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### Use of data in education QA assessment activity

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#### Executive Summary

This paper is intended to provide a factual account of developments to how we use data within our education quality assurance activities. We have developed our approach where sector and / or internal changes have required it, or where we have identified continuous improvements or best practice changes.

We have previously committed taking a summary paper to note to the Education and Training Committee (ETC), this is intended to provide assurance to ETC that the Education function remains able to deliver on data commitments, and make continuous improvement change at pace where required.

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Previous consideration	None.
Decision	None – this paper is to note
Next steps	Updates made to internal and external information
Strategic priority	Continually improve and innovate, develop insight and exert influence
Financial and resource implications	None
EDI impact	None
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# Use of data in education QA assessment activity

## Introduction

1. In our legacy quality assurance (QA) model, which was in place prior to September 2021, we did not routinely use structured data (internal / external) or intelligence from other organisations in our decision making.
2. One of the pillars of our current QA model is using data and intelligence to inform our regulatory decision making. Continuous improvement is built into the model, and there have been internally and externally-driven updates, changes, and improvements to sources of data, and how we use data through our assessments.
3. This paper presents our current position, where this position has developed due to internal and external changes. Nothing in these changes has changed our fundamental approach – the use of data to inform decision making remains a pillar of the QA model. The changes presented are required continuous improvement, to ensure we can still deliver our intentions linked to data.
4. Our approach functions as follows:
  - 4.1. We proactively source a range of key data points, which cover most HCPC-approved education providers
  - 4.2. Where data points are not available, providers can establish a regular supply of these data points.
  - 4.3. We use data when assessing providers or programmes through one of our operational processes (approvals, focused review, and performance review)
  - 4.4. Within these processes, data is not used as the final word, but as part of a quality picture – we ask providers to consider and reflect on data points in their returns to us.
  - 4.5. Outside of processes, when data points change, we can trigger interventions with providers where we consider it necessary to inform our view of the quality of a provider's provision

## Data

5. We have provided an updated external briefing document, which has integrated changes as noted through this section, as [appendix 1](#)
6. Use of teaching quality data
  - 6.1. Understanding teaching quality is important, to consider continued provider and programme alignment to our standards.
  - 6.2. We previously used Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) awards as one of our mandatory data points. When developing our model, we decided to use TEF as it is a 'national scheme... that aims to encourage higher education providers to

improve and deliver excellence in the areas that students care about the most: teaching, learning and student outcomes'<sup>1</sup>.

- 6.3. We recognised limitations with TEF awards, such as it only being mandatory for English Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), being institution-wide rather than subject specific, and with the currency of awards with existing awards being given from 2017-2019.
  - 6.4. Outside of our cyclical reviews of providers, we review mandatory data points, to consider if we need to investigate changes to data. All other data points that we use are renewed on a yearly basis, but TEF awards are given on longer cycles.
  - 6.5. New TEF awards are being given from September 2023. Although it is available on a voluntary basis, Northern Irish, Scottish, and Welsh providers have decided to not engage with TEF 2023.
  - 6.6. We decided to remove the TEF award as a mandatory data point from September 2023, for two main reasons. Firstly, there is no value in considering the TEF award on a yearly basis as awards do not change on a yearly basis. Secondly, we are cognisant to not disadvantage providers based on their HEI status or country.
  - 6.7. We will still consider teaching quality, including TEF award where it is available – we will continue to do this through our assessment activities against standards.
  - 6.8. More information about our use of teaching quality data can be found in our briefing [here](#).
7. National Student Survey overall satisfaction question (Q27)
- 7.1. In the previous version of the NSS, there was an 'overall satisfaction' question, which was used by many organisations as part of their understanding of the student view on education provision. Subject breakdowns of results are available in the public NSS data, and we produced an aggregated value for this question based on HCPC-related subjects at each institution.
  - 7.2. The Office for Students (OfS) decided to remove the summative overall satisfaction question for English providers for the 2023 survey. This means that only learners at Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh providers are now asked an overall satisfaction question, which has changed from the previous question.<sup>2</sup>
  - 7.3. The previous question was seen by many in the sector as reductive, as learners may have considered a range of things, some of which may have been outside of provider control, when answering the question. We needed to replace the previous data point due to its discontinuation in England, and used this change as an opportunity to develop a measure of learner experience which is based on answers to quality-related questions.
  - 7.4. NSS results are organised into seven 'themes':

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<sup>1</sup> [About the TEF - Office for Students](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Consultation on changes to the NSS - Responses and decisions \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](#), pages 17-22

1. The teaching on my course
2. Learning opportunities
3. Assessment and feedback
4. Academic support
5. Organisation and management
6. Learning resources
7. Student voice

7.5. We arrive at an overall result from response scores for each scale, using only results for HCPC-related subjects. We weight results based on the number of responses. This enables us to produce an overall result, and delve into the scale / subject level where required.

## 8. Consistency in interpretation

- 8.1. Previously, the Education and Training Committee (Panel) (ETP) have fed back on inconsistent interpretation of data through assessment activities.
- 8.2. We are clear that data should be used to form part of the quality picture, and to aid this (and reduce inconsistency), we have introduced norms with interpretation of data. These enable us to state with confidence where a data point is 'below', 'in line with' or 'above' a benchmark, and to be clear what this should mean in each case in terms of interpretation and action.

## 9. Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data supply

- 9.1. We currently pay for a regular supply of aggregated data from Jisc data consultancy. We are exploring becoming a 'public purpose customer' with Jisc, which would enable access to 'student level' (rather than aggregated) data.
- 9.2. This would enable us to undertake our own analysis of data, gaining further insight, and influence the data collection, which will improve the quality of the data. This requires further investment from the business to take to the next stage.

## 10. Establishing data supplies from providers not included in normal returns

- 10.1 Providers without a regular supply of data are capped at a two-year review period, where providers with a regular supply of data can extend this review period to a maximum of five years. Where they would like to, providers without a regular supply are able to establish a supply through our performance review process, but to date, no provider assessed has done this.
- 10.2 We are producing further advice and guidance to help providers understand our requirements in this area, and how this might apply to their provision. Our aim is that this guidance is available to help providers in performance review in the 2023-24 academic year.

## Intelligence

11. We actively seek intelligence from a range of sources, including professional bodies and commissioning organisations. We also have an open concerns mechanism, which can be used by any individual when they have concerns about education and training provision. The following sections are not an exhaustive list of organisations, individuals, or mechanisms, but rather a summary of updates from previous initiatives, developments, or changes in our approach in the last 12 months.

### 12. Professional bodies

#### Forum

- 12.1. Most professional bodies are members of our Education Forum. When developing the current model, we used this groups to consult on proposals, and when the model went live in September 2021, we used it to help facilitate change.
- 12.2. In June 2023, we moved this group to a more permanent information sharing mechanism. We agreed a terms of reference, which defined the aim of the group to “Share information to support and assure high quality education and training in the HCPC-regulated professions”. We have also worked internally to ensure that the Education Forum complements other professional body forums run by the HCPC.

#### 1-2-1 relationships

- 12.3. We have established a framework for 1-2-1 professional body interactions. Each professional body has nominated a key contact, and we have members of the team nominated as leads for each professional body. We meet most professional bodies 1-2-1 once every six months, where we share our current Education key messages, and discuss information relevant to education and training in the specific profession.

#### Information sharing arrangements

- 12.4. We have an aspiration to share assessment-level information with professional bodies, which will help both parties to understand provider and programme level information to inform quality assurance judgements.
- 12.5. We have established a mechanism to establish information sharing arrangements with professional bodies, and have integrated process points to share this information. Currently, we have established a formal arrangement with one professional body, and several other professional bodies are interested to develop this.

### 13. Information sharing with other bodies

#### Other professional regulators

- 13.1. We have similar standards, and share common approaches to many of the other health regulators, and work with many of the same education providers.

Therefore, it is important to be aware of the assessments of other regulators, and we have established a group to explore what information sharing might look like. The HCPC and NMC are jointly chairing this group, and we hope to develop arrangements in the next academic year.

#### NHS England (NHSE) (formerly Health Education England (HEE)) regional information sharing

- 13.2. We have established good relationships with regional NHSE offices, who are involved with the quality of education within regions.
- 13.3. Each region works slightly differently to apply the same quality code, so we are aiming to establish information sharing norms with the regional offices, with a view to inform our work as consistently as possible. This work has stalled with the merger of HEE and NHSE, but we will continue to pick this up to deliver if this remains necessary and achievable with changed NHSE structures.

#### 14. Year in registration survey

- 14.1. We have been running a survey to capture the experience of graduates / those in practice since 2021. This is particularly useful to inform our education quality assurance work, but also provides insight for the sector, and informs focus for our Professionalism and Upstream Regulation, and Policy and Standards teams.
- 14.2. Although we deliver some insight<sup>3</sup> from these surveys, response rates are lower than we would like. We ran the third iteration of this survey in the summer of 2023, will analyse results for September or October, and present them through relevant governance mechanisms. As part of the wrap up piece will consider whether we should make changes to how we capture this information.

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<sup>3</sup> [Informing our work with the graduate experience | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/informing-our-work-with-the-graduate-experience)

## Appendix 1 – External briefing re our use of external data sources

This document explains how we source external data used through our quality assurance work, and how data points and benchmarks are arrived at.

### **How we use data**

Using data and intelligence as a key part of our quality assurance model allows us to be:

- Proactive – where data and intelligence identifies risks, we can trigger some form of engagement with providers
- Risk-based – have an evidence-based understanding of risks for providers
- Proportionate – use risk profiling to undertake bespoke and right touch regulatory interventions

We do not make regulatory decisions using solely data we produce or receive. Data and intelligence is used to form part of a quality picture of education providers / programmes.

When supplying data to providers, we ask them to consider and reflect on the data. This might include noting how they have used a disappointing data point as catalyst for change, or challenging us if they are unclear how data points were arrived at, and / or if data points are out of date.

### **Values used**

We started using external data in our processes from the 2021-22 academic year. When integrating data into our model, we accepted that some data is better than no data, and worked with the bodies which would give us most coverage across providers. We have therefore used some data delivered through a direct supply, and some which is publicly available.

### **Benchmarks**

Benchmarking allows significant differences in performance to be highlighted, whilst considering that certain learner characteristics can impact on data points. We use benchmarking from relevant organisations as a comparison point when considering data.

## Data points explained

Data point	Source	How provider level values are arrived at	How benchmarks are arrived at	Recognised limitations of the data	Future development
<a href="#">Percentage not continuing</a> <a href="#">Percentage in employment / further study</a>	<a href="#">Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)</a> data, via Jisc data consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student level data aggregated at the provider level</li> <li>• Students included where the <a href="#">HESA 'course title' field</a> contains or references HCPC professional titles / parts of the Register (eg 'Hearing Aid Audiology', 'Paramedic', 'Podiatry')</li> <li>• This data is suppressed (ie not provided) when a percentage cannot be derived due to <a href="#">HESA's rounding and suppression strategy</a></li> </ul>	Unweighted mean of the education provider level data points provided through the supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supply relies on programme title, which may include non-HCPC-approved provision / exclude HCPC-approved provision</li> <li>• Data is provided to Odp due to HESA restrictions on supply</li> <li>• The benchmark used is sector-wide (based on HCPC professions), so does not take provider learner profile into account</li> <li>• Percentage in employment / further study is no longer publicly produced at a provider level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish direct data supply from Jisc as a 'public purpose customer'</li> <li>• We will be able to inform the quality of the data, particularly to ensure programmes are correctly tagged with HCPC as a regulatory body</li> </ul>



National Student Survey (NSS)	Office for Students (OfS) – public data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall results for each of the seven themes<sup>4</sup>, using only HCPC-related subjects (using the <a href="#">Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH)</a> level 3) aggregated at the provider level</li> <li>• Subject areas used are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Biomedical sciences (non-specific) (CAH02-05-03)</li> <li>○ Counselling, psychotherapy and occupational therapy (CAH02-06-07)</li> <li>○ Healthcare science (non-specific) (CAH02-05-02)</li> <li>○ Medical sciences (non-specific) (CAH01-01-01)</li> <li>○ Nutrition and dietetics (CAH02-06-02)</li> <li>○ Physiotherapy (CAH02-06-05)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Values from each subject weighted to the number of responses to give an overall value for subjects related to HCPC professions</li> <li>• Where no subject level data is available, the <a href="#">provider level data</a> for taught programmes is used</li> </ul>	Weighted mean of the education provider level data points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSS only applies to undergraduate provision at higher education institutions</li> <li>• Not all programmes within the subject areas will be HCPC-approved</li> <li>• Some HCPC-approved programmes will be outside of the subject areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to include data from the <a href="#">Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)</a></li> </ul>
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<sup>4</sup> 1. The teaching on my course, 2. Learning opportunities, 3. Assessment and feedback, 4. Academic support, 5. Organisation and management, 6. Learning resources, 7. Student voice

<a href="#">Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award</a>	Office for Students (OfS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most recent provider-level TEF award</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only mandatory for English institutions where <a href="#">condition B6</a> of the regulatory framework applies<sup>5</sup></li> <li>Some non-English providers engaged with legacy TEF, but Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh providers have not engaged with the most recent exercise (2023)</li> </ul>	
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<sup>5</sup> We are clear that we do not disadvantage providers who are not mandated to have a TEF award – see our [position statement](#) for further information