



University and College Union

‘Further, higher, better’

**Submission to the government’s
second Comprehensive Spending
Review**

Section 33

33 Data

In both sectors there is a need for data which is sufficient to enable effective workforce planning. This is particularly the case in relation to the need to replace the current cohort of teaching staff in further and higher education who are soon to retire.

Further education

There is a need to ensure that comprehensive data on learners, staff and finance in further education is collected and published. Despite the Learning and Skills Council having a requirement under anti-discrimination legislation (including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act) to provide reliable data on the further education workforce, no adequate monitoring information is published relating to gender and ethnicity pay gaps. This is a matter of serious concern, and we recommend that it is tackled urgently.

We welcome the commitment of the DfES in its 2006 FE White Paper to promoting equality and diversity in the FE workforce, and that it will be reviewing this, as well as working with Lifelong Learning UK to assess annually the workforce diversity profile. We note that an essential prerequisite is that adequate workforce data are available, particularly in obtaining a comprehensive level of response to questions regarding demographic information.

We note the commitment in the White Paper to improved arrangements for data collection. While the focus of the White Paper was on gathering information about learners, we urge that adequate data on employees also needs to be gathered and disseminated.

Comment

We support the recommendation in the Foster Review for 'urgent rationalisation and simplification of the data collected as a priority', with a more efficient system delivered by the end of 2007. We recommend that the sector works with the Higher Education Statistics Agency to learn from HESA's experience and to develop good practice.

Higher education

Information on students, staff and institutions in higher education is gathered and published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. We note the recent expansion of the staff record, which has brought with it considerable improvements in the depth and scope of information available.

Comment

We welcome the recent improvements to the scope of data gathering and provision by HESA on employees. But we are aware, if only anecdotally, of

gaps and weaknesses in data gathering at the institutional level, which are then passed on to the national datasets provided by HESA. There are particular gaps in information in information about the ethnicity and disability of employees. We call on institutions and HESA to work closely to plug gaps in data collection and improve the reliability of data for the sector.