

Suppressed data in totals and benchmark calculations

PITG 13/01

Issue

1. Inclusion of suppressed data in totals and benchmarks.

Recommendation

2. Where data for an institution is suppressed they should be removed from totals and benchmark calculations.

Discussion

3. Currently where institutions identify an issue with their data prior to publication the individual row in the table is removed but no adjustment is made to the sector figures or the calculation of benchmarks. This treatment not only means that the totals on the table are inconsistent with the data shown in the table but also that the benchmarks calculated for institutions who have their data shown are based on data that are known to be flawed.

4. There is an argument that the impact of a single institution's data being suppressed on the benchmark for another institution is likely to be minimal and in the vast majority of cases this is almost certainly true. However, for specialist institutions and indicators not based on young first degree students where the populations are concentrated in a smaller number of institutions this argument may not always hold. This has been shown to be the case in HEFCE's publication of Rates of qualification from research degrees where the number and nature of the suppressed institutions has had an impact on individual benchmarks and the sector figures. Therefore, there are both theoretical and practical reasons why including data for suppressed institutions in the benchmarks and totals is not desirable.

Recommendation: Where data for an institution is suppressed they should be removed from totals and benchmark calculations.

Further information

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