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Guidance

Risk assessment methodology: good and outstanding further education and skills providers

Updated 4 October 2022

Applies to England

This is the risk assessment process that Ofsted uses to assist in scheduling full and short inspections of good further education and skills (FES) providers and to help identify concerns about performance at outstanding FES providers.

Introduction

We use risk assessment to ensure that our approach to inspection is proportionate and to focus our efforts where they can have the greatest impact. We also use risk assessment to determine whether an inspection of a good provider should take place earlier or later than when an inspection is normally due. Further information on when inspection is likely to take place is set out in the [inspection handbook](#).

Risk assessment process

Risk assessment has 2 stages:

- stage 1 involves an assessment of each FES provider based on analysis of published and non-published data
- stage 2 involves a more in-depth desk-based review of a wider range of available information

Stage 1: analysis of published and non-published performance data

Several measures of a provider's performance, including that of any subcontractors, are included in the risk-assessment process. This includes:

- achievement-rate data
- value-added score
- retention-rate data

The most recent data and any trends over time are factored in.

The most appropriate qualifications and measures for each provider are agreed with policy colleagues, and their importance can vary depending on provider type.

The risk assessment involves creating a risk score for each provider based on all applicable measures.

Additional risk information

Additional information is incorporated into the risk assessment process and taken account of in making decisions.

The information, based on historic data, includes:

- views of learners and employers, gathered through online questionnaires
- funding agency information, including any interventions
- findings from monitoring visits
- the size and complexity of the provider, including the number and range of provision types
- any complaints about provision
- local intelligence such as changes to leaders or structures
- the geographical spread of education or training centres

Stage 2: desk-based review

Senior His Majesty's Inspectors within each region review the information provided by stage 1 of the risk assessment process. They also make use of regional intelligence to support the risk assessment.

The findings from both stages of the risk assessment are then considered by the data and policy teams, to finalise the selection of providers to receive a risk-based inspection in the following academic year.

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