

Higher Education Funding Council for England

Title	Invitation to comment on future changes to the UK Performance Indicators
To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of SFC-funded higher education institutions Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges Heads of other providers of higher education in England
Of interest to those responsible for	Higher education, Increasing and widening participation, Student experience and destinations, Research management
Reference	Circular letter 17/2015
Publication date	16 July 2015
Enquiries to	ukpisg@hefce.ac.uk

Dear Vice-Chancellor or Principal

Invitation to comment on future changes to the UK Performance Indicators

Purpose

1. The UK Performance Indicators Steering Group (UKPISG) is considering a number of changes to the UK Performance Indicators (UKPIs) (www.hefce.ac.uk/data/pi/). The UKPIs are currently published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on behalf of the four UK higher education (HE) funding bodies.
2. The possible changes outlined in this letter arise from a series of actions and decisions taken by UKPISG following the 2013 publication 'How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the UK Performance Indicators' (www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2013/ukpireview/). As part of the review, UKPISG committed to engage in dialogue with the sector as change is taken forward.
3. UKPISG first invited comment from the HE sector and its representative bodies on actions proposed in 'Invitation to comment on future changes to the UK Performance Indicators' (HEFCE Circular letter 33/2013, www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2013/CL,332013/) in December 2013. In July 2014, having taken account of the responses, UKPISG published 'Responses to the invitation to comment on future changes to the UK Performance Indicators' (HEFCE Circular letter 21/2014, www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/CL,212014/) which outlined a series of agreed next steps.
4. This letter provides an update on three of the matters outlined in these previous communications – the coverage and scope of the UKPIs, UKPIs for widening participation and UKPIs for research output – and invites comments on further proposals about changes to be implemented in the 2016 publications of UKPIs. Further details on the history and context are given in Annex A.
5. The proposals in this letter include the publication of possible new UKPIs as 'experimental statistics' before they are confirmed as formal UKPIs. This will enable further testing of and feedback on the proposals. The coverage of UKPIs will also be extended as soon as possible to

include HE provision registered at further education colleges, sixth form colleges and alternative providers.

Proposals

Coverage and scope

6. UKPISG propose that higher education registered at further education colleges, sixth form colleges and alternative providers should be incorporated into UK Performance Indicator measures at the earliest opportunities.

Widening Participation

7. The widening participation indicator based on National Statistics Social Economic Classifications 4 to 7 will appear for the last time in the 2016 publication of the widening participation UKPIs: it will not be published in 2017 and subsequent UKPI publications.

8. The development of widening participation indicators based on the following measures and priorities will be explored in the second half of 2015 by the UK Performance Indicators Technical Group, with the ambition of publishing them as 'experimental statistics' in 2016:

- schools with low numbers of pupils progressing to further study
- proportions of entrants from different school or further education institution types
- pupils in receipt of free school meals (with particular consideration of the extent to which variations in eligibility criteria for free school meals across the UK nations may be considered fundamental)
- household residual income of entrants to higher education.

9. The UK Performance Indicators Technical Group will also explore the development of nation-specific measures of area-based disadvantage for possible introduction to the 2016 publication of UKPIs.

Research

10. An expert group will explore the latest issues and interests relating to research UK Performance Indicators, as well as new or current measures of research activity that could be of use or interest.

11. All UK providers of HE are being asked by their relevant funding body to submit any feedback that they may have about these proposals, or other aspects of this letter, to the UKPISG secretariat at ukpisg@hefce.ac.uk. Alternative providers are also invited to submit comment, as the proposals have implications for them. Feedback should be submitted before **noon on Friday 18 September 2015**.

Yours sincerely

Heather Fry

Director (Regulation and Assurance)