

Timeline of the introduction and development of the Performance Indicators

PISG 11/07

Issue

1. In March 2011, the Performance Indicator Steering Group (PISG) received a presentation on the “Performance Indicators: now and in the future”. Following that presentation, members asked for a timeline showing noteworthy dates relating to the introduction and development of the Performance Indicators.

2. This paper attempts to capture the time points of noteworthy historical Performance Indicator developments.

Recommendations

3. There are no recommendations associated with this paper.

Discussion

4. Provided below is a list of significant time points in the development of the Performance Indicators:

1997

Following the recommendation of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Educationⁱ (NCIHE), the Secretary of State for Education and Employment asked the HEFCE to discuss with the Department ways in which progress can be made to develop suitable indicators and benchmarks of performance in the HE sector.

1998

At a meeting of the Department for Education and Employment, Treasury, HEFCE, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) met in January 1998 and agreed that HEFCE would take this forward through the creation of a group of both stakeholders and those with expertise in this area. This results in the formation of the PISG.

1999

The first set of Performance Indicators published relating to widening participation and retention (through HEFCE) are publishedⁱⁱ on behalf of all four of the UK funding bodies.

2001

The Chancellor of the Exchequer requests that indicators showing employment outcomes be developed. At that time, the only data available for such an indicator were found to be unsuitable, and it was agreed that HESA's First Destination Return should be amended and used. This was done for the survey of students graduating in the 1999-2000 academic year, and the first set of Performance Indicator relating to employment outcomes for full-time first degree qualifiers are publishedⁱⁱⁱ.

Location-adjusted benchmarks are also introduced for the widening participation Performance Indicators^{iv}.

2002

The widening participation indicators are extended to include an indicator examining students in receipt of the Disabled Student's Allowance^v.

2004

HESA calculate and publish the Performance Indicators on behalf of the four funding bodies^{vi}.

The way in which entry qualifications are accounted for in the Performance Indicator benchmarks is modified. For entrants from 2002/03, grades achieved in A levels, Scottish Highers, Vocational A levels and some other examinations were converted to UCAS tariff scores instead of the old points scores^{vii}.

2006

The funding bodies open a consultation on the usefulness and future development of the Performance Indicators for UK higher education^{viii}.

2007

The results of the review of the Performance Indicators are published by HEFCE (on behalf of the four funding bodies)^{ix}. No indicators are dropped as a result of the review, but some extensions to the existing indicators as well as one or two new indicators are suggested. It also notes that any future indicators will need to account for the significant changes that were about to occur to the HESA student record.

2008

The definition of the Low Participation Neighbourhood indicator moves from being based on the Super Profiles geodemographic classification to using POLAR2. The new method is based on the HE participation rates of people aged 18^x.

2009

At the request of the Scottish Funding Council, the Low Participation Neighbourhood indicator stops being published for students in Scottish HEIs. The relatively high (in UK terms) participation rate in Scotland coupled with the very high proportion of higher education that occurs in further education colleges (HEFCE 2005/03 estimated that around one in three young entrants in Scotland were studying a higher education course at a further education college^{xi}) means that the figures for Scottish institutions could, when viewed in isolation, misrepresent their contribution to widening participation.

Performance Indicators designated Official Statistics

2010

For this year only, the indicator based on NS-SEC separated from other widening participation indicators because the form of the question which informs NS-SEC changed in this particular year. The result is that a higher proportion of students are classified as “unknown” and those classified in NS-SEC groups 4 to 7 rises.

From 2007/08 onwards, the HESA student record collects additional information on an individual's qualifications on entry compared to previous years. The review of the performance indicators, carried out in 2007, recommended that "the definitions of categories of entry qualification to be used in defining the benchmarks should be reconsidered once the new-style entry qualification data become available." As a result, the richer entry qualification information allows the benchmark methodology to further account for student holding particular combinations of qualifications and grades (rather than using a single tariff score).

The non-continuation indicators were extended to cover part-time first degree students. The part-time non-continuation indicator differs from the full-time indicators in that it looks at continuation in the two years following entry. It is further restricted to only include those students studying at least 30% of an FTE.

The coverage of the employment performance indicators were extended to cover part-time first degree leavers plus full-time and part-time other undergraduate leavers.

The structure of the Performance Indicators Steering Group is reviewed and the group decide to reform, and review its membership. They also decide to create a sub-group to provide the Steering Group with advice on technical matters.

2011

First meetings of the reformed Performance Indicators Steering Group and newly formed Technical Group take place^{xii}.

Further information

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- ⁱ <https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/Partners/NCIHE/>
- ⁱⁱ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/perfind/1999/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ HEFCE 01/21, http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2001/01_21.htm
- ^{iv} "Location-adjusted benchmarks", http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2059&Itemid=141
- ^v Table 7, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/perfind/2002/report.asp>
- ^{vi} http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2072&Itemid=141
- ^{vii} "Entry qualifications for entrants 2002/03 to 2006/07", http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2059&Itemid=141
- ^{viii} HEFCE 06/34, http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_34/
- ^{ix} HEFCE 07/14, http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_14/
- ^x <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/polar2/>
- ^{xi} HEFCE 05/03, Section 5.3, http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_03/05_03.pdf
- ^{xii} <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/perfind/pisg/>