HESA AP data checking tool 2017-18

Final year outcome metrics method document

Contents

2017-18 Outcome metrics method document

1. The Department for Education (DfE) has asked the Office for Students (OfS) to provide metrics which analyse the outcomes of students who reach their final year of study. The DfE has indicated that it will use these metrics, together with the UK Performance Indicators published by HESA, to assess providers' academic performance. The metric is only calculated for providers who have submitted HESA data in 2016-17 and 2017-18, and for full-time undergraduate students.

2. The metrics work by identifying a starting population of students who, on the basis of the data returned to HESA, we expect to finish their courses between 1 February 2017 and 1 February 2018. These dates have been chosen to ensure that sufficient data is available about the students' activity both before and after their expected end dates. The students in the starting population are then categorised according to their status, or the qualification outcome they have achieved, by a point six months after their expected end date. This allows us to see how many students achieved the qualification they were aiming for within something close to the expected time period.

3. We are producing the final year outcome metrics through the data checking tool to give providers sight of the methodology, and to prompt the correction of data errors. We strongly encourage providers to view them and to familiarise themselves with the methodology, which is described in broad terms below, and in more detail in our technical document (see https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tools/2017-18-hesa-alternative-provider-student-data-checking-tool/).

4. In this note, 'student' refers to a student instance; occasionally a single student will have more than one instance. These instances would be treated independently in the analysis.

Data source

5. The metrics use the 2016-17 and 2017-18 HESA AP Student records or, for providers that submit a full return, the corresponding HESA Student records. The latest data available is used in the metrics. For example, if the course aim returned for an instance changes between 2016-17 and 2017-18, we will use the course aim returned in 2017-18 on the grounds that it is more likely to be correct. The metrics take into account amendments to the 2016-17 data once they have been approved for this use, processed and signed off.

Starting population

6. To be counted in the starting population a student must meet all of the following conditions:

   a. be full-time

   b. be undergraduate

   c. be in the HESA session population in either 2016-17 or 2017-18

   d. have an expected end date between 1 February 2017 and 31 January 2018 (inclusive)

e. have reached their final year of studies; that is, not have an end date more than a year before the expected end date.

7. A student's expected end date is calculated by adding the standard programme length indicated in the data to the start date of the instance. For example, a student with a start date of 1 January 2016 and with a stated standard programme length of 2 years would be assigned an expected end date of 1 January 2018.

8. When the year of programme is greater than the year of student, the difference between the two is subtracted from the expected end date. This is to cater for students who join a course after the first year. For example, a student who started a three year course on 1 September 2016 and who is shown in the most recent data as having a year of programme of 3 and a year of student of 1 would be assigned an expected end date of 1 September, plus three years, minus two years – that is, 1 September 2017. This is because the data implies that this student has entered directly to the final year of the course and is expected to finish a year after their start date.

Outcomes

9. Students in the starting population are categorised according to the outcome achieved by the evaluation date, which is six months after the expected end date. The categories are as follows:

    a. Student has qualified with the qualification level they were aiming for or higher – an end date is recorded as before the evaluation date and a qualification is reported which is equal to or higher than the course aim.

    b. Student has completed the course but their result is unknown – the student instance is present in the 2017-18 data and an end date is recorded as before the evaluation date but the reason for ending the instance is '98 - Completion of course - result unknown'.

    c. Student has left with a qualification of a lower level (other than credit) than the one they were aiming for – an end date is recorded as before the evaluation date and a qualification is reported which is lower than the course aim (other than credit).

    d. Student has left with no qualification – an end date is recorded as before the evaluation date and no qualification (other than credit) is reported.

    e. Student is not studying but has not left – the student instance is reported as not active in the latest instance period reported.

    f. Student is still studying – the student instance is present in the 2017-18 data and either the end date is blank, or else the end date is greater than the evaluation date.

    g. Otherwise – if the student instance does not fit into the above categories then it is unclassified.

    These categories are subsumed in the following broader categories: Qualified (a); Left (c, d); and other (b, e, f, g). The DfE has indicated that they will use these broader categories to assess academic performance.

Further technical guidance

10. Details of algorithms applied to the HESA data which are used to calculate the final year outcome metrics are provided in our technical document (see https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tools/2017-18-hesa-alternative-provider-student-data-checking-tool/).