TEF Year Four metrics and contextual data

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Purpose

1. This document accompanies the publication of the metrics and contextual data produced for the purposes of assessment in the Year Four exercise of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). It explains the context and use of the data, which has been published as a series of open data resources at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-data/get-the-data/.

Related publications

2. This document supplements and should be read alongside the following documents.

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework specification

www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-excellence-and-student-outcomes-framework-specification

TEF Year Four procedural guidance

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/teaching-excellence-and-student-outcomes-framework-year-four-procedural-guidance/

TEF Year Four further technical information

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-year-four/further-technical-information/

Pre-release access

3. There has been no pre-release access to the TEF Year Four metrics and contextual data 24 hours before release. To help quality assure the data and make sure that it is accurate and reliable, higher education providers received a copy of their own data on 22 October 2018 to check and ask for any necessary data amendments. The data amendment process described in the TEF Year Four procedural guidance concluded on 19 December 2018.

Summary of published material

4. The metrics and contextual data that help to inform the assessment of English higher education providers in the TEF Year Four assessment process have been published as Official Statistics.

5. This publication includes all of the core TEF metrics and splits, the supplementary Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) metrics, the grade inflation data and the contextual TEF data, in the format in which they will be presented to TEF panel members and assessors. It includes all available TEF Year Four data for those English higher education providers that deliver undergraduate provision that is in scope for TEF[1] and either:

    - have been officially registered by the Office for Students

    - were previously eligible to receive funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England

    - are designated for student support by the Secretary of State.

    Data is included for any such provider, whether or not it meets the definition of 'suitable metrics'[2], and whether or not the provider intends to apply for a TEF Year Four award.

6. For providers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the publication strategy for TEF metrics is a devolved matter. Each of the devolved administrations has decided that Year Four TEF data will only be published for providers that choose to participate in TEF Year Four, reflecting the voluntary nature of participation. Accordingly, the Office for Students will publish data for TEF Year Four participants from the devolved administrations at 0930 on 24 January.

Revision schedule

7. The open data resources that have been published in this release will be updated at 0930 on 24 January 2019 to include data for TEF Year Four participants from the devolved administrations. As described in paragraph 6, data for these providers is not considered official statistics: it will be incorporated into these resources to ensure that the set of TEF Year Four metrics and contextual data remains easily accessible to interested users.

8. It is anticipated that a small number of English higher education providers that deliver undergraduate provision that is in scope for TEF and do not currently meet any of the criteria in paragraph 5 may be officially registered by the Office for Students between the date of this publication and 30 May 2019. In this event, the open data resources that have been published in this release will be updated to include these newly registered providers. The data resources will be updated following confirmation of registration, with revisions clearly marked.

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[1] Defined at paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the TEF specification.

[2] Defined at paragraph 3.23 of the TEF specification.

What is the TEF?

9. The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework is a national exercise that assesses excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how well they ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study.

10. TEF awards are judged by an independent panel of students, academics and other experts, looking at what UK universities and colleges are doing above and beyond meeting the national quality standards. The results can help those considering higher education choose where to apply.

11. Data plays a key role in informing TEF assessments. Official data is combined with written evidence from each university or college illustrating its performance and making a case for excellence, to enable the independent assessment panel to arrive at the final rating. If a provider does not have TEF metrics, it cannot receive a TEF rating but it can opt in to receive a provisional TEF award.

What data is used in TEF?

12. The TEF draws on nationally collected data to construct metrics which seek to measure the performance of higher education providers in the following areas:

   a. Metrics based on the National Student Survey (NSS) – the extent to which students indicate agreement with statements regarding their experiences of the teaching on their course, assessment and feedback, and academic support.

   b. Continuation – the proportion of students who continue their studies from year to year, as measured from individualised student data captured in the Higher Education Statistics Agency and Individualised Learner Record student records.

   c. Employment outcomes – what students do after they graduate, as measured by responses to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) and from the LEO dataset.

   d. Grade inflation – the profile of undergraduate degrees classified as 1sts, 2:1s, other degree classifications and unclassified degree awards in the most recent three years of available data, as compared with 10 years ago.

13. Through benchmarking, the TEF metrics take into account the entry qualifications and characteristics of students, and the subjects studied, at each university or college. These can be very different and TEF assessment is based on what each college or university achieves for its particular students within this context. The metrics are also considered alongside further contextual data, about student characteristics at the provider as well as the provider's location and provision.

Related statistics and data sources

14. The TEF draws on nationally collected data, which is used in the construction of related statistics and analysis, including the following.

Metrics, data and provider submissions used in TEF Year Two and TEF Year Three assessments

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-data/get-the-data/

Data and analysis about higher education students and providers published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency

www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis

Data and analysis about higher education students and providers published by the Office for Students

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/

National Student Survey results data

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/get-the-nss-data/

UK Performance Indicators published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency

www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators

Higher education graduate employment and earnings data published by the Department for Education

www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-higher-education-graduate-employment-and-earnings

Analysis of degree classifications over time published by the Office for Students

www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/analysis-of-degree-classifications-over-time-changes-in-graduate-attainment/

Technical notes

15. The TEF Year Four metrics and contextual data make use of the concepts of majority mode of provision, suitable metrics and metric splits, each of which are defined in the TEF specification. Annex B of the TEF Year Four procedural guidance provides a full description of each metric. Field naming conventions and valid entries shown in the open data resources are described in the supplementary data definitions file, published alongside this document.

16. The TEF Year Four contextual data is based on headcount numbers of students in the standard higher education registration population per year (on average, between the 2014-15 and 2016-17 academic years). The standard higher education registration population is defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency at www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students#standard-registration-population.

17. All of the metrics data has been calculated on unrounded values. The data shown in the open data resources has subsequently been rounded to the nearest 4 decimal places.

18. Metrics are flagged and suppressed according to the criteria described in the TEF specification. Neutral metric flags are shown in the open data resources with the symbol '='. Suppression has been applied where metrics are not reportable. A metric may be not reportable if one of the following applies:

    a. There are no students in the denominator population (identified with 'N/A').

    b. There are fewer than 10 students in the denominator population (identified with 'N').

    c. The survey response rate is too low (identified with 'R'). For the NSS-based metrics, this is 50 per cent. For the DLHE-based metrics, this is 85 per cent of the target, which is equivalent to 68 per cent for full time students and 59.5 per cent for part time students.

    d. Insufficient data is available to form the benchmarks (identified with 'SUP'). Sufficient benchmarking data is at least 50 per cent coverage for each factor.

    e. Data protection requires us to suppress the metric to prevent disclosure (identified with 'DP').

19. The supplementary grade inflation metric will be considered for all providers using their own taught degree awarding powers (TDAPs) to award Level 6 or higher undergraduate degrees to students they taught and registered in the relevant time period. For many providers, the baseline year for this metric is 2008-09. Some providers that currently hold TDAPs have not used them for some or all of the years considered by the supplementary grade inflation metric: the year in which the provider first awarded qualifications with its TDAPs has been identified as its baseline. Changes in the profile of degree classifications awarded over time should be interpreted carefully for any provider with a baseline year more recent than 2014-15.

20. The open data resources show supplementary grade inflation metrics data for all those providers that currently hold TDAPs. Providers without TDAPs are not included in the dataset and have instead been listed separately as explicitly out of scope for this metric.

21. The Office for Students is committed to following the Code of Practice for the statistics it produces. Details can be found on the website of the UK Statistics Authority at www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/.