



Department
for Education

Data and Statistics Division

Autumn 2012 School Census

Post 16 Learning Aims Module Guidance

For use by schools and local authorities

Last updated: 3 October 2012

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Main changes from the 2011 School Census	3
1.2	Why is this collection of Post 16 Learning Aims data needed?	3
1.3	Which schools need to complete this module and for which students?	4
1.4	Which learning aims should be included?	5
1.5	Some scenarios to help identify the correct students and learning aims	6
2.	REQUIRED DATA ITEMS	8
2.1	Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN)	8
2.2	Learning Aim Start Date	8
2.3	Learning Aim Planned End Date	9
2.4	Learning Aim Status	9
2.5	Learning Aim Actual End Date	9
2.6	Learning Aim Result	10
2.7	Learning Aim Outcome	11
3.	PROCESSES FOR RECORDING LEARNING AIMS	12
3.1	Prior to or at the start of the academic year	12
3.2	At the start of the academic year	13
3.3	Throughout the academic year	13
3.4	For the Autumn School Census	13
4.	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	15
5.	FURTHER SOURCES OF GUIDANCE	22
5.1	Policy and funding guidance	22
5.2	Password and technical difficulties	22
5.3	General information	22

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is a quick reference guide to help schools and local authorities return the data required in the Post 16 Learning Aims module of the 2012 Autumn School Census.

1.1 Main changes from the 2011 School Census

Post 16 learning aims will only be collected once a year, in the Autumn School Census. They will no longer be collected in the Summer School Census.

The Autumn School Census will capture learning aims from the previous year: this will include any that were “live” at any point during 2011/12 as well as those for the current academic year, 2012/13.

The Autumn School Census will also collect information on the outcome of the previous year’s aims. It will capture both the result, eg A, A*, and the outcome (pass, fail or result not known) for each completed aim.

Learning aims will be collected for students in National Curriculum Year Group 12 or above, for whom the school wishes to claim post-16 funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) (the successor to YPLA). Previously students in National Curriculum Year Group 11 or below studying towards level 3 (or above) qualifications have been included.

Discount codes will no longer be collected. However, discount codes will continue to be associated with QANs and some schools may need to record at least some discount codes in their MIS – see Section 3.1. This is to allow qualifications that share a QAN to be distinguished. This is also necessary for distinguishing all QANs within some software systems.

1.2 Why is this collection of Post 16 Learning Aims data needed?

Information collected on learning aims and their outcomes will be used to calculate qualification success rates (QSRs) for schools. QSRs measure the percentage of learning aims that were due to end during the academic year that resulted in a pass. QSRs are currently used in calculating funding for school and Academy sixth forms, and the intention is that they will be used as a published measure from 2012, enabling comparison with other 16-18 providers.

In the past QSRs for school sixth forms were produced by collecting data on the learning aims studied by students through the School Census, and matching with results data from awarding organisations. However, the Census and awarding organisation data need to have corresponding QANs (qualification accreditation numbers) in order to achieve a high rate of matching, and to date, this has proved difficult, resulting in a large number of aims with unknown outcomes. Collecting information about the learning aims and their outcomes direct from schools in the School Census will negate the need for Departmental matching of information about learning aims from schools with results information from awarding organisations, resulting in more accurate and timely data. Schools will also benefit from having information about learning aims and

outcomes side-by-side in their systems as they will be able to use the data for their own analyses.

Colleges and training providers already supply both aims and outcomes through the Individualised Learner Record, their equivalent of the School Census.

1.3 Which schools need to complete this module and for which students?

This module is only required from secondary schools with sixth forms, including middle deemed secondary schools, CTCs and Academies (including free schools). This module is not required from special schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or secondary schools without sixth forms.

While students at other schools, such as special schools, may be studying learning aims, information about those learning aims is NOT collected as part of the School Census.

Information is required on learning aims from the previous (2011/12) as well as those for the current academic year (2012/13).

Learning aims taken in the **current academic year** will be collected for any students who:

- Have been on roll in the school at any point between 1st August 2012 and Census Day, and
- Were in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 12 or above in that period, regardless of their age, and
- For whom the school wishes to claim funding from the EFA

Learning aims that were taken in the **previous academic year** will be collected for any students who:

- Have been on roll in the school at any point between 1st August 2011 and 31st July 2012, and
- Were in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 12 or above in that period, regardless of their age, and
- For whom the school wishes to claim funding from the EFA

This may include students who have left school prior to the Autumn Census Day.

Note that any student who is doing the majority of their learning at level 3 or above would be expected to be in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 12 or above. Learning aims would therefore be expected to be returned in the School Census for such a student. If a student is in Actual National Curriculum Year

Group 11 or below studying towards some level 3 (or above) qualifications but with the majority of their learning at level 2 (or below) learning aims should **not** be returned for them in the School Census.

Funding will usually be agreed for students who have completed their statutory education and hold qualifications at least equivalent to a full level 2. Funding will usually be agreed for students who have completed their statutory education and hold qualifications at least equivalent to a full level 2. This means that EFA will agree to fund those aged under 16 in schools who are studying in the sixth form and who are studying most of their courses at level 3 - see paragraph 44 of YPLA's Funding Guidance Learner Eligibility Guidance 2010/11 <http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/agency-leg2010-11-version1aon12-04-2010.pdf>.

Schools may need to exercise some judgement as to what is meant by the majority of a student's programme at level 3 or above.

Schools should only include learning aims for those students who have (or had at the time of the learning aims) current or main registration at the school. For dual registered students, funding will only be provided to the main school. All learning aims for dual registered students must therefore be returned by the school which holds the student's main registration ie the main school should return the learning aims being taken at both the main and subsidiary schools. Subsidiary schools should not submit learning aims in respect of students with subsidiary registration.

1.4 Which learning aims should be included?

Learning aims should be included in the Autumn School Census if the learning aim finished after 31st July 2011 or it is on-going ie the Actual End Date is blank. Schools should return as a minimum, those learning aims which were started for the minimum period shown below. However, the Department will accept learning aims that have been completed for a period shorter than the minimum shown even though they may not qualify for funding.

Duration of Learning Aim	Minimum period
Greater than or equal to 24 weeks	Six weeks
Two weeks or more but less than 24 weeks	Two weeks
Less than two weeks	One learning engagement

Information in relation to re-sits is not generally required for the purposes of this collection and should therefore not be returned by schools. A re-sit occurs when an examination is taken again, or coursework resubmitted, but the student does not attend regular lessons for the course (attendance at revision classes

may occur). Sometimes a student may take an exam early in the academic year, does not do very well, and so takes the exam again later in the academic year to try to improve his or her result. In this scenario, as long as the exam was taken before the Planned End Date of the learning aim, the school can choose to return in the School Census the best result, which might be from the second sitting of the exam. Results achieved from re-sits taken after the Planned End Date should not be submitted.

Re-takes will be treated in the same manner as any other normal course and should be recorded as a new learning aim. A re-take occurs when a student is re-taking a complete qualification, including attendance at regular classes.

If students move between year groups during the course of an academic year, it may not be possible for a school's MIS to automatically identify the appropriate students or learning aims that need to be included in the School Census return. In such cases advice should be sought from the software provider and/or the school may need to make its own judgements according to the criteria set out above and decide whether or not the student and/or the learning aims should be included in the School Census return.

1.5 Some scenarios to help identify the correct students and learning aims

The following scenarios have been developed to help explain which students and learning aims should be included:

Scenario	Include student and/or learning aims	Why?
Dave, aged 16, has completed key stage 4 without getting 5 GCSEs but has continued on to the school's sixth form to do a NVQ level 2 course	Yes	Dave has moved into Actual National Curriculum Year Group 12 and so his NVQ level 2 course should be reported.
Gary, aged 16, failed his GCSEs last year and is now re-taking them	No	Would expect Gary to be kept down in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 11 and so his learning aims would not be reported.
Louise has progressed into the sixth form to do two A levels but is also re-taking one of her GCSEs	Yes	Louise has moved into Actual National Curriculum Year Group 12 and so all her learning aims, including the GCSE re-take, should be reported.
Ian is 15 and in National Curriculum Year Group 11 studying for his GCSEs and has also started an A level	No	Ian is in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 11, with the majority of his learning at level 2, and so his learning aims should not be included.
Gerry is 15 and is studying for 2 A levels and re-taking one GCSE	Yes	The majority of Gerry's learning is a level 3 and despite his youth would be expected to be in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 12, so all his learning aims, included the GCSE re-take, should be reported.

Scenario	Include student and/or learning aims	Why?
Elisabeth is in Year 12 and is doing her A levels at two schools. She takes her English and French A levels at the Small school and Spanish at the Big school. Which school should return which learning aims?	The Small school should return all three learning aims - A levels in English, French and Spanish. The Big school returns none.	The Small school holds Elisabeth's main registration and will receive funding for her.

2. REQUIRED DATA ITEMS

The following seven data items comprise this module:

- Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN)
- Learning Aim Start Date
- Learning Aim Planned End Date
- Learning Aim Status
- Learning Aim Actual End Date
- Learning Aim Result
- Learning Aim Outcome

2.1 Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN)

Every course of study leading to any level of qualification will have been allocated a QAN. The QAN specifies the qualification offered. It is essential that the correct QAN for the learning aim is returned in the School Census. A comprehensive list of QANs (with associated data) is available via the QAN Web Services (QWS) website at <https://collectdata.education.gov.uk/qwsweb/default.aspx>. Users should check this site regularly to ensure they have the latest version downloaded to their MIS software.

Particular care should be taken not to select a QAN with an expired Approval End Date – unless it is for the purpose of a retake, where it will be the original (rather than successor) qualification that is the relevant one. Care should also be taken if selecting a QAN as a new learning aim where the Approval End Date is near expiry. Schools should check with awarding organisations to find out whether the qualification is being extended, or if a new (or successor) qualification is available which the awarding organisation intends to use for examinations.

QWS will be cleansed on a regular basis of all QANs where the Certification End Date has passed.

QWS Review Date and Approval End Date show the dates by which awarding organisations should review a qualification. If these dates have passed, it does not necessarily mean that the qualification may not be used – but schools should still check with awarding organisations whether the qualification is still valid. Please check QWS Latest News on the QWS website for any important news and updates.

2.2 Learning Aim Start Date

The date on which the student began the learning activity necessary to achieve the learning aim. This date should **not** be later than Census Day.

2.3 Learning Aim Planned End Date

The planned end date should reflect the length of the course being undertaken, including time for examinations and assessment, and should remain unchanged throughout the duration of the learning aim. Where the learning aim finishes before or after the planned end date this would be reflected in the actual end date - the planned end date should NOT be changed. The planned end date should not be more than 5 years in the future and should be on or before 31 July in the academic year in which the learning aim is planned to end. The planned end date is used to identify the cohort of students in the calculation of success rates, so it is important that this date is in the correct academic year. If schools are unsure of the exact planned end date for a learning aim at the beginning of the learning aim, they may simply use 31 July, or for courses that are examined/assessed in the winter season, the end of February.

AS levels normally have a one year planned end date, eg a student starting an AS level in September 2012 would normally have a planned end date of 31 July 2013. Any subsequent A2 level would be shown as a new learning aim in the 2013 School Census.

2.4 Learning Aim Status – new data item for 2012 School Census

This should reflect the status of the learning aim at the time for the Autumn Census. There are four possible values as shown in the table below:

Code	Description
1	The learner is continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim
2	The learner has completed the learning activities leading to the learning aim
3	The learner has withdrawn from the learning activities leading to the learning aim
4	The learner has transferred to a new learning aim. That is, the learner has withdrawn from this learning aim and as a direct result has at the same time started studying for another learning aim within the same provider

2.5 Learning Aim Actual End Date

The date that the student completed the learning activities necessary to achieve the learning aim or the date they withdrew or transferred from the learning activities. This should include time for examinations and assessment. Unless a student has completed, withdrawn or transferred to another learning aim prior to the Census Day then the Learning Aim Actual End Date should be left blank.

2.6 Learning Aim Result – new data item for the 2012 School Census

This is the result of the overall examination / assessment associated with the completed learning aim, eg A, A*, distinction, provided by awarding organisations. In some school systems it may be possible to populate this field by data feeds provided by awarding organisations, typically in August. However, for any systems that do not, schools will need to manually enter the data. For those learning aims, eg some diplomas, where results data are not provided by awarding organisations because they are assessed by schools themselves, schools will also need to manually enter the data.

This is a free text field but its values are likely to be those included in the following table:

Code	Description
*, A to G, N, U, X, Y; a combination of two letters in the range A to G; a combination of * and letters in the range A to G; or **: AA*, A*A or A*A*	
01-45 followed by either an 'F' or a 'P' e.g. 01F or 45P	
PA	Pass
ME	Merit
DS	Distinction
CR	Credit
FL	Fail
01-99	Numeric value
FI	First class honours
SU	Upper second class honours
SL	Lower second class honours
SE	Undivided second class honours
TH	Third class honours
FO	Fourth class honours
UH	Unclassified honours
OR	Ordinary
GN	General
DS	Distinction
The following should be used to record basic skill diagnostic assessments only	
LN	Level 2 (no need)
L2	Need at level 2
L1	Need at level 1
E3	Need at entry 3
E2	Need at entry 2
E1	Need at entry 1
The following should be used to record the level of achievement for entry level qualifications	
EL1	Achievement at entry level 1
EL2	Achievement at entry level 2
EL3	Achievement at entry level 3
The following should be used to record the overall grade for BTEC National Certificates where two grades are issued	
	Any combination of two of the letters P, M and D e.g. PP, MP, MD, DD
The following should be used to record the overall grade for BTEC National Diploma where three or four grades are issued	
	Any combination of three or four of the letters P, M and D e.g. PPP, MPP, MPPM

Code	Description
The following should be used to record the CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Child Care and Education	
	Any combination of three of the letters A, B, C, D or E e.g. AAA, BBA, CCB, DDC, EED
The following should be used to record the Pre-U Certificate	
	D1, D2, D3, M1, M2 or M3
OTH	Other grade not included on the list above

2.7 Learning Aim Outcome – new data item for the 2012 School Census

This indicates the outcome of the learning aim as determined by the school. There are three possible values as shown in the table below:

Code	Description
1	Pass
2	Fail
3	Result not known

The Learning Aim Outcome (pass, fail and result not known) will be dependent on the results data provided to schools by awarding organisations. There may be some learning aims, for example some diplomas, where results data are not provided by awarding organisations because they are assessed by schools themselves. In these cases the schools will need to make a judgement themselves about whether the learning aim was passed or not and enter this information.

The Department has published a table showing for each QAN the grades that would be considered to be a pass and those that would be considered to be a fail. The table is published at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus/b00208370/sc2012/p-16-lookup>. The csv file contains the table itself and the pdf information to help the table to be interpreted correctly. There may also be a few discrepancies between the grades in this table and those provided by awarding organisations. This will not affect the vast majority of results but examples include key skills and graded exams such as music.

Some school systems may automatically populate this field, based on the results data entered. Schools should however ensure that they check the system has derived the correct outcome for each learning aim. The outcome is used in determining the success rate for the school and so it is very important that it is correct.

3. PROCESSES FOR RECORDING LEARNING AIMS

3.1 Prior to or at the start of the academic year

Before recording details of learning aims for individual students, it is suggested that schools produce a list of the qualifications which they will be providing. This school list will then be used for allocating specific learning aims to students.

Each qualification in the school list will be identified by a:

- Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN):
- Learning Aim Start Date (the date the learning activities for the qualification will start in the school); and
- Learning Aim Planned End Date (the date the learning activities for the qualification are due to be completed in the school).

“Learning activities” includes any examination or other method of assessment.

Schools will need to use the QAN Web Services website (QWS) - <https://collectdata.education.gov.uk/qwsweb/default.aspx> - to identify the correct QAN for each learning aim.

QANs are available for the overall International Baccalaureate (IB) and for each component (or subject) qualification. For those students taking the full IB, it is essential that the overall IB QAN is recorded in school MIS and returned in the School Census. QANs for the individual components need not be returned if the full IB is being undertaken. Students who are only taking components of the IB, but not going for the overall qualification, should return the QANs for those components. If the full IB is not being undertaken the overall QAN should not be returned. This is a change to the previous guidance which stated that for students taking the full IB schools needed to return QANs for both the overall IB and for each of the components.

Although they are not collected in the School Census, discount codes will continue to be associated with QANs. Schools will need to record them in their MIS to classify qualifications by subject area and to distinguish qualifications that share the same QAN. For example, a QAN for Art and Design might cover qualifications in Fine Art, Photography and Art History, each of which has a separate discount code. If a school is teaching two or more qualifications that share a QAN, the school should record in their system the different discount codes for each of these qualifications. This will be especially important where an *individual* student is doing more than one of the qualifications that share the same QAN. In addition, some software suppliers aim to automate the matching of exam results to learning aims within school MIS and to do this require the recording of accurate discount codes.

Discount codes are available from QWS. Schools should be aware however that a major revision of discount codes on the QWS database is due to be

completed by 15 June. This revision is to eliminate discrepancies between the discount codes used in QWS and those used in Performance Tables. Schools are advised not to assign any learning aims before 15 June. Some school MIS use a combination of discount codes and QAN to identify individual learning aims. Changing a discount code associated with a particular QAN can, therefore, lead to some MISs seeing the QAN / discount code pairing as a new qualification and ceasing to recognise the older pairing as a valid qualification. Schools should check their learning aims' data after 15 June in case these have been affected by the changes. It will be important for schools using systems that automatically match exam results to learning aims to check the discount codes in their systems prior to the Autumn School Census. Schools should check with their software supplier if this will be necessary for the system they use.

This revision of QWS should ease the automated matching and reduce the amount of manual work required overall. More details, including a list of the affected QANs can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus/b00208370/sc2012>. The Department is aware of the inconvenience that this change will cause schools. However, this change should ensure that discount codes will be more stable in future. As in previous years the Department's advice is that schools should use the most recent version possible of the QWS files for their census returns.

3.2 At the start of the academic year

At the beginning of a learning aim, typically at the start of the academic year, for each learning aim that a student is undertaking, schools will be expected to enter details for each one undertaken by a student, using the school list described above. This will include those courses starting in the current and those continuing from the previous academic year(s).

3.3 Throughout the academic year

Throughout the academic year the actual end date and status of the learning aim should be updated on an event driven basis. If the Learning Aim Status is continuing (the default value) then the Learning Aim Actual End Date should be left blank. If the student has completed, withdrawn or transferred from the learning aim then the Learning Aim Actual End Date should reflect the date the status changed.

3.4 For the Autumn School Census

For the Autumn School Census, for those learning aims that have been completed and for which awarding organisations have provided results, schools should return the QANs provided by awarding organisations, regardless of whether or not there is already a QAN in their MIS. There is no need for schools to check these against QWS. Data for the following learning aims will not appear on awarding organisation data and schools will need to access QWS and ensure the up to date QAN is returned for any learning aims that:

- Students withdrew or transferred from
- Have been completed but for which an awarding organisation has not provided a result e.g. because the learning aim is assessed by the school itself
- Are continuing

For completed learning aims, the Learning Aim Result should be the result of the overall examination or assessment e.g. A, A*, distinction, provided by awarding organisations. In some school systems it may be possible to populate this field by data feeds provided by awarding organisations typically in August.

The Learning Aim Outcome (pass, fail and result not known) will be dependent on the results data provided to schools by awarding organisations. There may be some learning aims, for example some diplomas, where results data are not provided by awarding organisations because they are assessed by schools themselves. In these cases the schools will need to make a judgement themselves about whether the learning aim was passed or not and enter this information. As mentioned above, the Department has published a table showing for each QAN the grades that would be considered to be a pass and those that would be considered to be a fail. The table is published at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus/b00208370/sc2012/p-16-lookup>. Some school systems may automatically populate this field, based on the results data entered. Schools should however ensure that they check the system has derived the correct outcome for each learning aim. The outcome is used in determining the success rate for the school and so it is very important that it is correct.

If a school appeals against a result given by an awarding organisation and the result of the appeal is received back by the school before/during the collection period, then the revised result and/or outcome should be included in the return. If the appeal result is unknown at the time of the collection then:

- (a) If the initial result being appealed equated to an outcome of fail, schools should return “result not known” for the Learning Aim Outcome and leave the Learning Aim Result blank
- (b) If the initial result being appealed equated to an outcome of pass, schools should return “pass” for the Learning Aim Outcome and the result provided by the awarding body for the Learning Aim Result

Success rates for all qualifications, including AS levels, will be calculated according to when the qualifications are due to end (ie the Planned End Date), regardless of whether or not they are cashed in (claimed). Any AS levels that have a Planned End Date one year after the Learning Aim Start Date that are not cashed in will be treated as fails for funding and success rate purposes. If a student continues their study beyond the Planned End Date entered at the start of the learning aim, the Planned End Date must not be changed.

4. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Index of questions

Any questions that have been updated since the last version can be identified by the word “New” and any that have been updated can be identified by the word “Updated”.

- [4.1 Where can I find more information about the EFA funding for sixth forms?](#)
- [4.2 Is there any impact on funding for courses that start on 1 June as the EFA academic year starts on 1 August?](#)
- [4.3 How can I find out more about the funding implications of the choices the school makes?](#)
- [4.4 Will schools still have to do a checking exercise in 2012 and/or subsequent years?](#)
- [4.5 If a student is in a sixth form but is retaking GCSEs and has not progressed on to any level 3 courses of study, should he be recorded as being taught in year 11?](#)
- [4.6 Are the retakes funded for a Year 12 student taking ASs and retaking GCSEs?](#)
- [4.7 If a QAN has changed during the year which one should be returned in the School Census?](#)
- [4.8 Are there any situations where the Learning Aim Actual End Date can legitimately be after the Learning Aim Planned End Date?](#)
- [4.9 Is it correct that those learning aims with actual end dates later than planned end dates will adversely affect the success rate of the school?](#)
- [4.10 Is it right that the Learning Aim Actual End Date must be before or the same as the date a student left the school?](#)
- [4.11 Can you provide some general guiding principles about planned end dates and actual end dates to help clarify what should be recorded for them?](#)
- [4.12 In the 2011 School Census for Learning Aim Completion Status it was possible to enter the value X, data input error. This value is not available in the 2012 School Census for Learning Aim Status, why not?](#)
- [4.13 What about non-regulated learning aims – do I need to submit a result for these?](#)

- 4.14 A student is in year 12, in the first year of a two year BTEC course, and at the end of the first year the course is continuing, no result is expected until the end of year 13. Would the result at the end of year 1 of the course count as a fail?
- 4.15 What should be returned in the School Census in the situation when a student starts one Maths A-level but achieves another?
- 4.16 A student is planning to take several maths learning aims in an academic year - eg Advanced GCEs in maths, pure maths and further maths and Advanced subsidiary GCEs in maths, pure maths and further maths – should all these be returned in the School Census?
- 4.17 If a student takes an exam early but fails it and then passes it when they take it again later in the year, which result should be returned?
- 4.18 What happens if a student re-takes the same short learning aim in the same academic year?
- 4.19 Can a learning aim outcome of “result not known” only be entered for a result that is being appealed or are there other circumstances where it can be used?
- 4.20 What about achievements in September / October? Should they be returned in October?
- 4.21 Where and in what form will the data be published?

4.1 Where can I find more information about the EFA funding for sixth forms?

Information is currently available on the Department’s website – <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentssupport/funding>.

4.2 Is there any impact on funding for courses that start on 1 June as the EFA academic year starts on 1 August?

Under the current method for allocating funds yes. Schools are unlikely to receive any extra funding in the academic year 2011/12 for any learning aims that start on 1 June 2012. For the following academic year, 2012/13, schools may lose a small proportion of funding for the part of the course delivered in the previous academic year, if the funding cap for the individual for that year has already been reached. In addition, any students who start learning aims on 1 June but do not come back at the start of the Autumn term may be ruled to have been on the course for more than 6 weeks and so would be treated as a failure for success rates purposes.

4.3 How can I find out more about the funding implications of the choices the school makes?

EFA does regular briefing sessions for schools and colleges about funding allocations. In addition the Open Book data training sessions held with schools and local authorities have provided more support. Some sessions will continue to be run during 2012. For more information see <http://www.egfl.org.uk/categories/gatekeeping/high1112/18apr2010/item6.html>.

4.4 Will schools still have to do a checking exercise in 2012 and/or subsequent years?

A checking exercise is planned relating to the 2010/11 data used to calculate the success rate for schools and Academies with sixth forms. This will be led by EFA and will be similar to the exercise undertaken in Summer 2011.

4.5 If a student is in a sixth form but is retaking GCSEs and has not progressed on to any level 3 courses of study, should he be recorded as being taught in year 11?

Yes, such a student would be considered to be in Actual National Curriculum Year Group 11 and so no learning aims information should be submitted for him in the School Census.

4.6 Are the retakes funded for a Year 12 student taking ASs and retaking GCSEs?

This student has moved into the sixth form and so their retakes would be funded and information about their learning aims should be included in the School Census. Re-sits taken after the planned end date where no teaching is involved should not be included in the School Census nor would they be funded.

4.7 If a QAN has changed during the year which one should be returned in the School Census?

For those learning aims with results the QAN provided by the awarding organisation should be returned in the Census. For all other learning aims the QAN correct at the time of the Census, and checked against QWS, should be returned.

4.8 Are there any situations where the Learning Aim Actual End Date can legitimately be after the Learning Aim Planned End Date?

Yes there are. Examples include:

- if a student was ill during the 2012 summer exam period and then took the exam at the next possible opportunity in November 2012. The learning aim would be recorded as continuing in the Autumn 2012 School Census with a planned end date of 31 July 2012. In the Autumn 2013 School Census the learning aim would be recorded as completed with an

actual end date of 15 November 2012 (say) but the planned end date would still be 31 July 2012.

- Vocational programmes and apprenticeships: an apprentice might not be able to take an assessment by the planned end date for a number of reasons eg they haven't been able to fit in the training for a certain element of a technical certificate around the work experience so they agree to reschedule it for a little later in the year; similarly NVQ planned end dates are only ever estimated – the assessments can take place at any time of the year and depend on the availability of assessors / teachers to carry out the assessments. If a student doesn't complete an assessment by the planned end date then they can carry on studying and retake the assessment as and when.

4.9 Is it correct that those learning aims with actual end dates later than planned end dates will adversely affect the success rate of the school?

Not necessarily. Learning aims due to be completed during the current academic year will only be treated as failures for success rate purposes if they have not been successfully completed by the end of the academic year. A school's success rate will not be affected if a learning aim is completed during the current academic year but later than planned.

4.10 Is it right that the Learning Aim Actual End Date must be before or the same as the date a student left the school?

Yes. This means that a student cannot be marked down in the school's MIS as having left the school until after they have taken their final exams. If a student has been excluded from a school and taken off the school's roll but the school allows them to come back to take their exams, then the completion status for the learning aim should be withdrawn, even though the school has allowed the student to take the exam.

4.11 Can you provide some general guiding principles about planned end dates and actual end dates to help clarify what should be recorded for them?

The following are general principles that should be employed. However, there may be specific rare scenarios where a different judgement could be made, especially around learning aims that span more than one academic year and advice may need to be sought on a case by case basis for these.

- Learning Aim Planned End Date must not be changed. This date can be defaulted to 31 July but care must be taken to ensure the correct year is entered for courses that last for more than one year.
- If a learning aim is re-sat before Learning Aim Planned End Date, a school can choose to submit whichever result is gained from an exam taken prior to the Learning Aim Planned End Date.
- If the Learning Aim Actual End Date is after the Learning Aim Planned End Date, then the result should be submitted and the Learning Aim Actual End Date should reflect when the learning activity was completed.

- The Learning Aim Actual End Date should not be changed as this will reflect the date when the student completed, withdrew or transferred from the learning aim – an event that only happens once.
- For one year courses that begin at the start of the Autumn Term and end during the Summer Term, eg A levels and GCSEs, then under current arrangements, a school's success rate and funding allocations will not be adversely affected if the school returns an end date with a default value of 31 July rather than the exact date learning ended. The school will need however to ensure the year is the correct academic year. Similarly for courses that start and end in the same academic year, under current arrangements a school's success rate and funding allocation will not be affected if the actual end dates are defaulted to the start or end of the month, so long as the learner completes the course.

4.12 In the 2011 School Census for Learning Aim Completion Status it was possible to enter the value X, data input error. This value is not available in the 2012 School Census for Learning Aim Status, why not?

This value was needed when learning aims data from schools were collected in the Autumn and Summer terms and progress between the two was monitored. Rather than deleting from their systems a learning aim that had been entered in error schools would enter X for the Learning Aim Completion Status, enter the correct learning aim and submit both records. For 2012, onwards, schools just need to keep their management information systems up to date with the correct information - they do not need to keep a record of any learning aims entered in error.

4.13 What about non-regulated learning aims – do I need to submit a result for these?

There are a number of non-regulated qualifications, which are recorded on QWS, which may be funded by the EFA. These include pre-university courses such as the Open University's YASS courses and "Non-regulated activity (students at risk of becoming NEET)". Because these are non-regulated qualifications results will not be available for them from awarding organisations. As long as a school provides the student with a certificate to say they have successfully completed the course, then the learning aim should be recorded as completed. Schools will need to manually enter the result which should equate to a pass if the course has been successfully completed.

4.14 A student is in year 12, in the first year of a two year BTEC course, and at the end of the first year the course is continuing, no result is expected until the end of year 13. Would the result at the end of year 1 of the course count as a fail?

No. A result would not be expected for this student or any other that was part of the way through a course spanning more than one academic year. The Learning Aim Planned End Date would show that the course was expected to continue for another year and the Learning Aim Status of 1 (the learner is continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim) would demonstrate that a result is not expected for this student.

4.15 What should be returned in the School Census in the situation when a student starts one Maths A-level but achieves another?

Let's say the original Maths A level was started in September 2012 and the Planned End Date was June 2014. In the 2012 and 2013 Autumn School Census collections start and planned end dates would be submitted for the learning aims with the original QAN and the Learning Aim Status would be continuing. In the 2014 Autumn School Census the Learning Aim Status would be completed and the QAN and result provided by the Awarding Organisation would be returned. The original QAN would not.

4.16 A student is planning to take several maths learning aims in an academic year - eg Advanced GCEs in maths, pure maths and further maths and Advanced subsidiary GCEs in maths, pure maths and further maths – should all these be returned in the School Census?

If a student is genuinely taking all these courses then yes, they should be recorded and submitted in the School Census. The current funding methodology means that the student would reach the funding cap so the school won't get huge amounts of funding for the student taking these extra courses.

4.17 If a student takes an exam early but fails it and then passes it when they take it again later in the year, which result should be returned?

The school can choose to return in the School Census the highest result gained from a learning aim completed on or before the planned end date for the learning aim. So in this scenario the school can return the pass as long as the exam was taken for the second time before the planned end date. If the exam was taken for the second time after the planned end date then the original fail should be returned.

4.18 What happens if a student re-takes the same short learning aim in the same academic year?

By way of example, let's take a student who embarks in September 2011 on a short learning aim, with a planned end date of December 2011. He takes the exam in November 2011, fails the learning aim and re-takes it in summer 2012.

Both learning aims should be returned in the Autumn 2012 School Census. A re-take occurs when a student is retaking a complete qualification, including attendance at regular classes, and this should be treated in the same manner as any other normal course and recorded as a new learning aim.

4.19 Can a learning aim outcome of “result not known” only be entered for a result that is being appealed or are there other circumstances where it can be used?

The main reason for “result not known” would be for a result that is being appealed. There may be other circumstances however. For example where students have completed all the coursework for their vocational courses but where the NVQ assessor had not yet completed the assessment or the exam body hadn't processed the paperwork.

4.20 What about achievements in September / October? Should they be returned in October?

Yes, results and outcomes should be returned for each learning aim, where the result/outcome is known at the time of submitting the data.

4.21 Where and in what form will the data be published?

It is intended to publish QSR reports for each provider via secure channels, eg the EFA's Information Management Portal (IMP). After a thorough quality assurance process, and subject to an assessment of data quality, the EFA intends to make aggregate QSR results available publicly. The exact location is yet to be decided. There are also plans to publish QSR data as a published measure in the future.

5. FURTHER SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

5.1 Policy and funding guidance

Policy and funding guidance is the responsibility of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and more information can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentssupport/funding>.

5.2 Password and technical difficulties

If you are having problems with COLLECT, have forgotten your password or have a problem logging on to the website, or if there is a technical fault with the website please contact the DSD Helpdesk using the service request form <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/requestform>.

5.3 General information

For detailed information about the School Census please refer to the 2012 School Census Guidance and other documentation which can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus/b00208370/sc2012>.