



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

ADULT FURTHER EDUCATION

Outcome based success
measures: Technical Annex

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Annex: Technical note

1. This document provides further information on the production of the outcome based success measures experimental data. In particular it covers in greater detail the definitions for each measure and the data sources used to calculate them.

Destination measures

Learners in scope for the measures

2. The measures cover all adult learners that completed an eligible FE learning aim in the 2010/11 academic year that was funded either by the Skills Funding Agency through the Adult Skills Budget or the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). Eligible learning is identified using the Individualised Learning Record (ILR), in particular the completion status and end date fields to identify completers (also referred to as 'retained').
3. Adult learners are those that are at least academic age 19 in the year they complete their training, i.e. in the case of learners completing in 2010/11 this covers learners aged 19 or older on 31 August 2010. Learners are identified unique to a provider, so appear once for each provider where they have completed a course.
4. The measures do not cover Adult Community Learners, Education Funding Agency learners, or 16-18 year old Apprenticeships. Adult Traineeships and 24+ Advanced Learning Loans learners will be included in the future, but these measures refer to 2010/11 learners before these provisions existed.

Learners with multiple learning aims

5. Outcomes are reported on a learner, rather than a learning aim basis. In the case where a learner completes multiple eligible aims within the academic year, outcomes are reported against their highest level aim. Where a learner completes two aims at the same level, the outcome is reported against the most recently completed aim. The hierarchy used to select between aims is below
 - Highest qualification
 - Higher Apprenticeship
 - Level 4 (or higher)
 - Advanced Apprenticeship
 - Level 3 (Full or Partial)
 - Other Level 3
 - Intermediate Apprenticeship
 - Level 2 (Full or Partial)
 - Level 2 ESOL
 - Level 2 English and Maths
 - Other Level 2
 - Entry or Level 1 ESOL
 - Entry or Level 1 English and Maths

- Other Entry or Level 1
- Unassigned

- Most recently completed aim (if completing more than one at the same level)

6. Where a learner completes more than one aim at the same level and on the same date, outcomes are reported against the aim with the lowest aim sequence number (a unique number used when recording aims in the ILR).

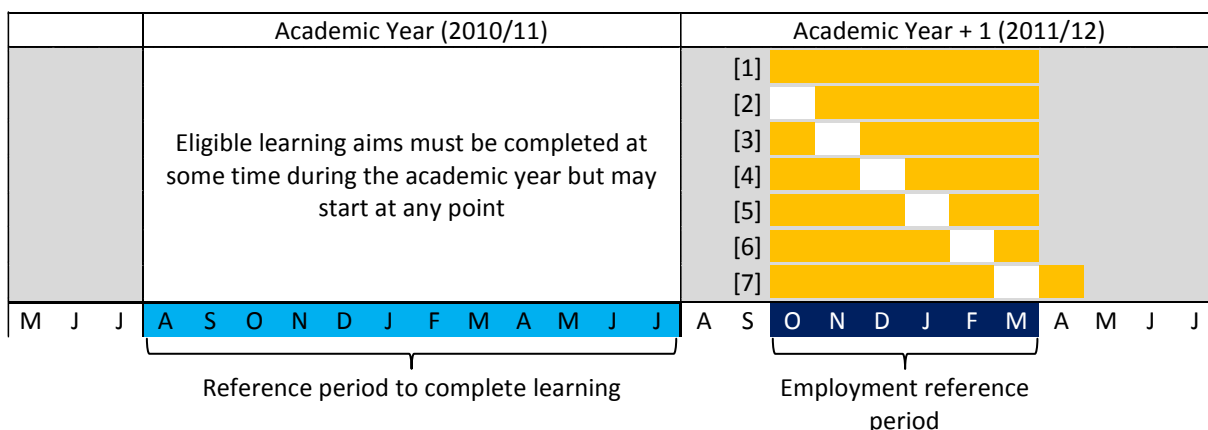
Destination measure – sustained employment

7. The ‘sustained employment’ measure aims to count the proportion of adult learners in sustained employment following the completion of their course. Employment destinations are produced by matching ILR data to HMRC tax records (further details are provided later).

8. The definition of sustained employment is consistent with the definition used for 16-19 accountability. This looks at employment activity in the six month October to March period following the end of the academic year in which the learning aim took place. For 2010/11 completers to be counted as in sustained employment

- A learner must be in paid employment in five out of the six months between October 2011 and March 2012.
- A learner needs to be in paid employment for at least one day in a month for that month to be counted.
- If a learner is employed in the five months between October 2011 and February 2012, but not in March 2012, then they must also be employed in April 2012.

Figure 1: The seven possible scenarios that would lead to a learner being classified as in sustained employment.



Key

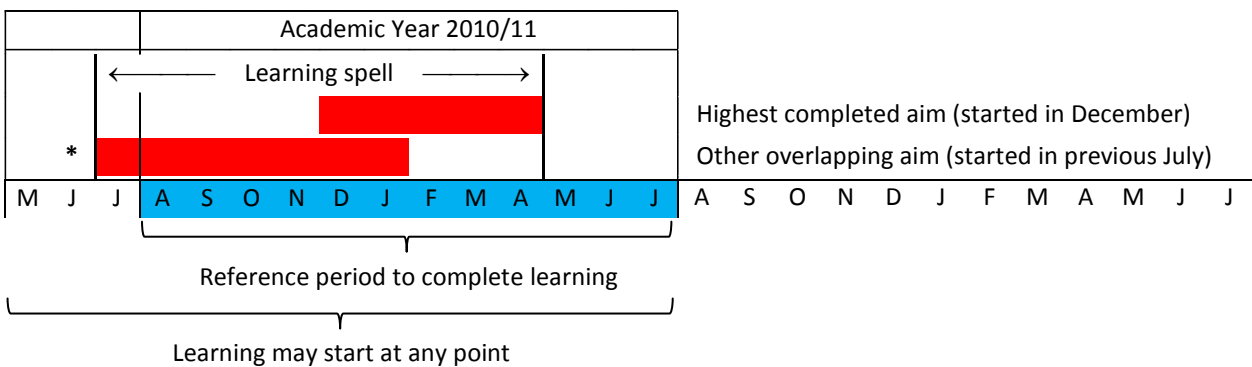
	In employment
	Not in employment
	Not within reference period

9. The measure allows for a one month pause in employment to reflect that there may be more volatility in initial employment post learning. Where the pause is in March, activity in April is checked to see if it is a short pause or a more substantial break.

Destination measure – sustained employment for benefit learners

10. The ‘sustained employment for benefit learners’ measure counts the same outcome as the sustained employment measure describe above, but for the sub group of learners that, prior to the start of their learning, were claiming benefits subject to more stringent labour market requirements.
11. Benefit status is determined using ILR data matched to DWP records, rather than through any fields on the ILR itself. The DWP data is seen as more robust and does not rely on the learner telling their training provider this information. Learners are included in this measure if, on the day before their training starts, they are claiming either
 - Job Seeker’s Allowance (JSA), or
 - Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG).
12. If a learner completes two eligible aims in the academic year 2010/11, and those aims overlap (so that the learner is studying two aims for at least some part of the year) then the learner’s benefit status is measured the day before the earlier start date. For example if a learner completed two eligible overlapping aims in the year, and the highest aim started on 1 December 2010 but the other started on 1 July 2010, then their benefit status would be measured prior to the earlier date, on 30 June 2010.

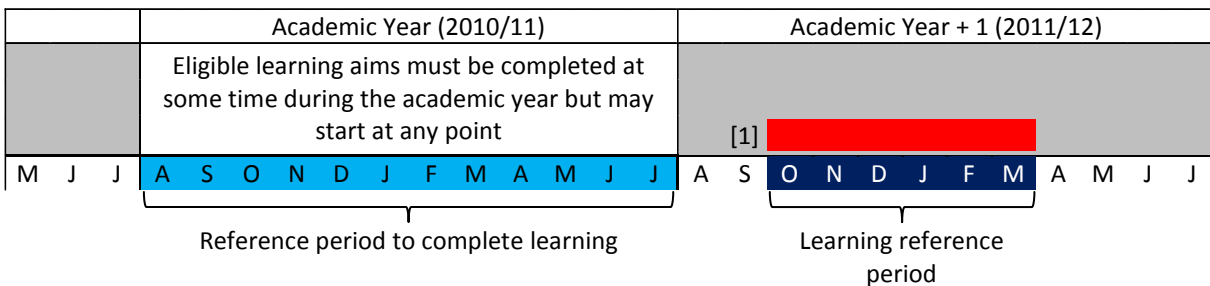
Figure 2: Example of when benefit status is measured for learners with multiple overlapping aims.



Destination measure – sustained learning

13. The ‘sustained learning’ measure aims to count the proportion of adult learners in sustained learning, regardless of economic activity, following the completion of their course. Learning destinations are produced by matching ILR data to ILR data (the following year) and Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) data (further details are provided later).
14. The definition of sustained learning is consistent with the definition used for 16-19 accountability. This looks at learning activity in the six month October to March period following the end of the academic year in which the learning aim took place. For 2010/11 completers to be counted as in sustained learning
 - A learner must be in training (either FE or HE) in each of the six months between October 2011 and March 2012.
 - A learner needs to be in learning for at least one day in a month for that month to be counted.

Figure 3: The single scenario that would lead to a learner being classified as in sustained learning.



Key

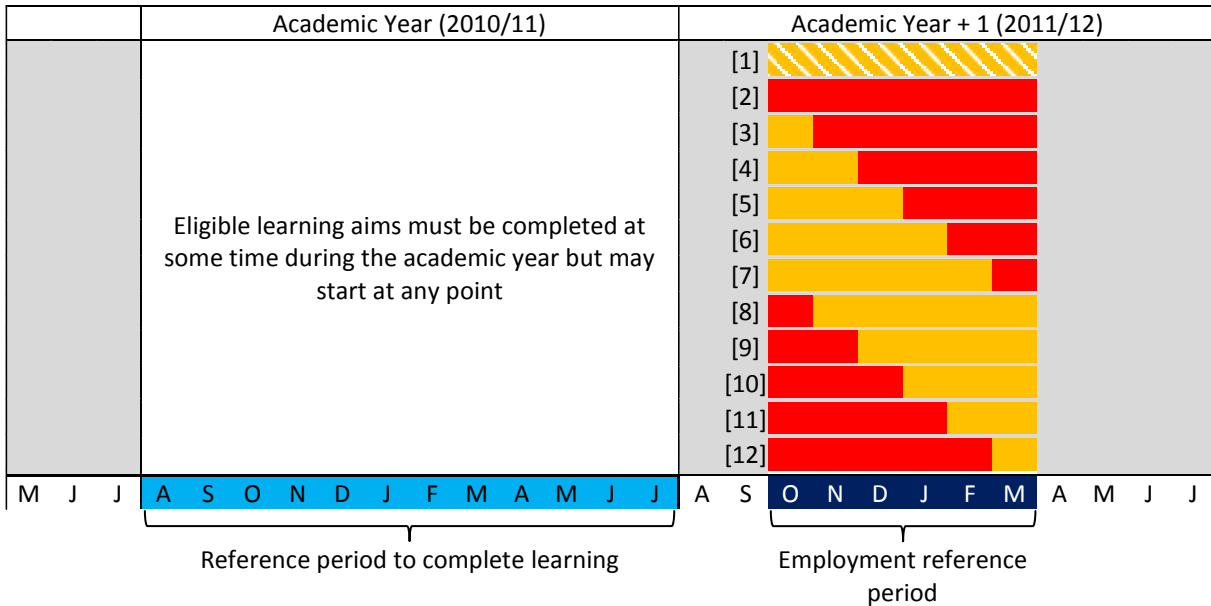
- In learning
- Not in learning
- Not within reference period

Destination measure – sustained positive destination

15. The ‘sustained positive destination’ measure aims to count the proportion of adult learners with a sustained positive outcome, either into learning or employment (or both). For 2010/11 completers to be counted as having a sustained positive destination, a learner must either
 - Have a sustained positive employment outcome, or
 - Have a sustained positive learning outcome, or
 - Be engaged in either learning (FE or HE) or paid employment in each of the six months between October 2011 and March 2012

16. Under the final scenario, learners may only ‘switch’ between learning and employment once. For example, if they are in learning for 2 months, then employment for 4 months they are counted as having a sustained positive destination. However if they are in learning for 2 months, then employment for 2 months, then learning 2 months, they are not counted as having a sustained positive destination.

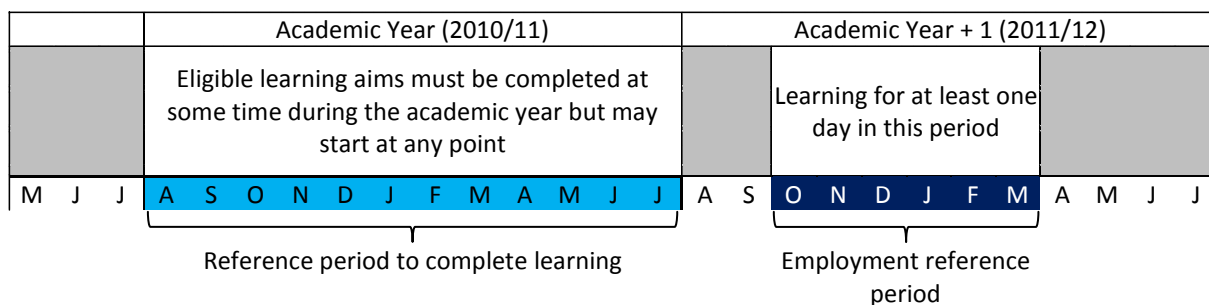
Figure 4: The twelve possible scenarios that would lead to a learner being classified as having a sustained positive destination



- Key**
- Has a positive employment outcome (as per Figure X above)
 - In learning
 - In employment
 - Not in learning or employment
 - Not in reference period

Destination measure – learning (non-sustained)

17. The ‘learning’ measure aims to count the proportion of adult learners who are in any learning, regardless of economic activity, following the completion of their course. This uses the same data sources and reference period as the sustained learning measure, but to be counted as in learning
- A learner must be in learning (either in Further Education or Higher Education) in any of the six months between October 2011 and March 2012.
 - A learner only needs to be in learning for a single day in a month for the learning to be counted.

Figure 5: The scenarios that would lead to a learner being classified as in learning.**Key**

- In learning
- Not in learning
- Not within reference period

Destination measure – positive destination (non-sustained)

18. The 'positive destination' measure aims to count the proportion of adult learners with a sustained positive outcome, either into learning or sustained employment. For 2010/11 completers to be counted as having a positive destination, a learner must
- Have a sustained positive employment outcome, or
 - Have a positive learning outcome (does not need to be sustained).

Progression measure

19. The progression measure is calculated using data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) matched with the ILR and HESA data. Currently this data only covers learners up to the age of 20. This has been used to produce an indicative measure to support the consultation, whilst work continues to develop the measure using the Personal Learning Record (PLR) which, as that data matures, will ultimately allow the measure to cover older ages. The measure compares the level of the aim that has been completed against the learner's entire learning history up to the start of the academic year measured, i.e. up to the end of July 2010.

In scope learners

20. The learners in scope for the progression measure are a subgroup of the learners in the destination measures. In addition to the selection rules described above, the learners must also
- Be of academic age 19 or 20¹, i.e. aged 19 or 20 on 31 August 2010.
 - Have achieved a Full Level 2 or Full Level 3 qualification in 2010/11.

¹ This measure is intended to cover the 19-24 age group, so this age restriction will change as the data mature to allow for older ages.

Definition of measure

21. Out of those achieving a Full Level 2 qualification, the measure shows the proportion achieving it for the first time. Similarly, out of those achieving a Full Level 3 qualification, the measure shows the proportion achieving it for the first time.
22. A Full Level 2 qualification is defined as a vocational qualification equivalent to an NVQ at Level 2, or academic qualifications that combined are equivalent to an NVQ at Level 2.
23. A Full Level 3 qualification is defined as a vocational qualification equivalent to an NVQ at Level 3, or academic qualifications that combined are equivalent to an NVQ at Level 3.

Disclosure

24. Outcomes are only published where data are available for at least 100 learners.
25. For all data, totals are rounded to the nearest 100 learners and percentages are rounded and reported to the nearest percentage point.
26. Where the rate for a destination is between 0% and 4% it is shown as 0-4%, and where the rate is between 96% and 100% it is shown as 96-100%. Applying a range at the top and bottom prevents disclosing information where all learners have the same outcome, e.g. if all learners move into employment the published figure will read 0-4%.

Medians and ranges

27. The median is calculated by ranking all providers' destination rates and taking the value at which half of providers fall above and half fall below. Providers are only included in the ranking where they have a published rate for a particular breakdown. If there is an even number of providers, then a simple average of the two central values is used.
28. In addition to the median, upper and lower quintiles are also shown. Twenty per cent of providers will have a destination rate of at least the value shown for the upper quintile. Twenty per cent of providers will have a destination rate of at most the value shown for the lower quintile. As with the median, depending on the number of providers, either a single rate or a simple average of two values will be used to calculate the upper and lower quintiles.
29. Medians and quintiles are only calculated where at least 20 providers have a published destination rate for a particular breakdown.

Matching process

Employment destinations and benefit learners

30. The employment destinations have been produced using a matched dataset of person level administrative data sources from BIS, DWP and HMRC. The 2010/11 completers from the ILR are matched to DWP benefit records, and HMRC P45 and P14 income tax returns using a mixture of National Insurance Number and matching on other personal details. The matching algorithm relies on a number of fields being accurately populated across both datasets and additionally, not all learners will necessarily have any record of employment or benefits for legitimate reasons, so the match rate will never reach 100%. For the learners covered in this data there is a very high match rate of 86%, and for apprenticeships this increases to 96%.
31. Once the match is established, the next step is to merge the different data files (employment, benefits, and learners) on the basis of the person level record linkage defined by the matching. The DWP and HMRC datasets provide a record of those receiving benefits and those paying tax through the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system respectively. Processing rules are then applied to transform the data into useable information on employment and benefit receipt to support all analysis. The coverage of the different datasets is set out further below.

Learning destinations

32. The learning destinations have been produced using a combination of two matched datasets. First, 2010/11 completers from the ILR data are matched to ILR data for 2011/12 to observe FE learning outcomes across that academic year. The matching is carried out by the Learning Records Service, part of the Skills Funding Agency, using a trusted process. Initially learners are matched using their Unique Learner Number, and then further matches are made by matching on five personal characteristics: postcode, date of birth, gender, surname and first name.
33. The same 2010/11 completers are also matched with Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) data for 2011/12 to observe HE learning outcomes. The matching is again carried out by the Learning Records Service and uses the same learner characteristics as described above. Together with the FE data, this is then used to measure learning outcomes in the following academic year.

Data sources

Benefit Data

34. Benefit data are taken from the underlying DWP payments systems and are supplemented by the information entered by Jobcentre advisers. The data therefore captures basic information accurately, but non-compulsory fields in either the labour market system or the payment system may be incomplete. Due to the size and technical complexity, these systems are not accessed directly, but at regular intervals scans are taken that build up a longitudinal picture from repeated snapshots of the data.

35. Start dates are entered on to the system and are accurate dates of benefit payment, thus provide certain timing and duration of a benefit claim. However, while Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) dates have very few discrepancies, due to the way the data is scanned the end dates recorded for other benefits may diverge to some extent from the events they are recording. The potential discrepancy varies from up to two weeks for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) to up to six weeks for Incapacity Benefit (IB).

Employment Data

36. The employment and earnings administrative dataset largely covers those who pay tax through PAYE through employer submission of P45 and P14. The core purpose of this process is to collect tax from those who are eligible to pay it through this mechanism. As such there is not complete coverage due to the taxation system. Employers are not required to supply information to HMRC for individuals who earn below the tax threshold, although for large employers these individuals are thought to be included due to methods of data transfer.
37. In addition any earnings recorded through self-assessment will not be in the data. The lack of self-assessment data means that the self-employed will not be in the data and the earnings of the highest paid are likely to be underestimated as they are most likely to have additional earnings recorded through self-assessment.
38. The data are primarily collected for the purposes of collecting taxes, so business rules have been applied to improve the quality of any suspect employment records to further enhance the data. This makes use of algorithms developed by researchers, and uses the same processes as documented in the research by Buscha and Urwin (2013)².

² [Estimating the labour market returns from qualifications gained in English further education using the Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\)](#), Franz Buscha and Peter Urwin

Individualised Learner Record data

39. The Skills Funding Agency requirements for personal data vary by the type of provision provided. For work based learning National Insurance Number is recorded for more than 90% of learners compared to around 20% for Education and Training. Other personal details fields have high completion rates although there is some use of defaults where information is not known and particular groups such as offender learners have information withheld.
40. The dates of learning can be assumed accurate to within a week. Key data fields are tied to funding therefore there is a strong incentive for providers to ensure the information returned is accurate.
41. As the data sharing only covers Skills Funding Agency funded learning it does not include learning undertaken outside of England and excludes learning funded through the Higher Education route.

Time lags

42. All data used in this process are drawn from administrative sources, which take time to process and collate. Therefore there are time lags between the reference period and availability of the dataset for analysis.
 - **Benefit data** taken from the National Benefits Database contain lags in completeness. Additional clerical claims, appeals and other complex situations add to the changes in later versions of the database for certain benefits. This retrospection in the data means initial records appear after three months while the timescale for complete data is approximately six months.
 - **Employment data** are matched to DWP data on a regular basis. There are cleaning rules applied to the data, which identify old records when updated with new information. As new information can come through about a job after it has ended this is a source of constant change, although the data is considered complete after approximately six months.
 - **Earnings data** is less timely than employment data, and in the past it has taken up to fifteen months after the end of the tax year for the data to be considered complete. HMRC started to implement Real Time Information (RTI) in April 2013 which will provide much more frequent feeds of employment and earnings data and should significantly improve the timeliness of the source earnings data.
 - **Individualised Learner Record data** is collated from returns by colleges with the provisional data collected to date generally published on a quarterly basis. Returns are not generally complete until up to six months after the end of the academic year, which runs from 1st August to 31st July.
 - **Higher Education Statistics Authority data** are collated from returns by institutions and data for the full academic year are available approximately six months after the end of the academic year.

Prior attainment data

43. It is intended that the progression measure will be calculated using data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) merged into the Personal Learning Record (PLR). Whilst work continues to develop the measure using that source, the measures for this publication have been created using NPD data matched with ILR, HESA and awarding body data. This is the same source that DfE use to produce statistics on Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19. A link to the latest version of that publication is given below.

Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-19-in-2013>

How do these compare against other numbers?

FE choices

44. FE Choices provides information on learner destinations which is available through the dedicated website <http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>. Data is collected through the Learner Destinations Survey and the most recent data showing the destinations of 2010/11 completers was published in May 2014. The table below outlines the key differences between the destination measures and FE Choices.

Figure 6: Differences between the destination measures and FE Choices.

Area	FE Choices	Destination Measures
Learners covered	19+ Skills 19+ Apprenticeships 16-18 Apprenticeships 16-18 EFA funded work place learning	19+ Skills 19+ Apprenticeships
Data sources	Learner Destination Survey and data matching for learning rates	Administrative datasets
Reference periods	Academic year following completion	Between October and March in the academic year following completion
Learning rate	Any learning at the same or higher level	Sustained learning at any level (i.e. covers all six months between October and March)
Employment rate	Remained in employment/self-employment with improved job security or enhanced career prospects; or Entered employment/self-employment having been in learning prior to the completion year (where the completion year's learning had a positive impact) Entered employment/self-employment having been outside the labour market prior to the completion year.	In employment in five out of six months between October and March

45. A key difference to FE choices is the wider coverage of the administrative data used, and the ability to show outcomes for far more providers and at a greater level of detail. The differences in the learners covered, reference period, and how learning and employment rates are counted means that whilst the headline positive destination rates are broadly similar for many providers, there are still some differences.
46. The sustained employment measure does not require employment to be new, or for job security or career prospects to have improved, so generally leads to higher employment rates than in FE Choices. The sustained learning rate is higher for some learners as there is no requirement for learning to be at a higher level than previously achieved for the sustained learning measure. However, the overall rate tends to be lower due to the strict requirement for learning across 6 months. Additionally any learning not recorded through ILR or HESA data would not be counted.

Attainment at 19 statistics

47. The Department for Education (DfE) publish statistics on attainment at age 19, which show the proportion of learners that have achieved a Full Level 2 and Full Level 3 at each age, up to the age of 19. The dataset that underpins these statistics is the same source that is used to calculate the progression measure in this publication, therefore there is a lot of similarity between these figures. However the attainment and progression measures count learners from a different perspective.
48. The attainment at 19 statistics are a cumulative count for the cohort leaving school, and show the proportion of all school leavers that have achieved a Full Level qualification at age 19. This differs to the progression measure which looks at the learners achieving in a particular academic year, and measures if they had previously achieved qualifications at that level.

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