

Please note that the recommendations given below are constructed on the default assumption that they will be accepted and agreed by the PISG. Members are required to respond to the PISG secretariat by email to confirm receipt and acceptance of the recommendations detailed below. Members are asked to clearly highlight in their responses to the PISG secretariat any challenge they may wish to make to the acceptance of a specific recommendation.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to members in March 2012 for information, and are attached to this email (PISG 20.01.2012.docx). The group are now asked to formally agree the minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the January 2012 meeting.

ACTION: HESA to publish the January 2012 PISG minutes on their website alongside the PIs and related content.

2. Report from the June 2012 Performance Indicators Technical Group meeting

The minutes of the June PITG meeting are provided for your information (PITG minutes 29.06.2012.docx). These are currently in draft form and are yet to be agreed by the PITG so should be treated in confidence. There are a number of actions arising from these minutes that require the consideration of the PISG.

- a. Paragraph 2.2 – The PISG and the PITG have at previous meetings discussed the publication of an explanatory note and statement which were intended to outline a number of changes, including those that may have resulted from the England student number control policy, as well as the key areas of the PISG's and the PITG's consideration over the last year (such as the incorporation of A level subject information in the PI benchmarks). Other pressures resulted in these documents not being prepared in time for the 2012 publication of the PIs.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The PISG accept the PITG's recommendation to publish a more comprehensive statement on the HESA website.

ACTION: HEFCE and HESA to draft such a statement/note for circulation to members of the PITG and the PISG.

- b. Paragraph 5.2 and 5.5 – On account of the POLAR methodology employed by the low participation neighbourhood indicator being updated in Summer 2012 to take account of the most recent data, the PITG could find no grounds on which they would wish to recommend the continued use of POLAR2 in preference over the new POLAR3. Additional information was felt necessary to aid understanding of the change from POLAR2 to POLAR3 and its effects.

The PITG recommended that the 2013 publication of the PIs should:

- (i) Provide the LPN indicator for the current cohort (entrants in 2011-12) on the basis of the POLAR3 methodology;

- (ii) Include supplementary, institution level tables that provide the LPN indicator for the previous two cohorts (entrants in 2010-11 and 2009-10) on the basis of the POLAR3 methodology;
- (iii) Provide a supplementary, institution level table showing the LPN indicator for the current cohort on the basis of the POLAR2 methodology;
- (iv) Include appropriate explanations of the data available and its interpretation.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The PISG accept the PITG's recommendation that HESA implement use of POLAR3 data in the LPN indicator in the 2013 publication of the PIs.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The PISG accept the PITG's recommendation that HESA publish the supplementary tables and additional information in the 2013 publication of the PIs, and in the two successive publications, as described above.

ACTION: HESA to implement use of POLAR3, and to publish supplementary tables and additional information as described.

- c. Paragraph 8.2 – The PITG recommend that the suppression limits used by the PIs should be amended to align with Unistats, and suppress on the basis of the denominator being less than 22.5, rather than the current limit of 20. The PITG agreed that they would further consider the suppression limits and approaches used in the PIs, with a view to making a fuller assessment of the risks of compromising data protection while retaining as much information as possible in the PIs.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The PISG accept the PITG's recommendation that HESA implement the use of a suppression limit of 22.5 for the denominators used to calculate percentages in the 2013 publication of the PIs.

ACTION: HESA to implement use of a suppression limit of 22.5 for the denominators used to calculate percentages in the 2013 publication of the PIs.

ACTION: The PITG to consider the suppression limits and approaches used in the PIs in more detail and provide advice to the PISG based on their assessment of the risks of the PIs compromising data protection.

- d. Paragraph 9.3 – Modifications to the 2011-12 DLHE questionnaire have resulted in a need to redefine the concept of 'activity' in respect of employment or study outcomes for use in the employment PIs. With no means to replicate the previous categorisations, the PITG recommend use of a mapping that HESA have developed following consultation with a review group consisting of statutory customers and experts. For information, the mapping is given in the attached PITG paper 12/05 (PITG 12 05.docx).

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** The PISG accept the PITG's recommendation that HESA implement the use of their proposed activity categorisations in the 2013 publication of the employment PIs.

ACTION: HESA to implement use of their proposed activity categorisations in the 2013 publication of the employment PIs.

- e. Paragraph 9.4 – Following changes made to the qualifications included in the UCAS tariff the PITG recommend making use of the standard tariff calculation (XTARIFF) where possible. The PITG invite the PISG to note that there will be some impact on the PI

benchmarks as a result of incorporating the new inclusions but that the extent of the impact will not be known until the data become available. For information, the new additions to the UCAS tariff are listed in the attached PITG paper 12/05 (PITG 12 05.docx).

Members are invited to please note that, subsequent to the meeting of the PITG, it has been identified that Essential Skills NI and Wales (all levels) are at an equivalent level to key skills and core skills, which have already been excluded from the standard tariff calculation (XTARIFF). For consistency, HESA have excluded the Essential Skills qualifications from the derivation of XTARIFF and, in a change to the list provided in paper PITG 12/05, qualifications with codes E1 to E4 and W1 to W4 will not be included.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** The PISG accept the PITG's recommendation that HESA continue the use of XTARIFF and incorporate the new qualifications included in the UCAS tariff.

**ACTION:** HESA to implement use of the tariff calculation (XTARIFF) in the 2013 publication of the employment PIs, and to provide evidence to the PITG and the PISG on the impact of the new inclusions.

- f. Paragraph 12.2 – In light of OFFA's recent expansion of their analytical capabilities, the PITG recommend that the PISG agree to adopt a principle whereby, if an organisation was represented on the PISG (as per the terms of reference), and had or gained technical expertise within that organisation then they should be invited to join the technical group. The PITG note that this would likely lead to OFFA and the NUS receiving an invitation for a technical representative to join the PITG.

The Chair of the PISG recommends that this matter be omitted from business undertaken by correspondence and is instead considered at the next meeting of the PISG.