

Table 3 Summary of how existing Benchmarking sources deal with Staff Turnover

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2016)

The CIPD is a professional body for HR and people development, with more than 140,000 members worldwide. It describes employee turnover as the proportion of employees who leave an organisation over a set period (often on a year-on-year basis), expressed as a percentage of total workforce numbers. It also highlights related variations, e.g. whether the term encompasses all leavers, both voluntary and involuntary, including those who resign, retire or are made redundant. It has active research and survey functions with a wide range of reports reflecting the full range of HR interests, which evolve over time; its 2015 resourcing and talent planning survey report for the UK and showed nationwide trends in median staff turnover, using the standard “crude wastage” method, viz. number of leavers in a set period multiplied by 100 and divided by the average number employed in the same period (CIPD 2015b). However, there are no regular surveys and reports for the HE sector.

DLA Piper (2015)

This commercial benchmarking company invites annual data submission from subscribing universities. Its 2014 report involved 76 responses from HE institutions. Staff turnover data is institution-wide and relates to voluntary leavers only, i.e. it excludes those who leave for reasons of redundancy, dismissal, normal or early retirement and end of fixed term contract. The stability index is calculated as the percentage of (current) employees, who were in the employment of the institution at the beginning of the 12-month period covered. A range of related questions are also asked. Presentations include means and quartile distributions.

Higher Education Statistical Agency (2014)

This is the central source for the collection and dissemination of statistics about publicly funded UK HE; collecting data about the full range of HE topics, with staffing being one. Staff record data have been collected for academic years since 1994/95 from subscribing HE institutions, and involves comprehensive details of each member of staff (which were consistent with the internal data used for this research). It was optional for institutions to include or exclude atypical non-academic staff, but from 2015/16 such staff were excluded. A specific section on the HESA website shows annual publications and products for staff in HE, with many tables providing specific details of starters and leavers, from which turnover rates can be calculated. However, this tends to be limited to institution level.

Universities and Colleges Employers Association (2014)

This is a membership organisation whose mission is to represent, negotiate for, and promote the interests of UK HE institutions as employers to all stakeholders. Its workforce survey is published every few years (the predecessor to the 2013 was for 2008). It quotes HESA turnover data and covers all staff that leave, including redundancies. Some presentations include new joiners. Data is presented nationally, and includes means, medians and ranges for different categories of staff. There was no stability index data.

Workforce Employment Relations Study (2013)

This is a multi-sponsored project, with input from the various sponsors, that covers all sectors in the UK. Its surveys take place every 4-7 few years; the first was for 1980 and its most recent, sixth report related to 2011. “Best estimates” are accepted if exact data is not available. It does not specifically ask for staff turnover rates but headline rates can be calculated from the data, as can the stability index. Its first findings report did not include staff turnover or stability index figures.