

## Ofsted letter sent to colleges

Dear xxxxxxx

You will have recently received a letter from Geoff Russell, Chief Executive of the LSC, regarding concerns the LSC have about the completion of the ILR returns and their impact on success rates. The letter states the measures the LSC and the Information Authority intend to put in place, along with some additional clarification, to ensure that the ILR returns for 2009/10 and the final ILR return for 2008/09 are completed according to the published guidance.

The Ofsted Executive Board is concerned that for colleges to be inspected this year, success rate data for 2007/08 and the data for 2008/09 supplied to the lead inspector may have been compiled from ILR data which are subject to some of the issues outlined in the LSC letter.

In order to assure ourselves that the data Ofsted uses are fit for purpose, we will be putting in place the same tests on the 2007/08 data that informed the visits to the seven colleges described in the LSC's letter. These tests will be conducted on data from each college shortly before it is to be inspected. It may be necessary to visit these colleges during the three weeks prior to the inspection to undertake some further testing of course data. During the inspection week, discussions will be held between the lead inspector, supported by the inspector(s) who have been involved in the data analysis, and college managers about any issues raised.

Where issues are identified inspectors will deal with each college individually. Possible outcomes include:

- Concluding that the data are substantially accurate and proceeding with the inspection as normal;
- Concluding for some aspects of the college's work that data are unreliable. In this case it may be possible to recalculate some success rates based on ILR returns submitted earlier than F05;
- Concluding that data at the aggregate level are unreliable and looking closely at the data for those qualification aims which curriculum inspectors deem to be representative of their curriculum areas;
- Concluding that data in general are unreliable and not placing importance on success rate evidence;
- Where data are unreliable, assessing the impact on the overall judgements and grade for leadership and management.

I hope this information, together with the letter you have received from the LSC is clear. Should you have any further questions, please contact the Ofsted National Inspection Helpdesk on 08456 404040 and request to speak to the Learning and Skills duty team.

Yours sincerely

HMI