be made available for download from the HEFCE extranet in due course.

Freedom of Information

10. HEFCW and HEFCE are covered by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act gives a public right of access to any information held by public authorities. In the event of a request for information contained in TRAC returns, we have a duty to decide whether information should be released or treated as confidential. Requests must be considered on a case-by-case basis, and we can refuse to disclose information only in specific circumstances. Should we receive a request, we will give careful consideration to whether the release of this information would, or would be likely, to harm the commercial interests of institutions submitting the data.
11. For information about HEFCW's TRAC reporting requirements, please contact Neil Hempstead or Bethan Owen, whose contact details are given at the cover page of this circular.

12. For further advice the TRAC Support Unit has responsibilities in the following areas:

- provision of the TRAC Helpdesk (covering all aspects of the TRAC guidance, annual TRAC and TRAC EC-FP7)
- policy research and support to the Financial Sustainability Strategy Group and the TRAC Development Group; TRAC Guidance research and development
- communication with the sector on TRAC
- support for the TRAC Self Help groups
- promulgation of TRAC among the sector's stakeholders.

The Support Unit can be contacted via e-mail (trachelpdesk@kpmg.co.uk) or phone (tel 0115 935 3400).

Assessing the impact of our policies

We will be carrying out an equality impact assessment to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We will also consider the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about EIAs.