



Skills Funding
Agency

Official

Minimum Standards

How the Skills Funding Agency will apply
Minimum Standards for 2015 to 2016

November 2015

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

How the Skills Funding Agency will apply Minimum Standards for the 2015 to 2016 Academic Year

We will use the overall qualification achievement rate (QAR) methodology when calculating Minimum Standards.

In 2015 to 2016 we will calculate minimum standards for:

- Apprenticeships - all ages
- Education and Training (Classroom and Workplace) – adult learners only

In our document "[How the Skills Funding Agency will apply Minimum Standards for 2014 to 2015](#)" published in March 2015 we told you that we would be increasing the minimum standards thresholds for some of the qualification types in 2015 to 2016. Those changes are confirmed in this document and they ensure that we continue to identify the poorest quality provision.

Thresholds

The thresholds in table 1 below are applied to QARs at aim level for education and training and at framework and programme level for apprenticeships when we calculate minimum standards.

Table 1: Minimum Standards thresholds for 2015 to 2016

<i>Qualification Type</i>	<i>Threshold %</i>
Apprenticeship Framework	62
Access to HE	70
A-Levels	75
AS-Levels	63
Award	80
Certificate	80
Diploma	70
ESOL	70
Basic Skills Maths and English	63
GCSE Maths and English	75
GCSE Other	75
Other non-Regulated	85
Other Regulated	70
QCF Unit	85

Tolerance level

The tolerance level will remain at 40% for apprenticeships and education and training in 2015 to 2016.

If the QAR for an apprenticeship or aim is below the relevant threshold in table 1 we will classify that aim or apprenticeship as falling below the minimum standard.

We will calculate the total number of apprenticeships or education and training aims that have fallen below the minimum standard. If 40% or more of the apprenticeships or aims in the 2015 to 2016 hybrid end year cohort are below the minimum standard the provider will be in scope for intervention.

Failure to Meet Minimum Standards

If a college or training organisation fails to meet minimum standards, the Agency's [approach to intervention](#) will apply. We may also use the results of minimum standards to inform business decisions. If we do this, we will specify how as part of those business processes.

Proportionality

We will not intervene formally where the proportion of leavers in underperforming provision exceeds the tolerance level but there are fewer than 100 leavers in the cohort that is below the minimum standards threshold. We expect a provider in this position to set challenging quality improvement targets as a priority.

Future Developments

We will review the thresholds and tolerance levels following publication of the 2014 to 2015 QARs and intend to use that information to set more rigorous minimum standards for 2016 to 2017.

We intend to produce Traineeships outcomes for 2015 to 2016. Reports will be shared with providers in the first quarter of 2017 and will be used to set thresholds for a minimum standard for traineeships that will be applied from 2016 to 2017.

There will be further work during 2015 to 2016 on the development of a wider set of [Outcome Based Success Measures](#): following the close of the second consultation which was launched in October 2015. This will include implementing minimum standards for:

- Sustained learning and/or employment
- Sustained employment for benefit learners