

Annex C: Sufficient data for TEF assessments

Introduction

1. Following our stage one consultation, we decided that we would only assess aspects within TEF for which a provider had sufficient indicator data for use in the assessment. However, we said that we would review the proposed data sufficiency requirements for the NSS indicators, with the aim of increasing the number of providers that could be rated for the student experience aspect. We have also reconsidered the sufficiency tests for the student outcome indicators, in the light of the proposed role of post-study indicators in assessing student outcomes.
2. We propose to take the same broad approach to testing data sufficiency as originally proposed, with some revisions.
3. The approach would involve testing whether an indicator:
 - a. Covers a substantial proportion of the provider's students.
 - b. Provides sufficiently strong statistical evidence to inform a judgement about performance.
4. We would then consider whether, for the aspect as a whole, there are enough indicators that meet these tests to inform a rating for the aspect.
5. The following paragraphs set out revised proposals for how we would determine whether these two tests are met.

Student experience

6. Having taken the decision to rate student experience only where a provider has sufficient NSS data, we have reflected on whether there is a way to design the tests that would allow more providers to be rated, while still ensuring that the data covers a substantial proportion of their students and provides a meaningful indication of performance. We have also taken account of the proposal to normally give half the weight to the NSS indicators when assessing the student experience aspect.
7. In terms of the coverage of the student experience indicators, our initial proposal was to consider indicators for modes of study that represented at least 35 per cent of the provider's students. If at least half of the provider's students in the relevant mode are on courses longer than one year, we proposed that the indicator had sufficient coverage to be used in assessment. We considered this to be the simplest test to give us a likely indication of whether the majority of the students in that mode are likely to be invited to complete the NSS.
8. We now propose to consider indicators where students who complete courses longer than one year in the relevant mode represent at least 25 per cent of everyone who completes at a provider. The advantage of this change is that providers where the great majority of students are in a single mode could be included, even if more than half of the students are on one-

year courses. It also makes the approach more consistent across providers with different proportions of students in different modes of study.

9. For example, if all of a provider's students are full-time, and 40 per cent of its students are on courses lasting longer than a year, this would be sufficient data using the proposed test. Previously this would not be treated as having sufficient data, despite a higher overall proportion of students likely to complete the NSS than some other providers that would have had sufficient data because of the way students were split across modes of study.
10. In terms of statistical confidence, we had proposed needing 90 per cent or higher statistical confidence that indicator performance is either materially above, in line with or materially below benchmark (or spans no more than two of these areas). We propose modifying this to use a lower threshold of 80 per cent. We consider that alongside the submissions and other evidence, this would still provide sufficient statistical confidence to inform the assessment. We would provide guidance to assessors on appropriate weighting of the data based on the strength of the evidence it presents.
11. In terms of the number of indicators that meet these tests, we are now proposing that, for at least one mode of study, we would need indicators for three or more of the six NSS themes.
12. These tests could only be applied to publishable indicators, so where the survey response rate is at least 50 per cent.
13. The coverage requirement, regarding courses lasting longer than a year, is to ensure that a substantial proportion of students will be eligible for the survey at some point during their course. Currently students on one-year courses are not eligible to take the NSS. We would use the latest year of size and shape data¹ to make this judgement, and use qualifiers rather than entrants because they are a better estimate of the population who will have taken the NSS. If for some reason a provider does not have any size and shape data relating to qualifiers but still has NSS data, we would determine whether they have sufficient data on a case-by-case basis.
14. Additionally, if we proceed with the proposal to allow further education colleges to opt in to having students on one-year courses included in the NSS, we would apply a different test to providers that choose to do this. For any provider that has opted to include its students on one-year courses in the NSS for two years prior to the assessment, we would waive the requirement relating to course length and test only if 25 per cent of students were in the relevant mode. In our view, we would need at least two years of data for one-year courses to have a clear view of its impact on the overall indicators and take it into account in a way that does not inadvertently advantage or disadvantage providers that choose to opt in to the survey for these courses.
15. We would review and revise the sufficiency tests for student experience once all one-year courses are included in the coverage of the NSS.

¹ Available at [Size and shape of provision data dashboard: Data dashboard - Office for Students](#).

Student outcomes

16. In stage one, we proposed that a provider would be treated as having sufficient data for the student outcomes aspect if it has indicators with sufficient coverage and statistical confidence for the continuation measure and at least one other measure. As we set out in paragraph 112, we are now proposing that a provider would need, for at least one mode, indicators for continuation, progression and one other of the post-study measures (use of skills, or earnings). As we explain in Proposal 14, we are now proposing the continuation and completion indicators should be reported separately for each mode and level of study.
17. To account for these proposals, we would revise the data sufficiency tests as follows. To have sufficient data to apply for a student outcomes rating, a provider's data would need to meet the tests below for at least one mode of study:
 - a. The indicators for continuation that provide sufficiently strong statistical evidence to inform a rating – when the indicators for each level of study within the mode are considered together – represent at least 33 per cent of the provider's students.
 - b. The indicators for progression and one other post-study measure represent at least 33 per cent of the provider's students within the scope of the measure (for example, for progression, students living in the UK) and provide sufficiently strong statistical evidence to inform a judgement about performance.
18. In both cases we would use the same statistical confidence test as for NSS indicators: that we have at least 80 per cent confidence that the performance is either materially above, in line with or materially below benchmark (or spans no more than two of these areas).
19. As with the original proposal, these tests could only be applied to publishable indicators, so for progression and use of skills only where the response rate to relevant survey questions is at least 30 per cent.
20. We originally proposed that indicators should represent at least 35 per cent of the provider's students, but we have identified a few providers where students are so evenly split across modes of study that no single mode has 35 per cent of students in it. We are therefore proposing to reduce the percentage of students required in a mode to 33 per cent. If we were to do this, we would still only consider indicators that represent roughly one third of a provider's students, so we do not view this as a substantive change to the original proposal. It could, however, potentially allow some providers to apply for a student outcomes rating that would not have been able to if we applied the original test.

Impact of proposed changes

21. The impact of these changes is that more providers would have sufficient data to be rated for the student experience aspect. Fewer providers would have sufficient data for student outcomes, but those that can apply for a student outcomes rating would have data about both study and post-study outcomes to inform the rating.
22. Previously we estimated that 260 providers would have sufficient NSS data for a **student experience** rating. Using the same dataset, this would increase to 285 using the revised definitions. However, as we explained in the stage one consultation, we will have another

year of NSS data available when we begin assessments and we expect statistical confidence in the overall indicators to increase as a result. We also propose to include one-year courses in the NSS. We estimate the combined effect of both of these things would be that up to 100 more providers could have sufficient data to be rated for student experience, so up to 385 in total, leaving around 40 that could not be rated.

23. Previously we estimated that 349 providers would have sufficient data to be assessed for **student outcomes**, and 27 would not. With the proposed changes, we estimate that 317 providers would have sufficient data, and 66 would not. In addition, some providers do not yet have any student outcomes data.
24. As set out in Proposal 2, we would consider the availability of data when scheduling providers for assessment, and we expect this would help to increase the number of providers with sufficient data and that could therefore apply for TEF ratings. For example, we would expect many of the providers that currently do not have sufficient student outcomes data to have sufficient data in future years.