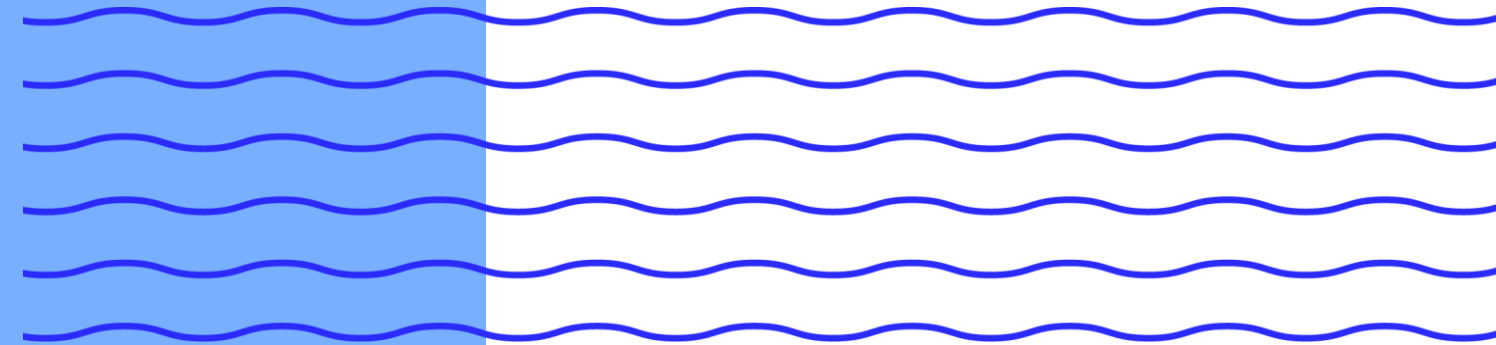


The Office for Students and condition B3 (student outcomes)



Awareness Test

The bear is back

The Office for Students and condition
B3 (student outcomes)

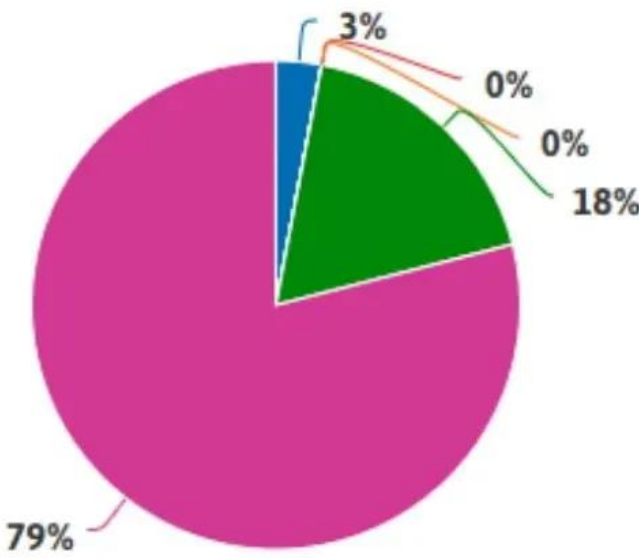


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Continuation

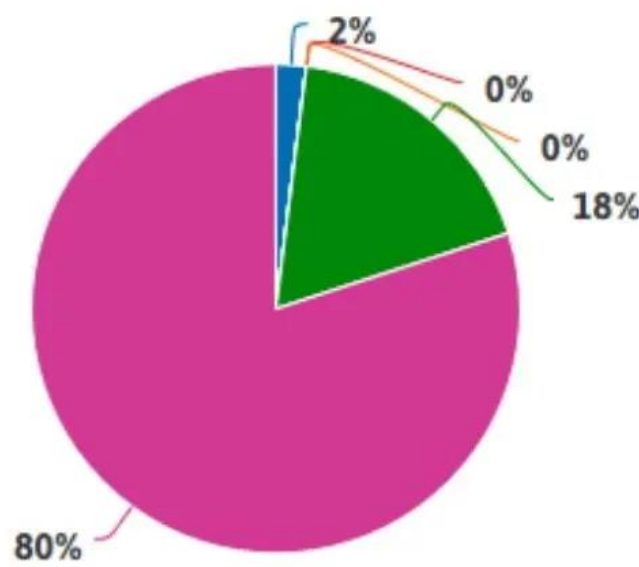
This is what students are doing 1 year after starting the course.

Business studies



- Continue at the university or college
- Complete the course they enrolled on
- Complete a different award from the one they enrolled on
- Are taking a break from their studies
- Left before completing their course

Business and management



- Continue at the university or college
- Complete the course they enrolled on
- Complete a different award from the one they enrolled on
- Are taking a break from their studies
- Left before completing their course

The B3 bear

- This is a condition relating to the quality of the higher education provided by the provider.
- In judging whether a provider is delivering successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study, material that the OfS may consider includes
- A range of student outcomes indicators, broken down to show outcomes for students with different characteristics that include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Student continuation and completion rates.
 - ii. Degree and other outcomes, including differential outcomes for students with different characteristics.
 - iii. Graduate employment and, in particular, progression to professional and managerial jobs and postgraduate study.
- Any other information from employers and others about the extent to which a provider's qualifications are recognised and valued.



Stages

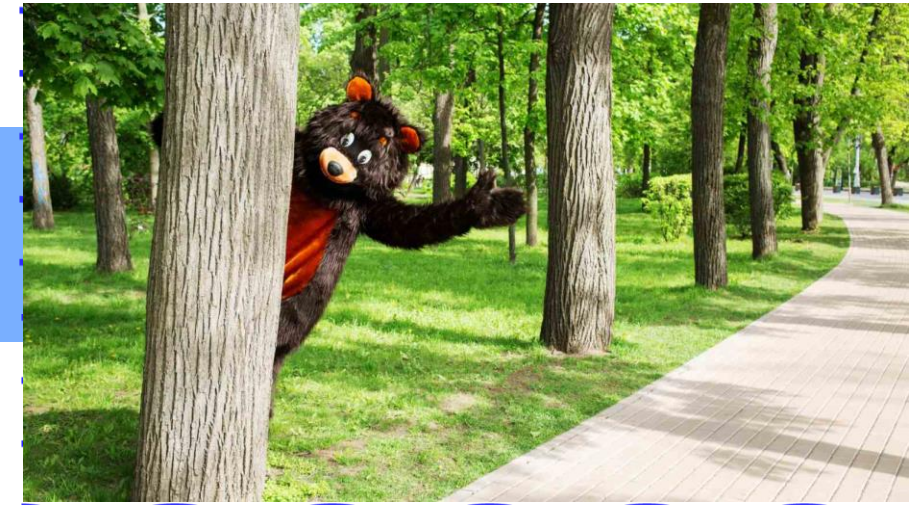
- The condition is assessed in two stages.
- The first considers the absolute outcomes delivered by the provider for its students.
- The second gives consideration of the context in which these outcomes are achieved.
- Regulatory interventions, such as a specific condition, mitigate risks of future breach.

B3 bear

- We set a minimum baseline requirement for quality, which includes a minimum level for student outcomes.
- Our intention in doing so is to be clear that all students are entitled to the same minimum level of quality.
- We do not accept that students from underrepresented groups should be expected to accept lower quality, including weaker outcomes, than other students.
- We therefore do not bake their disadvantage into the regulatory system by setting lower minimum requirements for providers that typically recruit these types of students.
- For this reason, in assessing a provider's performance we focus on performance shown in absolute rather than benchmarked indicators, although we will take a provider's context into account in reaching our judgement to ensure we have properly interpreted its absolute performance.

Initial registration

- In the initial registration phase it managed to generate 147 “interventions”
 - 50 formal letters
 - 77 lots of “enhanced monitoring”
 - 20 specific (and public) conditions of registration
- as well as playing a starring role in five of the six outright registration refusals that have so far been made public.
- Plus a starring role in Bloomsbury and Dagenham College cases



How?

- Performance “in aggregate”, over a “time series” (for the number of years up to a five year period for which indicators could be derived from available)
- Across splits for different demographic groups – broken down by mode (full or part-time) and level of study (for example “other undergraduate”, first degree), as well as by age, participation of local areas (POLAR), English indices of multiple deprivation (IMD), ethnicity, disability, sex and domicile.



Blame it on the baseline

- Baseline for each indicator (in each mode and level of study that the provider delivers) as a guide to whether performance in relation to a particular indicator raised concerns, and that baseline varied according to the mode and level of the course.
- And the result was then broken into three types – “no concern”, “concern” (you get a letter or enhanced monitoring) or “significant concern”.



Then...

- Proportion of the provider's current students who were at risk of experiencing the outcome(s) that were identified as being in that “significant concern” category
- and the extent to which different demographic groups experienced outcomes of “significant concern”
- and to do that OfS looked at the relative proportion of the most recent student population for which data was available who were represented by a student demographic split indicator that may be “of significant concern”.



And then

- If more than 75 per cent of a provider's student population fell into a demographic group which was identified as experiencing an outcome that may be of significant concern, the provider was not likely to satisfy the B3 condition.
- Then contextual factors kicked in...



Court case

- Win then lose...
- Policy v Operational
- Consultation
- Rationality to define quality in this way
- One judge actually said OfS' explanation of the second stage of its demographic threshold analysis was "very hard to follow", and "I believe that I was not alone in that respect"

Since then...

- Court case which was won then lost by OfS
- Fairness for small(er) providers?
- Revelation of the baselines in use (and acceptance they weren't set esp high – criterion/norm)
- Ministerial pressure (speeches and guidance) to move the baselines
- OfS announcement to look at “pockets” (subjects)
- Constant position that baselines will be absolute
- Consultation on all of the above that has dragged on through Covid

We will get baselines

- Continuation rates help it understand whether a provider is recruiting students able to succeed through the early stages of its courses, with the appropriateness of recruitment and student support under the spotlight;
- It says completion is similar and provides a look over the whole student lifecycle. This difference in focus means that there will not be a direct, linear, relationship between a provider's continuation rate and its completion rate.
- Meanwhile progression tells OfS whether a provider's students have successful student outcomes beyond graduation.

	Aggregated indicator (all five years combined)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Other undergraduate (all subjects)	82.3%	79.5%	72.5%	84.5%	86.5%	87.5%
Business and management	87.0%	85.0%	85.0%	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%
Computing	70.9%	66.7%	52.2%	74.4%	78.9%	78.9%
Mechanical engineering	92.7%	91.1%	90.0%	93.3%	93.3%	95.6%
First degree (all subjects)	91.8%	91.6%	90.7%	92.3%	91.7%	92.9%
Business and management	89.9%	90.0%	95.5%	89.8%	87.8%	89.3%
Computing	93.8%	93.5%	92.0%	92.8%	94.8%	96.0%
Mechanical engineering	91.8%	91.0%	78.5%	96.5%	93.5%	94.0%

So big questions

- Franchising (and the past few years)
- How is OfS going to tackle at subject level?
- Where does Proceed fit?
- What will the baselines be (unintended consequences)
- Will the process vary from that previously?
- Does that effectively represent a kind of SNC by the back door?
- Will providers be given time to respond at subject or provider level?
- Who will the impacts of the policy be felt by?
- To what extent is there “politics” in the number and the process (and the credit-taking)
- Quality as “the extent to which we’re prepared to take a chance on you”

The bear is back

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