

Measuring Success

newsletter

This is the final edition of the Measuring Success newsletter. In future, information on developments in the new measures programme will be included in LSC Update and on the new measures web pages at www.lsc.gov.uk/nms.

This edition includes a progress report on the new measures, an update on the Provider Gateway, a look at recent developments in value added for 16 -19 learners and discussions on the integration of equality and diversity into the new measures, value for money and the new standard for employer responsiveness and vocational excellence.

Progress report on new measures

A good deal of progress has been made in developing and implementing the new measures. Qualification success rates (QSR) and value added and distance travelled (VA/DT) for 16-19 learners are successfully being piloted and RARPA is fully implemented in non-accredited provision. Other notable achievements include:

- development of the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) to distribute value added and distance travelled data
- development of the Provider Gateway for document exchange and delivery of new measures of success data
- new qualification success rates which allow better comparison of FE colleges and work based learning providers
- a quality improvement pack which has been disseminated to all providers
- awareness raising and staff development events attended by over 2000 delegates

Work is now underway to build on the new measures to create the standard set of performance indicators announced in the recent White Paper: *Further education: raising skills, improving life chances*. Progress has been made to determine the scope of the learner satisfaction and learner destinations measures, and we are reviewing how we develop provider responsiveness to employers, value for money and staff measures in light of both the White Paper and the LSC's *agenda for change*.

Going forward, existing measures are being tested through a substantial evaluation programme. Future development of the remaining measures will be supported by further consultation, testing and piloting. We have also commissioned an extensive set of staff development tools and resources to support providers in the adoption and use of the measures.

Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA)

RARPA in non- accredited learning is completing the first stage of its implementation, the embedding year. All learning providers offering LSC-funded non-accredited learning should have processes in place in their teaching and learning that can demonstrate the RARPA staged process. Providers should also have quality improvement and self-assessment systems that incorporate, reflect and can identify good practice and areas for improvement in such provision.

From September 2006, the LSC will require providers to apply RARPA to all LSC-funded non-accredited provision. Providers will also be expected to demonstrate that at each stage of the RARPA standard, all learners within receipt of non-accredited provision are well supported. Since the five RARPA stages are linked to the Common Inspection Framework, it is likely that processes to meet the standard are already in place in good quality provision. In such cases, providers will not be expected to do anything new or different.

For further information on RARPA please refer to the RARPA 'For Action' document on the RARPA homepage at:

http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/AdultandCommunity/welcome_rarpa.htm

The extension of RARPA to accredited provision is being taken forward through the RARPA Extension (REX) project and is linked closely to the development of the Framework for Achievement. REX aims to ensure that RARPA can be effectively and efficiently applied to accredited provision and embedded within the day-to-day quality systems of the provider. The project also seeks to establish mutually agreed criteria and procedures that will enable providers to produce evidence that:

- establishes and maintains their status as recognised awarding body centres
- supports provider self assessment and quality improvement processes
- contributes to assessments of performance against a standard set of key indicators for the LSC and others
- informs the LSC's planning and funding arrangements
- assists Sector Skills Councils in their arrangements for endorsing providers
- informs the Inspectorate's planning of inspections and inspection judgements.

Development work with six awarding bodies and a small number of providers will begin in September 2006, and will be undertaken alongside the testing and trialling for the Framework for Achievement. The LSC anticipates that the application of RARPA to LSC-funded accredited provision will be ready for implementation in September 2008, following a period of testing, trialling and piloting.

Further information about RARPA and REX is available in *Piloting and Implementing New Measures of Success: the Quality Improvement Pack* and on the New Measures of Success area of the LSC website www.lsc.gov.uk/nms.

Value added for 16-19 learners: recent developments

Value added in the Learner Achievement Tracker

The value added (VA) for 16-19 learners measure distributed through the LAT is currently being piloted. The primary purposes of this measure are to support:

- improvements in teaching and learning by schools and colleges
- inspection
- planning and quality assurance arrangements by the LSC.

The LAT outputs are based on those qualifications taken within a specific academic year. For example, the LAT produces VA and distance-travelled scores by qualification and by subject for the previous year. This will enable providers, inspectors and the LSC to review the progress made in individual qualification and subject areas over the given academic year, such as all AS level mathematics qualifications taken in 2005/06.

Institution level value added measure

The DfES is taking forward work on an institutional measure of VA for 16-19 learners, to be included in the Achievement and Attainment Tables (AAT) for schools and colleges. This measure will give a single, overall indicator of value added and will include all level 3 qualifications. It will be based on a subset of the same data from awarding bodies as the measure published in the LAT. The measure will be piloted with a sample of schools and colleges in 2006, with a view to rolling out nationally in the 2007 tables.

The institutional VA measure will be one of a number of institutional performance indicators published in the AAT. In line with the approach taken for VA at other key stages, the institutional measure will be based on the total achievements of each student within the given period of study. It will be a single overall indicator of value added reflecting the total, cumulative achievements of students throughout their period of sixth form study.

How the two VA measures will work together

The LAT and AAT measures serve slightly different purposes, but are designed to be complementary. The key differences between the two measures are:

- The AAT measure produces a single, overall institutional score based on total point score achieved by learners. It includes all level 3 qualifications. It does not produce data on qualifications and subjects.
- The LAT measure reports data by qualification and subject. It includes graded level 3 qualifications only. (Ungraded level 3 qualifications are included in the distance travelled measure, alongside qualifications at levels 1 and 2.) It includes all qualifications achieved by 16-19 year old learners in a given year. It does not produce a single, overall, institutional score.

Learner satisfaction

Learner views and satisfaction are identified as key performance indicators of providers' responsiveness to learners in the recent White Paper *Further education: raising skills, improving life chances*. Currently, national level data on learner satisfaction is collected through the National Learner Satisfaction Survey. Information on this survey can be found at <http://researchtools.lsc.gov.uk>. However, the identification of learner views as a key performance indicator within the White Paper emphasises the need to develop standards for the collection, sharing and use of learner satisfaction information at provider level.

The Responsive College Unit (RCU) are undertaking a survey of current practice on behalf of the LSC and will be contacting a large sample of learning providers to ask how learner views are collected and used. The survey questionnaire can be completed online at www.rcu.co.uk/survey/learner_satisfaction.jsp.

There will also be four workshops in July at which providers can discuss their current approaches and contribute to the development of the measure. There will be an opportunity to register an interest in these events when responding to the questionnaire.

The new standards-based approach will be tested and piloted in 2006/2007 and rolled out in 2007/08.

Learner Destinations

The FE White Paper also places learner destinations as a key measure of provider responsiveness to learners. It acknowledges that considerable work is still needed to develop this measure and that a range of options will be carefully considered.

Our feasibility work on improving learner destinations information is nearly complete. It has revealed that providers are keen to collect and make better use of this information; however, at present they generally do not use this information for quality assurance purposes.

We are confident that in future, better use can be made of existing data. For example, matched data sets allow tracking of learners who enrol on new courses or with a different provider.

We plan to explore whether we can collect this progression information and share it with providers. We also wish to explore further, whether it is possible to make better use of data on learners' progression into Higher Education.

For learners who leave education and training, a follow-up survey will be commissioned to track their destinations. This will focus on key priority groups of learner, for example, skills for life, first full level 2 and full level 3. We will be working over the summer of 2006 to determine what providers will need to do to collect and use learner destinations information.

The collection of learner destinations information will be pre-piloted in 2006-07 and will be implemented from 2008-09.

New Standard for Employer Responsiveness & Vocational Excellence

The new standard (NS), as set out in the White Paper, builds on the current Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) network, and develops the Quality Mark, with its wider view of promoting excellence through the creation of specialist networks.

The NS will be a single standard for recognising excellence at sector/subject level.

The White Paper sets out imperatives for the NS:

- i) an emphasis on *"how CoVE status will play a part in defining the mission and purpose of the institution and in driving improvement across the whole institution"*;

- ii) that *"there must be effective leadership and management of the institution as a whole and no areas of significant weakness"*;
- iii) measure *"outcomes and impact achieved by the institution"* that show what the provider is achieving in relation to its customers;
- iv) developing concentrations of CoVEs in related disciplines in individual institutions, to build a reputation for outstanding specialist provision;
- v) making *"excellence in working with employers a key criterion, including responsiveness to employer and sector skill needs."*

We will work with Sector Skills Councils, employers, providers and other stakeholders to develop the standards, drawing on the Quality Mark proposals for employer responsiveness, and the key elements of vocational excellence from the revised CoVE criteria. Consultation is taking place to ensure alignment with key programmes including Train to Gain, Framework for Excellence, and National Skills Academies.

The NS will be developed and refined over the next few months and trials of the standards and key performance measures are planned for autumn 2006. We intend to pilot the refined NS towards the end of 2006 with implementation beginning early in 2007.

Framework for Excellence

As indicated in the recent White Paper *Further education: raising skills, improving life chances*, there will be a new approach to performance monitoring and assessment which will introduce a single, standard set of indicators covering the dimensions of responsiveness, quality and finance. This approach will be known as the Framework for Excellence.

Framework for Excellence aims to ensure that clearer information is made available to the sector to:

- improve quality
- inform learner and employer choices
- inform LSC judgements
- enable the Quality Improvement Agency to provide effective support
- help assess value for money.

Framework for Excellence will help providers be clear about their own performance and better able to undertake self-assessment to inform effective quality improvement.

The three high level dimensions are supported by seven proposed key performance indicators (KPIs) which have been selected to identify effective, efficient and economical use of resources. Assessed together, these will provide an overall indication of value for money.

The dimensions and their supporting KPIs are as follows:

Responsiveness

- Delivery against plan
- Provider responsiveness to employers (including employer satisfaction)
- Provider responsiveness to learners (including learner views/satisfaction and learner progression/ destinations)

Quality

- Learner (qualification) success rates
- Quality of provision (via provider self assessment, validated by inspection)

Finance

- Financial health
- Financial control.

A consultation on the Framework for Excellence will take place from late May 2006.

Value for money

In view of this new approach to assessing value for money, the LSC will no longer be developing a separate stand alone VFM measure. However, the new measures of success will have a key role within the framework and will be incorporated within the standard set of measures, either as key performance indicators or as supporting indicators.

Integrating equality and diversity into the new measures programme

As part of the aim of the new measures programme we are working to ensure that equality and diversity considerations are integral to the programme. This work will:

- ensure that new measures data can be used to monitor equality and diversity and to help providers and partners meet their legal obligations
- ensure that the new measures are as inclusive as possible
- demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity across the sector and indicate future developments to ensure that the measures can meet requirements.

Key areas of work include an Equality Impact Assessment of the new measures programme and a project on the inclusiveness of the new measures.

Stakeholders involved in consultation and development of the measures include practitioners, provider representative organisations and agencies such as the Learning and Skills Network (LSN), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and *Skill*, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.

Issues being addressed include the availability of robust and consistent data on factors such as ethnicity, gender, learning difficulties and disabilities, and the need to ensure that data are used appropriately for the performance of different groups of learners.

Provider Gateway

Current users are now able to make use of the Gateway's improved facilities and of the LAT to support their work in quality improvement.

From summer 2006, access to the Gateway will be extended to Adult and Community Learning providers and to the Offender Learning and Skills Service which is responsible for the provision of skills for individuals in custody and/or under supervision in the community. There will be a number of new features and improvements, including:

- a notice board notifying users of new information available and of requests for them to upload new information. This will help with planning and ensuring relevant information is uploaded in a timely fashion
- users will be required to read and accept terms and conditions of access to the Gateway. This ensures agreement on the appropriate use of the sensitive information held within the Gateway
- improvements in the search facility
- mapping of schools with sixth forms to local authority areas
- the ability to upload documents in bulk
- links to related websites.

Additional documents to be uploaded include:

- development plans agreed between providers and the LSC
- letters issued by Ofsted after an annual assessment visit to colleges.

Substantial work is also going on to enable easy access to key success data for work-based learning providers and colleges. This will move the Gateway towards the vision of a one stop shop to support inspection and quality improvement.

Developments beyond summer 2006 include exploring the possibility of access by Higher Education institutions with significant further education provision and by Jobcentre Plus in respect of the provision which it jointly funds with the LSC.

More information on the new measures of success programme can be found on the new measures of success pages of the LSC website www.lsc.gov.uk/nms. Comments or enquiries relating to the measures are welcome and should be sent to: newmeasures@lsc.gov.uk

Further information

The Measuring Success newsletter was produced by the LSC, the Department for Education and Skills, ALI and Ofsted to keep you up to date with the development of New Measures of Success. The new measures are being further developed to create the standard set of performance indicators announced in the recent FE White Paper.

The aim of the programme is to measure the success of learners and the performance of education and training providers more accurately and fairly. This will highlight the sector's existing strengths and identify areas for improvement. Future updates on the new measures will be included in LSC Update, available at www.lsc.gov.uk/nms.