



Qualification success rates

School sixth forms

This is a briefing document providing an overview of the development of a new measure of qualification success rates for school sixth forms.

The aim of the new measure for qualification success

- 1 The New Measures of Success programme includes a commitment to develop success rates that will enable a fairer and more accurate comparison of effectiveness of different providers across the post-16 sector. The method for calculating success rates for FE and WBL has been aligned. The first stage of this process for QSR was to align the methods for calculating success rates for FE and WBL. The programme is now focusing attention on developing a comparable success rate for School Sixth Forms.
- 2 A feasibility study has shown that comparable ways of calculating success rates can be extended to schools. There are, however, some key technical issues that need to be resolved before this can happen.
- 3
 - i) Currently post-16 performance tables report the achievements of 16 -18 year olds in schools using the average point scores achieved by students when they sit examinations. Although this provides a common measure, it does so only for a limited range of qualifications (GCSE, A/AS, AVCE and Level 3 Key Skills).
 - ii) The way that learner achievement and success rates are calculated for FE and sixth form colleges (measuring the number of qualifications gained as a percentage of the number of learners who started the course) is different from that applies to school sixth forms.

The importance of the new measure for the LSC and learning providers

- 4 For the LSC the new qualification success rates will play an important role in planning, enabling it to make comparisons of education quality across a range of different providers. For learning providers themselves, the new measures will help to create a level playing field, in which their performance relative to other providers can be assessed objectively.
- 5 Publication of the new rates will help improve teaching and institutional management, and enable potential learners and parents to be better informed about

the choices that are available to them. This has been signalled in the 14-19 White Paper as a key element in the new accountability framework.

The likely impact on Schools with Sixth Forms

- 6 There are two steps to achieving harmonised success rates:
 - collection of appropriate information from schools with sixth forms,
 - collection of information on the same basis from different types of providers.

- 7 To achieve the former we are developing systems to collect the information in the School Census (which from 2006 replaces the Pupil Level Annual School Census). To achieve the latter, we need to ensure that the same data definitions are used throughout. We would do this by extending the 'Common Basic Data Set' to include more data about qualifications, including in particular GCSE and post-16 qualifications. One significant consideration in both these areas is to minimise the administrative burden on schools.

- 8 School software suppliers are unable to develop their systems in time to enable the collection of the post-16 learning aims for individual students for the 2006/07 academic year. It has been agreed that an interim solution (Post-16 Learning Aims Management System 2006/07) will be developed for the 2006/07 year to run concurrently with Schools' existing systems. It is expected that the data needed will be collected using this interim solution in December 2006 and June 2007.

What the LSC and schools with sixth forms need to know

- 9 Lead times for changes in data collection from schools are long, because of the need for school management information system software to be updated and to give schools and LEAs time to get ready. Local LSCs and learning providers should be aware of the forthcoming changes, but the impact of the new measures of success rates is not likely to be felt immediately in schools.

Next steps

- 10 A communication plan will be developed to distribute information to schools, local authorities and LSC colleagues. Further information on the new measures of success for the post-16 sector can be found in the dedicated new measures area of the LSC website at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/nms>.

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