

# A field guide to sixth form success rates

April 2011

► For guidance

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## Introduction

This guidance aims to support school and academy sixth forms in understanding how success rates are calculated and why they are an important measure of performance.

Success rates are used in two ways: firstly to be able to compare education for 16-19 year olds within and between sixth forms and colleges; and secondly as an element of the national 16-19 funding formula, which is used to calculate your funding allocation. Both uses of the success rate aim to support improvement in the quality of education for 16-19 year olds.

We are working with the Department for Education to review the 16-19 national funding formula to see how it can be simplified. Until that work is completed, we hope that this guidance and the *Open Book* project will be helpful tools to support your work.

It is also important to remember that the information that has been used to calculate 09/10 success rates was taken from before the Autumn 2010 exercise which updated success rates for many schools. Therefore, for some sixth forms, we acknowledge that the information may be out of date. However, the reports will still be useful to schools.

This guidance is divided into two parts: part 1 provides a general explanation of how success rates work; part 2 introduces you to some new documents that we have produced for your sixth form based on your 2009/10 success rate (the Qualification Success Rate pilot report and the success rates spreadsheet).

You'll find further support in our accompanying *Field guide to sixth form funding allocations* and on our website [www.ypla.gov.uk](http://www.ypla.gov.uk) in the Open Book section where we have prepared some technical Frequently Asked Questions to answer your detailed queries.

# Part 1: Success rates explained

## The elements of success

The YPLA, Ofsted and the Department of Education measure the success of your 16-19 year old students in a particular way, we call this your **Qualification Success Rate**. Your Qualification Success Rate has three components: your success rate, your retention rate and your achievement rate. Or to put it simply, of those students that you accept into your sixth form, how many complete their planned journey and of those that do, how many are successful.

$$\text{SUCCESS RATE} = \text{ACHIEVEMENTS} \div \text{STARTS}$$

**Success Rate** – This shows how many students have been able to pass *and* finish their course.

$$\text{ACHIEVEMENT RATE} = \text{ACHIEVEMENTS} \div \text{COMPLETIONS}$$

**Achievement Rate** – This shows the proportion of your sixth form's courses that your students have been able to pass.

$$\text{RETENTION RATE} = \text{COMPLETIONS} \div \text{STARTS}$$

**Retention Rate** – This is a measure of whether your students have been able to finish their courses.

The inclusion of the retention element is important because it means that your Qualification Success Rate is a measure of the student journey and therefore provides an indication of how effective the sixth form is in guiding a student onto a programme that reflects their prior attainment, skills, commitment and realistic aspirations.

## SUCCESS RATE

### How is your sixth form's success rate calculated?

$$\text{SUCCESS RATE} = \text{ACHIEVEMENTS} \div \text{STARTS}$$

This guidance (and its accompanying documents) look at your success rate for 2009/10. This period began on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009 and finished on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010. Starts and achievements can only be included in the calculation if you planned for the student to complete their course during this period.

Your success rate is calculated at learning aim level. If a student is studying 4 AS levels, then the student's results for each subject count towards your success rate.

#### **FOR EXAMPLE...**

140 SIXTH FORMERS WERE STUDYING IN 2009/10. EACH SIXTH FORMER STUDIED 3 SUBJECTS. THE SIXTH FORM REPORTED IN THEIR MAY 2010 CENSUS THAT 120 STUDENTS WOULD COMPLETE THEIR COURSE BY 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2010 (THESE STUDENTS GAINED 304 PASSES IN THEIR EXAMS), BUT THAT 10 STUDENTS HAD DROPPED OUT OF THE SIXTH FORM AFTER 6 WEEKS; AND 10 STUDENTS WERE STUDYING THEIR COURSES OVER 2 YEARS AND WOULD BE ENTERED FOR THEIR EXAMS IN SUMMER 2011.

- THE STUDENTS THAT ARE DUE TO COMPLETE DURING 2010/11 ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE CALCULATION (THEY WILL BE COUNTED NEXT YEAR); THIS LEAVES 130 SIXTH FORMERS.
- EACH SIXTH FORMER STUDIES 3 SUBJECTS:  $3 \times 130 = 390$  STARTS
- $304 \text{ ACHIEVEMENTS} \div 390 \text{ STARTS} = 0.78$  OR 78% SUCCESS RATE
- $304 \text{ ACHIEVEMENTS} \div 360 \text{ COMPLETIONS} = 0.84$  OR 84% ACHIEVEMENT RATE
- $360 \text{ COMPLETIONS} \div 390 \text{ STARTS} = 0.92$  OR 92% RETENTION RATE

## Which students can be included in your success rate?

We look at each course that your students are studying. To be included in the success rate calculation each one must pass a number of checks. When they have passed the checks they are counted as a **START** (called **learning aims in scope** in your QSR report).

### Criteria for inclusion in your success rate:

- The course must generate a Standard Learner Number
- The student is in Year 12, 13 or 14
- You have planned that the student will finish the course during 2009/10
- The qualification must be eligible to be included in the success rate

**Generating an SLN** – We take the QAN code that you report in your census and we look in the Learning Aims Database to see if there is a SLN attached to this qualification. Some qualifications do not generate SLN. You can also see the SLN value of your courses at <http://providers.lsc.gov.uk/lad/>

**Student Year** – Sixth form funding is for sixth formers. We only fund students in Year 12 and 13, or those in Year 14 (who, for example, might be retaking a course).

**Planned end dates** – You reported in your May 2010 census when you planned for your students to complete their courses. If this planned end date is in 2009/10 (between 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010) then the course will be included in the 2009/10 success rate calculation. If the planned end date is on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010 or later, then the course will be included in your success rate calculation for the next year (2010/11).

**Eligibility of qualification for inclusion in the success rate** – Key skills and functional skills courses are not currently included in the success rate calculation. This may be subject to review.

### **OTHER EXCLUSIONS FROM THE SUCCESS RATE CALCULATION**

**VISITING STUDENTS** – ANY STUDENT WHOSE HOME INSTITUTION IS OTHER THAN YOUR OWN SIXTH FORM IS EXCLUDED FROM THE CALCULATION

**RESITS AND RETAKES** – RETAKES ARE ACCEPTABLE AND ARE TREATED IN THE SAME WAY AS OTHER COURSES. RESITS (EXAM/ASSESSMENT ONLY) ARE NOT FUNDED OR INCLUDED IN THE SUCCESS RATE CALCULATION

**TRANSFERS** – IF A STUDENT TRANSFERS TO ANOTHER COURSE, THEIR ORIGINAL COURSE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUCCESS RATE CALCULATION

## What counts as an achievement?

When your sixth form submits its census return, the Department for Education matches this to information about exam results from awarding bodies.

Achievement is measured on a **pass / fail basis**. We do not consider a student's grades in the success rate calculation.

### Achievement status categories reported by DfE:

- **Achieved**
- **Not Achieved**
- **Results not known**
- **Study continuing**

**Achieved** – These students have passed their course. They are included in the calculation and will have a positive impact on your success rate.

**Not achieved** – These are included in the calculation and will have a negative impact on your success rate.

**Results not know** (or “**unknown outcomes**” in the QSR) – These students' results were not matched to your census records. These students are not currently included in your success rate calculation, but can be if you provide updated information in a business case.

**Study Continuing** – If the planned end date is in 2010/11, it is not included in the calculation. If the planned end date is in 2009/10, then it is included in the calculation; and if there is no achievement it will negatively affect your success rate.

### Cashing-in rules:

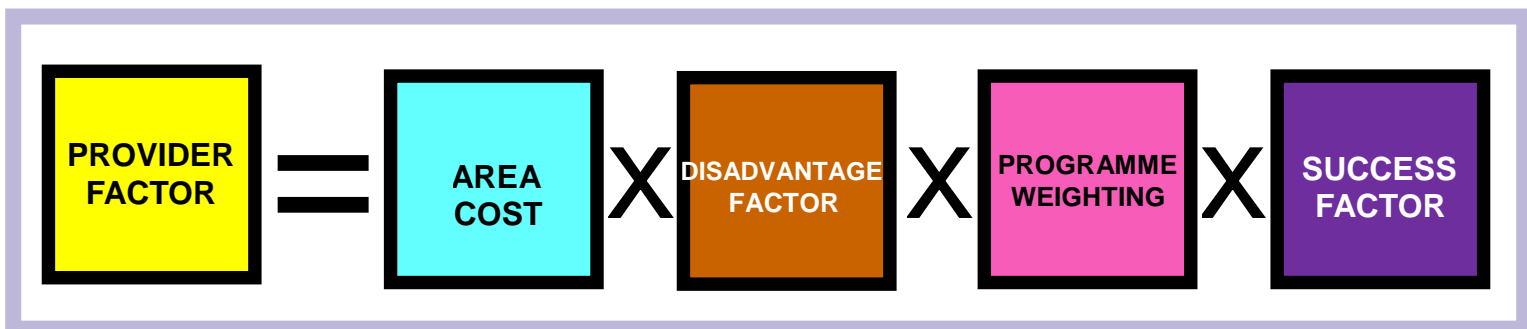
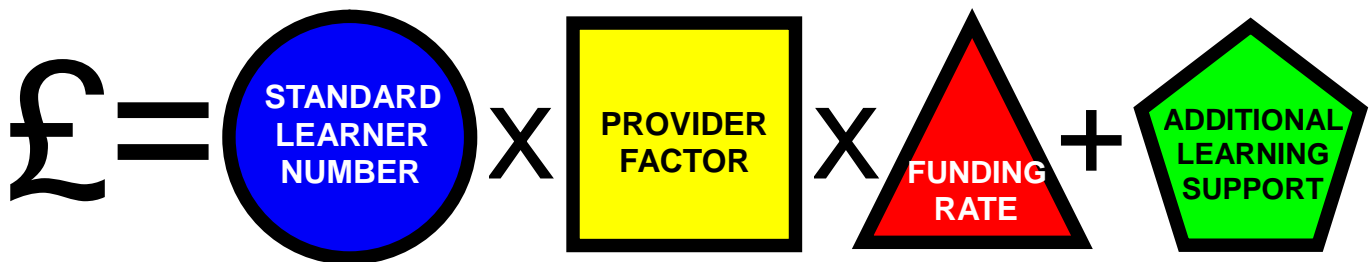
**Cashing-in** is when your sixth form tells the exam board that a student wants their result to be added to their final grade. In the past some sixth forms have not accepted the awarded grade with the intention of getting the student to re-sit the assessment.

- If you have not cashed-in some of your AS levels, these will show up as **Results not known**
- Qualifications that have not been cashed-in cannot be included in the success rate calculation because the actual end date of the course occurs after the end of academic year 2009/10 (after the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010).
- You cannot include qualifications that your sixth form has not cashed-in in a business case to the YPLA.
- You can find more information on cashing-in on the Department for Education's website:

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus)

## Success in the national funding formula

All sixth forms and colleges in England are funded in the same way. A national funding formula is used to calculate how much money is paid for teaching 16-18 year olds. Your sixth form's success rate is currently an element of this calculation:



THE ABOVE FORMULA WAS USED TO CALCULATE YOUR 2011/12 FUNDING ALLOCATION. WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION TO REVIEW ALL ELEMENTS OF THE 16-19 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA TO SEE HOW IT CAN BE SIMPLIFIED FOR FUTURE ALLOCATIONS.

FOR MORE GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING FORMULA PLEASE SEE THE ACCOMPANYING **FIELD GUIDE TO SIXTH FORM FUNDING ALLOCATIONS**, OR FOR TECHNICAL DETAIL ABOUT HOW THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AFFECTS YOUR SIXTH FORM, PLEASE REFER TO THE YPLA'S FUNDING GUIDANCE AT:  
[WWW.YPLA.GOV.UK/ABOUTUS/OURWORK/FUNDING/ALLOCATIONS](http://WWW.YPLA.GOV.UK/ABOUTUS/OURWORK/FUNDING/ALLOCATIONS)



## Success factor and success rate

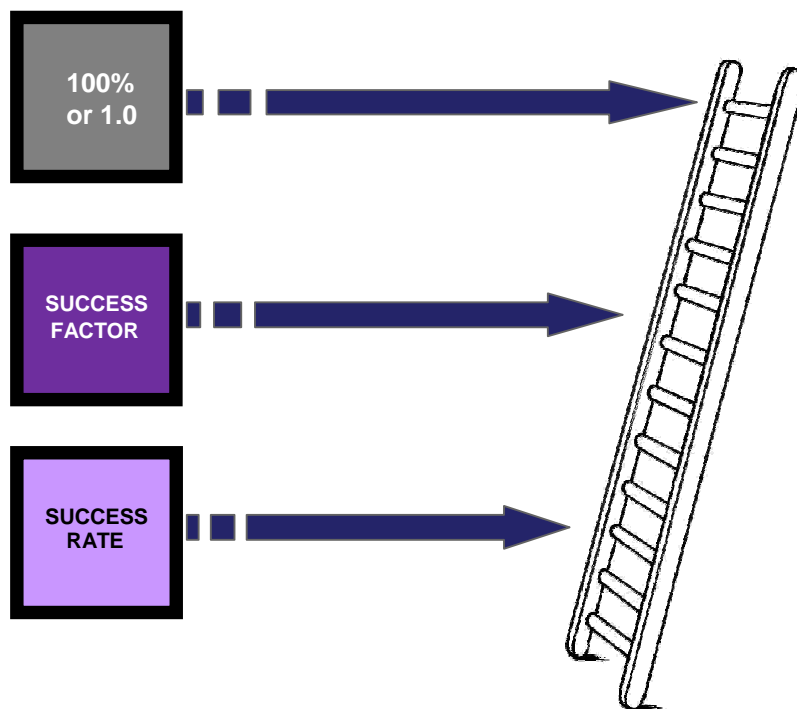
We used a success factor when calculating your 2011/12 funding allocation, this was either based on your 08/09 data or the updated success rate based on the checking exercise from Autumn 2010. This element of the Provider Factor gives a reward to sixth forms for ensuring that their students pass their course. Every student who passes their course has a positive impact on the funding for the whole sixth form.

The success factor comes from your success rate, but they are not the same. We recognise that there is a cost to your sixth form and that there is an inherent value to educating young people – even if they don't pass their course. Therefore we fix your *success factor* at a higher point than your *success rate*.

To calculate your success rate: **Success Factor = (Success Rate ÷ 2) + 0.5**

or in other words...

**take the halfway point between your success rate and 100% or 1.0**



**FOR EXAMPLE...**

80% SUCCESS RATE = 0.900 SUCCESS FACTOR  
50% SUCCESS RATE = 0.750 SUCCESS FACTOR

# Part 2: Your success rate documents

1. Qualification Success Rate pilot report
2. Success rate spreadsheet and business case

## 1. Qualification Success Rate report (*pilot*)

We have produced a Qualification Success Rate report for your sixth form. This report provides you with management information which can be used, for example, to help you with your self-assessment so that you can improve the quality of your sixth form. The report shows your sixth form's success, retention and achievement rates during 2009/10. Colleges have received this report in the past and we have now produced it for sixth forms too so that all providers of 16-19 education have access to the same type of information.

This is a pilot and the first time that we have produced this report for sixth forms. The report uses the same data as the success rate spreadsheet. The retention and achievement rates are subject to the same rules about **Starts** as the success rate, described earlier in this guide.

### **Why have you produced a Qualification Success Rate report for my sixth form?**

- The YPLA and the DfE aims to treat all sixth forms and colleges equally and consistently, as far as possible. This means making fair and equal assessments about the effectiveness and quality of the provision that is offered to young people. Colleges will also receive a Qualification Success Rate report.

### **Where did you get this information from?**

- We've based this report on the data that you returned in your May 2010 census. It is the same data that we've used in your success rate spreadsheet.

### **What's the YPLA's role in improving my sixth form?**

- The YPLA does not have a direct role in quality improvement. Sixth forms and colleges are autonomous and responsible for managing and assuring the quality of their own provision. However, we do have a role in managing and minimising the risk to public funding and ensuring that we are supporting provision that meets minimum national standards.

### **What should I do with my Qualification Success Rate report?**

- The responsibility for the quality of provision and improvement rests with your sixth form. Self assessment is a key process by which this responsibility is fulfilled. The Qualification Success Rate report aims to support your sixth form on quality improvement and to help you measure progress against your own objectives. Evaluating the success of students is at the heart of this process; a close analysis of the report will help you do this.

### **Who else will see my Qualification Success Rate report?**

- Ofsted will also have access to your Qualification Success Rate report, but will not use the report to make judgments about your sixth form in this pilot year.

## ***YOUR QUALIFICATION SUCCESS RATE REPORT AND YOUR BUSINESS CASE***

YOUR QUALIFICATION SUCCESS RATE REPORT IS BASED ON THE DATA WHICH YOU SUBMITTED IN YOUR CENSUS. IN THIS PILOT YEAR YOU MAY IDENTIFY ISSUES WITH ITS CONTENT. YOU CAN ADDRESS THESE VIA A SUCCESS RATES BUSINESS CASE (DESCRIBED LATER IN THIS DOCUMENT). HOWEVER YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT IF YOUR SUCCESS RATE CHANGES, BECAUSE WE HAVE ACCEPTED A BUSINESS CASE, IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO REVISE YOUR QUALIFICATION SUCCESS RATE REPORT. THIS IS BECAUSE WE DO NOT ASK YOU TO RE-SUBMIT ALL OF YOUR CENSUS DATA. OFSTED WILL NOT USE THIS REPORT TO INFORM ANY JUDGEMENT ABOUT YOUR SIXTH FORM.

## 2. Success rate spreadsheet and business case

We have also produced a success rate spreadsheet and business case for your sixth form. This has been designed so that you can see how your census data is used to calculate your success rate.

The spreadsheet looks at your 2009/10 success rate. It is based on your census return in May 2010. Your updated 08/09 success rate was used in your 11/12 allocation.

The spreadsheet includes an automatic business case template so that if the success rate that we've calculated from your census data is not in line with your expectations, then you can propose that it be changed.

### **Action to take – at a glance**

#### **1. Does your success rate look about right?**

Bearing in mind the autumn 2010 updating exercise, if you are satisfied that your success rate is broadly in line with your expectations, then you do not need to take any further action.

#### **2. Are the right students being counted?**

Review the data in your success rate spreadsheet. Check if the correct number of students is included in the calculation. Has the student's programme of study been reported correctly?

#### **3. Have their results been recorded accurately?**

Check to see if the student's achievements have been reported accurately. Do you have students recorded as *Results not yet known* that you can update?

#### **4. Submitting a business case**

If you wish to report corrected information, complete the final three grey columns on the data sheet; this will automatically complete the business case for you. We do not require you to re-submit your census data; but you must hold evidence at your school which supports *all* changes that you propose. The headteacher should print and sign the page named **Business Case**; send this to the YPLA by 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011. The YPLA will contact your sixth form after you have submitted your business case to review your supporting evidence.

## Submitting a business case

If your success rate is not in line with your expectations you can submit a business case to the YPLA. We will review your business case; if it is accepted, your success rate will be revised.

### *Evidence requirements*

- Your sixth form must hold evidence on site to support every change that you propose. If you do not have acceptable supporting evidence you must not propose a change.
- Evidence must be suitable for providing assurance to an external auditor.
- We do not want you to create new evidence. You should only hold evidence which is *naturally occurring* during the year.
- Business cases must be signed by the headteacher as the accounting officer for your sixth form.

#### **Acceptable evidence**

Statement from an awarding body  
Extract from your census  
/ MI system return to DfE/LA

#### **Not acceptable evidence**

Spreadsheet produced  
by sixth form  
Letter of assurance  
from headteacher  
Photos of students

There is an automatic business case form on your success rate spreadsheet. You need to report to us which records are incorrect, but **we do not require you to re-submit your census information.**

**Step 1** - For those courses that you wish to propose a change, complete columns T (*Amended Achievement Outcome*) and V (*Reason for Change*); if you have entered "other" in *Reason for Change*, then please describe your reason in column W.

Summary of starts and achievements					Sixth form business case form		
Unique Pupil Number	Pupil Names' See Pupil Name tab for further informati	Is this Counted as a Start?	If Not, Why Not?	What was the Achievement Outcome?	Amended Achievement Outcome	Reason for Change	Explanation - Only Complete This Field if Reason is "Other" (Uncashed AS cannot be included)
G91929997001	James	Yes		Not Achieved			
G91929997001	James	Yes		Not Achieved			
V919204097011	Sarah	Yes		Not Achieved			
V919204097011	Sarah	Yes		Not Achieved			

**Step 2** - If you have students that have been omitted from the data and you wish them to be included in the success rate calculation, you will find a section at the bottom where these students can be included. You should only report the Unique Pupil Number and complete the grey columns described in Step 1.

\* To report a missing qualification, type the UPN in the yellow cell below and complete the Sixth F

Unique Pupil Number	Amended Achievement Outcome	Reason for Change	Explanation - Only Complete This Field if Reason is "Other" (Uncashed AS cannot be included)

**ypla** Business Case to Amend 2009/10 Success Rate  
Young People's Learning Agency

Starts (Learning Aim in scope) = Achieved + Result Not Known + Not Achieved + Study Continuing  
 Success Rate = Achieved / (Starts - Result Not Known)  
 Success Factor = (Success Rate \* 0.5) + 0.5  
 Retention Rate = Study Continuing / Starts  
 Achievement Rate = Achieved / Continuing + Result Not Known

	YPLA Assessment	Sixth Form Assessment	Difference
Starts	247	247	0
Success Rate	67.36%	67.36%	0.00%
Success Factor	0.837	0.837	0.000
Achieved	161	161	0
Result Not Known	8	8	0
Not Achieved	74	74	0
Study Continuing	7	7	0
Retention Rate	78.54%		
Achievement Rate	86.55%		

**Summary of Reasons for Proposed Changes**

The student's start status is incorrect	The student's achievement status is incorrect	The record is missing or a duplication	Other
0	0	0	0

Please describe the most significant issues that have arisen in your proposed changes (eg particular subjects or particular fields). Please give an indication of the number of records that are affected.

As the accounting officer, I confirm that the changes proposed by this business case are accurate and that my sixth form holds acceptable evidence to support all proposed changes.

Head Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Teacher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions for submitting a business case:**

- Print this page (Business Case) only.
- Your business case should be signed by the headteacher.
- Either send a hard copy in the post or scan (then email) your business case to your regional YPLA office.
- Submit your business case by Friday 8th July 2011.

**The YPLA will contact you, after you have submitted your business case, to review your**

**Step 3** - The business case template will automatically calculate your proposed success rate. Please print this page and get the headteacher to sign it. Return only this print out (hard copy by post, or scan & email) to the YPLA by 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

**Step 4** - The YPLA will contact your sixth form after you have submitted your business case to review your supporting evidence.

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