



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Qualification achievement rates business rules 2017 to 2018

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Of interest to colleges and training organisations

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Introduction and purpose of document

- 1 This document outlines the business rules that explain the method for calculating the qualification achievement rates (QAR) for:
 - a Apprenticeships
 - b Education and training, including those funded by Advanced Learner Loans in the 2017 to 2018 funding year (1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018).
- 2 The document also describes the changes to the business rules since the 2016 to 2017 funding year.

Understanding the terminology

- 3 The terms 'we' and 'ESFA' refer to the 'Education and Skills Funding Agency' and associated staff.
- 4 When we refer to 'you' or 'providers', this includes colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers that receive funding from us, or Advanced Learner Loans (loans) payments from the Student Loans Company (SLC) on behalf of learners, to deliver education and training.

Changes from the 2016 to 2017 business rules

- 5 We will **include** all apprenticeship starts from 1 May 2017 recorded under Funding model 36 ('Apprenticeships (from 1 May 2017)').
- 6 We will **exclude** directly funded 14 to 16 year-old students, recorded in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) using the Learning Delivery Monitoring (LDM) code 320 ('14 to 16 direct funded students in FE'). We are excluding these students because they are included in the key stage 4 performance tables which are used to measure performance against this cohort of learners rather than QARs.
- 7 We will **exclude** apprenticeship standards from the timely achievement rates. We are excluding these because providers have raised concerns about how we calculate timely achievement rates for apprenticeship standards. This is because the 'Learning planned end date' of an apprenticeship standard recorded in the ILR includes both the learning delivery element and end point assessment (EPA) element; where the timing of the EPA is not entirely in a provider's control. Therefore, we will suspend timely QARs for standards until we have implemented a way for providers to record reaching gateway (when they are ready to take their EPA).

Methods of calculation

- 8 We calculate overall and timely QAR, pass rates and retention rates from ILR and Large Employer Outcome Pilot (LEOP) data submitted by providers. We merge the last 5 years' data into the QAR dataset, which we use for reporting.
- 9 We take information for apprenticeships from the programme aim ILR record and the learning aim level ILR record for education and training; we use the term learning aims throughout this document to refer to both of these.
- 10 The **overall QAR**, **pass rate** and **retention rate** calculations use the hybrid end year of the aim. The hybrid end year is the latter of the:
 - a planned end year of the learning aim
 - b actual end year of the learning aim or
 - c reporting year.
- 11 The calculations use three values:
 - a The number of aims that have ended - where they have an actual end date or where continuing learners and planned breaks in learning did not return.
 - b The number of aims achieved. This includes reformed AS levels that are decoupled from the A Level and any cashed pre-reform AS levels.
 - c The number of aims where the learner has completed all the learning activities.
- 12 For the hybrid end year:
 - a The **overall QAR** is the number of achieved learning aims as a percentage of the total number of learning aims in the cohort that ended.
 - b The **overall pass rate** is the number of achieved learning aims as a percentage of the total number of learning aims that have completed all the planned learning activities.
 - c The **overall retention rate** is the number of learning aims that have completed all of the planned learning activities as a percentage of the total number of learning aims that ended.
- 13 The **timely QAR** calculation measures the number of aims achieved on or before their planned end date, or no more than 90 days after it, as a percentage of the number of aims planned to complete in the reporting year. We do not count achieved aims with an actual end date more than 90 days after the planned end date as achievements in the timely method.
- 14 The last day of the reporting period for the 2017 to 2018 year is 31 July 2018. To be included in the calculations, the hybrid end date (for the overall QAR) and the planned end date (for the timely QAR) of the learning aim must be on or before 31 July 2018.
- 15 We treat uncashed AS levels as failures; this relates to pre-reform AS levels.

- 16 We will treat mergers in the same way as in 2016 to 2017; producing one file against post-merger UKPRN, but also following the updated transfers process outlined in version 3 of the [Provider Support Manual for 2017 to 2018](#).
- 17 We may however produce QAR results for the previous constituent parts of merged colleges, or for other group structures, if agreed as part of structural changes or from area review recommendations.
- 18 We account for changes to learner reference numbers made through the learner reference number (LRN) change process or within the ILR record in QARs.

QAR reporting

- 19 We will calculate overall and timely QARs for the 2017 to 2018 funding year; we provide comparison values for the previous two years using the same methodology to show a trend. Values for previous years may be different from the officially published QAR for the previous years because of changes to the business rules between years or if you reported or updated data after the final ILR submission for the year.
- 20 We will produce overall and timely QARs for subcontracted provision for both education and training and apprenticeships.
- 21 The overall QAR is the method that we will use for Minimum Standards. We use the pass rates, retention rates and timely QAR to provide additional information about the delivery of provision.

Learning aims included in the QAR

- 22 The learning aims included in the QAR calculation are those in receipt of public funding through:
 - a the Adult Education Budget (or previously called the Adult Skills Budget as we use data from the last 5 years)
 - b Apprenticeships; this includes all standards and frameworks
 - c Advanced Learner Loans
 - d the Large Employer Outcome Pilot
 - e 16 to 19 allocations.

See also the 'Aims excluded from the QAR' section to see what we exclude.

- 23 We treat learning aims as withdrawals for the **overall QAR** methodology where they:
- a have a completion status of 1 ('Learner continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim') in the final R14 ILR return for a funding year **AND**
 - b do not have a corresponding record in the following funding year.

Where this occurs, we will set the reporting year as the year after the last submitted file containing the learning aim.

- For example, an aim with a planned end date of June 2017 and a completion status of 1 ('Learner continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim') recorded in the R14 ILR in 2016 to 2017, and does not appear in the R14 ILR in 2017 to 2018, will be a withdrawal in the 2017 to 2018 year.

- 24 We treat learning aims as withdrawals for the **overall QAR** methodology where they have a completion status of 6 ('Learner has temporarily withdrawn from the aim due to an agreed break in learning') and where either:
- a They do not have a corresponding restart record in the same funding year or in the following two funding years, **OR**
 - b The planned break recorded in the R14 ILR return for 2016 to 2017 has no corresponding restart record in the R04 ILR return of 2018 to 2019.

If this scenario happens, the reporting year will be set to one year after the latter of the expected end year or actual end year.

- For example, if an aim with a planned end date in July 2017 was recorded with a planned break in learning in April 2017, but did not have a restart record in:
 - R14 ILR return in 2016 to 2017, **OR**
 - R14 ILR return in 2017 to 2018, **OR**
 - by the R04 ILR return of 2018 to 2019it will be treated as a withdrawn aim in the 2017 to 2018 funding year.

- 25 We match restart records to planned break records by matching the:
- a UKPRN
 - b Learner reference number
 - c The 'Original learning start date' on the restart record where it matches:
 - the 'Learning start date' **OR**
 - the 'Original learning start date' (to allow for situations where the planned break was itself a restart) of the planned break record for either the:
 - Programme type and framework/standard code for apprenticeships, **OR**
 - Learning aim reference for other aims.

Learning aims excluded from the QAR

- 26 The following exclusions apply to all QAR, pass and retention rates (some of the terminology below relates to historical provision as we use 5 year's data to calculate QARs). Those marked with an asterisk '*' will only be excluded under the timely QAR methodology if they occur on or before or within 90 days of the planned end date:
- a Directly funded 14 to 16 year-old students, recorded in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) using the Learning Delivery Monitoring (LDM) code 320 ('14 to 16 direct funded students in FE')
 - b Apprenticeship standards **for timely QARs only**
 - c Transfers:
 - o *Where a learner transferred to a different programme or learning aim within the same provider.
 - o *Where a learner transferred to a new provider following our intervention or from the Department for Education. The exclusion applies to the original provider's QAR, not the new provider's QAR. The new provider should assess the learners fully and plan their learning accordingly.
 - o Education and training learning aims without successful achievement following a transfer to other provision with another provider, aligning with government strategy such as the [apprenticeship 2020 vision](#). We will not exclude transfers from apprenticeships to other learning aims.
 - d *Planned breaks where the learner has temporarily withdrawn due to an agreed break in learning for the learning aim; we will excluded these from the relevant hybrid end year. However, if a learner does not return from a planned break then any learning aims excluded under this rule previously, will be included in subsequent reporting years.
 - e Any learning aim where a learner withdrew within the respective funding qualifying period without achievement; the qualifying periods are:
 - i. 42 days if the planned duration is 168 days or greater.
 - ii. 14 days if the planned duration is between 14 and 167 days.
 - iii. 0 (zero) days when the planned duration is less than 14 days.
 - iv. There is no qualifying period for trailblazer pilot standards recorded under Funding model 81 ('Other adult'), however we exclude those where the apprentice withdraws without a net employer contribution payment being recorded (i.e. any payments minus refunds)
 - f Innovation Code learning aims (referenced as ZINN0001 to ZINN0006 and Z0004474 to Z0007833).
 - g Instances where unemployed learners claiming Universal Credit, Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group) cannot continue their learning through to successful completion because they have gained employment.

- h Learners undertaking a traineeship programme that are unable to continue or complete their learning aims because they have gained employment. We will identify full time employment from the learner's destination and progression record.
- i Funded provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) or special educational needs (SEN) delivered by independent specialist providers.
- j European Social Fund-funded aims recorded under Funding model 70 ('ESF') on the ILR.
- k Community Learning funded learning aims using the 'non-formula funded' approach recorded under Funding model 10 ('Community Learning') on the ILR.
- l The following learning aims:
 - i. Key skills
 - ii. Employability Skills Programme (ESP) funded learning aims
 - iii. Foundation learning weekly learning aims
 - iv. Remaining 'First Steps' learning aims
 - v. Diagnostic tests
 - vi. Unitisation qualifications
 - vii. Additional units
 - viii. Tutorial support and complementary studies
 - ix. Work experience or work placement aims
 - x. Non regulated learning aims used to claim funding for additional ESOL learning needs
 - xi. Learning Technologies Pilot learning aims identified using the LDM code 337
 - xii. Apprenticeship Seasonal Worker Pilot learning aims identified using the LDM code 348
 - xiii. Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) learning aims identified using the LDM code 034
 - xiv. 18-21 Work skills pilot learning aims identified using the Funding and monitoring codes 332 or 341
 - xv. Joint Investment Programme learning aims
 - xvi. Access to Apprenticeships pathway provision where the learner is unemployed.

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