

FAQs: Self-Evaluation Report

Updated on 27/08/2026

1. Data Source & Timeframe

Should the timeframe recorded in this column be 2025/2026 in all cases?

The timeframe recorded in the Data Source & Timeframe column will depend on the most recent available relevant datasets from which an institution's benchmarking and results data for 2025/2026 will be drawn. For benchmarking, data will usually be drawn from the most recent publicly available dataset (see response on **Benchmark Data** below, for further guidance). For reporting results, the HEI can either use the most recent publicly available dataset, or if preferred, the HEI may use internal data that has not yet been published. If opting for the latter, the HEI should list **both** data sources (publicly available and internal) and record the relevant timeframe for each.

For example:

For indicators that draw on Progression or Completion rate data, the most recent publicly available datasets for benchmarking are published in the [HEA – Progression, Continuation, and Completion Report 2026](#), and include the **2023/2024 New Entrants Progression rate**, and the **Completion rate as of 2024**. For reporting results, the HEI can either use these datasets, or if preferred, they may use internal HEI data that has not yet been published. If opting for the latter, the HEI should list both data sources and record the timeframe for each.

For any indicators that draw on data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey, the most recent publicly available dataset is the [Class of 2024](#) survey results.

For any indicators that draw on the Knowledge Transfer Ireland Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey, the most recent publicly available dataset is currently [2025](#).

For indicators that draw on data from the [System Performance Dashboard](#), the timeframe will differ depending on the specific indicator. For example, for the Number of enrolments on Springboard+/- HCI courses, the timeframe of the most recent published dataset currently is 2025. The Dashboard will be updated as more recent data becomes available.

For indicators that draw on internal HEI datasets, the HEI should indicate the period to which the data relates. For example, an indicator may draw on the HEI's CPD Data to report on the **Number of managers (academic and PMSS) undertaking X training**; the HEI should indicate whether the reported data is from calendar year 2025 or 2026.

2. Benchmark Data

Is the Benchmark Data column different to the preceding column? Should Benchmark Data use data from the same year as the data in the Baseline column?

Benchmarking of the HEI's performance against comparator HEIs should be completed annually as part of the Self-Evaluation Report. In the 'Benchmark Data' column, the HEI should provide **the most recent available data** for the comparator institution, group of institutions or sectoral measure identified in the preceding 'Benchmark' column.

For example:

Where the benchmark is to attain the national average, the benchmark data should be the most recent available system-wide average.

Where the benchmark relates to maintaining or improving a sectoral ranking, the institution's current ranking should be reported using the most recent available data.

Where more recent comparator data is not available, institutions may repeat the benchmark figures recorded in the Performance Agreement and explain this in the relevant technical note.

Where no benchmark has been identified, or benchmarking is not applicable to the indicator, the field may be marked as 'N/A'.

The Baseline column should not be edited, and no further baseline data should be provided in the tables in Part A. (For definition of baseline and benchmark, please see [SPF Glossary](#))

Further guidance on the completion and submission of the SER is provided in the [Strategy & Performance Dialogue Process 2025-2028](#) Information Pack.

3. Results Data

Where the most recent results data available for a performance indicator relates to an earlier academic year, should this be entered in the current result column, or should the result be left blank until data for the current academic year becomes available?

As indicated in the guidance, institutions should provide the most recent available result in the current result column. The result reported does not necessarily need to relate to the academic year named in that column.

For example, where the most recent available data relates to 2024/25, it is acceptable to enter this result in the '2025/26 Result' column and cite the 2024/25 data under 'Data source and timeframe'.

4. Data availability and alternative methodology

An institution wishes to report progression rates for new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas but cannot reproduce the HEA's methodology using the data available internally. Can the institution instead identify socioeconomic disadvantage using an alternative measure, such as independently verified socioeconomic status?

Where an institution requires data held by the HEA, and this information is not yet available on the HEA website, it may request the relevant institution-level data from the HEA via Statistics@hea.ie.

For reporting purposes, the indicator should continue to be calculated on the same basis as the baseline and targets agreed in the institution's Performance Agreement. An alternative institutional measure should not be substituted where it would result in the reported figure being calculated on a different basis from the agreed baseline and targets. Any amendment to the methodology falls under the Performance Agreement modification process.

5. System Performance Dashboard

On the System Performance Dashboard, the headline figure displayed on the dashboard for disadvantaged mature new entrants does not match the percentage shown in the accompanying column chart. Why do these figures differ, and which figure should be used?

The figures are based on different denominators and therefore measure different things.

The headline figure shows mature new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds as a percentage of all disadvantaged new entrants.

The column chart shows mature new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds as a percentage of all mature new entrants.

Both figures are therefore correct, but they represent different measures. Institutions should use the figure that corresponds to the wording and definition of the relevant performance indicator in their Performance Agreement.

6. Reporting data that was unavailable at the time of submission

What should an institution do where results data for one or more indicators was not available when the Self-Evaluation Report was submitted, but become available before the Strategy and Performance Dialogue meeting? Can provisional data be provided?

Where results data become available after submission of the Self-Evaluation Report, institutions should provide the updated data to the HEA in advance of the Strategy and Performance Dialogue meeting.

The results reported should reflect the most recent data available to the institution. The period to which the data relate should be clearly identified in the 'Data source & timeframe' column.

Where the most recent available results are provisional, this should be clearly stated in the relevant technical note.

7. Removing/Replacing an indicator where data may not be available annually

An institution has included a particular score as a performance indicator, but the score depends on an external audit that may not be conducted every year. Is it possible to remove the indicator from the current Self-Evaluation Report?

It is not possible to amend or remove the indicator from the **current** Self-Evaluation Report on a given year.

However, where an institution wishes to remove or replace the indicator in its Performance Agreement, which **will affect subsequent** SERs, it may submit this as a modification request. The proposed change should be applied to the Performance Agreement using Track Changes, and a brief supporting rationale should accompany the request. Once agreed, the change may be reflected in the institution's 2026 Self-Evaluation Report.

Please note that amendments to future targets are not within the scope of the modification process.

Alternatively, the institution may retain the indicator but report on it less frequently. In this case, the targets in the Performance Agreement should remain unchanged. For any year in which an audit has not been conducted, the institution may report the result as 'Not available' and explain the reason for the data being unavailable in the relevant technical note.

8. Requesting modifications to a Performance Agreement

How should an institution request a change to an indicator or objective in its Performance Agreement? Should the proposed change be made directly in the Self-Evaluation Report?

Proposed changes to the Performance Agreement should not be made directly in the Self-Evaluation Report. Where an institution refers in its Self-Evaluation Report to a proposed change, the HEA may advise whether the request falls within the scope of the Performance Agreement modification process.

For changes that are within scope, a formal modification request should be submitted in writing by the President's Office, or equivalent, to systemperformance@hea.ie, in accordance with the process set out in the Strategy and Performance Dialogue Information Pack. The request should include a clear and robust supporting rationale.

All proposed amendments should be marked using Track Changes in an MS Word version of the Performance Agreement and submitted to the HEA for review. Once agreed, modifications will take effect from the 2026/27 reporting period onwards.

9. Correcting errors in indicator data and associated targets

An institution has identified an error in the calculation of a baseline published in its Performance Agreement. The targets were developed using the incorrect percentage. Should the institution correct the baseline and revise the associated targets, or retain the original percentage and amend the baseline year?

Where an error in the underlying data or calculation is identified, a correction may be facilitated. The institution should amend the baseline in both the Self-Evaluation Report and the Performance Agreement using Track Changes, for HEA review.

Percentage targets for subsequent years may be revised where necessary to reflect the corrected baseline or an amendment to the underlying denominator, such as a lower total enrolment figure.