



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Qualification achievement rates business rules 2018 to 2019

Version 1

February 2019

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

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Introduction and purpose of document

- 1 This document outlines the high-level business rules that explain how we calculate the qualification achievement rates (QAR) for the 2018 to 2019 funding year (1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019) for apprenticeships and for education and training, including those funded by advanced learner loans.
- 2 We will publish the dataset specifications in 2019; these will contain the detailed technical rules.

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 2017 to 2018 business rules

- 5 The main methodology and principles have not changed from 2017 to 2018.
- 6 We will **exclude** delivery through the Flexible learning fund (identified using through the Learning Delivery Monitoring (LDM) code 360).
- 7 We are currently reviewing how we measure success and achievement for traineeships; we will publish further details about this in due course. For 2018 to 2019, QARs for traineeships will use the 2017 to 2018 methodology.

The different calculation methods

- 8 We calculate overall and timely QAR, pass rates and retention rates from the Individualised Learner Record (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 learning 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 2018 to 2019 year is 31 July 2019. 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 2019.
- 15 We treat uncashed AS levels as failures; this relates to pre-reform AS levels that appear in our trend data.

Mergers and learner reference number changes

- 16 We will treat mergers in the same way as in 2017 to 2018:
 - a For Further Education college mergers that take place up to and including 31 July 2019, we will combine the ILR learning aims from any pre-merger UKPRNs and we will produce the QAR for the 2018 to 2019 reporting year for the post-merger UKPRN.
 - b Where the Further Education college merger took place on or after 1 August 2019, we will produce the QAR for the 2018 to 2019 reporting year under the pre-merger UKPRNs.
- 17 If a learner's 'Learner reference number' changes, either within a funding year or between years, then you must record this using the 'Learner reference in previous year' field. This allows us to match the records accurately.

Campus identifiers

- 18 Where we have told you to record the campus identifier in the ILR, and you have recorded these, we will include them in the QAR dataset.

What we will produce for you and what we will publish

- 19 We will calculate overall and timely QARs for the 2018 to 2019 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, although this is not available for apprenticeship standards.
- 21 We will publish summary data that contains various views of your QAR data; for example by sector or by qualification type. We will also publish a data extract that contains the detailed information that allows you to recreate the dashboards along with some guidance that explains how to do this.
- 22 We will produce the summary data and data extract three times a year. These will be an in-year release based on R10 data, a provisional QAR in January 2020 (following the R04 submission and time to process the data) and a final QAR in March 2020. The provisional QAR enables you to check your data and ensure that we have applied our published methodology correctly. We will share the final QARs with Ofsted.
- 23 We will publish on gov.uk detailed final QAR information through the [National Achievement Rate tables](#) (NARTs). This allows you to benchmark your performance against other providers and provider types.
- 24 We will produce final QAR results for the previous UKPRNs of colleges that merged in 2018 to 2019 for transparency. We will only produce these tables for the year the college merged; in subsequent years, we will only publish QARs for the post-merger UKPRN.
- 25 We will not publish disaggregated campus data for colleges that are part of a group in the [NARTs](#); we are treating this data as shadow data for 2018 to 2019. However, we do plan to publish this data for colleges in parallel with publication of NARTs. We will not publish the experimental QAR data for delivery sites as part of NARTs, but we will make these available to you.
- 26 The overall QAR is the method we will use to inform outcomes for all age apprenticeships and education and training provision. We use the pass rates, retention rates and timely QAR to provide additional information about the delivery of provision.

The learning aims included in the QAR calculation

27 The learning aims included in the QAR calculation are those in receipt of public funding through:

- the Adult Education Budget (or previously called the Adult Skills Budget as we use data from the last 5 years)
- Apprenticeships; this includes all standards and frameworks
- Advanced Learner Loans
- the Large Employer Outcome Pilot
- 16 to 19 allocations.

See also [The learning aims excluded from the QAR calculation](#) section to see what we exclude in these programmes.

28 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 'Learning planned end date' of June 2018 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 2017 to 2018, and does not appear in the R14 ILR in 2018 to 2019, will be a withdrawal in the 2018 to 2019 year.

- 29 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 2017 to 2018 has no corresponding restart record in the R04 ILR return of 2019 to 2020

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

For example, if you recorded an aim with a 'Learning planned end date' in July 2018 with a planned break in learning in April 2017, this will be a withdrawn aim in the 2018 to 2019 funding year if there is no restart record in:

- o the R14 ILR return in 2017 to 2018, **OR**
- o the R14 ILR return in 2018 to 2019, **OR**
- o the R04 ILR return of 2019 to 2020

- 30 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:
 - i. the 'Learning start date' **OR**
 - ii. 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:
 - o 'Programme type' and 'Framework code'/'Standard code' for apprenticeships, **OR**
 - o 'Learning aim reference' for other aims.

The learning aims excluded from the QAR calculation

- 31 We will monitor and analyse the volumes and proportions of aims excluded from QAR calculations to ensure that providers are correctly excluding aims. Where we identify large volumes or proportions, we will contact you to discuss these and may require evidence to confirm these exclusions.
- 32 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, identified in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) using the 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 and we can match to a new aim where the start date of the new aim is within 120 days of the actual end date of the old aim.

We will not exclude transfers from apprenticeships to non-apprenticeship learning aims.
 - 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](#).
 - d *Planned breaks where the learner has temporarily withdrawn due to an agreed break in learning for the learning aim; we will exclude 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 Unemployed learners claiming Universal Credit, Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group) who cannot continue their learning through to completion because they gained employment.
- f Learners undertaking a traineeship programme who are unable to complete their learning aims because they have gained employment. We will identify full time employment from the learner's destination and progression record.
- g The following learning aims:
 - i. European Social Fund funded learning aims recorded under Funding model 70 ('ESF')
 - ii. Community Learning funded learning aims using the 'non-formula funded' approach recorded under Funding model 10 ('Community Learning')
 - iii. Where a learner withdrew within the respective funding qualifying period without achievement. 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).
 - iv. Learning Technologies Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 337
 - v. Apprenticeship Seasonable Worker Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 348
 - vi. Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) learning aims identified using LDM code 034
 - vii. 18-21 Work skills pilot learning aims identified using LDM codes 332 or 341
 - viii. Employer Ownership Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 351
 - ix. Innovation Code learning aims (references as ZINN0001 to ZINN0006 and Z0004474 to Z0007833)
 - x. Key skills learning aims
 - xi. Unitisation qualifications
 - xii. Tutorial support and complementary studies learning aims
 - xiii. Work experience or work placement aims
 - xiv. Non regulated learning aims used to claim funding for additional ESOL learning needs

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