

Fundamental review of the Performance Indicators

PISG 13/01

Issue

1. The need for a fundamental review of the Performance Indicators was discussed with both the Performance Indicators Steering Group and the Performance Indicators Technical Group at meetings of those groups during 2011 and 2012. That review process has now been completed and researchers from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the National Centre for Social and Economic Research (NatCen) are presenting their findings for the PISG to consider further.
2. Members of the PISG are invited to discuss the conclusions and recommendations arising from the fundamental review of the PIs.

Discussion

3. During their 2011 and 2012 meetings, members of the Performance Indicators Steering Group discussed the need for a fundamental review of the Performance Indicators and recognised that there were unanswered overarching questions that applied across all of the PIs. It was agreed that the first review process would therefore ask fundamental questions about how meaningful a set of PIs was to different users; consider changes, or potential changes, to the HE context and the data landscape; and seek to develop the approach to Performance Indicators in alignment with the characteristics of Official Statistics.
4. HEFCE commissioned the fundamental review on behalf of the PISG, and issued the invitation to tender at the end of January 2013. An appointment panel consisting of three representatives from PISG and PITG member organisations was established to assess tenders and award the review. Celia Hunt, HEFCE's representative on the PISG, accepted an invitation to act as Chair of both the appointment panel and the review project group established to steer the review. Celia was joined by a representative from each of HEFCE and UUK on the appointment panel. The review project group then included members of the appointment panel, with the addition of seven representatives from organisations represented on the PISG and/or the PITG.
5. The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the National Centre for Social and Economic Research (NatCen), working in partnership, were awarded the review and commenced work in March 2013. The review process involved:
 - a. a review of the relevant literature;
 - b. Interviews with key stakeholders, including Government and funding bodies from all four nations of the UK as well as other sector and career bodies;
 - c. Interviews with higher education providers and potential PI users;
 - d. Online consultation to gather responses from a wider range of existing and new stakeholders; and

e. Deliberative group discussions among a range of interested parties, drawn from those who responded to the online consultation.

6. The review project group met twice during the course of the review: once at the project inception stage and again at the interim report stage. In addition, the project group provided further advice by correspondence as necessary. The researchers delivered a draft final report to the PISG secretariat in July 2013, before feedback was gathered from members of the project group. This feedback has been incorporated into the final report, which consists of two parts.

7. The first, the synthesis report, summarises findings from across the methodological strands to answer the questions set for the review. This report is shared with members of the PISG at Annex A of this paper: please note that this report has not yet been subject to a final proof-reading that will prepare it for publication. The second, the evidence report, provides further detailed findings from each of the strands, as well as a glossary of terms used, a list of bibliographic references, a full list of participating organisations and institutions, and a list of the current PIs. On account of its size and depth, this second report is not shared with members of the PISG at this time but will be published in due course and can be made available to members at their request.

8. The PISG are invited to discuss the conclusions and recommendations arising from the fundamental review of the PIs.

Further information

9. For further information contact Alison Brunt (Phone: 0117 931 7166; e-mail: a.brunt@hefce.ac.uk).

Annex A

The published version of Annex A is available at:
www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2013/ukpireview