

# A field guide to HEI success rates

December 2011

► For guidance

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## Introduction

This guidance aims to support Higher Education Institutions 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, colleges and HEIs; 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.

This guidance provides a general explanation of how success rates work and introduces you to the success rate review spreadsheet that we have also produced.



## How is your HEI'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 a Foundation Certificate in Creative Craft and an additional level 2 award in Food Safety, then the student's results for each subject count towards your success rate.

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

140 STUDENTS WERE STUDYING IN 2009/10. EACH STUDENT STUDIED 3 SUBJECTS. THE HEI REPORTED IN THEIR HESA RETURN 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 HEI 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 STUDENT STUDIES 3 SUBJECTS:  $3 \times 130 = 390$  STARTS
- $304 \text{ ACHIEVEMENTS} \div 390 \text{ STARTS} = 0.78$  OR 78% SUCCESS 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**.

### Criteria for inclusion in your success rate:

- The course must generate funding (a Standard Learner Number)
- The student is 16-18 when they begin the course
- 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 funding** – We take the qualification code that you report in your HESA return 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 Age** – 16-19 funding is for 16-19 year olds. To qualify the student must normally be no older than 18 years old when they begin the course.

**Planned end dates** – In your HESA return, you reported the start date and planned length of the course. We derive a planned end date from this. 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**

**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 HEI submits its HESA return, you include achievement data. It is this data which the YPLA uses to assess your success rate.

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

### Achievement status categories:

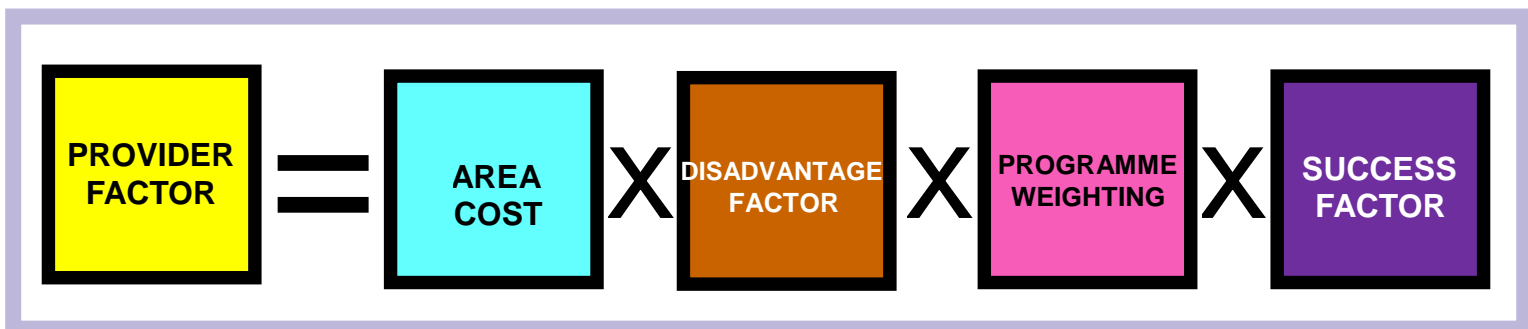
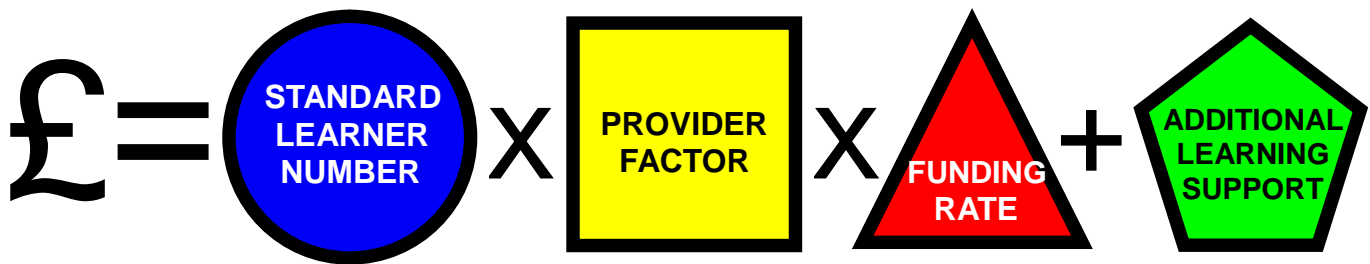
- **Achieved**
- **Not Achieved**

**Achieved** – These students have passed their course and will have a positive impact on your success rate.

**Not achieved** – These students will have a negative impact on your success rate. Where a student's achievement outcome is recorded as **Exam taken but results not known**, this counts as *Not Achieved*; where a student's achievement outcome is recorded as **Study Continuing**, this counts as *Not Achieved*: in both of these cases, this is because the student has not passed their course within the time period that you planned.

## Success in the national funding formula

All HEIs, 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 16-19 year olds. Your HEI'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 TECHNICAL DETAIL ABOUT HOW THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AFFECTS YOUR HEI, 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

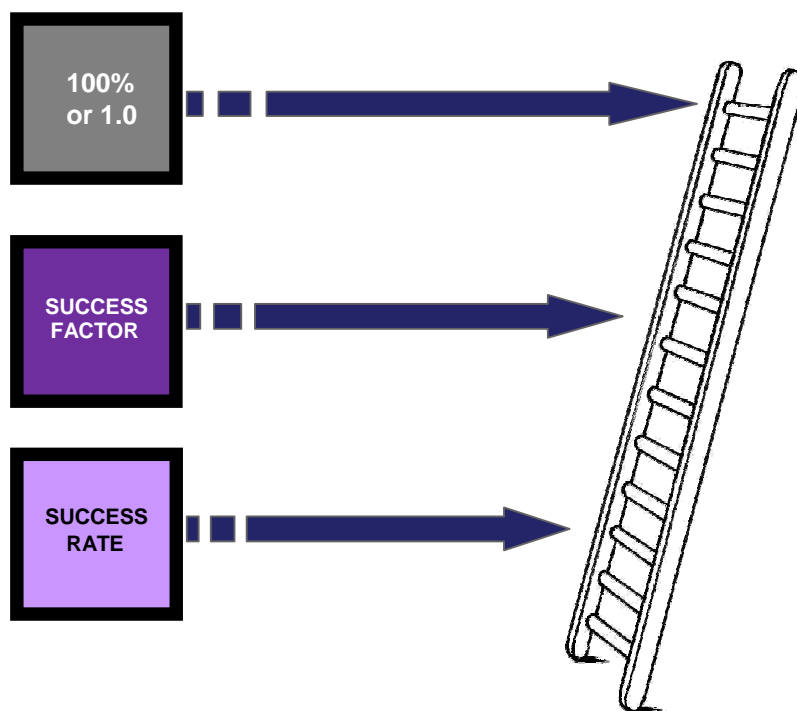
This element of the Provider Factor gives a reward to education providers for ensuring that their students pass their course. Every student who passes their course has a positive impact on your whole FE funding allocation.

The success factor comes from your success rate, but they are not the same. We recognise that there is a cost to your HEI 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



## Success rate spreadsheet and business case

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

The spreadsheet looks at your 2009/10 success rate. It is based on your HESA returns for 2008/09 and 2009/10; we look at all courses that you planned to end in 2009/10.

The spreadsheet includes an automatic business case template so that if the success rate that we've calculated from your HESA 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?**

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.

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

If you wish to report corrected information, complete the final four grey columns on the data sheet; this will automatically complete the business case for you. We do not require you to re-submit your HESA data; but you must submit evidence which supports *all* changes that you propose. The Accounting Officer should print and sign the page named **Business Case**; send this to the YPLA with evidence supporting every change that you propose.

## 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 HEI 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 accounting officer for your HEI.

#### **Acceptable evidence**

Statement from an awarding body  
Extract from your HESA / MI system return  
Signed award sheets from your exam board (for your own awards)

#### **Not acceptable evidence**

Spreadsheet produced by HEI  
Letter of assurance from your organisation  
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 HESA information.**



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