

Prior Qualifications

The discrepancy between ILR and Prior
Qualifications Survey Data

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Aim

- The aim of this session is to help us understand direct from providers what the issues are around the collection of prior attainment data, particularly around Apprenticeships
- We are keen to understand the issues you face and how we might be able to help
- We have some ideas we'd like to test but the key point of us being here is to listen to you

Issue

- The Prior Qualifications Survey (PQS) is a survey of adult learners who are studying for a Level 2 or 3 qualification.
- The ILR and PQS show markedly different results for firstness, with the ILR showing much higher levels i.e. lower levels of prior attainment.
- The data service have looked at both surveys and concluded the ILR is not currently suitable for the purpose of measuring the firstness rate and that the PQS results are a more reliable information source and therefore should be used to measure firstness.
- We are keen to help you improve the data quality of the ILR.

Why a focus on progression, i.e. firstness is important

- Although we no longer have targets, it's still important for provider data managers to have accurate information on this situation since:
 - there is much greater economic value gained (wage gain) when someone moves up to a first Level 2 than when someone re-trains and does another Level 2 in a different topic (same result at Level 3)
 - people with lower levels of qualification are less likely to receive employer provided training
 - it is more of a priority for government funding to subsidise those who have been 'failed' by the system previously
 - people with lower levels of qualification have less access to finance to fund their own training.

The Prior Qualifications Survey

- The PQS survey is carried out over the phone. Respondents are first asked to indicate whether they had achieved qualifications from a variety of sources. They are then read a list of qualifications relating to the source they have chosen and asked to confirm whether or not they have achieved each of these. They are then asked a range of supplementary questions regarding the number and level attained, a highest level qualification held was then assigned to each respondent.

The scale of the difference

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
College L2 PQS	38%	38%	38%	37%	39%	39%
College L2 ILR	58%	57%	64%	62%	65%	58%
College L3 PQS	54%	54%	54%	56%	57%	56%
College L3 ILR	90%	89%	90%	90%	91%	76%
WBL L2 PQS	54%	63%	79%	65%	47%	37%
WBL L2 ILR	N/A	98%	97%	98%	72%	68%
WBL L3 PQS	N/A	95%	95%	76%	64%	56%
WBL L3 ILR	N/A	N/A	94%	90%	83%	85%
App L2 PQS	32%	N/A	N/A	N/A	28%	25%
App L2 ILR	N/A	47%	57%	60%	59%	54%
App L3 PQS	46%	N/A	N/A	N/A	50%	49%
App L3 ILR	N/A	69%	83%	87%	90%	87%

Headlines

- Firstness reported through the ILR is consistently higher than in PQS in all the years for which we have data.
- In 2009/10 the ILR reported L2 firstness in Apprenticeships at 54% compared to 25% from the PQS. At L3 this difference is 87% ILR compared to 49% PQS.
- In 2009/10 the ILR reported L2 firstness in Work Based Learning (WBL) provision of 68% compared to 37% from the PQS. At L3 this difference is 85% ILR compared to 56% PQS.
- The level of firstness reported appears to have dropped from 2008/09 to 2009/10.
- It is not just old or unusual courses that are being missed, the PQS survey has found common courses like GCSEs, NVQs, A Levels and degrees are not being captured in the ILR.

What do you think?

- We've set out what the issues are, do you have any thoughts about why this might be happening?
- Would any of you be willing to talk with us offline to help us understand how your MI collection takes place?
- What could we do to help?
- Would a common format of forms help, based on what others have found useful?

What we are planning to do?

- We have produced a draft form, based on best practice in the sector which we would welcome your views on. It's attached at Annex A.
- The aim has been to find an approach which isn't too long and confusing but obtains enough info to get the right answer
- Would you find this useful?
- Does it differ much from how you currently collect information?
- Would it work in the 'real world'?
- Would you be willing to help us test this with real learners?