Measures of Success and Framework for Excellence – Frequently Asked Questions for Schools with Sixth Forms November 2006

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the measures of success and Framework for Excellence. For further information please go to the website at: www.lsc.gov.uk/ffe

Framework for Excellence is a small, standard set of performance indicators which is being developed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), in consultation with providers, inspectorates and other stakeholders. Framework for Excellence builds on and includes the measures of success. The Framework for Excellence will consist of key performance indicators and is currently planned to be piloted in autumn 2007.

Framework for Excellence will not apply to school sixth forms. Three components of the Measures of Success – value added, distance travelled and qualification success rates, will apply to schools with sixth forms.

1. **Which of the measures of success will apply to me?**

   - Value added (VA)
   - Distance travelled (DT)
   - Qualification success rates (QSR).

2. **What is the timescale of these measures?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA and DT</td>
<td>March 2006 – September 2007</td>
<td>Piloting</td>
<td>Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions on value added and distance travelled measures

3. What are the value added and distance travelled measures and what information will they show?

Value added (VA) and distance travelled (DT) measures aim to show the progress of individual students based on their prior attainment up to the end of Key Stage 4, and compare the results to national norms.

4. What counts as prior attainment?

The starting point for both the VA and DT calculations is the average prior attainment of the student, for Level 2 qualifications, at age 15 or 16.

5. Will fails be included in the value added and distance travelled measures?

Some qualifications will be calculated including fails and some will be calculated excluding fails. More detail is available in the online document Treatment of fails in the calculation of Value Added and Distance Travelled for the Learner Achievement Tracker.

6. What qualifications are included in value added and distance travelled measures?

The scope of the qualifications included in the value added (VA) measure is different to that in the distance travelled (DT) measure. The VA measure includes graded level 3 qualifications; while the DT measure records other approved qualifications at level 1 and 2, as well as pass/fail level 3 qualifications, like National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), key skills and Apprenticeships.

VA data can be used as a predictive tool for achievement of individual students based on their prior attainment. The DT data may be used to predict the achievement of a group of students.

7. Where does the data for the value added and distance travelled calculations come from?

The data used to calculate the value added (VA) measure is obtained directly from awarding bodies. Attainment data for post-16 qualifications is subsequently matched to attainment information on pre-16 qualifications, using
forename, surname, date of birth and gender. The process for sourcing the data for the distance travelled (DT) measure is the same as for the VA measure, with the addition of individualised learner record (ILR) data.

8. **Which of my students are included in value added and distance travelled measures?**

   VA and DT measures will mainly include learners following programmes for approved qualifications, who were aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August at the beginning of the year in which they completed their post-16 qualification.

9. **How large does a group/class have to be to generate a reliable value added or distance travelled score?**

   Groups or classes need to consist of more than four students for a value added or distance travelled score to be calculated.

10. **Why are the Qualification and Curriculum Authority points used to measure value added rather than Universities & Colleges Admissions Service or Universal Marking Scheme points?**

    Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) points cover a wider range of qualifications than Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and Universal Marking Scheme (UMS). Further information on the range of qualifications covered by QCA points can be found on the QCA website following the link: http://www.qca.org.uk/15.html.

    UMS data is not currently available for us to use in the measures and to use it would involve imposing an additional data collection burden on providers.

11. **How will the value added and distance travelled measures be piloted?**

    Both measures are being piloted by the four partners - Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and Department for Education and Skills (DfES), from March 2006.

    During the pilot and evaluation period:
the LSC will pilot the use of the value added and distance travelled measures by all relevant LSC-funded providers in planning, self-assessment and discussions of three-year development plans from March 2006 to Autumn 2007.

Ofsted will pilot the use of value added (VA) and distance travelled (DT) in planning inspections and making inspection assessments over a two-year period. In the second year of the pilot, inspectors will also review the progress being made by providers in using the measures for self-assessment and evaluation. During the pilot, inspectors will not base judgements solely on VA and DT data, but will compare the data within the Learner Achievement Tracker with evidence from other sources.

ALI will pilot the use of DT in planning inspections and during inspections for work based learning (WBL) providers between March 2006 and autumn 2007.

The DfES will be piloting the use of a VA measure in the Achievement and Attainment Tables (AAT) in 2007, with a view to rolling out nationally in the 2008 tables.

12. **What is the Learner Achievement Tracker?**

The Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) is software, which shows value added (VA) and distance travelled (DT) data. It will cover a wide range of learners and compare providers’ performance with the national norm for all learners taking that particular subject or qualification.

The LAT has been tested by providers from across the sector and key stakeholders.

13. **How does the Learner Achievement Tracker differ from existing proprietary systems?**

During the development of the methodology used in the value added (VA) and distance travelled (DT), account was taken of existing systems which calculate VA for students on graded qualifications. The most well-known of these systems are the A Level Information System (ALIS) and the A Level Performance System (ALPS). The VA and DT measures use a different methodology from these systems, called multi-level modelling (MLM). The use of MLM provides the following advantages:

- it provides a flexible and efficient means of data calculation
- it is robust in terms of dealing with very small national cohorts of learners, so that more institutions can be included in the national measure.
- there is clear information about how providers are performing with learners at different levels of prior attainment.
- the use of MLM in pre-16 value added calculations is well established.

The Learner Achievement Tracker will:

- be provided free of charge to all LSC-funded providers and Local Authorities.
- cover a wider range of learners, including vocational qualifications, and compare providers’ performance with the national sample of all learners taking that particular subject or qualification.
- be used by the four partners and other stakeholders in making assessments of provider performance.

14. **Who will be able to see the Learner Achievement Tracker outputs in my school?**

Your data will be available to you through the Provider Gateway, a secure internet website, available following the link: [https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk](https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk). A user approver has been designated to manage the access to the Provider Gateway in your school. Also, a username and password has been sent to your user approver to access the system. And you will only have access to information about your own school.

Local Authorities (LA), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and your local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) also have access to the Provider Gateway. Your Local Authority will be able to access pdf reports for all the schools in their area.

15. **Can I download data from the Learner Achievement Tracker?**

Yes, you will be able to download your own data from the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) into an Excel file via the Provider Gateway.
Questions on qualification success rates

16. What is the qualification success rates measure?

Qualification success rates (QSR) are the number of qualifications achieved as a proportion of the total number of qualifications studied. This measure has been used by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and inspectorate for many years.

17. When will schools get qualification success rates data?

The Learning and Skills Council currently publishes success rates for Further Education and work-based learning provision. The LSC’s calculation work on qualification success rates data for schools will commence once the achievement data is received following the end of the 2006/07 school year. It is expected to lead to publication in Spring 2008.