

August 2012/20

Issues paper

This report is for information

This document is the first publication of widening participation and continuation indicators for higher education provision registered at further education colleges in England. We anticipate this information will be of relevance to FECs and others interested in the participation and retention of HE students at FECs. No action is required in response.

Widening participation and non-continuation indicators for further education colleges

Overview of trends

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Table 1	separate downloadable file
Table 2	separate downloadable file

Widening participation and non-continuation indicators for further education colleges

Overview of trends

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions
Of interest to those responsible for	Student management, Quality assurance, Widening participation
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Executive summary

Purpose

1. This document is the first of a series of publications giving the widening participation¹ and non-continuation indicators for higher education (HE) provision registered at HEFCE-funded further education colleges (FECs) in England.

Key points

2. We anticipate this information will be of relevance to FECs and others interested in the participation and retention of HE students at FECs.
3. The indicators in this report are derived from data submitted to the Data Service's Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record for the academic years 2008-09 to 2009-10. Two tables accompany this document as separate files.
 - Table 1 shows the profile of students from low participation neighbourhoods for young full-time HE entrants registered at FECs in 2009-10.

¹ Indicators referred to throughout this publication as participation indicators are those that look at the profile of students in HE with respect to characteristics associated with under-represented groups.

- Table 2 shows the breakdown of non-continuation following year of entry, for full-time entrants registered at FECs in 2008-09.

4. Each individual FEC's data are compared with a sector-adjusted average. The methods used to calculate the indicators provided by this document are intended to be as consistent as possible with the UK Higher Education Performance Indicators published by HESA, for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

5. We intended to produce these indicators annually. HEFCE intend to publish Table 1 for entrants in 2010-11, and Table 2 for entrants in 2009-10, later in 2012.

Action required

6. This document is for information only.

Terminology

7. This document and its supporting tables make use of terminology which is defined and explained at Annex A. The annex provides definitions of terms such as ‘registered’ provision, ‘first degree’ and ‘sector-adjusted average’, along with ‘participation’ and ‘non-continuation’, which are used extensively throughout this document.

Introduction and background

Background: existing HE performance indicators

8. Performance indicators (PIs) for higher education (HE) provision have been published for higher education institutions (HEIs) since 1999; they have not included HE provision registered at FECs. The first PIs for HE provision registered at HEIs were published by HEFCE, on behalf of all four UK HE funding bodies. HEFCE continued to publish the indicators annually until 2003, with additions and amendments as the coverage was extended. The PIs have been published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on HEFCE’s behalf since 2004. The Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) has been overseeing the implementation, management and ongoing development of the PIs since 1998².

9. The PIs are designed to provide reliable, comparable information on the nature and performance of the HE sector in the UK. All of the indicators published by HESA are based on UK domiciled students who studied HE provision registered at publicly funded HEIs in the UK (and at one privately funded institution, the University of Buckingham). Most of the PIs are shown separately for splits of students by age, mode and/or level of study.

Development of indicators for FECs

10. The existing UK HE PIs are intended to provide a consistent set of measures of performance of the HE sector in the UK. Because the UK HE PIs do not include HE provision registered at FECs, there has been something of an information gap in this area for FECs. In particular, the facility to directly compare their performance to that of HEIs in respect to equivalent provision on a consistent basis has not been available to them.

11. Given the increased interest in non-continuation, and in particular the role of FECs in widening participation, this report aims to go some way to filling the information gap and provides data on the students registered on a course of prescribed HE³ at each HEFCE-funded FEC. Our development of participation and non-continuation indicators for HE provision registered at English FECs has sought to maintain consistency with the UK HE PIs.

12. Coverage of part-time students is the main area in which our development will not have so far maintained consistency. Unlike the PIs published for HEIs, which include both full- and part-time students, the indicators for FECs that are introduced by this document have been restricted

² Details of roles and responsibilities of the PISG can be found at www.hefce.ac.uk/data/pi/performanceindicatorssteeringgroup/.

³ Of the HE that takes place in FECs, HEFCE is empowered to fund only certain, prescribed courses. This is set out in the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and the Education (Prescribed Courses of Higher Education) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 1998, which were amended to apply to England. All HE provision considered within this report for students registered or taught at FECs is prescribed HE delivered by HEFCE-funded FECs. Throughout the remainder of this report, references to FECs relate specifically to HEFCE-funded FECs.

to full-time students. While part-time students are not included in the results provided by this publication, we recognise that they account for a substantial proportion of HE provision registered at FECs. The main reason for this apparent omission is that the patterns of study for full-time students are typically more structured, and consequently more predictable and easier to interpret. Part-time provision is more flexible, particularly for students registered at FECs, and this makes indicators that include part-time students inherently more complex and analytically challenging to develop⁴. The patterns of study of part-time students registered at FECs require further investigation and understanding before indicators can be developed to consider this provision.

Aims of this publication

13. In addition to filling the information gap discussed in paragraph 10 by providing data on the full-time HE students registered at each FEC, this report provides further data to enable consideration of the participation and non-continuation indicators in relation to the entirety of HE provision registered at HEIs and FECs in England. That is, we provide participation and non-continuation indicators for the following categories of full-time HE provision at a sector-wide level:

- a. HE students registered at HEIs.
- b. HE students taught at HEIs.
- c. HE students registered at FECs.
- d. HE students taught at FECs.

14. Participation and non-continuation indicators for HE students registered at HEIs (category a. given at paragraph 13) are published for individual institutions by HESA in the UK HE PIs⁵. Indicators for the categories a., b. and d. are not provided for individual institutions within this document, but are provided at a sector-wide level that includes all English HEIs and FECs.

15. Note that category b. is likely to be a subset of category a.: HE students registered at an HEI may either be taught at that same HEI, or franchised to another institution. Under a franchising arrangement, a student who is registered at an HEI may be taught by a partner HEI or FEC of that registering HEI. It follows that category c. is likely to be a subset of category d.: HE students taught at an FEC may be those who are registered at that same FEC or franchised from another institution. Note also that all HE students, regardless of where they were taught or registered, would be included in the coverage if categories a. and c. were combined, or if categories b. and d. were combined.

16. In the longer term it is anticipated that the PISG will consider the desirability and practicality of extending the current participation and non-continuation PIs published by HESA, along with the potential to publish indicators at an institutional level for categories a. to d.

⁴ For example, part-time first-degree entrants to UK HEIs were included in the non-continuation PIs for the first time in 2010. The inclusion followed a substantial programme of work to improve understanding of their patterns of study, and was limited to entrants whose intensity of study in their first year was at least 30 per cent of a full-time student's.

⁵ The UK HE performance indicators are published on the HESA web-site, at www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/2072/141/.

Institutions' feedback and quality assurance

17. FECs in England reviewed the methods used to generate these participation and non-continuation indicators in summer 2011. Each FEC was provided with an explanation of the method, an indication of overall results for the sector, as well as data relating to their own institution to aid their understanding of the methods. Institutions were invited to provide feedback on the method and to highlight any data errors that were likely to affect the results generated. A number of responses were received, and two respondents acknowledged errors in their underlying data submissions which would affect the accuracy of the indicators calculated for them⁶. The results for the two institutions have been suppressed in this publication.

Key findings

18. Tables 1 and 2 (which accompany this document on the HEFCE web-site) provide data for HE entrants registered at FECs, showing indicators relating to participation and non-continuation respectively.

19. Table 1 is similar to the participation indicators included in table series T1 of the UK HE PIs published by HESA, though consideration of the participation of under-represented groups in HE has been limited to consideration of those from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs)⁷. Table 1 considers the profile of young HE entrants from these neighbourhoods registered at FECs among:

- full-time first degree entrants in 2009-10 (similar to table T1a of the PIs)
- full-time other undergraduate entrants in 2009-10 (similar to table T1c of the PIs)
- all full-time undergraduate entrants in 2009-10 (similar to table T1b of the PIs).

20. Table 2 is largely consistent with the non-continuation indicators included in table series T3 of the UK HE PIs published by HESA. Table 2 considers the non-continuation of HE entrants registered at FECs among:

- young entrants to first degree programmes in 2008-09 (similar to the data on young students included within table T3a of the PIs)
- mature entrants to first degree programmes in 2008-09 (similar to the data on mature students included within table T3a of the PIs)
- young entrants to other undergraduate programmes in 2008-09 (similar to the data on young students included within table T3d of the PIs)
- mature entrants to other undergraduate programmes in 2008-09 (similar to the data on mature students included within table T3d of the PIs).

21. The discussion that comprises the remainder of this document includes comparisons made between the indicators described above and sector-adjusted averages. The sector-adjusted averages are intended to support interpretation of the indicators. Readers may wish to refer to

⁶ Further detail of the feedback received from institutions is provided at paragraphs 19 to 22 of Annex A.

⁷ As is consistent with the PIs, LPN has been defined on the basis of the HEFCE POLAR2 methodology. For more information on POLAR2 see www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/ourresearch/polar/polar2/.

the definitions and explanations provided at Annex A for further information relating to this interpretation and any associated implications.

22. Sector-adjusted averages for registered entrants have been calculated based on provision registered at both HEIs and FECs. For each of the indicators the same approach enables us to calculate a sector-adjusted average relating to all HE students registered at HEIs in England, and a sector-adjusted average relating to all HE students registered at FECs in England. Similarly, sector-adjusted averages for taught entrants have been calculated based on taught provision at both HEIs and FECs. A sector-adjusted average relating to all HE students taught at HEIs in England has been calculated for each of the indicators, as has a sector-adjusted average relating to all HE students taught at FECs in England.

Percentage from low participation neighbourhoods

23. The participation indicators discussed by this document show the proportion of entrants in 2009-10 who were from low participation neighbourhoods, where this proportion is provided separately for young full-time first degree entrants and for young full-time other undergraduate entrants.

24. LPNs have been defined using the HEFCE POLAR2⁸ classification, which is based on rates of participation in HE by young people. Those students whose home postcode falls within those neighbourhoods of the UK with the lowest rates of young participation are denoted as being from an LPN. More information on the POLAR2 method can be found at paragraphs 13 to 15 of Annex A.

25. As described at paragraph 14, data are provided to enable consideration of the indicators in relation to HE provision registered at HEIs and FECs in England. To this end, Table A below provides the profile indicators for different categorisations of HE provision at a sector-wide level.

Sector-level findings

Registered and taught entrants

26. Table A shows that in FECs the proportions of registered entrants who were from LPNs were higher than those proportions of taught entrants. Among young full-time undergraduate entrants registered at FECs, 21.5 per cent were from LPNs. If instead all young full-time undergraduate entrants taught at FECs are considered, the proportion was lower at 18.3 per cent.

27. A similar finding is identified in HEIs: a larger proportion of registered entrants were from LPNs compared to taught entrants, though the figures are closer. While 10.9 per cent of young full-time undergraduate entrants registered at HEIs were from LPNs, the proportion was 10.7 per cent among those entrants taught at FECs.

⁸ POLAR stands for Participation of Local Areas.

Table A Comparison of participation indicators for HEIs and FECs in England

HE students		Young full-time entrants (%)		
		First-degree	Other undergraduate	All undergraduate
Registered at HEIs	Indicator	10.5	16.1	10.9
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	10.3	16.6	10.9
Registered at FECs	Indicator	22.9	21.0	21.5
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	17.8	19.4	18.2
Taught at HEIs	Indicator	10.4	16.0	10.7
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	10.3	16.6	10.7
Taught at FECs	Indicator	17.6	18.5	18.3
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	15.2	17.9	16.1

Entrants at HEIs and FECs

28. Table A also shows that, in England in 2009-10, the proportions of young, full-time entrants registered at FECs who were from LPNs were higher than the equivalent proportions among entrants registered at HEIs.

29. While 10.5 per cent of young entrants to full-time first degrees registered at HEIs in England were from an LPN in 2009-10, Table A (and Table 1) show that this proportion was 12 percentage points lower than the proportion observed among equivalent entrants registered at FECs. For young entrants to full-time other undergraduate programmes in England (who held no previous HE qualification on entry in 2009-10), 16.1 per cent of those registered at HEIs were from LPNs, lower than the 21.0 per cent of those registered at FECs.

Comparing to sector-adjusted averages

30. Considering both the taught and the registered populations of HE students at English FECs, the proportions observed to come from LPNs exceeded the sector-adjusted average. That is, higher proportions of HE students at FECs were from LPNs than might be expected allowing for the subject areas that students are studying, their ages and their highest qualifications on entry.

31. Among young full-time first degree entrants registered at FECs, Table A shows that the proportion who were from LPNs (22.9 per cent) exceeded the sector-adjusted average of 17.7 per cent by more than five percentage points. Among equivalent entrants registered at HEIs, the proportion from LPNs (10.5 per cent) exceeded the sector-adjusted average of 10.3 per cent by less than one percentage point.

32. Among young full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at FECs, the proportion who were from LPNs (21.0 per cent) exceeded the sector-adjusted average of 19.4 per cent by more than one percentage point. Among equivalent entrants registered at HEIs, the proportion from LPNs (16.1 per cent) was lower than the sector-adjusted average of 16.5 per cent.

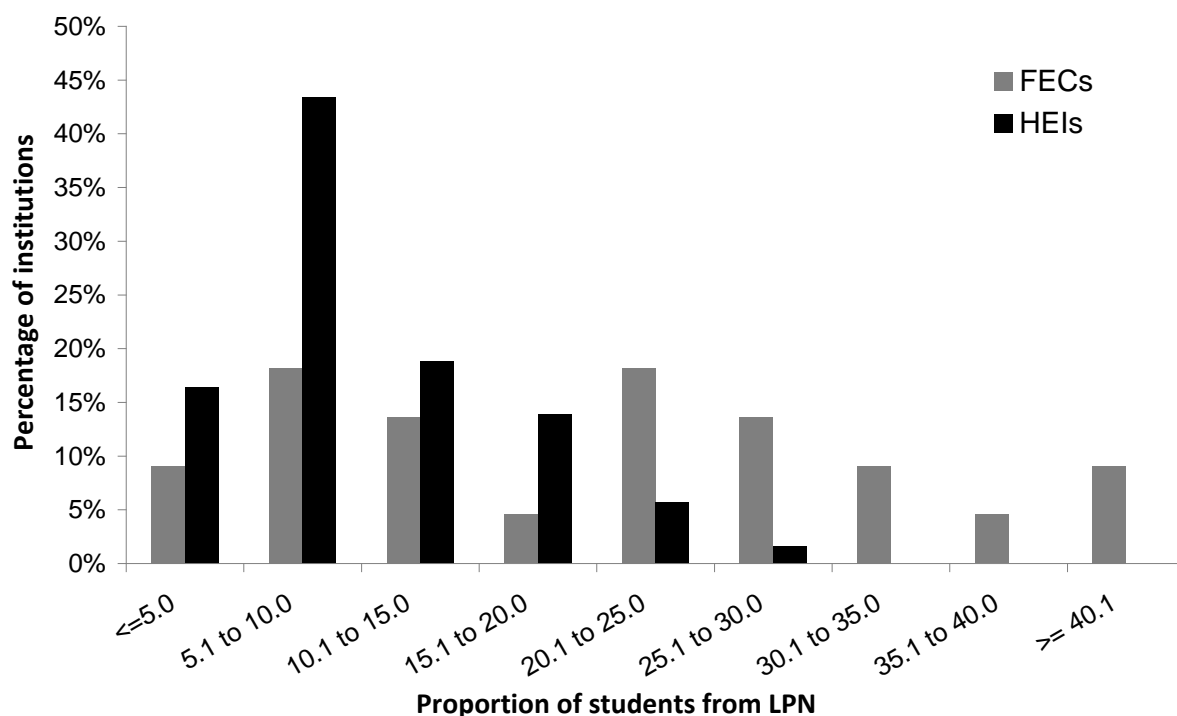
Institutional-level findings

33. The proportions of young full-time entrants registered at individual institutions who were from LPNs have been published in Table 1 for 72 of the FECs in England. Results for the 32 other FECs are not published for the following reasons:

- a. Populations of young full-time entrants were smaller than 23 individual students for 30 institutions.
- b. There were errors in underlying data for another two institutions (see paragraph 17).

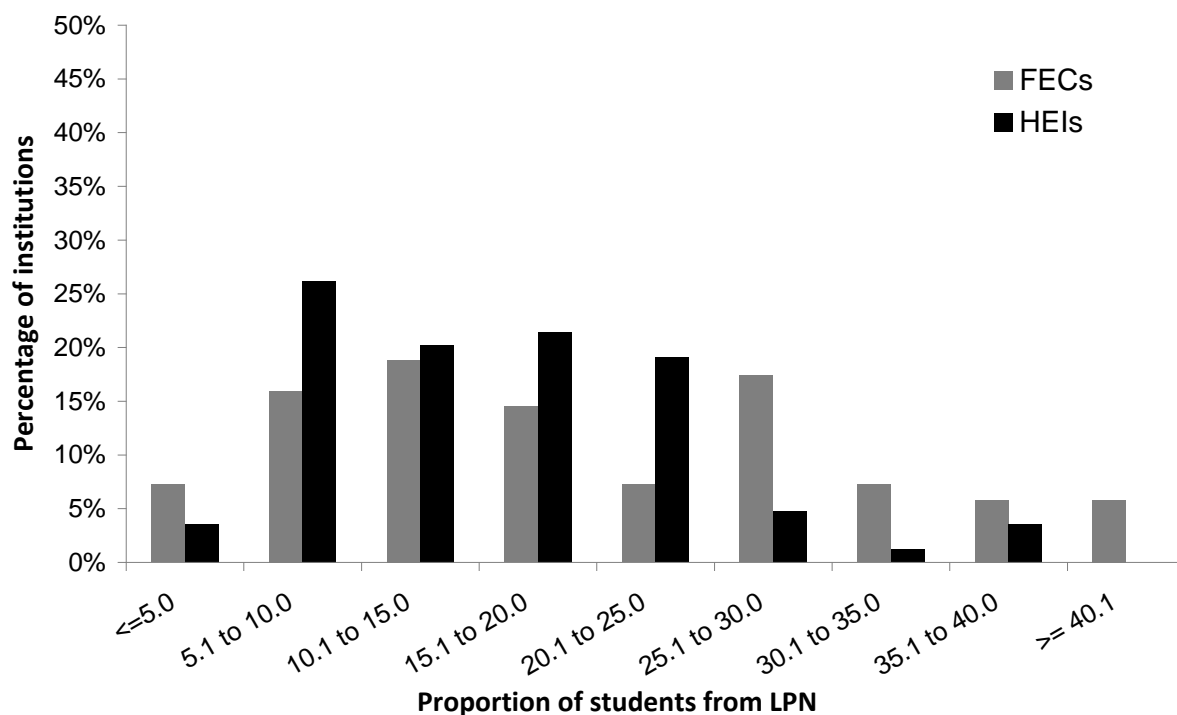
34. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the spread of the LPN indicator proportions across HEIs and FECs in England whose populations of young full-time entrants totalled 23 students or more, split by the type of institution. Figure 1 considers this distribution in respect of young full-time first degree entrants, and Figure 2 for young full-time other undergraduate entrants.

Figure 1 Distribution of LPN indicator proportions across institutions (young full-time first-degree entrants)



35. Figure 1 shows the range of indicator proportions observed among FECs, and diversity in terms of the numbers of registered entrants coming from LPNs. More than a half of FECs had more than a fifth of their young full-time first degree entrants coming from LPNs, and a number of FECs had more than 40.0 per cent of such entrants coming from LPNs. By contrast, 43 per cent of HEIs in England had between 5.1 per cent and 10.0 per cent of their young full-time first degree entrants coming from LPNs. No HEI was seen to have had more than 30.0 per cent of such entrants in 2009-10 coming from LPNs.

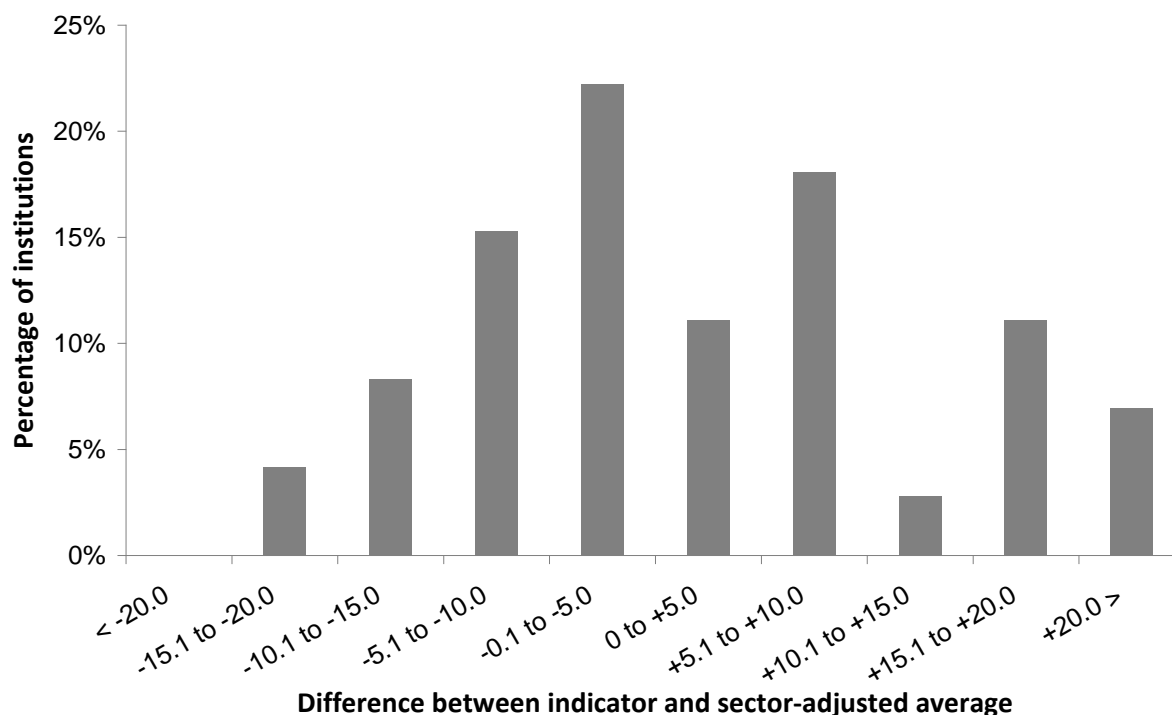
Figure 2 Distribution of LPN indicator proportions across institutions (young full-time other undergraduate entrants)



36. Figure 2 shows that, as among first degree entrants, the range of indicator proportions observed among FECs was larger than that observed among HEIs in terms of the numbers of registered other undergraduate entrants coming from LPNs. 43 per cent of FECs had over a fifth of their young full-time other undergraduate entrants coming from LPNs, and a number of FECs had more than 40.0 per cent of such entrants coming from LPNs. By contrast, a majority of HEIs in England had 25.0 per cent or less of their young full-time other undergraduate entrants coming from LPNs, and more than a quarter of HEIs had 10.0 per cent or less of such students coming from LPNs.

37. Considering all young undergraduate entrants at an individual FEC, the indicator proportion from LPNs and the sector-adjusted average for that institution can be compared, and the difference between the two calculated. Figure 3 shows the distribution of these differences. Note that the sector-adjusted averages have been based on provision registered at both HEIs and FECs.

Figure 3 Distribution of the difference between LPN indicator proportion and sector-adjusted average across FECs (young full-time undergraduate entrants)



38. The sector-adjusted average was greater than or equal to the proportion of entrants from LPNs for 36 of the 72 FECs in England whose populations of young full-time entrants totalled 23 students or more. These institutions are shown with a difference greater than or equal to zero in Figure 3. That is, having allowed for differences in the institutions' student profiles in respect of their age, qualifications on entry and subject area of study, 50 per cent of FECs performed better than their sector-adjusted average and had a higher proportion than might have been expected of young full-time students who were from LPNs.

39. Of the 36 FECs with a non-negative difference between their indicator and their sector-adjusted average, Table 1c shows that 13 had a significance marker of a plus sign, showing that their indicator was *significantly* better than their sector adjusted average. In other words, 18 per cent of FECs displayed sufficient variation in the difference between the indicator and the sector-adjusted average to be noteworthy, and thus to be seen as performing significantly better than their sector-adjusted average.

40. Compared to the 50 per cent of FECs, 38 per cent of HEIs in England had a difference between their LPN indicator proportion and their sector-adjusted average that was greater than or equal to zero. Similar proportions of HEIs and FECs were seen to perform significantly better than their sector-adjusted average: 20 per cent of HEIs compared to 18 per cent of FECs.

Non-continuation rates after first year at institution

41. The method used to produce the non-continuation indicator is based on tracking students from the year they enter an institution to the following year. It provides information about where students are in that following year: whether they are continuing at the same institution (on the same course or on another HE course at the institution), whether they have transferred to another institution, or whether they are absent from HE completely. The indicator is provided

separately for young and mature full-time entrants to first degree and other undergraduate programmes of study in 2008-09.

42. Table B (below) provides the non-continuation indicators for different categories of HE provision in both HEIs and FECs at a sector level. Table 2 (see Excel document) provides the non-continuation indicators for HE provision registered at FECs at an institutional level.

Sector-level findings

Registered and taught entrants

43. Table B shows that in FECs the proportions of registered entrants who did not continue in HE beyond their first year were higher than those proportions of taught entrants. Among full-time first degree entrants registered at FECs, 14.1 per cent did not continue after their first year. If instead all full-time first degree entrants taught at FECs (regardless of where they are registered) are considered, the proportion was lower at 13.6 per cent. Among full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at FECs, 19.5 per cent did not continue after their first year, compared to 19.1 per cent among those entrants taught at FECs.

44. A similar finding is identified in HEIs: a larger proportion of registered entrants did not continue in HE compared to taught entrants. While 7.8 per cent of full-time first degree entrants registered at HEIs did not continue after their first year, the proportion was 7.6 per cent among entrants taught at HEIs. Among full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at HEIs, 15.4 per cent did not continue after their first year, compared to 14.0 per cent among those entrants taught at HEIs.

Table B Comparison of continuation indicators for HEIs and FECs in England

HE students		Full-time entrants (%)					
		Young first-degree	Mature first-degree	Total first-degree	Young other undergraduate	Mature other undergraduate	Total other undergraduate
Registered at HEIs	Indicator	6.4	12.9	7.8	17.0	14.4	15.4
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	6.5	13.0	7.9	16.3	14.6	15.3
Registered at FECs	Indicator	12.8	14.9	14.1	19.2	19.9	19.5
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	12.1	13.6	12.9	20.3	19.5	20.0
Taught at HEIs	Indicator	6.2	12.8	7.6	15.0	13.4	14.0
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	6.5	13.0	7.8	15.4	13.7	14.3
Taught at FECs	Indicator	12.4	14.6	13.6	19.0	19.1	19.1
	<i>Sector-adjusted average</i>	11.0	13.5	12.1	19.3	19.0	19.2

Entrants at FECs and HEIs

45. Looking at both the first degree and other undergraduate populations, Table B shows that the non-continuation rates of full-time undergraduate entrants registered at FECs in England in 2008-09 were higher than the rates among equivalent undergraduate entrants registered at English HEIs.

46. Compared to HEIs, Table B shows that FECs had a higher proportion of young full-time first degree entrants who did not continue in HE beyond their first year: 12.8 per cent among those registered at FECs, compared to 6.4 per cent of those registered at HEIs. Similarly, FECs also had higher proportions than HEIs of mature full-time first degree entrants who did not continue after their first year. Among such students registered at HEIs, Table B shows that 12.9 per cent did not continue after their first year compared to 14.9 per cent of those registered at FECs.

47. In respect of full-time entrants to other undergraduate programmes of study, as with first degree entrants FECs had a higher proportion of young students who did not continue in HE beyond their first year, compared to HEIs. A non-continuation rate of 19.2 per cent was observed among young full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at FECs, compared to a rate of 17.0 per cent among those registered at HEIs. Similarly, 19.9 per cent of mature full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at FECs did not continue after their first year compared to 14.4 per cent of those registered at HEIs.

Comparing to sector-adjusted averages

48. Considering both the taught and registered populations of full-time first degree entrants at English FECs, the proportions who were observed not to continue in HE after their first year were higher than the sector-adjusted average. Among such entrants registered at FECs, Table B shows that the proportion who did not continue (14.1 per cent) was higher than the sector-adjusted average of 12.9 per cent by more than one percentage point. More taught entrants in FECs (13.6 per cent) were observed not to continue, compared to the sector-adjusted average (12.1 per cent).

49. For equivalent entrants taught and registered at English HEIs, the proportions observed not to continue were below the sector-adjusted average.

50. In respect of the populations of full-time other undergraduate entrants at FECs, a different finding is observed for young entrants compared to mature entrants when the sector-adjusted averages are considered. The proportions of mature full-time other undergraduate entrants taught and registered at English FECs who were observed not to continue in HE after their first year were higher than the sector-adjusted average. The proportions of equivalent young students taught and registered at English FECs who did not continue were below the sector-adjusted average.

51. Among entrants registered at English HEIs, the opposite finding is observed. The proportion of mature full-time other undergraduate entrants who did not continue was below the sector-adjusted average. The proportion of equivalent young students who did not continue in HE after their first year was higher than the sector-adjusted average.

52. For both young and mature full-time other undergraduate entrants taught at English HEIs, the proportions observed not to continue were below the sector-adjusted average.

Institutional-level findings

53. Non-continuation rates of full-time undergraduate entrants registered at individual institutions have been published for 84 of the FECs in England (see Table 2). Results for the 18 other FECs are not published for the following reasons:

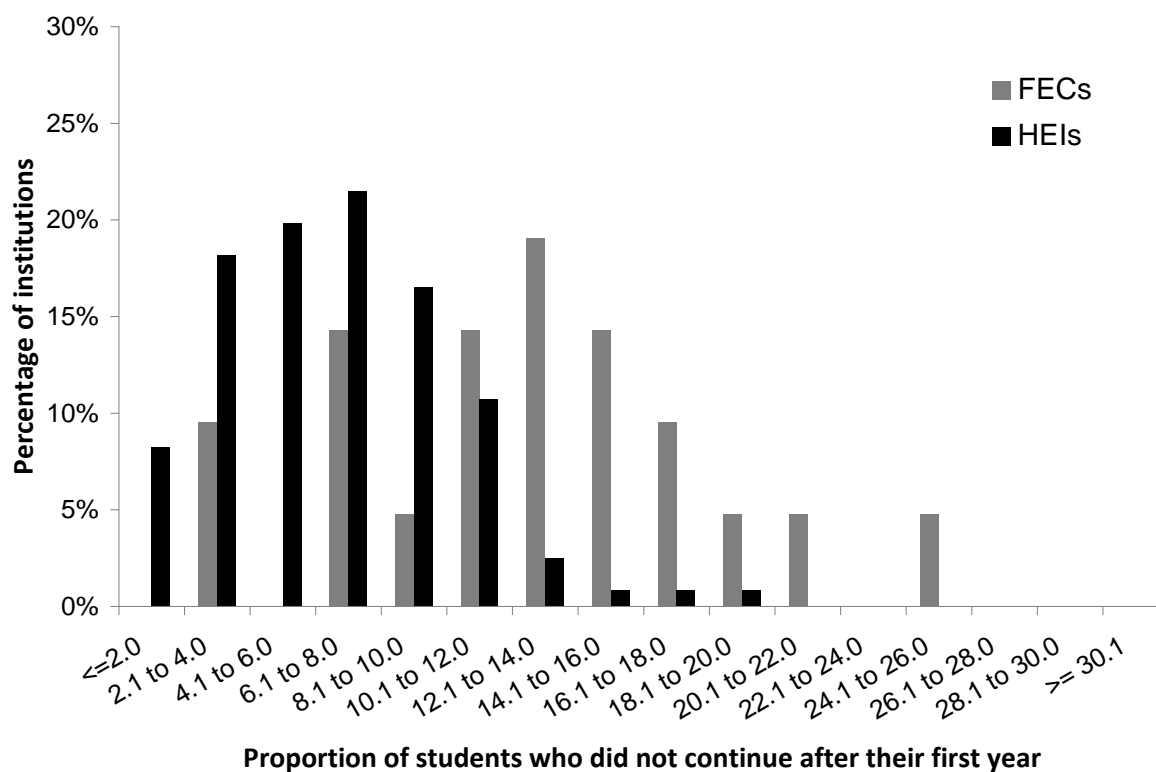
- a. Populations of full-time undergraduate entrants were smaller than 23 individual students for 16 institutions.
- b. There were errors in underlying data for another two institutions (see paragraph 17).

Non-continuation among full-time first degree entrants

54. In general, a higher proportion of mature full-time first degree entrants than young entrants did not continue in HE after their first year. Table 2a shows that 14.9 per cent of mature full-time first degree entrants registered at FECs did not continue in HE after their first year. This compared to 12.8 per cent of equivalent young entrants.

55. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the spread of the proportions of students who did not continue after their first year across those HEIs and FECs in England whose populations of full-time entrants totalled 23 students or more, split by the type of institution. Figure 4 considers this distribution in respect of young full-time first degree entrants, and Figure 5 for mature full-time first degree entrants.

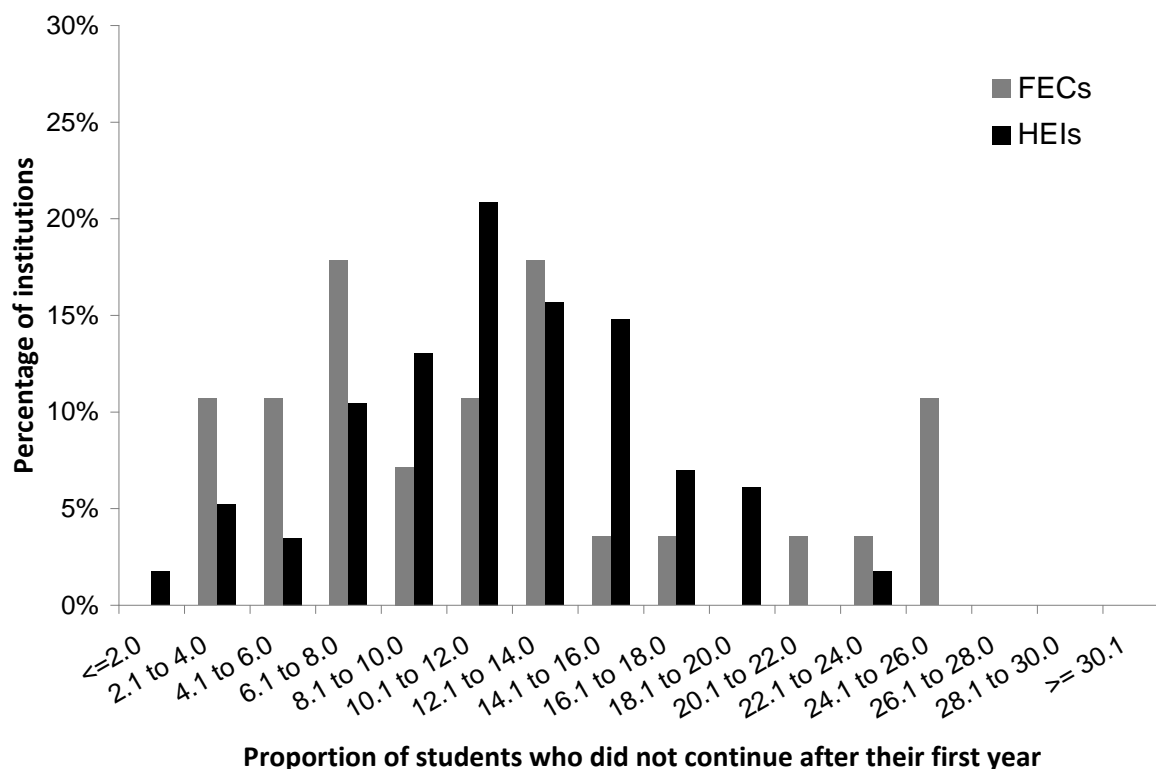
Figure 4 Distribution of non-continuation indicator proportions across institutions (young full-time first degree entrants)



56. Figure 4 shows that when it comes to young full-time first degree entrants, HEIs had lower non-continuation rates than FECs. While 84 per cent of HEIs had a non-continuation rate lower than 10.0 per cent for such entrants, this was true of 29 per cent of FECs. More than half of

FECs (62 per cent) had a non-continuation rate of between 10.1 per cent and 20.0 per cent. Across all young full-time first degree entrants registered at FECs, 12.8 per cent did not continue after their first year.

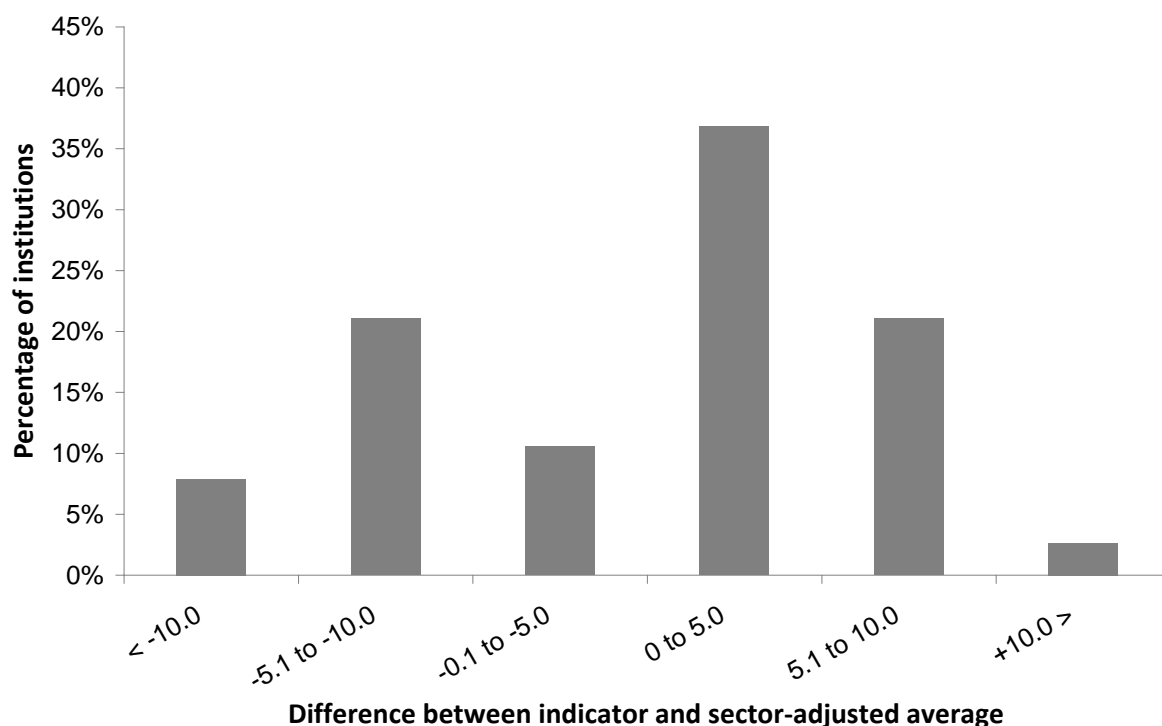
Figure 5 Distribution of non-continuation indicator proportions across institutions (mature full-time first degree entrants)



57. Figure 5 shows a similar trend for mature full-time first degree entrants to equivalent young entrants. While three-quarters of HEIs had a non-continuation rate of between 6.1 per cent and 16.0 per cent for such entrants, this was true of 57 per cent of FECs. Figure 5 shows that the most frequently observed non-continuation rates were between 6.1 per cent and 8.0 per cent and between 12.1 per cent and 14.0 per cent: for almost a fifth of FECs for this population of entrants. Across all mature full-time first degree entrants registered at FECs, 14.9 per cent did not continue after their first year.

58. Considering all full-time first degree entrants at an individual FEC, the indicator proportion not continuing in HE after their first year and the sector-adjusted average for that institution can be compared, and the difference between the two calculated. Figure 6 shows the distribution of these differences. Note that the sector-adjusted averages have been based on provision registered at both HEIs and FECs.

Figure 6 Distribution of difference between non-continuation indicator proportion and sector-adjusted average across institutions (full-time first degree entrants)



59. The sector-adjusted average was greater than or equal to the proportion of entrants not continuing for 23 of the 38 FECs in England whose populations of full-time first degree entrants totalled 23 students or more. These institutions are shown with a difference greater than or equal to zero in Figure 6. That is, having allowed for differences in the institutions' student profiles in respect of their age, qualifications on entry and subject area of study, 61 per cent of FECs performed better than their sector-adjusted average and had a lower proportion than might have been expected of full-time first degree students who did not continue.

60. Of the 23 FECs with a non-negative difference between their indicator and their sector-adjusted average, Table 2a shows that one had a significance marker of a plus sign, showing that their indicator was *significantly* better than their sector adjusted average. Two FECs had a minus sign, showing that their indicator was significantly worse than their sector-adjusted average. In other words, 3 per cent of FECs (one institution) displayed sufficient variation in the difference between the indicator and the sector-adjusted average to be noteworthy, and thus to be seen as performing significantly better than their sector-adjusted average. Another 5 per cent of FECs (two institutions) were seen to perform significantly below their sector-adjusted average.

61. The proportions of FECs performing better than their sector-adjusted average were broadly similar to those of HEIs in England. Among HEIs in England, 64 per cent of institutions had a difference between their non-continuation indicator proportion and their sector-adjusted average that was greater than or equal to zero. The equivalent proportion was 61 per cent of FECs. In respect of institutions seen to perform significantly better than their sector-adjusted average, this was true of 4 per cent of HEIs compared to the 3 per cent of FECs.

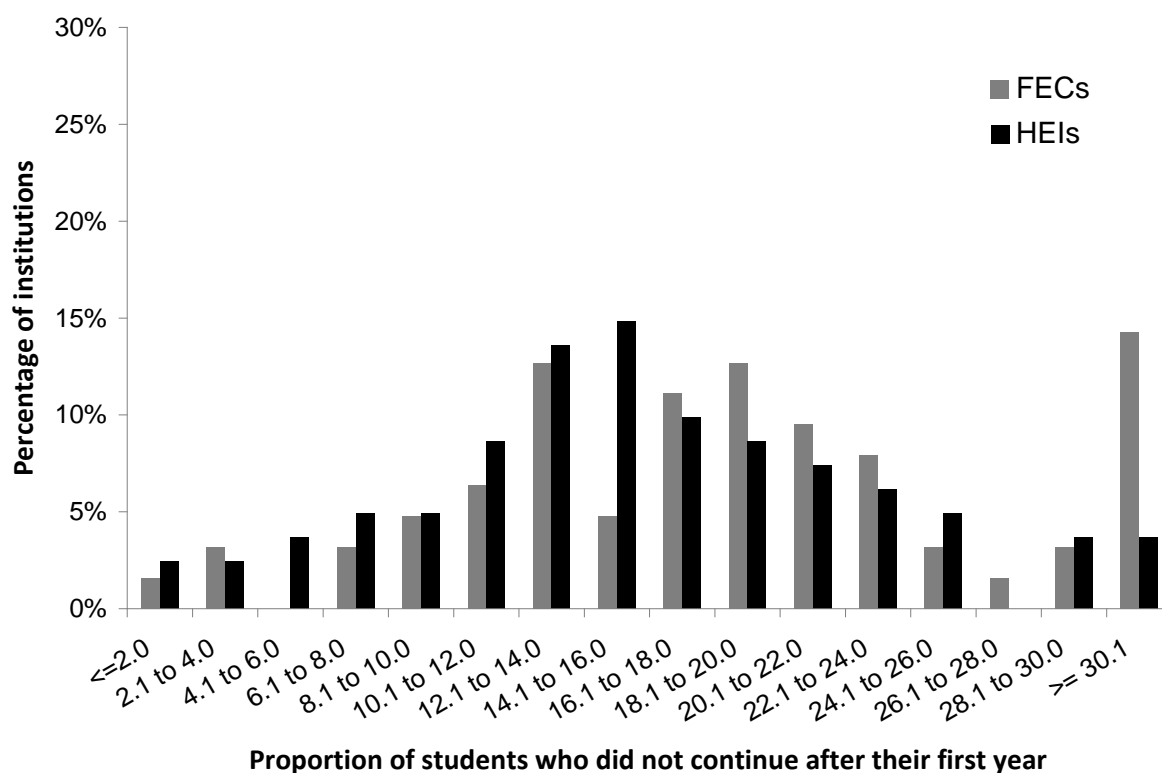
Non-continuation among full-time other undergraduate entrants

62. Table 2 also shows the proportions of full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at FECs who did not continue in HE beyond the first year. These proportions are again provided separately for young and mature full-time other undergraduate entrants to HE.

63. Among those registered at FECs, 19.9 per cent of mature full-time other undergraduate entrants did not continue in HE after their first year, a higher proportion than the 19.2 per cent among equivalent young entrants. We note that this finding is the converse of what is observed among those registered at HEIs, where a higher proportion of young students among full-time other undergraduate entrants did not continue. Table B above shows that mature full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at HEIs had a non-continuation rate of 14.4 per cent, compared to 17.0 per cent for equivalent young entrants.

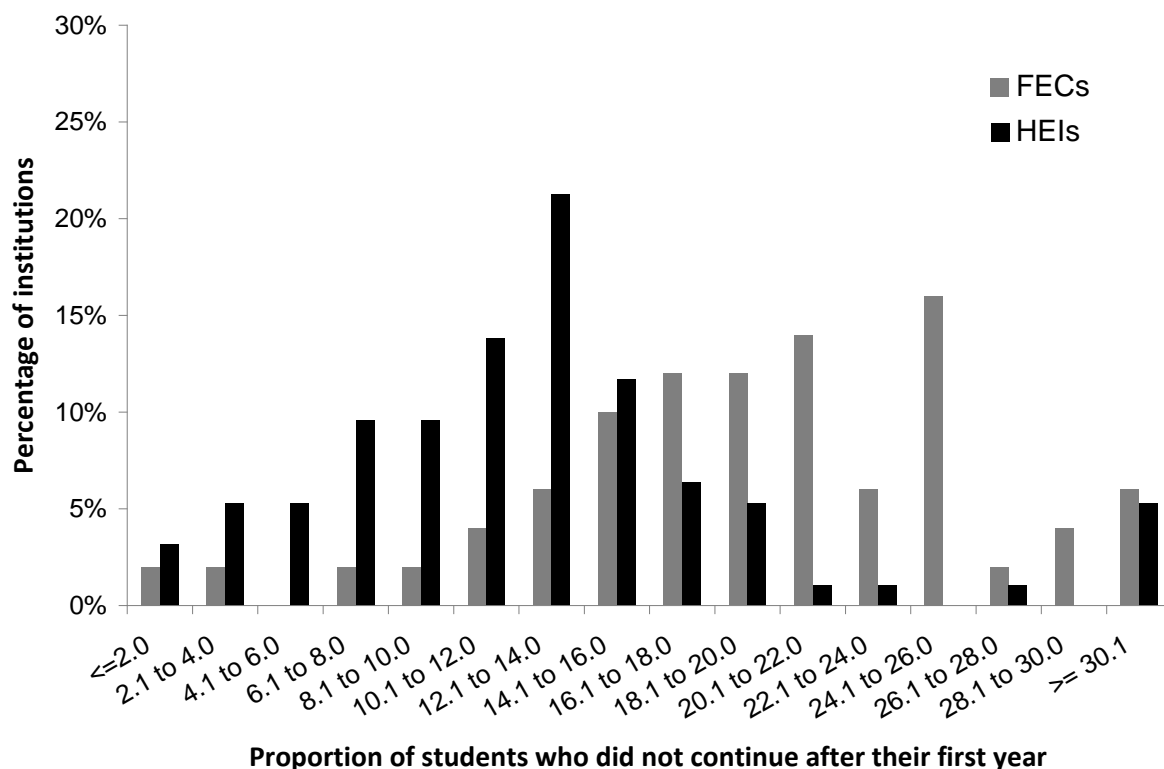
64. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the spread of the proportions of students who did not continue after their first year across those HEIs and FECs in England whose populations of full-time entrants totalled 23 students or more, split by the type of institution. Figure 7 considers this distribution in respect of young, and Figure 8 for mature, full-time other undergraduate entrants.

Figure 7 Distribution of non-continuation indicator proportions across institutions (young full-time other undergraduate entrants)



65. Figure 7 shows that while 56 per cent of HEIs had a non-continuation rate of between 10.1 per cent and 20.0 per cent for their young full-time other undergraduate entrants, this was true of a smaller proportion of FECs (47 per cent). One in every eight FECs had a non-continuation rate higher than 30.0 per cent. Across all young full-time other undergraduate entrants registered at FECs, 19.2 per cent did not continue after their first year.

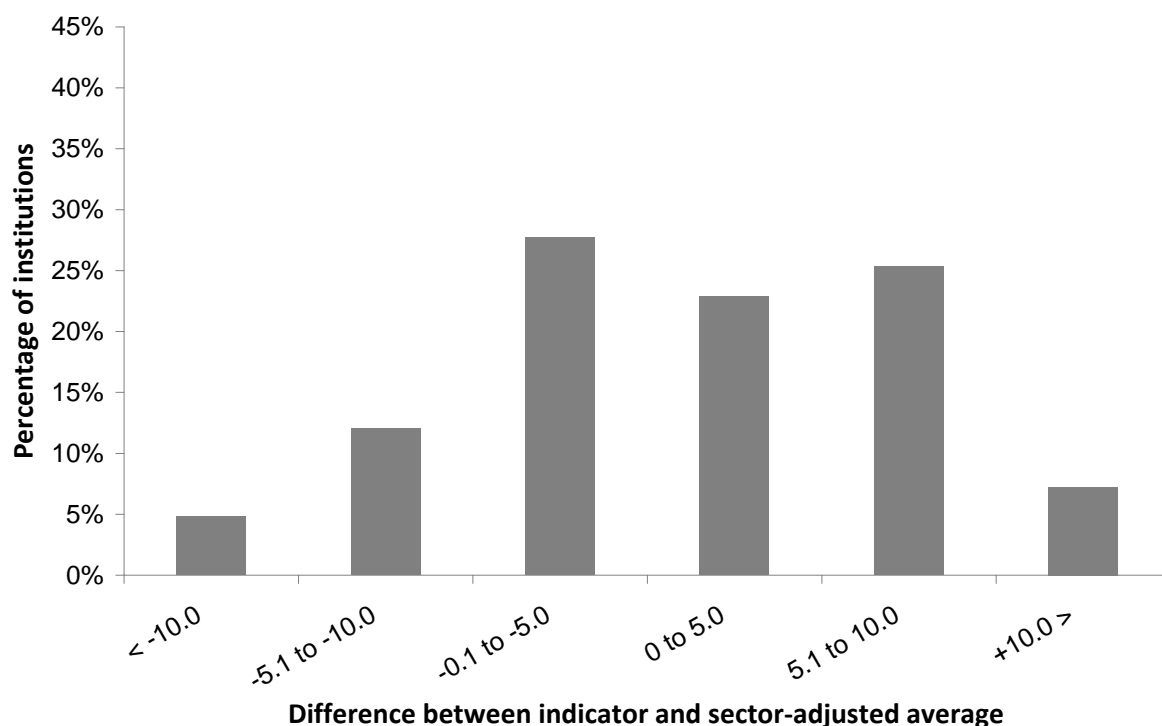
Figure 8 Distribution of non-continuation indicator proportions across institutions (mature full-time other undergraduate entrants)



66. Figure 8 shows that 66 per cent of HEIs in England had a non-continuation rate of between 6.1 per cent and 16.0 per cent. A non-continuation rate of between 16.1 per cent and 30.0 per cent was observed for two-thirds of FECs. Around 5 per cent both of HEIs and of FECs had non-continuation rates of higher than 30.0 per cent among their mature full-time other undergraduate entrants.

67. Considering all full-time other undergraduate entrants at an individual FEC, the indicator proportion not continuing in HE after their first year and the sector-adjusted average for that institution can be compared, and the difference between the two calculated. Figure 9 shows the distribution of these differences. Note that the sector-adjusted averages have been based on provision registered at both HEIs and FECs.

Figure 9 Distribution of difference between non-continuation indicator proportion and sector-adjusted average across institutions (full-time other undergraduate entrants)



68. The sector-adjusted average was greater than or equal to the proportion of entrants not continuing for 46 of the 83 FECs in England whose populations of full-time other undergraduate entrants totalled 23 students or more. These institutions are shown with a difference greater than or equal to zero in Figure 9. That is, having allowed for differences in the institutions' student profiles in respect of their age, qualifications on entry and subject area of study, 55 per cent of FECs performed better than their sector-adjusted average and had a lower proportion than might have been expected of full-time other undergraduate students who did not continue.

69. Of the 46 FECs with a non-negative difference between their indicator and their sector-adjusted average, Table 2b shows that nine had a significance marker of a plus sign, showing that their indicator was *significantly* better than their sector adjusted average. Another five FECs had a minus sign, showing that their indicator was significantly worse than their sector-adjusted average. In other words, 11 per cent of FECs displayed sufficient variation in the difference between the indicator and the sector-adjusted average to be noteworthy, and thus to be seen as performing significantly better than their sector-adjusted average. Another 6 per cent of FECs were seen to perform significantly below their sector-adjusted average.

70. We note that among HEIs in England, 80 per cent of institutions had a difference between their non-continuation indicator proportion and their sector-adjusted average that was greater than or equal to zero. Paragraph 68 detailed that the equivalent proportion was 55 per cent of FECs. In respect of institutions seen to perform significantly better than their sector-adjusted average, this was true of 19 per cent of HEIs compared to the 11 per cent of FECs.

Next steps

71. It is intended that these indicators be produced regularly, and HEFCE plans to publish another set later in 2012 which will provide the most recent data. It is probable that the PISG will

consider the desirability and practicality of extending the current participation and non-continuation UK HE PIs to HE provision registered at FECs, as well as to HE provision taught at HEIs and FECs. However there are a range of complicating factors that would need to be resolved in order to make such an extension. This would not be a trivial matter and may take some time to resolve.

Annex A – Definition of terms

Purpose

1. This annex defines and explains the terminology that is made use of throughout the main body of this document as well as its supporting tables. It provides definitions of terms such as ‘registered’ provision, ‘first degree’ and ‘sector-adjusted average’, along with ‘participation’ and ‘non-continuation’, which are used extensively throughout the document.
2. The definitions provided below make reference to a number of student and course characteristics, defined using variables collected in the Data Service’s Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) individualised student records⁹. Algorithms and data definitions relating to these characteristics, and the ILR and HESA variables associated with them, are provided at Annex C.

Terms relating to characteristics of the course or provision

Taught and registered provision

3. ‘Registered’ provision is that for which a given institution or provider is fully accountable. All aspects of finance, administration and quality related to the students engaged in this provision are the responsibility of the institution registering the student. Included within these responsibilities is the requirement for the registering institution to return data on the student to the appropriate bodies. For example, for students registered at a further education college (FEC) the FEC is required to return data on those students to the Data Service in their collection of the ILR.
4. Under a franchising arrangement, a student undertakes provision that is delivered by one provider on behalf of another. In many cases in higher education (HE) these arrangements involve an FEC delivering provision that has been franchised to them by a partner higher education institution (HEI). The student ‘belongs’ to the HEI as the registering institution: the HEI receives any funding associated with the student (and passes on a proportion to the partner FEC), is ultimately responsible for administration and quality, and is required to return data on the student to the HESA student data collection and the appropriate HE funding body. The student is taught by the FEC as the teaching institution.
5. In many cases FECs have both students for whom they are fully accountable (registered students) and students whom they teach on behalf of an HEI. ‘Taught’ provision is all that which is delivered by a given institution or provider, whether or not that institution is fully accountable for some or all of the provision. In other words, all those students that a given institution teaches (regardless of where they are registered) form the ‘taught’ population of that institution.

⁹ Full descriptions of the variables collected in the Data Service’s ILR are available at www.theia.org.uk under ILR, ILR Documents, and ILR Specification (for the academic year of interest).

Full descriptions of the variables collected in the HESA individualised student records are available at www.hesa.ac.uk, under Student Stream, Student Collection (for the academic year of interest), and Field list and detail.

Levels of study

6. HE students are those students on courses for which the level of instruction is above that of A levels or Scottish Highers/Advanced Highers.

7. Within HE, a student's level of study is defined on the basis of the learning aim recorded for the student. The information provided in this publication is restricted to consider only those studying at undergraduate level. Three categorisations of students studying at undergraduate level are considered:

- i 'First degree' – refers to an honours or ordinary degree programme of study (e.g. BA, BSc). The coverage of this term includes four-year sandwich courses, extended first degrees (such as integrated masters programmes) and programmes leading towards eligibility to register with a statutory regulatory body (such as the General Teaching Council). Note that the term 'first' in this context does not imply that it is necessarily an individual learner's first instance of study on a degree programme.
- ii 'Other undergraduate' – refers to qualification aims equivalent to and below first degree level. The coverage of this term includes, but is not limited to, foundation degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Higher Education (Dip HE and CertHE), Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC and HNDs), and Diplomas of Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector.
- iii 'Undergraduate' – refers to the combination of first degree and other undergraduate qualification aims to provide coverage of the entirety of provision at this level.

Full-time mode of study

8. Information is provided about students at an institution who were studying full-time in the year of entry. Full-time students are those recorded as studying full-time at an institution, or on thick or thin sandwich courses, provided that the length of the course is at least 24 weeks.

Terms relating to characteristics of the student

Entrants

9. The two tables that accompany this document as separate files both provide information about full-time entrants to an institution. These are defined as students who started a full-time programme of study at that institution during the academic year of interest. The definition of a student as an entrant is based on the commencement date of the student's study. While most entrants go into the first year of a programme of study, some may start on a later year of the programme, for example if they transfer from another institution.

10. Entrants who are recorded as leaving before 1 December have not been included in the calculations, unless the record contains important information such as a qualification. It has been agreed that students leaving this early in their studies should be disregarded for the purposes of measures such as the UK higher education (HE) performance indicators (PIs) published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Age

11. Young students are those who are aged under 21 on 30 September of the academic year in which they are recorded as entering the institution. Thus for students recorded as entering an institution in 2009-10, young students are those born after 30 September 1988.

12. Mature students are those who are aged 21 or over on 30 September of the academic year in which they are recorded as entering the institution.

Low-participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2)

13. POLAR2 (where POLAR stands for Participation of Local Areas) is a classification based on rates of young participation in HE. Specifically, these are the rates of participation in HE of people who were aged 18 between 2000 and 2004 and entered a HE course in a UK HEI or FEC in Great Britain, aged 18 or 19, between academic years 2000-01 and 2005-06.

14. The POLAR2 classification is formed by ranking 2001 Census Area Statistics wards by their young participation rates for the combined 2000 to 2004 cohorts. This gives five young participation quintile groups of areas ordered from '1' (those wards with the lowest participation) to '5' (those wards with the highest participation), each representing 20 per cent of UK young cohort. Students have been allocated to the neighbourhoods on the basis of their postcode. Those students whose postcode falls within wards with the lowest participation (quintile 1) are denoted as being from a low participation neighbourhood.

15. More information on the POLAR2 classification and the files used in the mapping can be found on the HEFCE web-site, www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/ourresearch/polar/.

Terms relating to data provided in Table 1 and Table 2

Participation and non-continuation

16. Annex B describes the principles of the methodology used to produce the data in Table 1 and Table 2, and provides further information regarding our approach to the publication of these data. The terms 'participation' and 'non-continuation' can be better understood by considering them in the context of the data provided in this report, and hence by referring to Annex B.

Sector-adjusted averages

17. The interpretation of the indicators is supported through the provision of sector-adjusted averages¹⁰. An institution's likelihood of recruiting widening participation students, or of retaining the students it recruits, is affected by a number of factors, and the sector-adjusted averages take into account the institution's student profile in respect to some of these factors. They are intended to help avoid comparisons between institutions whose student profiles are so different from one another that they should not be compared directly. For the purposes of the indicators provided in this document the sector-adjusted averages are calculated across all UK HEIs and all English FECs. To compare an institution's outcomes to the whole sector, including both English FECs and UK HEIs, the sector-adjusted average should be used in preference to the overall sector average.

18. The sector-adjusted averages are not targets, and will change from one year to the next if the overall value of the characteristic changes. If no factors were taken account of in the calculations of the sector-adjusted average, each institution would have the same sector-adjusted average: the overall sector average. A number of factors are accounted for so rather they show the values that might be expected of an institution's indicator if they reflect the sector averages after taking into account the impact of variations in the subject area of study as well as

¹⁰ Sector-adjusted averages are the equivalents to the benchmarks published within the UK HE PIs.

students' ages and highest qualifications held on entry. These sector-adjusted averages give information about the figure that might be expected for an institution if no factors other than those allowed for were important. Where differences do exist, this may be due to the institution's performance, or due to some other factor which is not included in the sector-adjusted average.

19. Two symbols are used to show whether the difference between the indicator and the sector-adjusted average is significant: that is, where there is sufficient variation to be noteworthy. A plus sign, '+', indicates that the institution's indicator is significantly better than its sector-adjusted average and a minus sign, '-', indicates that the indicator is significantly worse than its sector-adjusted average. Such markers should be taken as an invitation to the institution to investigate possible causes for the differences that have been identified. If neither symbol is used, the institution can say that its indicator is similar to the sector average, allowing for subject areas of study, students' ages and their highest qualifications on entry.

Location-adjusted averages

20. Location-adjusted averages¹¹ are included alongside the original sector-adjusted averages. These location-adjusted averages take account of where an institution's students come from, as well as their subject and entry qualifications, and try to measure the effect of location on the indicator.

21. The difference between the two adjusted averages will show how much effect the region of origin of an institution's students has on the indicator. Small differences, for instance of no more than 1 or 2 per cent, suggest there is little effect. Either the institution recruits nationally, or it recruits locally from a region which is similar to the average of the UK as a whole. Larger differences mean that the geographical effect seems to be important.

22. Which adjusted average is used will depend on the context. Both adjusted averages provide information about the institution, and together they can shed light on why an indicator takes a certain value. Note that in deciding whether two institutions are similar, it is the original sector-adjusted average that is most informative – the fact that the location-adjusted averages of two institutions are different may only indicate that the institutions are in different parts of the country. Institutions which do better against the location-adjusted average than against the original one can point out that location, in the sense of where their students come from, is affecting their results. An institution that does better against its original sector-adjusted average than against the location-adjusted average may note that, although much of its success in recruiting students from LPNs, for example, is because of its location, nevertheless it is still taking in large numbers from such areas. In both cases institutions should examine their results critically.

¹¹ Location-adjusted averages are the original sector-adjusted averages with the addition of an additional adjustment relating to the location of an institution's students' home region.

Factors used in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 sector-adjusted averages

Factor	Number of categories
Subject of study	18
Entry qualifications	28
Age on entry	3
Region of domicile	13

23. For technical details on how the adjusted averages are calculated, please refer to the HESA web-site at

www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2059&Itemid=141.

Annex B – Methodological principles

Purpose

1. Full technical details of the data definitions used to produce the data shown in the two tables that accompany this document as separate files can be found at Annex C. This annex seeks to outline the methodological principles that have been used in the production and publication of these data. Readers may wish to refer to Annex A for definitions of terms that are used within this annex.

Interpreting the data

2. The data in Table 1 and Table 2 (see accompanying tables) should be read in the context of the following notes. Both tables report on students registered at further education colleges (FECs), as the existing UK higher education (HE) performance indicators (PIs) published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) already report on students registered at higher education institutions (HEIs) but taught at another institution (which may include FEC provision).

Table 1 – Participation indicators

3. The participation indicators seek to provide information about the profile of an institution's students in respect to groups that are under-represented in HE. That is, they show the proportion of students at an institution who were from a particular under-represented group.

4. The method used to produce Table 1 is based on low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs), which have been defined using the HEFCE POLAR2 classification (where POLAR stands for Participation of Local Areas). This classification is based on rates of participation in HE by young people, and draws on data provided by HESA, the Data Service, UCAS, the other UK funding bodies and HM Revenue & Customs. Those students whose home postcode falls within neighbourhoods of the UK with the lowest rates of young participation are denoted as being from a low participation neighbourhood. The indicators provided by Table 1 then give the proportions of young full-time HE entrants at an institution who have been denoted as being from a low participation neighbourhood on the basis of their home postcode.

5. More information on the POLAR2 method can be found at paragraphs 13 to 15 of Annex A, and at www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/ourresearch/polar/.

Table 2 – Non-continuation indicators

6. This table looks at non-continuation rates for students at an institution, showing how good an institution is at retaining the students it recruits. The method considers students who start in a particular year, and looks at whether they are still in HE one year later. The non-continuation rates for students at an institution are of widespread interest, but need to be carefully defined and interpreted. The methods are explained in more detail below.

7. The method used to produce Table 2 is based on tracking students from the year they enter an institution to the following year. The table provides information about where the students are in that following year. The method used to track students from one year to the next is described at Annex D: it is the same as that used by HESA in the generation of the UK HE PIs.

8. A full-time student who entered an undergraduate course at an institution in 2008-09 may have, in the following year (2009-10), continued at the same institution, either on the same course or elsewhere in the institution, transferred to another institution, or been absent from HE completely. Some students may have qualified at the end of their first year, either with a first degree or with another undergraduate qualification. Such students are included with those who continue at the same institution.

9. Students may leave HE at various times during their first year, or simply not return after the end of the year. When a student leaves very early in the academic year, there may be reasons for this which are unconnected with the course or the institution. To allow for this, full-time students who are recorded as leaving before 1 December in their first academic year have been removed from all of the figures provided.

Coverage of the indicators

10. The data include students who were registered at an HEI or FEC in England and were studying for an HE qualification. Students registered at FECs are only included in the data if they are studying a prescribed course of HE. Information is derived from the HESA 2008-09 and 2009-10 individualised student data returns and the Data Service's 2008-09 and 2009-10 ILR return.

11. The data used in constructing the indicators have been taken from the ILR and HESA individualised student records. The data are about provision rather than student characteristics. This means that we may have counted the same student more than once. This happens where the student is registered for two or more different courses. Postdoctoral students are not included in the ILR Student Record.

12. All students included in the tables are those whose normal residence is in the United Kingdom, excluding Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man. If the students' domicile is unknown it is assumed that the student is resident in the UK. Incoming and visiting exchange students, and students studying for the whole of their programme of study outside the UK, are excluded from the tables.

Omission of small numbers

13. In keeping with our established approach in relation to the UK HE PIs and the National Student Survey statistics, we have undertaken to omit very small numbers to protect the identity of the individuals.

14. Where the population is less than 23 students Tables 1 and 2 do not show percentages of students from LPNs, percentages of students who continue or qualify, sector-adjusted averages or context statistics; we show only the population (rounded to the nearest five).

Verification exercise

15. FECs in England reviewed the methods used to generate these profile and non-continuation indicators in summer 2011. Each FEC was provided with an explanation of the method, an indication of overall results for the sector, as well as data relating to their own institution to aid their understanding of the methods. Institutions were invited to provide feedback on the method and to highlight any data errors that were likely to affect the results generated. A number of responses were received.

16. A number of the concerns we received were in relation to the lack of coverage of part-time students within the indicators, which was felt to be an important omission given the relatively large volumes of part-time HE provision taught at FECs. Our responses to those institutions outlined the analytical challenges described at paragraph 12 of the main body of this document, which slow the development of indicators relating to part-time provision. We noted that our intention would be to extend the indicators to cover part-time provision over the next few years.

17. Other concerns noted different parameters and categorisations in respect of students studying HE in FECs compared to in HEIs. An example was the definition of young and mature students where 'young' students were deemed to be those aged 16 to 18 in FECs, compared to those aged under 21 in HEIs. The intention for consistency across the indicators produced for HEIs and FECs was explained as the driver for the choice of parameters and categorisations, along with knowledge of the characteristics of students undertaking HE provision.

18. Two institutions requested suppression of their results in this publication on account of errors in their underlying Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data that had led to misleading results in respect of these indicators. The results for the two institutions have been suppressed in this publication.

Annex C – Technical definitions

ILR fields used in the generation of Table 1

1. The indicators provided in Table 1 are the proportions of young full-time undergraduate entrants at an institution who have been denoted as being from a low participation neighbourhood (LPN) on the basis of their home postcode. The generation of Table 1 relies on our ability to define the population of interest (described further at paragraphs 10 to 12 of Annex B), and to determine whether individual students falling within that population come from an LPN.
2. Implementation of this methodology draws reference to variables extracted from the Data Service's 2009-10 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) dataset. Table C1 below describes these variables and the manner in which we will refer to them in the following descriptions.
3. Details and definitions of fields extracted from the ILR are available in ILR documentation made available by the Information Authority, at www.theia.org.uk/ilr/ilrdocuments/.

Table C1: ILR fields used in the generation of Table 1

Field code	Description	Name	Data set
L03	Learner reference number	ST_REF	Learner
L01	Contract/Allocation provider number	ST_UPIN	Learner
L24	Country of domicile	ST_DOMIC	Learner
A11A	Source of funding	QA_FEHE1	Learning aim
A11B	Source of funding	QA_FEHE2	Learning aim
L11	Date of birth	ST_DOB	Learner
L17	Home postcode	ST_POSTC	Learner
H11	Highest qualification on entry	HQ_QUAL_	HE
H39	UCAS tariff points	HQ_UCATP	HE
A27	Learning start date	QA_ST_DA	Learning aim
A28	Learning planned end date	QA_EXP_E	Learning aim
A31	Learning actual end date	QA_EN_DA	Learning aim
H14	Mode applicable to HEIFES	HQ_MHESE	HE
ENGLAND_FE_HE_STATUS_CODE	England FE/HE status	ENG_LEVE	Learning Aim Database
LEARNING_AIM_TYPE_CODE	Learning aim type	QUAL_TYP	Learning Aim Database
LEARNING_AIM_TITLE	Learning aim title	QUAL_TIT	Learning Aim Database

AWARDING_ BODY_CODE	Awarding body code	AWARD_BO Learning Aim Database
A35	Learning outcome	QA_OUTCO Learning aim
LEARNDIRECT_ CODE	Learn direct code	LDCS_CO1 Learning Aim Database

Derived fields used in the generation of Table 1

4. Paragraphs 6 to 28 provide details of the fields that we have derived from the underlying 2009-10 ILR data for use in the generation of Table 1. These derived fields are listed in Table C2 below.

Table C2: Derived fields used to generate Table 1

Field name	Description	Paragraph
ILRKEY	Unique learner instance identifier	6
PILEVEL	Level of study	7
PIMODE	Mode of study	10
PIAGE	Age at 30th September in year of entry	11
PISUBG	Subject area of study	12
HESACAT	Highest qualification held on entry	15
POLAR	POLAR quintiles identifier	17
LPN_MARKER	POLAR marker identifier	19
SUBWT	Student headcount identifier	20
EXCL1	Exclusion criterion identifier – mode of study	22
EXCL2	Exclusion criterion identifier – commencement of study	23
EXCL4	Exclusion criterion identifier – pre-course domicile	24
EXCL8	Exclusion criterion identifier – incoming or visiting exchange students	25
EXCL16	Exclusion criterion identifier – level of study	26
EXCLUDE	Exclusion criteria summary	27

5. Note that in paragraphs 6 to 28, definitions are given in a hierarchical manner. Thus, if a student's record satisfies the first criterion listed in a definition they have been assigned to the first categorisation, regardless of whether or not they also satisfy criteria listed later in the definition.

ILRKEY

6. This field uniquely identifies learner instances of study within the 2009-10 ILR return. Each unique record within the ILR in 2009-10 is assigned a unique ILRKEY.

PILEVEL

7. This field assigns a student to a level of study. The allocation of level of study requires the identification of recognised awarding bodies for higher education (HE) qualifications: largely UK HEIs with the power to award degrees, together with Edexcel and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) where the qualification aim is a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND).

8. The identification is made on the basis of the ILR field name AWARD_BO in 2009-10 ILR data. Recognised awarding bodies are defined by the following valid entries to that field:

APU, ASTONUNI, BATHSPA, BCUNIV, BIRKBECK, BNU, BOLTONIN, BRUNEL, BU, CAF, CITY, CU, DMU, DU, EDGEHU, HAUC, HUAVA, HUDDU, HULLU, J9162, J9236, KCL, KINGSTON, LANU, LEEDU, LHU, LJM, LMU, LONDON, LONDONMU, LOUUI, LU, MIDU, MMU, NTU, OBU, OU, PU, RAM, RCA, RCM, ROYAGCOL, SALFU, SBU, SHU, SSU, STAFFU, TVU, UAL, UCANTCC, UCCA, UCE, UCLAN, UEA, UEL, UK, UNEWCAST, UNIBRI, UNIEXE, UNORTH, UOB, UOBATH, UOBEDS, UOCHESTR, UOCHICH, UODE, UOG, UOGLOS, UOGREENW, UOH, UOK, UOLE, UOM, UON, UONORTON, UOPLY, UORG, UOS, UOSH, UOST, UOSX, UOSY, UOT, UOW, UOWAR, UOWINCH, UOWR, UOY, UW, UWE, WU, YORKSTJO.

9. Other values of AWARDING_BO are not classed as a recognised awarding body for the purposes of this analysis.

Value	Description	Definition
DEG	A first degree course	ENG_LEVE = H and QUAL_TYP = 0394, 1406, 1407, 1408, 1409, 9000, 9002, 9107, E007 and AWARD_BO identifies a recognised awarding body, as defined at Paragraph 8.
OUG	An other undergraduate course	ENG_LEVE = H and (QUAL_TYP = 9112, 9111, 9110 or QUAL_TYP = 0031, 0032) and AWARD_BO identifies a recognised awarding body, as defined at Paragraph 8.
HEO	An other HE course	ENG_LEVE = H and QUAL_TYP = 0125, 0126, 9111, 9112, 9113, 9103, E008, 1411, 1412, 0393, 1410, 2001, 9100, 9101, 9109 and AWARD_BO identifies a recognised awarding body, as defined at Paragraph 8.
NHE	Not a HE course	Otherwise

PIMODE

10. This field categorises the student's mode of study in 2009-10.

Value	Description	Definition
FT	Full-time	HQ_MHESES = 01, 02
PT	Part-time	HQ_MHESES = 03
OT	Other	Otherwise

PIAGE

11. This field assigns a student to an age group. In an approach consistent with the UK HE s (PIs), we consider indicators for young students (those aged under 21 at 30 September 2009) and mature students (those aged 21 or over on 30 September 2009).

Value	Description	Definition
U	Unknown	ST_DOB = blank or 30/12/9999 or ST_DOB > 30 September 1999
Y	Young student	ST_DOB > 30 September 1988
M	Mature student	ST_DOB ≤ 30 September 1988

PISUBG

12. The Learn Direct codes used to identify subject areas of study for students returned to the ILR have been aligned to the broad groupings of subject area used by HESA for reporting information broken down by subject. HESA have defined 19 subject areas to present a useful high-level analysis of subject area of study.

13. For the purposes of this analysis we have reduced HESA's broad groupings into 18 subject areas by incorporating the veterinary science grouping into that of medicine and dentistry. This approach gives groupings that are consistent with those used in the generation of the UK HE PIs.

14. A student record is assigned to one of the broad subject areas of study on the basis of the Learn Direct codes (ILR field name LDCS_CO1) returned in that student record. Those Learn Direct codes are mapped to the appropriate grouping of subject area of study and assigned one of the values 1 to 9 or A to J. These values and groupings are described in the table that follows:

Value	Description
1	Medicine and dentistry and veterinary sciences
2	Subjects allied to medicine
3	Biological sciences
5	Agriculture and related sciences
6	Physical sciences
7	Mathematical sciences
8	Computer sciences
9	Engineering and technology
A	Architecture, building and planning
B	Social studies
C	Law
D	Business and administrative studies
E	Mass communications and documentation
F	Languages
G	Historical and philosophical studies
H	Creative arts and design
I	Education
J	Combined subjects

HESACAT

15. This field assigns a student to a grouping of their highest qualification held on entry to their programme of study. We consider 21 groupings of qualifications held on entry.

Value	Description	Definition
HE	HE qualification	HQ_QUAL = 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30,31
AASSCE	A-levels/AS-levels/Scottish Highers, with or without Vocational Certificates of Education (VCE)	HQ_QUAL = 39, 40
VCE_ONLY	VCEs and no A-levels/AS-levels/Scottish Highers	HQ_QUAL = 37, 38
BTEC	Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) or Ordinary National Diploma (OND), including Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualifications and Scottish Qualifications Authority	HQ_QUAL = 41

(SQA) equivalents		
ACC_FND	Foundation or Access course	HQ_QUAL = 29, 43, 44, 45, 48, 72
BACC	Baccalaureate	HQ_QUAL = 42, 47
OTHERS	Other qualifications not included elsewhere	HQ_QUAL = 55, 56, 57, 94, 97
NONE	No previous qualification	HQ_QUAL = 92, 93, 98
UNKNOWN	Highest qualification on entry is not known or not provided	HQ_QUAL = 99 or Otherwise

16. For students who held A-levels/AS levels/Scottish Highers, with or without VCEs, as their highest qualification on entry (that is, if HESACAT = AASSCE), further granularity is required and the value of HESACAT is reassigned according to the following definition.

Value	Description	Definition
AASSCE_0	Unknown or not applicable tariff score	HQ_UCATP = ., 0
TAR100	001 to 100 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 100
TAR 160	101 to 160 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 160
TAR 200	161 to 200 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 200
TAR 230	201 to 230 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 230
TAR 260	231 to 260 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 260
TAR 290	261 to 290 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 290
TAR 320	291 to 320 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 320
TAR 350	321 to 350 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 350
TAR 380	351 to 380 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 380
TAR 420	381 to 420 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 420
TAR 480	421 to 480 tariff points	HQ_UCATP ≤ 480
TAR 480+	481 tariff points and above	HQ_UCATP > 480

POLAR

17. The HEFCE POLAR2 classification (where POLAR stands for Participation of Local Areas) is used in the analysis of participation of young people in HE. Further details on the POLAR2 classification are given at paragraphs 13 to 15 of Annex A.

18. The classification organises students into one of five quintiles on the basis of their home postcode, where each quintile represents 20 per cent of the UK young cohort. The quintiles are ordered from '1' (those areas with the lowest young participation in HE) to '5' (those areas with

the highest young participation in HE). This field takes one of the values '1' to '5' which identifies the POLAR2 quintile the student has been assigned to. The field has the value 'unknown' if the student's home postcode is not known or invalid and no assignment has been possible.

LPN_MARKER

19. A student is denoted to come from an LPN if they have been assigned to POLAR2 quintile '1' on the basis of their home postcode. This field provides a marker as to whether or not an individual student has been denoted as coming from an LPN.

Value	Description	Definition
U	The student's home postcode cannot be assigned to a POLAR2 quintile (the postcode is not provided, not valid or not included within the most recent postcode directories).	POLAR= blank
Y	The student has been assigned to POLAR2 quintile '1' on the basis of their home postcode: they are denoted as being from an LPN.	POLAR= 1
N	The student has not been assigned to POLAR2 quintile '1' on the basis of their home postcode: they are not denoted as being from an LPN.	Otherwise

SUBWT

20. The individualised data we consider contain one record for each instance of study in a subject area in an academic year. For example, a student who is studying for a first degree in biology in 2009-10 will have one record for that instance and will constitute one headcount. A student who is studying for a first degree in mathematics and physics in 2009-10 will have two records for that instance, one for each subject area, with each counting as a headcount of a half.

21. This field contains a derivation of a student's full-person equivalence across the subject area(s) of their programme of study in 2009-10. The full-person equivalence is given as a headcount. Because we are considering subject areas identified by the ILR field name LDCS_CO1 only, for all students registered at FECs the value of SUBWT will be 1.

EXCL1

22. This field identifies students who meet the exclusion criterion relating to mode of study. Students who were not studying full-time have been excluded from the population of interest.

Value	Description	Definition
0	The student was studying full-time.	PIMODE = FT
1	The student was not studying full-time.	Otherwise

EXCL2

23. This field identifies students who meet the exclusion criterion relating to commencement of study: students who were not an entrant (as defined in paragraphs 9 and 10 of Annex A) have been excluded from the population of interest. Note in particular that entrants who were recorded as leaving on or before 1 December 2009 have not been included in the population of interest.

Value	Description	Definition
0	The student was an entrant in 2009-10.	QA_ST_DA ≥ 1 August 2009 and QA_ST_DA < 1 August 2010 and QA_EN_DA ≠ blank and not ≤ 1 December 2009 and QA_EXP_E ≠ blank and not ≤ 1 December 2009
1	The student was not an entrant in 2009-10.	Otherwise

EXCL4

24. This field identifies students who meet the exclusion criterion relating to their domicile prior to the commencement of study: students who were not domiciled in the UK prior to beginning their course have been excluded from the population of interest.

Value	Description	Definition
0	The student was UK domiciled.	ST_DOMIC = 399, 099, 299, 599, XF, XG, XH, XI
1	The student was not UK domiciled.	Otherwise

EXCL8

25. This field identifies students who meet the exclusion criterion relating to incoming or visiting exchange students: students who were incoming Erasmus students have been excluded from the population of interest.

Value	Description	Definition
0	The student was not an incoming Erasmus student.	QA_FEHE1 ≠ 017, 020 or QA_FEHE2 ≠ 017, 020
1	The student was an Erasmus student.	Otherwise

EXCL16

26. This field identifies students who meet the exclusion criterion relating to their level of study. Students who were not registered on a first degree or other undergraduate programme of study have been excluded from the population of interest.

Value	Description	Definition
0	The student was registered on a first degree or other undergraduate course.	PILEVEL = DEG, OUG
1	The student was not registered on a first degree or other undergraduate course.	PILEVEL = HEO, NHE

EXCLUDE

27. This field summarises the five exclusion criteria described in paragraphs 22 to 26 into one value which can be used to determine an individual student's inclusion or exclusion from the population of interest. Students who have a value of 1 recorded in any one or more of the EXCL fields are excluded from the population of interest. This field will enable identification of the exclusion criterion or combination of criteria which have been satisfied to lead to their exclusion.

28. The field is computed as $(1 \times \text{EXCL1}) + (2 \times \text{EXCL2}) + \dots + (16 \times \text{EXCL16})$. The reason(s) which contributed to the exclusion can therefore be determined. For example, if EXCLUDE = 13, the only possible combination of exclusion criteria that sum to 13 are EXCL1, EXCL4 and EXCL8: the student was excluded on the basis that in 2009-10 they were not studying full-time, they were not UK-domiciled and they were an incoming or visiting exchange student.

ILR and HESA fields used in the generation of Table 2

29. The indicators provided in Table 2 are the proportions of full-time undergraduate entrants at an institution in 2008-09 who have been observed to become absent from HE in the year following entry.

30. The population of entrants registered at FECs (and described further at paragraphs 6 to 12 of Annex B) are tracked from 2008-09 to 2009-10, and the table provides information about where the students were in that year following entry. The generation of Table 2 relies on our ability to define the population of interest and to determine whether, in the following year, individuals falling within that population continue at the same institution (either on the same course or elsewhere in the institution), transfer to another institution, or become absent from HE completely. Some students may qualify at the end of their first year, either with a first degree or with another undergraduate qualification, and the methodology includes such students with those who continue at the same institution.

31. Implementation of this methodology draws reference to variables extracted from the 2008-09 and 2009-10 ILR datasets. Table C3 below describes these variables and the manner in which we will refer to them in the following descriptions. ILR fields shown in Table C3 with a suffix of _2009 relate specifically to the 2009-10 ILR data. Fields with no such suffix relate to fields drawn from the 2008-09 ILR.

Table C3: ILR fields used in the generation of Table 2

Field code	Description	Name	Data set
L03	Learner reference number	ST_REF and ST_REF_2009	Learner
L01	Contract/Allocation provider number	ST_UPIN and ST_UPIN_2009	Learner
L24	Country of domicile	ST_DOMIC	Learner
A11A	Source of funding	QA_FEHE1	Learning aim
A11B	Source of funding	QA_FEHE2	Learning aim
L11	Date of birth	ST_DOB	Learner

L17	Home postcode	ST_POSTC	Learner
H11	Highest qualification on entry	HQ_QUAL_	HE
H39	UCAS tariff points	HQ_UCATP	HE
A27	Learning start date	QA_ST_DA and QA_ST_DA_2009	Learning aim
A28	Learning planned end date	QA_EXP_E and QA_EXP_E_2009	Learning aim
A31	Learning actual end date	QA_EN_DA and QA_EN_DA_2009	Learning aim
H14	Mode applicable to HEIFES	HQ_MHESE and HQ_MHESE_2009	HE
ENGLAND_FE_HE_STATUS_CODE	England FE/HE status	ENG_LEVE and ENG_LEVE_2009	Learning Aim Database
LEARNING_AIM_TYPE_CODE	Learning aim type	QUAL_TYP and QUAL_TYP_2009	Learning Aim Database
LEARNING_AIM_TITLE	Learning aim title	QUAL_TIT and QUAL_TIT_2009	Learning Aim Database
AWARDING_BODY_CODE	Awarding body code	AWARD_BO and AWARD_BO_2009	Learning Aim Database
A35	Learning outcome	QA_OUTCO and QA_OUTCO_2009	Learning aim
LEARNDIRECT_CODE	Learn direct code	LDCS_CO1 and LDCS_CO1_2009	Learning Aim Database

32. Details and definitions of fields extracted from the ILR are available in ILR documentation made available by the Information Authority, at www.theia.org.uk/ilr/ilrdocuments/.

33. Implementation of the methodology also draws reference to variables extracted from the 2009-10 HESA dataset. In identifying students whose continuation outcome was to transfer to another institution we have sought to include any transfers to study registered at HEIs. As such, students' 2008-09 ILR data have been linked to both 2009-10 ILR records and the 2009-10 HESA individualised student records to ensure a thorough consideration of continuation outcomes.

34. Table C4 below describes the HESA variables and the manner in which we will refer to them in the following descriptions. All fields shown in this table relate specifically to the 2009-10 HESA student data.

Table C4: HESA fields used in the generation of Table 2

Field code	Description	Name	Entity
UKPRN	UK provider reference number	UKPRN	Institution
INSTID	HESA institution identifier	HESAINST	HESA derived field
TYPEYR	Type of instance year	TYPEYR	Instance
STULOAD	Student instance full-time equivalence	STULOAD	Instance
ENDDATE	End date of instance	DATELEFT	Instance
XMODE01 [†]	Mode of study	XMODE01	HESA derived field
XLEV501 [†]	Level of study – 5 way split	XLEV501	HESA derived field
XQLEV501 [†]	Level of qualification obtained – 5 way split	XQLEV501	HESA derived field
XQOBTN01 [†]	Highest qualification obtained	XQOBTN01	HESA derived field

35. Details and definitions of fields extracted from the HESA student records are available from the HESA student record coding manuals made available by HESA, at www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menl=11051. The specifications of the HESA derived fields (marked with [†] in Table C4) in relation to 2011-12 HESA data are available at www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2479&Itemid=233. Derivations in relation to 2009-10 should be consistent with those for 2011-12 in respect of the derived fields we have considered in this analysis.

36. The method used to track students from one year to the next is described at Annex D. It is the same as that used by HESA in the generation of the UK HE PIs.

Derived fields used in the generation of Table 2

37. Paragraphs 39 to 53 provide details of the fields that we have derived from the underlying 2008-09 and 2009-10 ILR data, and from 2009-10 HESA student data, for use in the generation of Table 2. These derived fields are listed in Table C5 below. Derived fields with a suffix of _2009 relate specifically to information derived from the 2009-10 ILR or HESA data. Derived fields with no such suffix relate to information derived from the 2008-09 ILR.

Table C5: Derived fields used to generate Table 2

Field name	Description	Paragraph
ILRKEY and ILRKEY_2009	Unique ILR learner instance identifier	39
PRIKEY_2009	Unique HESA learner instance identifier	40
PILEVEL and PILEVEL_2009	Level of study	41
PIMODE	Mode of study	42
PIAGE	Age at 30th September in year of entry	43

PISUBG	Subject area of study	44
HESACAT	Highest qualification held on entry	45
OUTCOME_2009	Continuation outcome classification	46
SUBWT	Student headcount identifier	47
EXCL1	Exclusion criterion identifier – mode of study	48
EXCL2	Exclusion criterion identifier – commencement of study	49
EXCL4	Exclusion criterion identifier – pre-course domicile	50
EXCL8	Exclusion criterion identifier – incoming or visiting exchange students	51
EXCL16	Exclusion criterion identifier – level of study	52
EXCLUDE	Exclusion criteria summary	53

38. Note that in paragraphs 39 to 53, definitions are given in a hierarchical manner. That is, if a student's record satisfies the first criterion listed in a definition they have been assigned to the first categorisation, regardless of whether or not they also satisfy criteria listed later in the definition.

ILRKEY and ILRKEY_2009

39. The definition of these fields is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 6 of this annex, with the exception that ILRKEY is derived in respect of the 2008-09 ILR data. ILRKEY_2009 is derived in respect of the 2009-10 ILR data.

PRIKEY_2009

40. This field uniquely identifies learner instances of study within the 2009-10 HESA student record return. Each unique record within the HESA student record in 2009-10 is assigned a unique PRIKEY_2009.

PILEVEL and PILEVEL_2009

41. The definition of these fields is consistent with the definition given in paragraphs 7 to 9 of this annex with the exception that PILEVEL is derived in respect of the 2008-09 ILR data. PILEVEL_2009 is derived in respect of the 2009-10 ILR data.

PIMODE

42. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 10 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

PIAGE

43. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 11 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

PISUBG

44. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraphs 12 to 14 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

HESACAT

45. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraphs 15 to 16 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

OUTCOME_2009

46. This field provides a summary of an individual student's continuation outcome in respect of the year following their entry to full-time undergraduate study registered at an FEC. This continuation outcome might be: continuing at the same institution, either on the same course or elsewhere in the institution; transferring to another institution; or becoming absent from HE completely. Some students may qualify at the end of their first year, either with a first degree or with another undergraduate qualification, and the definition includes such students with those who continue at the same institution.

Value	Description	Definition
Continue or qualify at the same institution	The student continued on an instance of HE study, or qualified, at the same registering institution.	(PILEVEL = DEG, OUG and QA_OUTCO = 1, 6, 7) or (PILEVEL = DEG, OUG and QA_EXP_E = QA_EN_DA and QA_EXP_E ≠ NULL and QA_OUTCO = 4, 5) or (PILEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO_2009 = 1, 6, 7 and QA_EN_DA_2009 ≠ NULL and QA_EN_DA_2009 ≤ 1 December 2009 and ST_UPIN = ST_UPIN_2009) or (PILEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO_2009 = 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and (QA_EN_DA_2009 = NULL or QA_EN_DA_2009 ≥ 1 August 2009) and ST_UPIN = ST_UPIN_2009) or (PILEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO2009 = 3 and QA_EN_DA_2009 ≥ 1 December 2009 and ST_UPIN = ST_UPIN_2009) or

		<p>(PILELEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO_2009 = 0 and (QA_EN_DA_2009 = NULL or QA_EN_DA_2009 ≥ 1 December 2009) and ST_UPIN = ST_UPIN_2009)</p>
Transfer	The student transferred to an instance of HE study registered at another institution.	<p>(PILELEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO_2009 = 1, 6, 7 and QA_EN_DA_2009 ≠ NULL and QA_EN_DA_2009 ≤ 1 December 2009 and ST_UPIN ≠ ST_UPIN_2009)</p> <p>or</p> <p>(PILELEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO_2009 = 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and (QA_EN_DA_2009 = NULL or QA_EN_DA_2009 ≥ 1 August 2009) and ST_UPIN ≠ ST_UPIN_2009)</p> <p>or</p> <p>(PILELEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO2009 = 3 and QA_EN_DA_2009 ≥ 1 December 2009 and ST_UPIN ≠ ST_UPIN_2009)</p> <p>or</p> <p>(PILELEVEL_2009 = DEG, OUG, HEO and QA_OUTCO_2009 = 0 and (QA_EN_DA_2009 = NULL or QA_EN_DA_2009 ≥ 1 December 2009) and ST_UPIN ≠ ST_UPIN_2009)</p> <p>or</p> <p>(PRIKEY_2009 ≠ NULL and XMODE01 = 1, 2, 3 and XLEV501 = 1, 2, 3, 4 and (STULOAD > 0 or TYPEYR ≠ 1) and (DATELEFT ≠ NULL or DATELEFT ≥ 1 December 2009))</p> <p>or</p> <p>(PRIKEY_2009 ≠ NULL and (DATELEFT ≠ NULL or DATELEFT ≥ 1 December 2009) and XQLEV501 = 1, 2, 3, 4 and XQOBTN01 ≠ D90, E90, L90, L91, M90, M91, H90, H91, I90, I91, J90, C90, L99, M99, H99, I99, J99, C99, X99)</p> <p>or</p>

(PRIKEY_2009 ≠ NULL and (DATELEFT ≠ NULL or DATELEFT ≥ 1 December 2009) and XQOBTN01 = H24)

Inactive	The student did not continue or qualify at the same institution, or transfer to another institution, and is considered to be inactive in HE in the year following entry.	Otherwise
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SUBWT

47. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraphs 20 to 21 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

EXCL1

48. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 22 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

EXCL2

49. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 23 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

EXCL4

50. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 24 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

EXCL8

51. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 25 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

EXCL16

52. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraph 26 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

EXCLUDE

53. The definition of this field is consistent with the definition given in paragraphs 27 to 28 of this annex, where it has been defined on the basis of 2008-09 ILR data.

Annex D – Outline of overall linking process

1. In the generation of Table 2, the students in 2008-09 have been linked to 2009-10 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student data. The method used to do this is also used by HESA in the generation of the Performance Indicators where the indicators require students to be linked across years. It requires all available HESA and ILR records to be linked.

Outline of method used to link ILR student records

2. The first step in the overall process is to link all available ILR records. A unique longitudinal identifier is created for each individual that appears at any point in the ILR records. This identifier is created as follows.

3. All students in an ILR record (year X) are matched to the following record (year X+1) using a number of match processes:

- i. Records matched on gender, surname, first names, institution attended and either same postcodes and mistyped birth dates, or same birth dates and mistyped postcodes.
- ii. Records matched on gender, birth date, surname, first name and postcode, with a restriction on common surnames.
- iii. Records matched on gender, birth date, first name, postcode and an allowance for a misspelt non-common surname.
- iv. Records matched on UCAS number and same birth dates (with an allowance for typing errors), or same surnames, or same postcodes.

4. These four matching processes are also used to internally match records belonging to the same student within a single academic year's ILR record. This internal matching is done for both year X and year X+1.

5. The identified matches are then resolved so that a single person identifier exists for year X and year X+1.

6. The process is repeated for matching between all pairs of years (X+1 and X+2, X and X+2, and so on).

7. The final step is to resolve all found links across all the years to produce a single ILR longitudinal identifier.

Outline of method used to link HESA student records

8. Then, all available HESA student records are linked and a unique longitudinal identifier is created for each individual who appears at any point in the HESA student records using a similar process.

9. All students in a HESA individualised student record (year X) are matched to the following record (year X+1) using five match processes:

- v. Records with matching HUSID, HESAINST and NUMHUS (HIN linked).

- vi. Records matched on gender, birth date, first name and surname, with restriction for common names and an allowance for maiden name changes and spelling errors.
 - vii. Records matched on HUSID and either postcode, birth date, surname or first name.
 - viii. Records matched on HESAINST, HUSID, gender and surname with potential spelling errors or maiden name changes.
 - ix. Records matched on birth date, gender and first part of postcode. A combination of first name, HUSID and second part of postcode is further used to eliminate and select potential matches.
10. The steps outlined in paragraphs 4 to 7 are repeated in respect of the HESA student records, to produce a single HESA longitudinal identifier.

Outline of method used to link ILR student records to HESA student records

11. Once all available records are linked within the HESA and ILR data, the two sets of identifiers are combined. We are able to link across the two data sources in a similar manner to that described, using the information obtained by linking ILR and HESA records.
12. All students in an ILR record (year X) are matched to a HESA individualised record using match processes which are consistent with match processes ii. to iv. described at paragraph 3. It is assumed that the HESA longitudinal identifier cannot be reduced any further, but the ILR longitudinal identifier can. This means that if, through the linking of HESA and ILR records, two HESA identifiers are found to be the same person, these identifiers remain as separate individuals. However if two ILR identifiers are found to be the same person, they are combined to create a single identifier.

List of abbreviations

BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
FEC	Further Education College
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
LPN	Low Participation Neighbourhood
ONC	Ordinary National Certificate
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
PI	Performance Indicator
PISG	Performance Indicators Steering Group
POLAR	Participation of Local Areas
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
VCE	Vocations Certificates of Education