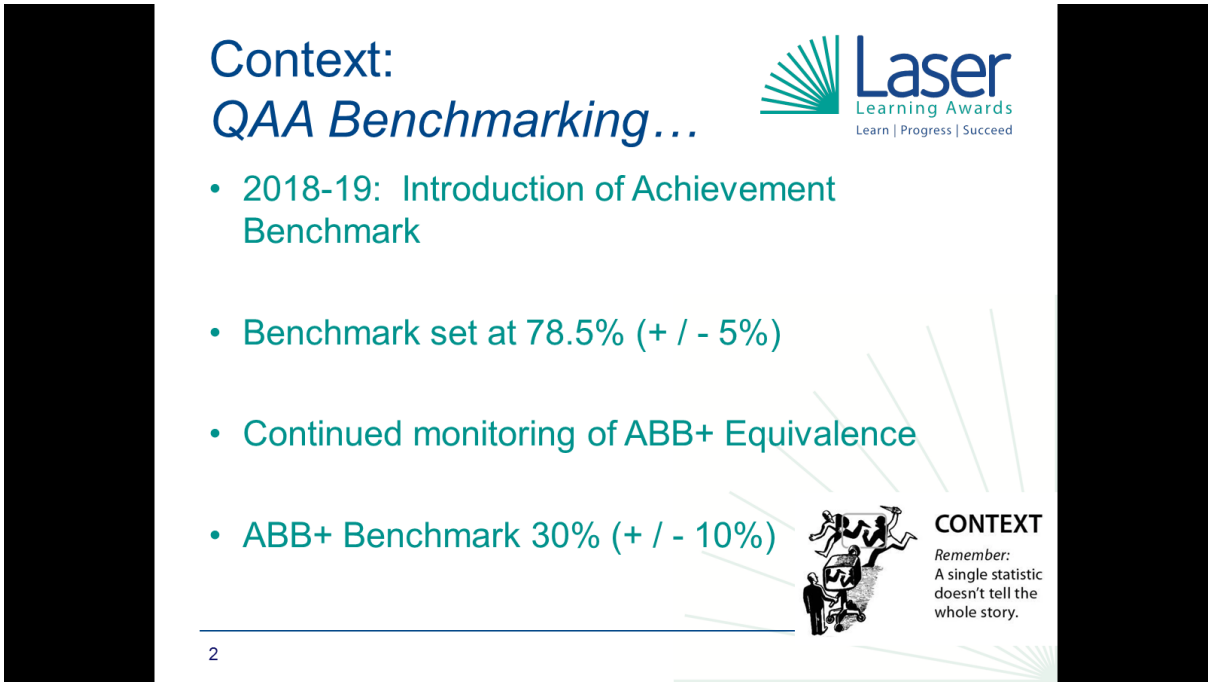
Laser Learning Awards: Achievement and Grading 2017-18

Title Slide

This presentation will examine achievement and grading in relation to students registered for the completion of Access to HE Diploma titles with Laser Learning Awards in the academic year 2017-18.

Aims and Objectives:



2018-19: Introduction of Achievement Benchmark

- For 2018-19 the QAA have asked all Access Validating Agencies to analyse achievement across their overall provision and also in terms of diploma areas and centres.

Benchmark set at 78.5% (+ / - 5%)

- They have set a benchmark for achievement based on the National Achievement Rate Targets of 78.5% achievement for Access with a tolerance of plus or minus five percent. Therefore, the upper tolerance of the benchmark is 83.5% and the lower tolerance is 73.5%. LASER has to report on all of our providers in relation to this benchmark. Detailed analysis against the benchmarks is contained within the Making the Grade IV report.

Continued monitoring of ABB+ Equivalence

- All AVAs are also asked to continue to monitor ABB+ Equivalence across our providers, including overall ABB+ Equivalence and also ABB+ Equivalence by diploma area and centre.

ABB+ Benchmark 30% (+ / - 10%)

- For 2017-18 reporting there is a revised benchmark of 30% with a tolerance of plus or minus 10%.

Headlines at a glance:

Headlines

Laser Learning Awards
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	Percentage of Achievement	Variation against QAA Benchmark
Adjusted SFA Data 2017-18 (Achievement)	71.1%+	-2.4% below lower tolerance
Quartz Data on ABB+ Equivalence	37.5%	Within tolerance (+7.5% on Benchmark)

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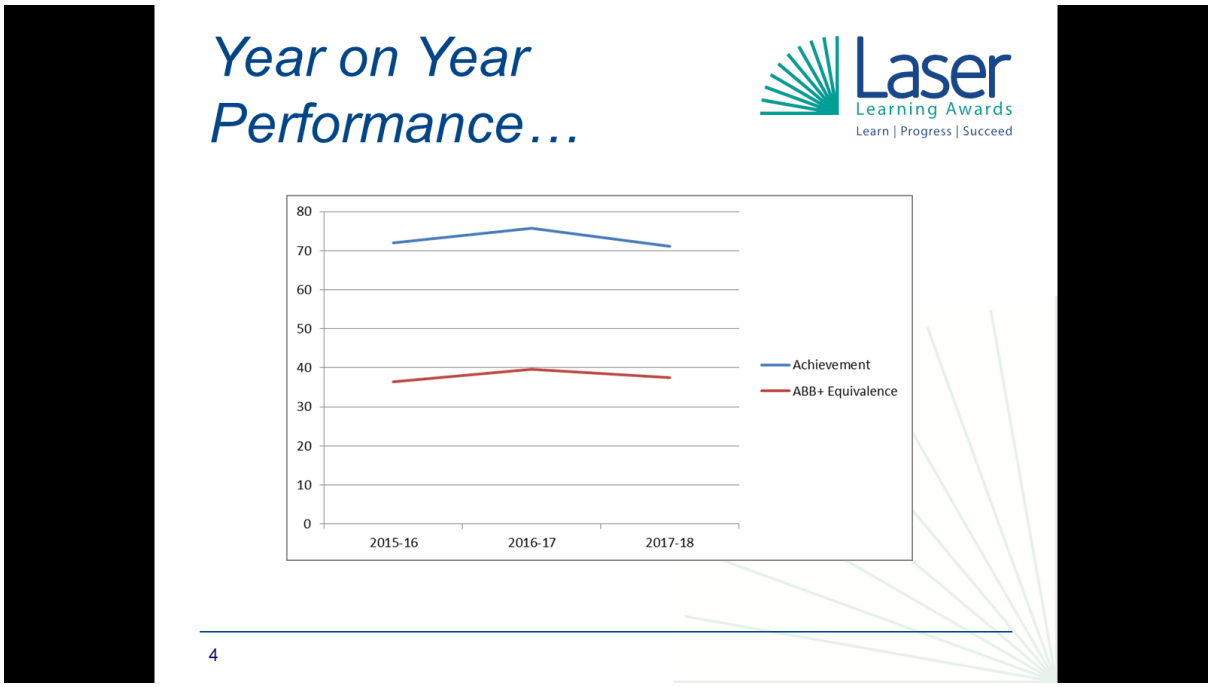
- The data for achievement has been based on an amalgamation of data from R14 Data Cut provided by the Education Skills and Funding Agency and also our own internal Quartz Database. It suggests that overall LASER data sits 2.4% below the lower tolerance of the QAA Achievement Benchmark.

- In relation to ESFA Funded Students LASER's achievement rate is within benchmark (74%). This overall average incorporates data in relation to Non-Funded students who have a significantly lower achievement rate (31%) in ESFA funded centres (as well as within centres where there is no ESFA funding). This will be discussed later within the presentation.

- Data in relation to ABB+ Equivalence is drawn from the Quartz Database and this suggests that LASER is within tolerance of the ABB+ benchmark.

The picture in terms of year on year performacnce:



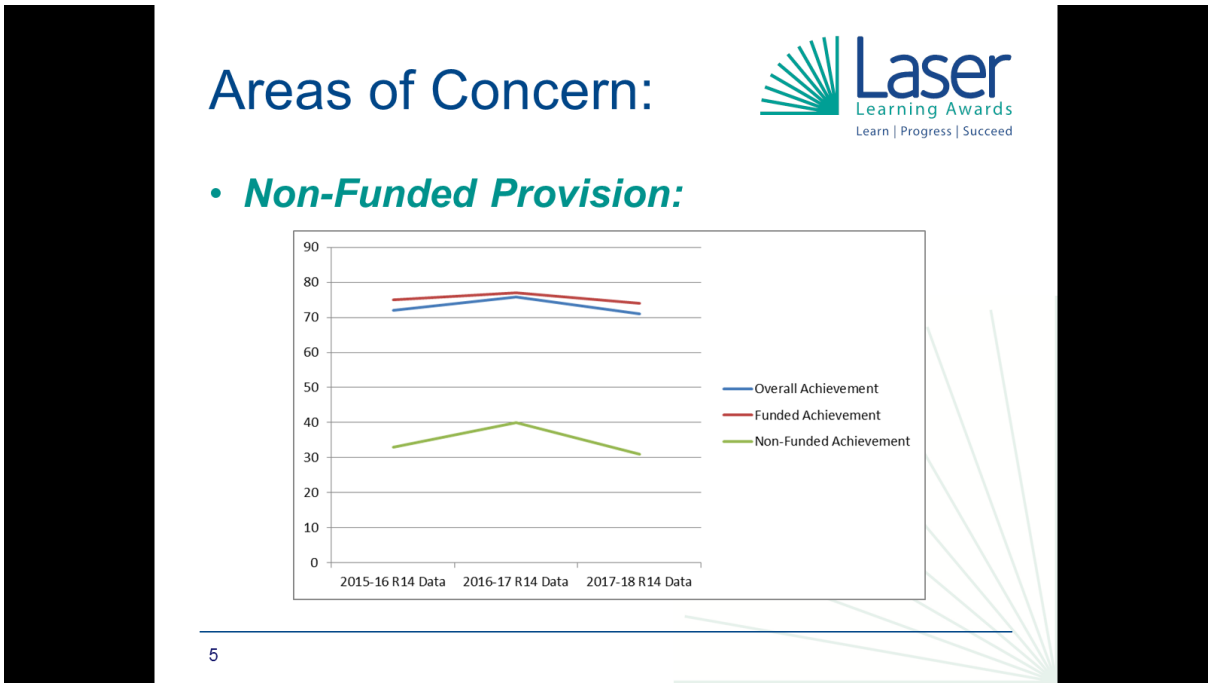
- The overall trends in relation to the last 3 years suggests a small increase in both Achievement and ABB+ in the year 2016-17.

- There has been a decrease in both achievement and ABB+ Equivalence between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

- Achievement has fallen 1% beneath the figure for the academic year 2015-16.

- ABB+ equivalence remains 1% above that of for 2015-16. The overall trends remain largely constant.

Areas of concern in relation to achievement:



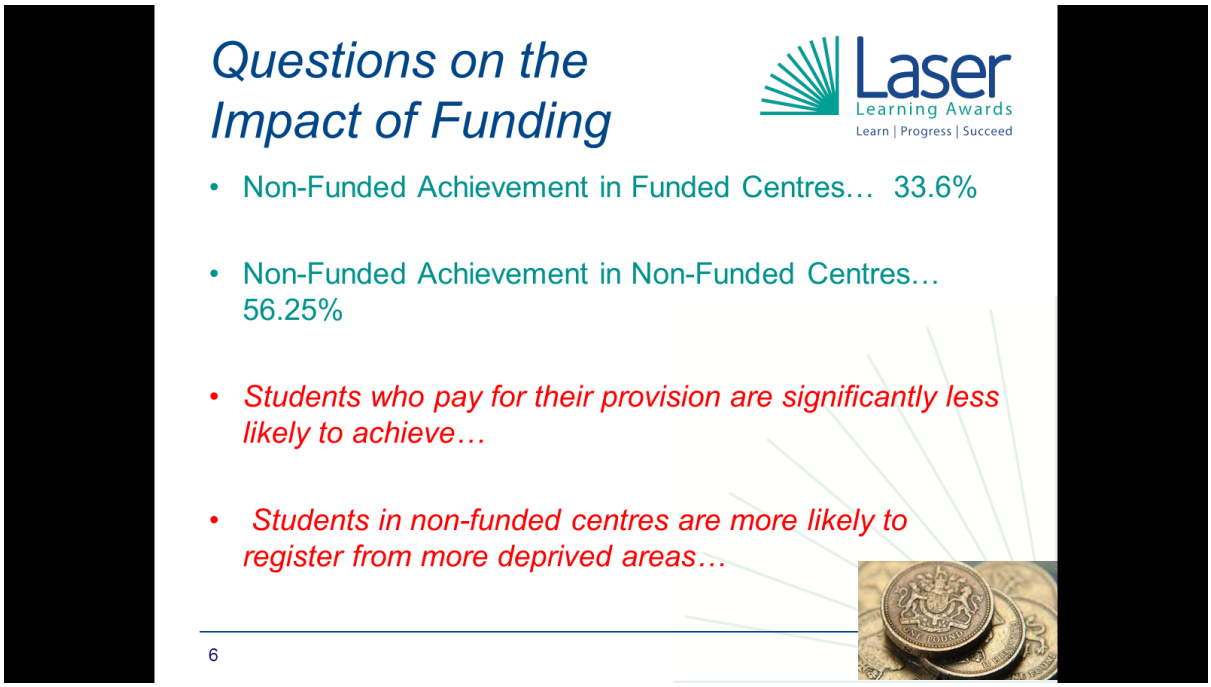
- As noted earlier, non-funded achievement remains a particular area for concern. This is particularly the case in terms of the ESFA Data set. This suggests that students who are studying in the same classes as funded students and whose only tangible difference to them is the nature of how the qualification is paid for are subject to a significantly differential expectation of achievement.

- To put this in context, students who are able to access ESFA funding have an approximately 3 in 4 probability of successful achievement. Students in the same classes who do not receive said ESFA funding have a 1 in 3 probability of successful achievement.

- Initial research has suggested no significant demographic differences in the two groups, either in terms of socio-economic profile, previous qualifications or work patterns. Therefore, the differential achievement presents an area which clearly requires further investigation as these students represent around 10% of the students being registered from ESFA funded centres.

- The AVA is currently undertaking research into this apparent anomaly which will be shared with centres in due course.

Questions in relation to the impact of funding:



- An interesting parallel with the data in relation to students who 'self fund' can be found in comparison of the non-funded student achievement within ESFA funded centres with their success in centres where no funding is drawn down from the ESFA.

Non-Funded Achievement in Funded Centres… 33.6%

- Self funding students in ESFA Centres (as noted) achievement represents 33.6%.

Non-Funded Achievement in Non-Funded Centres… 56.25%

- However, in centres where all students are self-funding the averaged achievement is 56.25. Further research suggests though that in relation to 75% of self-funding centres achievement is in excess of 70%. However, the average is reduced by the remaining 25%.

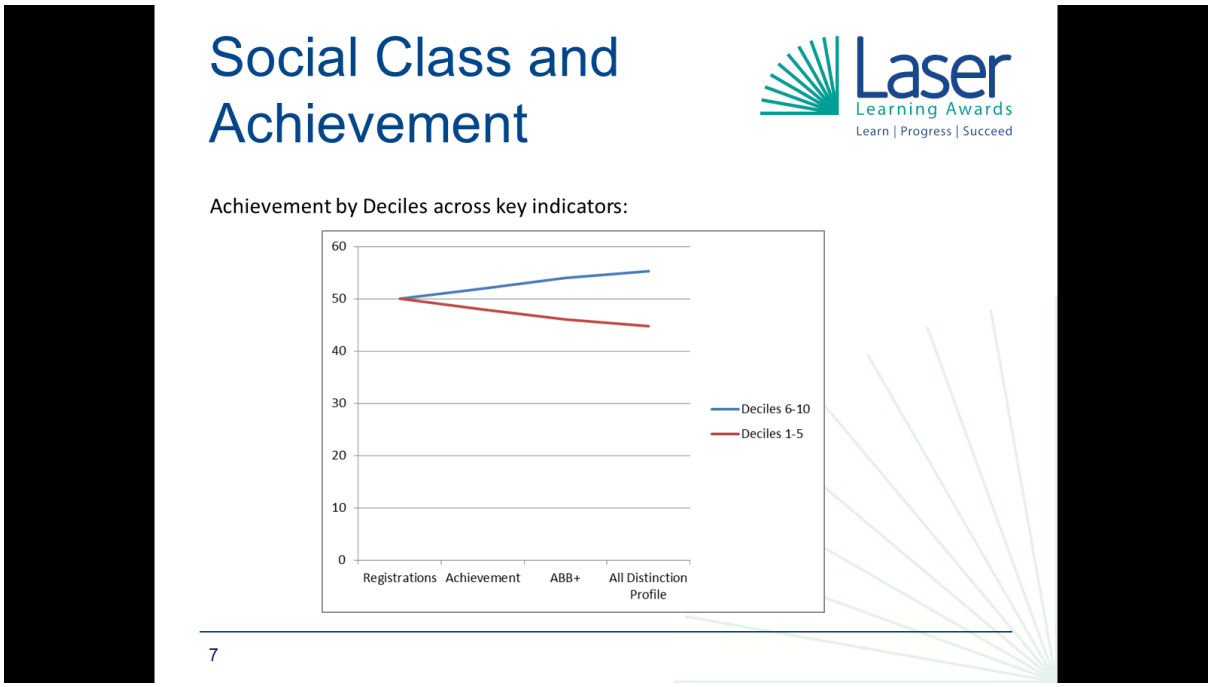
Students who pay for their provision are significantly less likely to achieve…

- In relation to the ESFA Data set there is clear evidence that self-funding students are less likely to achieve and this is seemingly confirmed (although to a lesser extent) in relation to centres not able to access ESFA funding…

Students in non-funded centres are more likely to register from more deprived areas…

- Interestingly, students identified as emerging from 'deprived' postcodes are more likely (proportionately) to register to non-funded centres than centres where there is ESFA funding available. This would seem counter-intuitive but the data does show higher intakes from deprived areas in non-funded centres provision.

Key Facts in relation to Social Class and Achievement:

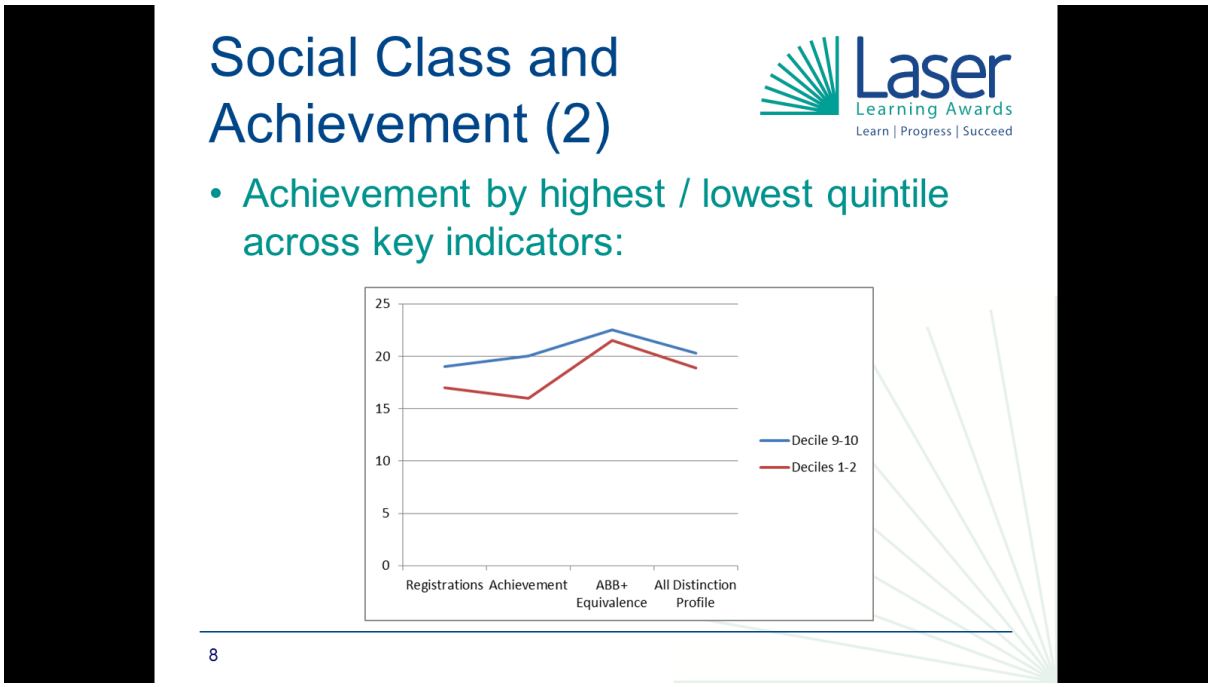


- In exploring the impact of Social Class as expressed by postcode position within the English Indices of Deprivation, the percentage of students registering from the upper and lower halves of the English Indices of Deprivation is equal.

- Students registering from the upper half of the deciles represent 2% more achievement against registrations with those from the poorer deciles falling by the same 2% when achievement and registrations are compared.

- The trend continues with the upper deciles being increasingly more likely to achieve ABB+ equivalence and All Distinction profiles and the poorer half of the deciles being proportionately less likely to achieve either ABB+ Equivalence or indeed All Distinction profiles.

Social Class and Achievement in the highest and lowest quintiles:



- If the same date is examined in terms of the most affluent quintile (Deciles 9-10) against the poorest quintile (Decile 1-2) a slightly different picture emerges.

- The most affluent quintile is significantly more likely to achieve than the poorest quintile. However, in terms of both ABB+ Equivalence and All Distinction profiles, there is a significant improvement in poorer student's performance. This would suggest that cross cutting factors may be bringing down performance for Deciles 3-4-5 despite the apparent improvement in probability of ABB+ Equivalence and All Distinction profiles for the lowest quintile.

- A simple correlation between wealth as expressed by postcode decile and achievement is not borne out by an examination of this data but nevertheless there is a clear overall correlation between deciles and achievement in the more general sense.

General analysis of socio-economic indicators:

Impact of Gender on achievement / grading marginal…

- Overall female students are slightly more likely to achieve than males. This is also the case in terms of ABB+ Equivalence. However, in terms of All Distinction profile equilibrium returns as 75% of women achieve All Distinction profile and 25% of males. This is equal to the constitution of overall registrations. Therefore, women are more likely to achieve and also to gain ABB+ Equivalence but equally likely to gain an All Distinction profile.

Impact of Ethnicity on achievement not significant although does impact on grading…

- Students not identifying as White British are slightly more likely to achieve (1%) than those identifying as White British. However, the data suggests that there is a significant swing to those identfying as White British in terms of both ABB+ Equivalence and All Distinction profiles although the data from Quartz remains incomplete as numerous registrations do not include accurate ethnicity data.

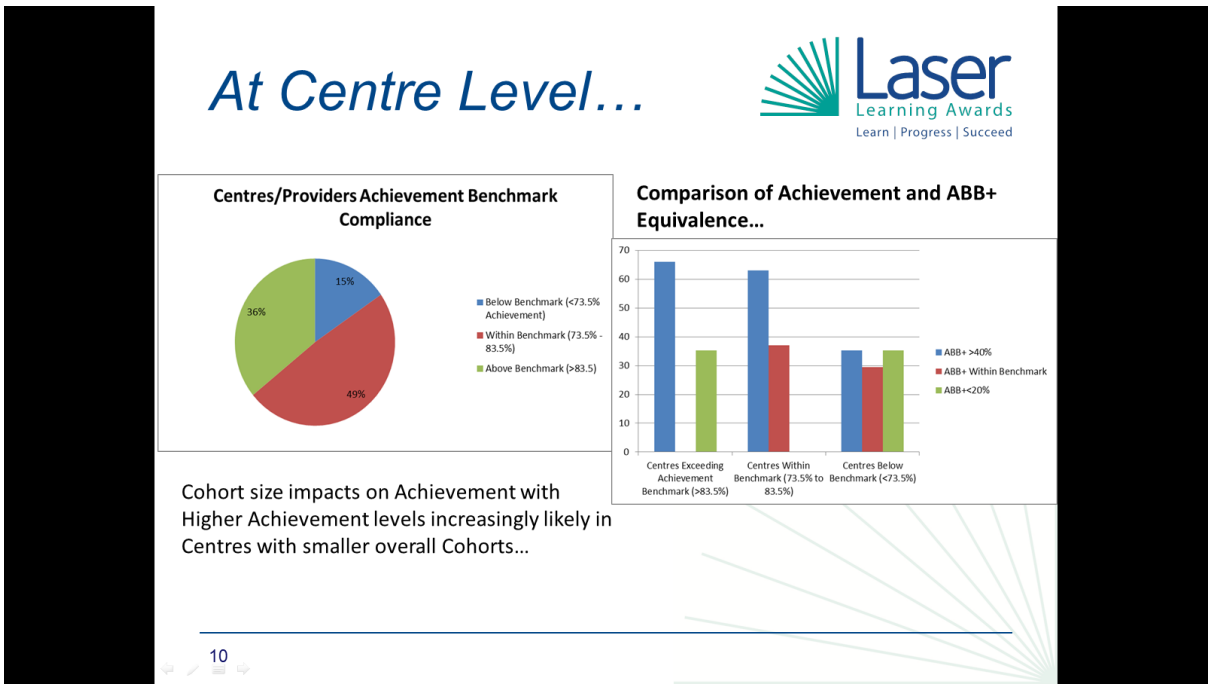
Some evidence of impact of Disability but not of Additional Learning Needs impacting on Achievement…

- Disability does appear to present a small negative impact on achievement when compared to registrations (a 2% fall). Identification of ‘additional learning needs’ has no impact. Unfortunately this analysis could not be carried over to ABB+ and All Distinction profiles as, in the same manner as ethnicity data, there were too few completed registrations in relation to this to allow for a meaningful sample to be taken.

Age does impact in all key areas, with students over 40 doing best over key indicators. Under 19s achieve more than those in the 20-39 age range…

- Age does appear to impact on achievement, ABB+ and All Distinction profiles. Students over 50 have the 'flattest' comparative profile suggesting the highest stability in percentage registered across achievement, ABB+ Equivalence and All Distinction profile. The most significant decline in percentages across key indicators was seen in the 20-29 year old group and the second least successful profile was from 30-19. Under 19s represent the third best performing group and the second best performing group across all key indicators was the 40-49 age group.

Data in relation to achievement and grading at centre level:

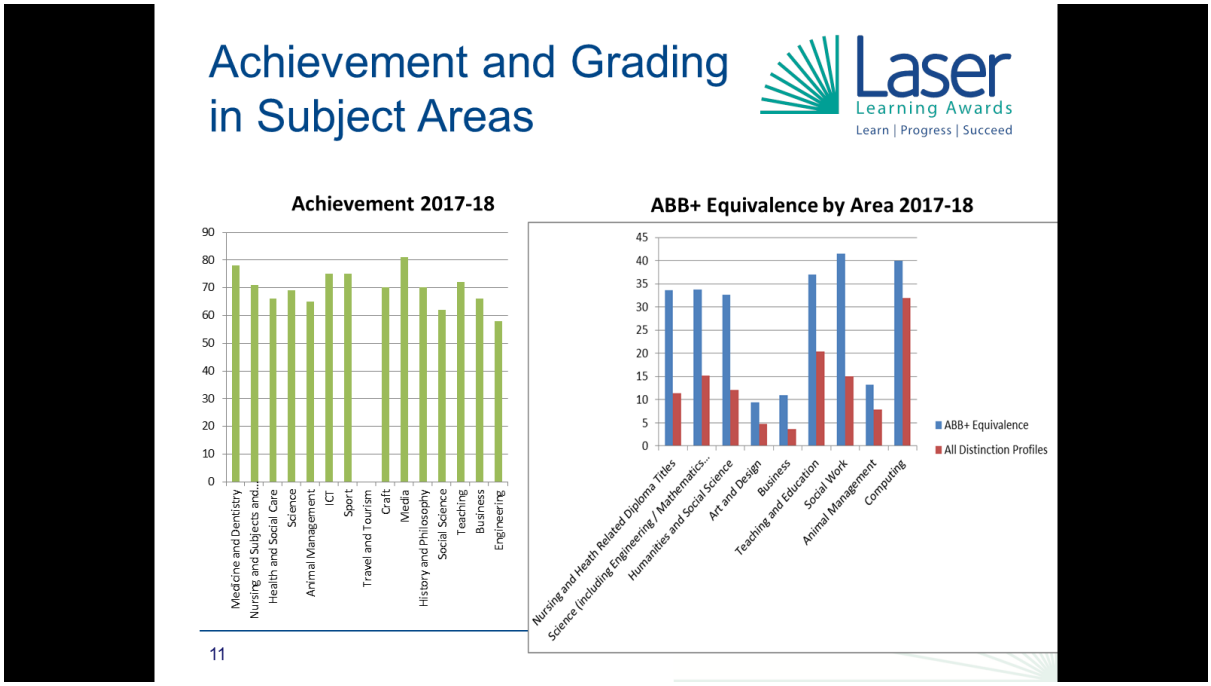


- In relation to the QAA Achievement Benchmark 85% of provision is either within or above the Achievement benchmark. 15% of provision falls beneath said benchmark. However, data suggests a clear correlation between cohort size (the number of students registering to a given centre / diploma) and achievement. Smaller cohorts equate to a higher probability of success on average. Whilst a direct correlation cannot be simplistically drawn the data would seem to be suggestive that smaller class sizes may well be linked to higher achievement.

- If both Achievement and ABB+ Equivalence are cross referenced centres who exceed ABB+ Equivalence are more likely to appear within or above the achievement benchmark. However, centres within the ABB+ Benchmark are more likely to be found within or below the achievement benchmark. Interestingly, those falling beneath the lower tolerance of the ABB+ Benchmark are found either within those beneath the achievement

benchmark or above it, but interestingly not within it. This evidences the complex interaction of factors which impact upon achievement and grading.

Data in relation to achievement and grading in subject / diploma areas:



- Data in relation to Achievement and Grading in relation to Diploma Subject Area shows some differences in terms of achievement. This data is drawn from the Subject Area Tier Two data from the R14 Data Cut of ESFA data.

- The highest achieving subject area was Media (81%) and the lowest was Engineering (58%). However, the bulk of samples were drawn from very small sized samples.

- In relation to the QAA Achievement Benchmark only four subject areas were operating within tolerance (Medicine and Dentistry; Sport (Science); ICT and Media and Communications). Whilst the others fell below tolerance the largest single subject area (Nursing and Subjects allied to Medicine) saw an increase of 1% and the overall distribution of achievement saw some areas increase and other decrease. There were no discernible patterns in relation to this although this is perhaps unsurprising as the majority of subject achievement rates were (as noted drawn against very small sample sizes).

- In relation to the ABB+ Benchmark, Social Work Diploma titles saw the highest level of ABB+ Equivalence and represented the only diploma title to exceed the upper tolerance of the QAA ABB+ Benchmark (by 1%).

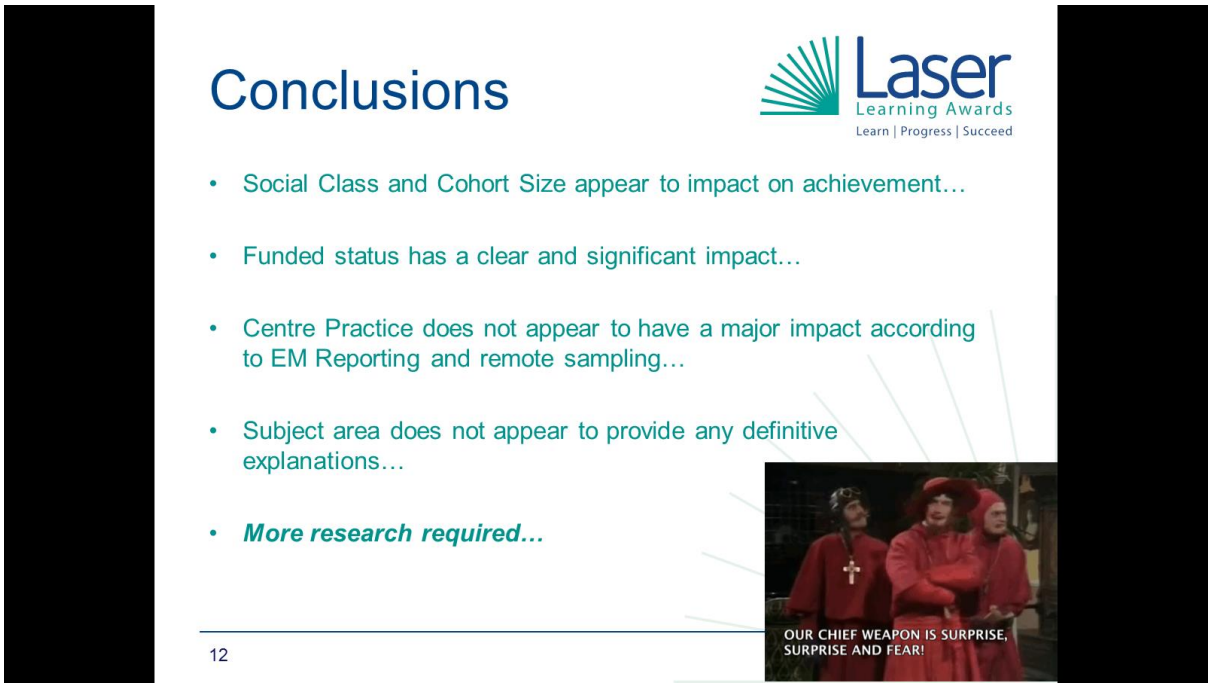
- Animal Management, Business and Art and Design all fell beneath the lower tolerance but importantly all the aforementioned ABB+ Equivalence scores were drawn against very small sample sizes. The most populous diploma

titles in relation to Nursing / Health, Science and Humanities and Social Science all fell within tolerance.

- Looking at all Distinction profiles there distribution of these was notably higher in relation to Computing than in other areas. There were quite different frequencies of All Distinction profiles by area but it should be remembered that the percentages were in many cases against samples where the overall registrations were against less than 50 students overall.

- Small samples such as these can lead to a significant 'skewing' of the percentages achieving All Distinction profiles (and ABB+ Equivalence) in such small scale areas.

Conclusions:



Social Class and Cohort Size appear to impact on achievement…

- At the conclusion of this process we can conclude that the social class demographics of cohorts does impact on achievement although the factors underpinning this are quite complex and do not have a simple linear impact where the higher the decile the greater the probability of success. Nevertheless, the upper half of the deciles are progressively more likely to succeed across all key indicators whereas students from the poorer deciles are commensurately less likely to succeed.

Funded status has a clear and significant impact…

- Funding status appears to have a clear impact on achievement although this area needs greater research to fully explore the causal factors for the differential.

Centre Practice does not appear to have a major impact according to EM Reporting and remote sampling…

- Centre practice does not appear to significantly impact upon achievement according to both EM reporting and sampling of work. The determinants of achievement seem to be more focussed upon matters occurring outside the classroom. This is not to underestimate the excellent teaching and learning taking place in the majority of centres, but rather to recognize that this excellent practice does not necessarily equate to success as other factors clearly impact upon student achievement outside of the hard work of dedicated teaching staff.

Subject area does not appear to provide any definitive explanations…

- In this sense there is also no conclusive evidence that subject areas impact on achievement and grading (although any evidence here is compromized by the low sample size for many subject areas).

More research required…

- LASER believes more research is required to further understand the data. This will include a general focus on achievement in Lead Centre Moderation Reports as well as a practitioner questionnaire aiming to identify what practitioners feel are the key determinants of success at the chalk-face. LASER will also explore identified good practice in relation to achievement through this process.

- LASER will also undertake specific investigations into both non-funded provision in ESFA funded centres to try to explain the significantly different achievement rates. It will also explore the factors which impact on achievement in centres who do not (are not able to access) ESFA funding to isolate any good practice and lessons which might be learned from their provision.

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