

Issue

1. The production and publication of material relating to the undertakings and discussions of the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG).

Recommendations

Recommendation: That members consider and agree the summary of the March 2011 meeting of the Performance Indicators Steering Group (as given in Annex A).

Recommendation: That members agree to the publication of the summary document alongside the PIs and associated on HESA's website.

Recommendation: That members take a view on the potential to publish further material relating to the meetings of the PISG.

Recommendation: That members take a view on a preferred approach and format in respect of the reporting of evidence prepared by the PITG.

Discussion

2. In March 2011, the PISG met for the first time following the group's recent reconstitution. As an item of any other business the group discussed the potential to publish information regarding the items discussed by the PISG at their meetings. At that time members proposed that a brief summary of the discussion topics could be produced, agreed by the group, and then published alongside the Performance Indicators (PIs) and associated content on HESA's website.

3. The proposed summary document has been drafted in respect of the March 2011 meeting of the PISG and is provided at Annex A.

Recommendation: That members consider and agree the summary of the March 2011 meeting of the Performance Indicators Steering Group (as given in Annex A).

Recommendation: That members agree to the publication of the summary document alongside the PIs and associated on HESA's website.

4. Members are invited to note the potential demand for further information regarding the undertakings and discussions of the PISG. It is possible that interested parties may seek further details having engaged with the summary document: from the minutes of the meeting as well as the papers considered by the group. The PISG are invited to take a view on the potential publication of these additional materials.

Recommendation: That members take a view on the potential to publish further material relating to the meetings of the PISG.

5. The PITG met for the first time in June 2011 and undertook a discussion regarding the interaction of the PITG with the PISG. In particular, the group queried the form of the evidence they may be required to produce as well as how and where this might flow from the PITG. They questioned whether this might be a summary of items discussed at their meetings, a full and detailed technical report of their discussions and the evidence considered, or some other level of reporting. They also questioned the audience to whom any such evidence would be targeted: whether this is the PISG or a wider audience beyond that. Given the intended interactions between the two groups, the PITG felt it appropriate to seek guidance from the PISG on a preferred approach in this respect.

Recommendation: That members take a view on a preferred approach and format in respect of the reporting of evidence prepared by the PITG.

Further information

6. For further information contact Mark Gittoes (Phone: 0117 931 7052; e-mail: m.gittoes@hefce.ac.uk) or Alison Brunt (Phone: 0117 931 7166; e-mail a.brunt@hefce.ac.uk).

Annex A: Meeting summary of the PISG's March 2011 meeting

Performance Indicators Steering Group

Meeting summary of the Performance Indicators Steering Group held at 10.30am on Monday, 28 March 2011 at Centre Point, London. The meeting was chaired by Heather Fry, Director of Education and Participation, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of previous meeting (Paper)
3. Matters arising
 - (a) Publication of 1st Tranche
4. Terms of reference (PISG 11/01 - Paper)
5. Performance Indicators: Now and in the future (PISG 11/02 - PowerPoint)
6. Benchmarking: Entry qualifications (PISG 11/03 - Paper)
7. Items for report
 - (a) 2011 Publication date for 2nd Tranche
8. Date of next meetings
 - (a) Steering Group
 - (b) 1st Technical group meeting
9. Any other business

Matters arising

Tranche 1 of the UK Higher Education Performance Indicators (PIs) would be published on 31 March 2011 in accordance with National Statistics requirements. Tranche 2 would be published on 15 July 2011.

Terms of reference (PISG 11/01)

The group discussed their terms of reference and the final version would be agreed by correspondence. The terms of reference for PITG were considered. It was agreed that PITG could admit one additional member of PITG to jointly represent Universities UK, Universities Scotland, GuildHE and Higher Education Wales.

Performance Indicators: now and in the future (PISG 11/02 PPT)

The group discussed the history, present and future of the PIs, including their development and the uses that the PIs were put to by different stakeholders. Following an initial discussion, the next meeting of PISG would include further coverage of the role and relevance of PIs and PISG, and later meetings would further consider the currency of the existing indicators and their coverage.

Benchmarking: Entry qualifications (PISG 11/03)

Members of PISG discussed recent calls for improvements to be made to the benchmarks that accompany the PIs, in that they were criticised for not fully accounting for a student's qualifications on entry by considering the subject area of A levels taken. They noted that differences were already recognised by the benchmarks accounting for the HE subject area of study. It was recognised that the perception of the PIs by others was important and that the PISG needed to be equipped with the evidence required to respond appropriately and consistently to criticisms of this nature. The PISG agreed to seek evidence and expert advice from PITG to

better understand this issue. Any future decisions would be made on the merits of the evidence once given due consideration by PISG. Beyond this, a response by PISG to the recent criticisms was not felt either necessary or appropriate at this time.

Date of next meeting

It was agreed that PISG would meet three times in the first year following the change in governance arrangements. The group would meet again in July 2011. The PITG would meet before July 2011.

Any other business

The group discussed the potential to publish information regarding the items discussed by PISG. A brief summary of the discussion topics could be published alongside the PIs and associated content on HESA's website, following agreement of the summary by the PISG. Publication of the group's terms of reference and membership would be maintained.