



Department  
for Education

# **Qualification achievement rates business rules 2022 to 2023**

**Version 2.0**

**September 2023**

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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 2022 to 2023 funding year (1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023).
2. The dataset specifications containing the detailed technical rules are published separately.

## Understanding the terminology

3. The term 'we' refers to the 'Department for Education' (DfE) or Education and Skills Funding Agency' (ESFA), an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) 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, Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) or Advanced Learner Loans (loans) payments from the Student Loans Company (SLC) on behalf of learners, to deliver education and training.

5. We take information for apprenticeships from the programme aim Individualised Learner Record (ILR) record. We use the learning aim level ILR record for education and training and Traineeships. We use the term 'learning aims' throughout this document to refer to both.

6. The term 'Education and Training' means ILR records that are recorded for 16 to 19 study programmes, the adult education budget (AEB) including the devolved AEB, and advanced learner loans.

## Changes since the publication of 2022 to 2023 version 1.0 in June 2023

7. Revision to section [Matching learning aims across years](#) to confirm from 2022 to 2023 we will utilise the Unique Learner Number (ULN) to match learning aims across ILR files and where we are unable to do so we will match on Learner Reference Number (LRN).
8. Under section [What we will produce for providers, share and publish](#), clarification on the presentation of historical trend data in provider level dashboards.

## Changes from the 2021 to 2022 business rules

9. The calculation of timely QAR has been removed.
10. Data submitted using the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for the last 5 years is used to create a QAR dataset for reporting. Historically, we have utilised the Learner Reference Number to match learning aims across ILR files. From 2022 to 2023 we are matching on the Unique Learner Number (ULN) and where we are unable to do so we will match on Learner Reference Number (LRN).

## About QARs

11. QARs, and the associated pass rates and retention rates, are a measure of the quality of the training courses that a provider delivered in a funding year.
12. QARs are included on the [Explore our statistics and data service](#) and used by Ofsted for risk assessment for training providers inspections.
13. They show learners, employers and training providers the quality of training between organisations in the sector.
14. We will calculate the following measures:
  - a) overall QARs
  - b) pass rates (excluding Traineeships)
  - c) retention rates
15. The overall QAR, pass rate and retention rate calculations use the hybrid end year of the learning aim. The hybrid end year is the later of the:
  - a) achievement year (for apprenticeship standards on funding model 36 only)
  - b) planned end year of the learning aim
  - c) actual end year of the learning aim
  - d) reporting year
16. The calculations use 3 values:
  - a) The number of aims that have ended - where they have an actual end date or where continuing learners, planned breaks in learning or transfers 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
17. The different measures for each hybrid end year are:
  - 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

## Matching learning aims across years

18. Data submitted using the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for the last 5 years is used to create a QAR dataset for reporting.

19. Many learning aims take more than one year to complete, meaning that the same learning aim for a learner or apprentice can appear in more than one ILR file. We use various combinations of variables to ensure we match the correct records across years. Historically at learner level, we have utilised the Learner Reference Number for matching purposes. From 2022 to 2023 we will match on the Unique Learner Number (ULN) and where we are unable to do so we will match on Learner Reference Number (LRN).

20. Changes to the learner reference number should be avoided if at all possible between years for continuing learners. If a provider does unavoidably have to change the learner reference numbers used, for example because of a change to their MIS system, they should ensure that the Learner reference number in previous year field is completed. This allows us to match the records accurately. For more information about recording this correctly, please refer to the Provider Support Manual and technical specifications.



## College structural change

21. The term structural change covers various scenarios for example resulting in:
  - a) a merger or de-merger with another college
  - b) the complete closure of a college
  - c) sixth form college converting to academy status
22. College mergers that take place up to and including 31 July 2023, we will produce a QAR for 2022 to 2023 reporting year combining the ILR learning aims from the pre-merger UKPRNs for the post-merger college UKPRN.
23. College mergers that took place on or after 31 July 2023, we will produce the QAR for the 2022 to 2023 reporting year under the pre-merger UKPRNs.
24. Where there is college structural change, between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023, we will aim to produce the QARs, including the historical trend, using the following principles:
  - a) for learners still in learning on 31 July 2022, we will attribute these to the provider who continues to deliver the learning from 1 August 2022
  - b) for learners who have already finished their learning and have a hybrid end year of 2021 to 2022 or earlier, we will attribute them to the provider who delivered the training before the structural change
  - c) for learners who have already finished their learning but have a planned end date after 1 August 2022 (i.e. a hybrid end year of 2022 to 2023 or after), we will attribute these to the provider who 'owns' the campus from 1 August 2022
25. Each instance of structural change may be different and have unique characteristics not described here, and therefore there may be exceptions or additions to the principles above.

## What we will produce for providers, share and publish

26. We will produce provider level QARs and share with you as follows:

- a) Education and Training for 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023
- b) Apprenticeships 2020 to 2021, 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023
- c) Traineeships for 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023

27. Normally we provide comparison values for the previous 2 years to show a trend, however due to arrangements around the impact of Covid-19, we cannot retrospectively present historical years where this would include data previously excluded or out of scope.

- a) In 2020 to 2021, qualifications were identified as subject to normal or alternative/ Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) arrangements. Where qualifications were subject to alternative assessment/TAG arrangements these were out of scope for QAR. This no longer applied in 2021 to 2022 as all qualifications returned to normal assessment arrangements and in scope for QAR. Therefore, only 2 years (2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023) of data will be produced and shared for Education and Training and Traineeships at provider level.
- b) As Apprenticeships continued to be subject to normal assessment, data will be produced and shared at provider level for 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023.

28. Historical trend data, presented in provider level dashboards, has not been re-calculated and is shown as originally calculated using the methodology of the business rules for the relevant academic year.

29. We will produce overall QARs for subcontracted provision for education and training, traineeships and apprenticeships.

30. Summary data and data extracts will be produced 4 times a year and provide you views of your QAR data and the ability to create your own dashboards. These will be created:

- in-year data release in July each year using the provider's R10 ILR data. This gives providers opportunity to review their data, as it cannot be changed after the R14 ILR collection
- in-year data release in September each year using the provider's R12 ILR data. This gives providers opportunity to review their data, as it cannot be changed after the R14 ILR collection
- provisional data release in January each year using the provider's R14 & R04 ILR data gives providers chance to check the QAR methodology has been applied correctly

- final data release in April each year using the provider's R14 & R04 ILR data to providers the final position

## What we will share with external stakeholders

31. Training provider level QARs are shared securely with:
- Ofsted
  - relevant Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Greater London Authority (GLA) for devolved AEB funded provision

## What we will publish

32. QAR information is published through the [Explore our statistics and data service](#).
33. Historic versions up to the 2018 to 2019 year are available from [Statistics: national achievement rates tables](#).
34. In July 2021, we confirmed the approach for 2021 to 2022 for qualification achievement rates (QARs) will continue to align with that for school and college performance tables. For 2021 to 2022, education and training, apprenticeships and traineeships QARs were published at provider level. This was a change from 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021, when we confirmed that we would not publish any provider-level QARs in response to COVID-19. Full details of the announcement in relation to 2021 to 2022 can be found on [GOV.UK](#).
35. QARs will continue to be published with information at provider level for 2022 to 2023.
36. Subject to data quality and for transparency we are continuing to review whether we reinstate publishing final QAR results for college structural change and campus level data as follows:
- transparency reports to show trends before and after college merger in that year. Subsequent years will be QARs for the post-merger UKPRN
  - QAR datasets with campus level data, where providers have been issued a campus ID

## The learning aims we include in QARs

37. The learning aims we include in the QAR calculation are those in receipt of funding via:

- a) 16 to 19 recorded in the ILR under Funding model 25 ('16 to 19 (excluding Apprenticeships and 16-18 learner programmes funded through school or academy funding model)')
- b) the Adult Education Budget (or previously called the Adult Skills Budget as we use data from the last 5 years). This includes devolved delivery. Both devolved and non-devolved delivery are recorded in the ILR under Funding model 35 ('Adult Skills')
- c) Advanced Learner Loans recorded in the ILR under Funding model 99 ('Non-funded') using the Learning Delivery Funding and Monitoring Code 'ADL'
- d) Apprenticeships; this includes all standards and frameworks recorded in the ILR through Funding models 35 ('Adult Skills'), 36 ('Apprenticeships') and 81 ('Other Adult') for providers listed on [Register of apprenticeship training providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/registries-and-checklists/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers) at the start of the academic year.
- e) Traineeships recorded in the ILR where the Programme Type is 24.

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

## How we calculate withdrawals

39. We treat withdrawals as:

- a 'Completion status' of 1 ('Learner continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim') being recorded in the final R14 ILR return for a funding year
- not having a corresponding record in the following funding year

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

41. For example, an aim with a 'Learning planned end date' of June 2022 and a 'Completion status' of 1 recorded in the R14 ILR in 2021 to 2022, and does not appear in the R14 ILR in 2022 to 2023, will be a withdrawal in the 2022 to 2023 year.

42. 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 2 funding years, **OR**

- b) the planned break recorded in the R14 ILR return for 2021 to 2022 has no corresponding restart record in the R04 ILR return of 2023 to 2024

43. If this scenario happens, we will set the reporting year to 1 year after the later of either:

- the expected end year
- actual end year

44. For example, if you recorded an aim with a 'Learning planned end date' in July 2022 with a planned break in learning in April 2021, this will be a withdrawn aim in the 2022 to 2023 funding year if there is no restart record in either:

- the R14 ILR return in 2021 to 2022 **OR**
- the R14 ILR return in 2022 to 2023 **OR**
- the R04 ILR return of 2023 to 2024

45. We match restart records to planned break records by matching the 'UKPRN', 'Learner reference number' (or Unique Learner Number from 2022 to 2023) and the 'Original learning start date' on the restart record where it matches either the:

- 'Learning start date' **OR**
- 'Original learning start date' (to allow for situations where the planned break was itself a restart) of the planned break record for either:
  - 'Programme type' and 'Framework code'/'Standard code' for apprenticeships **OR**
  - 'Learning aim reference' for other aims

46. We treat uncashed AS levels as failures; this relates to pre-reform AS levels that appear in our trend data.

## The learning aims we exclude from QARs

47. We monitor and analyse that providers are correctly excluding aims in QAR calculations.
48. Where we identify large volumes or proportions, we will contact you to discuss these and may require evidence to confirm these exclusions.
49. Permanent exclusions are applied in the current academic year business rules and unlikely to change to be included in future academic years.
50. Time limited exclusions are applied in the current academic year business rules but may change to be included in future academic years.

## Permanent exclusions

51. Current permanent exclusions are:
  - 14 to 16 year-old students who are direct funded or home educated, identified in the ILR using the LDM codes 320 ('14 to 16 direct funded students in FE') and 321 ('14-16 Home Educated Students')
52. Transfers, where a learner transferred to:
  - a different programme or learning aim within the same provider and we can match to a new aim with a start date within 120 days of the actual end date of the old aim
  - 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
  - another provider to undertake learning that meets a specific government strategy and they don't have a successful achievement from the previous training provider
  - an apprenticeship from a traineeship, other sustained employment or appropriate further learning (as defined in the Funding Rules for a 'positive outcome')
53. We will not exclude transfers from apprenticeships to non-apprenticeship learning aims.
  - 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. 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
  - 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

- European Social Fund funded learning aims recorded under Funding model 70 ('ESF')
- Community Learning funded learning aims using the 'non-formula funded' approach recorded under Funding model 10 ('Community Learning')
- 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 (For example, any payments minus refunds)
- where an instance of learning generates no funding
- Learning Technologies Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 337
- Apprenticeship Seasonable Worker Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 348
- Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) learning aims identified using LDM code 034
- 18-21 Work skills pilot learning aims identified using LDM codes 332 or 341
- Employer Ownership Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 351
- Innovation Code learning aims (references ZINN0001 to ZINN0006 and Z0004474 to Z0007833)
- Unitisation qualifications (learning aim type code 8008 and 8009)
- work experience or work placement aims
- Portable Flexi-job Apprenticeships Pilot using LDM code 383

## Time limited exclusions

54. Time limited exclusions are:

- T Level and T Level Transition Programme aims
- Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE) aims
- Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies (FJAAs) using LDM code 386

55. More information about how we identify and exclude these aims is included in the [Technical specifications](#) under the relevant academic year.



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