

Terms of reference for the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG)

1. The Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) was established in 1998, and is made up of representatives of the funding bodies, HESA, government departments, HE institutions and other interested bodies. The group's original brief was to take forward the recommendations of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, and the request of the Secretary of State for Education and Employment to develop appropriate performance indicators and benchmarks for families of institutions with similar characteristics and aspirations.

2. Since its foundation the PISG has overseen the implementation, management and ongoing development of the institutional performance indicators for higher education¹ through the advice it provides to the UK funding bodies and other relevant bodies. The group will continue in this role, which includes defining and keeping under review the role and relevance of an appropriate set of performance indicators. This will involve conducting reviews and receiving such reports and papers as to enable the group to:

- a. Be responsible for the publication of the HE performance indicators on an annual basis.
- b. Agree new performance indicators, taking technical advice from the Performance Indicators Technical Group (PITG)² as appropriate.
- c. Identify any changes in the coverage of the existing performance indicators.
- d. Consider changes in definition of the existing HE performance indicators, taking technical advice from the PITG as appropriate.
- e. Advise on the use and interpretation of the HE performance indicators to stakeholders, including to HEPISG, as appropriate.

3. Through its members and in its own right the PISG will be expected to:

- f. Maintain a sufficient technical understanding of the HE performance indicators in order that the group take informed policy decisions.
- g. Receive the advice of specialists (in addition to the members of PITG) when it is called upon for particular topics.

4. The PISG will:

- h. Normally meet one to two times per year.
- i. Carry out a review of the membership of the PISG and PITG every five years, or earlier if such a review is deemed necessary by the Chair of PISG.

¹ For simplicity we refer to the "institutional performance indicators for higher education" as "performance indicators" throughout this document. Furthermore, all references to "performance indicators" should be taken to mean "performance indicators and their benchmarks".

² See Annex A for the PITG terms of reference.

Membership

5. The chair of the PISG will be a senior member of staff from the Higher Education Funding Council for England and will be nominated by HEFCE.
6. The membership of PISG should be those who are suitably placed to take a strategic view with regard to issues surrounding HE performance indicators. Members should be able to balance their policy expertise and knowledge of context with a capability for broad understanding of technical issues. Organisations should take these factors into account when making nominations.
7. The members of PISG will be nominated by the following organisations, and need not necessarily be officers of the organisations:
 - h. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
 - i. Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland
 - j. GuildHE
 - k. Higher Education Funding Council for England
 - l. Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
 - m. Higher Education Statistics Agency
 - n. Higher Education Wales
 - o. National Union of Students
 - p. Scottish Funding Council
 - q. Scottish Government
 - r. UCAS
 - s. Universities UK
 - t. Universities Scotland
 - u. Welsh Government
 - v. Office of Fair Access.
8. The chair of PISG will endorse (or not) the nominations made.
9. The chair of PITG will also be a member of the PISG. They have primary responsibility for managing the interaction between the two groups and will be an individual who is able to strike a balance between policy and technical articulation.
10. Each organisation listed will have one member of the PISG apart from the organisations from which the chairs of PISG and PITG are drawn. These organisations (currently HESA and HEFCE) will be invited to nominate one member each to PISG in addition to their member fulfilling the role of chair.
11. Observers are permitted at each meeting at the discretion of the chair of PISG.
12. The secretariat of PISG and PITG will be the same to ensure consistency in communication and content. They will aid the chairs in the interactions between the two groups, although the PITG chair has primary responsibility for ensuring such interaction. HEFCE will normally provide the secretariat.

Annex A: Terms of reference for the Performance Indicators Technical Group (PITG)

1. The Performance Indicators Technical Group (PITG) is a sub-group of the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) that was established in 2010. Made up of technical representatives drawn from the funding bodies, HESA, government departments and other interested bodies, the PITG provides advice to the PISG on technical aspects of the institutional performance indicators for higher education.
2. Through the advice it provides, the PITG will support the PISG in its role in the implementation, management and ongoing development of the performance indicators. Drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of its members the PITG will:
 - a. Advise PISG on the technical development of new performance indicators.
 - b. Advise PISG on implementation of changes to coverage of existing performance indicators.
 - c. Ensure that the definitions of existing performance indicators remain fit for purpose, to include alerting PISG when there may be policy considerations of decisions made regarding the definitions of existing performance indicators.
 - d. Advise PISG on interpretation of existing, and potentially new, performance indicators.
 - e. Advise PISG regarding decisions that relate to the UK Statistics Authority's conditions for Official Statistics.
3. Through its members and in its own right the PITG will be expected to:
 - f. Take forward any other technically-related recommendations of PISG directed to the PITG.
 - g. Receive the advice of specialists called upon for particular specialist technical topics.
 - h. Maintain a policy perspective on the context within which the HE performance indicators operate.
4. The PITG will:
 - i. Normally meet a minimum of two times per year; where it will be ensured that timings of meetings are compatible with providing up-to-date advice to PISG.

Membership

5. The chair of the PITG will be a senior member of staff from the Higher Education Statistics Agency and will be nominated by HESA. They will be the sole member of PITG who will also be a member of the PISG. They are responsible for managing the interaction between the two groups

and will be an individual who is able to strike a balance between policy and technical articulation. They will also provide an institutional perspective on technical matters.

6. The other additional members of PITG will be nominated by the following organisations:

- h. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- i. Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland
- j. Higher Education Funding Council for England
- k. Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- l. Higher Education Statistics Agency
- m. Scottish Funding Council
- n. Scottish Government
- o. UCAS
- p. Welsh Government
- q. A single member drawn from Universities UK, Universities Scotland, Guild HE, and Higher Education Wales.

7. The PITG is a sub-group of the PISG and as such the latter will have a role governing the relationship between themselves and the PITG. In particular, the PISG will endorse (or not) the member organisations nominated to join PITG.

8. Each organisation listed will have one member of the PITG apart from HESA as the organisation from which the chair of PITG is drawn. HESA will be invited to nominate one member to PITG in addition to their member fulfilling the role of chair.

9. Observers are permitted at each meeting at the discretion of the chair of PITG.

10. The secretariat of PISG and PITG will be the same to ensure consistency in communication and content. They will aid the chairs in the interactions between the two groups, although the PITG chair has primary responsibility for ensuring such interaction. HEFCE will normally provide the secretariat.