

Qualification success rates

Harmonisation of qualification rates between further education and work based learning providers

This is a briefing document providing an overview of the development of a new measure of qualification success rates for further education and work based learning providers.

Aims of the new measures of qualification success

- 1 The new measures of qualification success will:
 - Give a more accurate picture of learner success across the post-16 sector, while at the same time recognising providers' unique characteristics.
- 2 The new measures:
 - Align the methods used to calculate success rates in further education (FE) and in work based learning (WBL) enabling a fair and realistic comparison of these two types of provision.
 - Include a length-and-level-adjusted benchmark report which is a more accurate performance indicator for FE colleges than the headline success rate.
 - Will produce a new measure for school sixth forms so that these too can be included in comparisons across the sector (see separate document in the New Measures area of the LSC website).

The importance of the new measures of qualification success for local LSCs and learning providers

- 3 Then new ways of measuring qualification success will help create a system that is fairer both to FE and WBL providers, creating a more level playing field.
- 4 By harmonising the methods of measuring success currently in use, the new measures will increase consistency and so provide a more reliable way of choosing between different types of learning provision. To be successful, the new measures of qualification success need to be understood and accepted throughout the post-16 sector.

Impact of the new measures of qualification success on local LSCs and learning providers

Improved Bench Marking

5 The length-and-level-adjusted benchmarks should allow more meaningful indicators of success to be applied to providers. These will be linked to methods of benchmarking performance at more detailed levels than currently used. Appropriate national benchmarks are also being developed to enable the performance of learners in WBL to be assessed in a consistent way.

New Measures for Work Based Learning

6 Two new measures for WBL will now be reported upon; an overall measure and a timely measure.

- **Overall measure:** This method groups learners into years based on the later of the expected end date and actual end date. All achievements will be counted under this measure.
- **Timely measure:** groups learners into years based on the expected end date. Only achievements occurring either before or within one month of that date will be counted.

7 The new measures for WBL take account of:

- a six-week period of grace at the start of a programme, during which withdrawals do not count in success rates
- transfers to different courses at the same provider, such that only the programme being transferred to is counted in success rates
- accurate expected end dates, as achievements occurring more than one month after this date will not be counted in the new timely measure. All achievements are still counted in the overall measure.

The new measures for WBL will be reported on in a number of ways, including by

- programme type,
- age at start of programme
- sector subject area.

In the future, if data allow, there will also be reporting of success rates by subsidiary aims such as NVQ, technical certificate and key skills.

What local LSCs and learning providers need to do

8 Local LSCs and providers should take account of these changes in the measures of qualification success. They can gain greater understanding by visiting the New Measures area of the LSC website to keep updated on developments. Also they should ensure that they read the various communications sent to them to help them prepare for the introduction of these new measures.

Next steps

9 The implementation of the new measures has been piloted from September 2005. The Adult Learning Inspectorate has adopted the new measures from April 2006. The LSC is still using the current measure as its primary measure for 2005/06. The transition to the new measure is still under discussion.

Further information on the new measures of success programme for the post-16 sector can be found in the dedicated new measures area of the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk/nms.

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