

**ABERDEEN 2040**

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**DEFINITIONS DOCUMENT**

*This document provides specifications for each of the performance indicators agreed at School-level to support delivery of Aberdeen 2040.*

**Table of Contents**

Data Statement – School Performance Indicators.....	2
League Table Rankings.....	3
Entry Qualifications.....	4
National Student Survey (NSS) .....	5
Student Staff Ratio .....	6
Graduate Careers.....	7
Graduate Careers (Internal).....	8
Student Continuation .....	9
Doctorates Awarded per Academic FTE.....	10
Research Income .....	11
Citations .....	12
International Co-Authorship .....	13
Number of Viable Impact Case Studies .....	14
Widening Access .....	15
Metadata .....	16

## DATA STATEMENT – SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following document provides a summary definition of the School Performance Indications (PIs) agreed by Court to underpin Aberdeen 2040. These will be monitored routinely as part of wider School planning arrangements.

The data for all PIs and metrics listed here is [available via School data files](#) which are updated on an ongoing basis and designed to support School planning activities. School data files can be accessed via the Directorate of Planning SharePoint site, [here](#). For every PI or metric included, the following is given:

1. **Summary:** this provides a short summary of the PI, including any contextual information on what it intends to measure and why.
2. **Methodology and Specification:** this provides a short overview of the method used to calculate each PI, with a summary level specification given for all data provided. Where applicable, there is also sign-posting to methodologies used by external providers.
3. **Data:** this specifies the source of data for each PI or metric. The data will either be internally or externally generated.
4. **Frequency:** this specifies how often the data will be updated; for example, league table data will be updated annually.

Any queries around the data are welcomed and should be made to the Directorate of Planning ([planning@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:planning@abdn.ac.uk)) in the first instance; Planning will work with Schools to address data concerns.

Alternatively, please visit the Strategic Planning webpages: [www.abdn.ac.uk/strategic-planning](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/strategic-planning)

## League Table Rankings

<b>Summary</b>	<p>The University tracks performance and UK rankings at subject level under five major league tables; <i>Good University Guide</i>, <i>Complete University Guide</i> and the <i>Guardian</i> (all national rankings), along with the <i>Times Higher World</i> ranking, and the QS (both global rankings).</p>
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	<p>All data used is generated externally by the different league table providers and is publicly available. The data will be presented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By subject, with subjects aligned to Schools;</li> <li>• Over five years, updated on a rolling basis;</li> <li>• To include number of HEIs ranked;</li> <li>• To include overall ranking position by subject over the five-year window, along with ranking position for each of the measures used to determine the overall league table position;</li> <li>• All ranking positions will be assigned to a quartile, based on actual ranking relative to the total number of HEIs included. These will be colour coded.</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	<p>The data comes directly from source, from the league table providers, and is collated, analysed and produced in visual format by Planning.</p>
<b>Frequency</b>	<p>Data for each league table is produced on an annual basis – with different release dates for each one; the most recent results will always be included in the School data files.</p>

## Entry Qualifications

<b>Summary</b>	Entry qualifications are an important determinant of student standards and performance once enrolled, and ultimately, to their degree qualification level. They are used by each of the main three UK national league table providers, meaning they are also key to driving league table performance.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	The methodology used in the School data files takes the mean tariff point scores on entry for first-year, first-degree students under 21 years of age. This is based on A-level and AS-levels results; Highers and Advanced Highers; and other equivalent qualifications, such as the International Baccalaureate. Entrants with zero tariffs are excluded from the calculation.
<b>Data</b>	This data is taken directly from the Times Good University Guide, which is based on the HESA methodology. The data is collated and analysed by Planning.
<b>Frequency</b>	Annual

## National Student Survey (NSS)

<b>Summary</b>	The NSS is a key tool used sector wide to gauge universities standards or performance in education and the student experience.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	The data provided will be broken down to subject level, with subjects aligned to the relevant University School. It will provide the “% agree” figure for every question under each of the main headings that comprise the survey, and every response will be ranked by quartile, thereby providing an indicator of performance relative to the sector benchmark.
<b>Data</b>	The data comes directly from the NSS and is collated and analysed by Planning.
<b>Frequency</b>	Annual

## Student Staff Ratio

<p><b>Summary</b></p>	<p>The healthy SSR is indicative of a better-quality teaching and learning environment. All data will be extracted from HESA for the latest and previous years. The data is standardised sector-wide and thus directly comparable to other institutions. It is also used by the Guardian, Complete University Guide and the Times Good University Guide.</p>
<p><b>Methodology and Specification</b></p>	<p>The HESA SSR shows the total number of students per member of academic teaching staff. The SSR is calculated using the student and staff full-time equivalent (FTE). Further information on the HESA methodology is <a href="#">available here</a>.</p> <p>The Guardian league table defines it as follows:</p> <p>Student-staff ratios (SSR) seek to approximate the levels of staff contact that a student can expect to receive by dividing the volume of students who are taking modules in a subject by the volume of staff who are available to teach it. Thus, a low ratio is treated positively – it indicates that more staff contact could be anticipated.</p> <p>Staff and students are reported on a ‘full-time equivalent’ basis and research-only staff are exclude from the staff volume. Students on placement or on a course that is franchised to another provider have their volume discounted accordingly.</p> <p>At least 28 students and three staff (both FTE) must be present in an SSR calculation using 2019/19 data alone. Smaller departments that had at least seven student and two staff FTE in 2019/19, and at least 30 student FTE in total across 2018-19 and 2019/20, have a two-year average calculated.</p>
<p><b>Data</b></p>	<p>The external data from HESA is released every March, but with a 12-month lag. This means that the data released in March each year will normally show the position at the end of the previous academic year.</p>
<p><b>Frequency</b></p>	<p>Annually.</p>

## Graduate Careers

<b>Summary</b>	<p>The Graduate Outcomes survey is the primary sector wide source for tracking graduate destinations. The survey is administered externally by HESA who survey graduates 15 months after completing their studies. The survey supersedes the former Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey and is now the data source for key metrics produced by the three main national league tables to determine graduate performance.</p>
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	<p>The PI at subject level will measure the percentage of leavers in graduate-level employment or further study within 15 months of leaving the University.</p> <p>Schools will be given this figure from both the Times Good University Guide and Guardian league tables, and a sector-wide rank will also be provided for each league table.</p> <p>The data produced by both league tables is based on UK-domiciled full-time first-degree leavers who responded to the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey.</p> <p>However, they both produce different scores due to a slight difference in their respective methodologies; the Guardian includes graduates who go on to undertake any further UG study in their definition of a positive destination, whereas the Times excludes UG sub-degrees (for example, a UG Cert).</p>
<b>Data</b>	<p>The PI data will be taken directly from the Times Good University Guide and from the Guardian league table.</p>
<b>Frequency</b>	<p>Annually – noting the league table data for each measure is released once per year.</p>

## Graduate Careers (Internal)

<b>Summary</b>	The Graduate Outcomes survey is the primary sector wide source for tracking graduate destinations. The survey is administered externally by HESA who survey graduates 15 months after completing their studies. The survey supersedes the former Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey and is now the data source for key metrics produced by the three main national league tables to determine graduate performance.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	This tab presents skill level categories for graduates in employment, and types of qualification for graduates in further study. These are shown by academic level (PGR, PGT, and UG), and mapped to school by headcount (such that joint honours students count equally for each distinct school). The figures presented are percentages of all respondents in either employment or further study and provide a detailed guide to school performance. However, <i>it should be noted that different league table metrics and national performance indicators follow different methodology specifications</i> , each considering different subsets of the full set of respondents presented here - for example only considering full time and/or UK domiciled undergraduates, and for example excluding activity categories such as 'Other including travel, caring for someone, or retired' from their analyses. These figures are therefore guides to league table performance rather than exact projections of individual metrics.
<b>Data</b>	The data is taken directly from the Graduate Outcomes survey results and analysed internally.
<b>Frequency</b>	Graduate Outcomes survey results are published annually, expected late spring/early summer.



## Student Continuation

<b>Summary</b>	This will measure non-continuation rates by School and discipline where applicable; this is an important measure of student satisfaction, among other things, and a key determinant of education related performance.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	<p>This is based on the HESA T3 indicator, which is also adopted by the Guardian league table, and for the Outcome Agreement by the SFC, though the latter focuses on Scottish entrants only. As under the HESA T3 indicator, the method used to calculate rates of non-continuation tracks students who continue after their first year of study either by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progressing on the same programme or on another course within the same provider;</li><li>• Repeating a year;</li><li>• Transferring to another HE provider;</li><li>• Discontinuing their study.</li></ul>
<b>Data</b>	This will be extracted directly from the Guardian league table results which as above, use HESA T3 data.
<b>Frequency</b>	Annually

### Doctorates Awarded per Academic FTE

<b>Summary</b>	The rate of doctorates awarded per academic FTE is indicative of a healthy research environment. This PI will be generated internally, using the Student Record system and the HR database, with a methodology that aligns with that used by the THE world league table ranking.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	The numerator will be every doctorate awarded each year (noting this will exclude any research Masters, Master of Philosophy degrees or equivalent) and the denominator will be academic staff, with a number of exclusions, including research only and honorary appointments.
<b>Data</b>	The data will be extracted from Discoverer and the HR database and compiled and analysed by Planning.
<b>Frequency</b>	Annual.

## Research Income

<b>Summary</b>	Research income generated from external sources is a key indicator of research performance sector wide.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	This will include all income received by the School over the last full financial year, specifically for the purposes of carrying out research. This will only include external funding and will include income from industry or commerce. This is in line with approach to measure research income used by the THE world ranking. This PI data provided will also show indirect cost contributions.
<b>Data</b>	The data will be extracted from the University Finance System (Agresso) by Research Finance from within R&I and will be as included in the monthly management reports.
<b>Frequency</b>	Bi-annually for Planning purposes.

## Citations

<b>Summary</b>	Citation rates for academic journal articles and other outputs are an important indicator of academic quality and impact, across most disciplines.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	The citation rate will track the average number of times research outputs published in the School are cited globally, meaning the total number of citations as numerator, and the number of outputs as denominator. This is in line with the methodology used for the THE league table.
<b>Data</b>	Data to be extracted from Web of Science and analysed by R&I.
<b>Frequency</b>	Annual

## International Co-Authorship

<b>Summary</b>	International research collaboration, and particularly international co-authorship, bring with them a range of benefits, and are seen as important for enhancing research quality.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	This will be measured by calculating the proportion of the Schools total research journal publications each year that have at least one international co-author. The approach used to track international co-authorship will align with the methodology used by the THE ranking.
<b>Data</b>	Data to be extracted from Web of Science and analysed by R&I.
<b>Frequency</b>	Annual

## Number of Viable Impact Case Studies

<b>Summary</b>	Impact is a key indicator of both research quality, and of the wider value research has beyond academia. Projections of impact help determine research grant funding allocations, while impact is also a major pillar of the Research Excellence Framework.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	This shows the number of impact case studies required for submission to the next REF exercise, relative to the number of case studies currently identified or in preparation. All case studies will conform to the definitions set out by the REF.
<b>Data</b>	Data will be produced internally, generated by R&I via Schools.
<b>Frequency</b>	The data will be updated annually, or more frequently where appropriate, in line with any ongoing REF preparations.

## Widening Access

<b>Summary</b>	The University monitors a series of Widening Access measures as stipulated by the Scottish Funding Council, and formally monitored by the University's Outcome Agreement.
<b>Methodology and Specification</b>	All data used is generated internally, based upon technical guidance provided by the Scottish Funding, using derived HESA fields. The full technical guidance for each metrics is available on the SFC website available here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="https://www.sfc.ac.uk/College-and-University-Outcome-Agreement-Guidance-2021-22">College and University Outcome Agreement Guidance 2021 – 22 (sfc.ac.uk)</a></li></ul>
<b>Data</b>	The data is produced by Student Records, utilising Snapshot 5.
<b>Frequency</b>	Data is monitored across the Academic Year, and a final updated annually based on Year End data.

## METADATA

<b>Title</b>	School Planning Data – Definitions Document
<b>Author / Creator</b>	Iain Grant
<b>Owner</b>	Directorate of Planning
<b>Date published</b>	March 2022
<b>Version</b>	1
<b>Date for next review</b>	March 2023; though changes may be made sooner if definitions for data taken from external provider's change.
<b>Audience</b>	All
<b>Related documents</b>	School data files.
<b>Subject / Description</b>	This provides data definitions / specifications for the formal performance indicators agreed for Schools as part of Aberdeen 2040.
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	No
<b>Section</b>	Directorate of Planning
<b>Theme</b>	Strategic Planning