



Department
for Education

Qualification achievement rates business rules 2021 to 2022

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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 2021 to 2022 funding year (1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022).

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 all 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 2021 to 2022 version 1.0 in May 2022

7 The section [the learning aims we include in QARs](#) provides improved clarity on the learning aims included for 16-18 and apprenticeships.

8 The section [The learning aims we exclude from QARs](#) includes new exclusions in relation to Portable Flexi-job Apprenticeships Pilot using LDM code 383 and Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies (FJAAs) using LDM code 386.

Changes from the 2020 to 2021 business rules

9 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 will not apply in 2021 to 2022 and the expectation is all qualifications have returned to normal assessment arrangements and therefore in scope for QAR. TAG arrangements impacted on the QARs for Education and Training and at component level for Traineeships.

10 Normally we provide comparison values for the previous 2 years using the same methodology to show a trend. Due to arrangements around the impact of covid19, we cannot retrospectively apply business rules for 2021 to 2022 to historical years where this will result in including data previously excluded or out of scope. This will mean:

- a As we did not supply 2019 to 2020 data, the data for this academic year will not be provided at provider level as trend data for 2021 to 2022.
- b 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 will not apply in 2021 to 2022 and the expectation is all qualifications will have returned to normal assessment arrangements and are therefore in scope for QAR. We cannot retrospectively apply the 2021 to 2022 business rules to 2020 to 2021 and include data previously identified as out of scope. Therefore, only one year (2021 to 2022) of data will be produced and shared for Education and Training and Traineeships at provider level.
- c 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.

11 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 are to be published at provider level. This is 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](https://www.gov.uk).

12 We will produce provider level QARs and share these securely Ofsted. From 2021 to 2022 we will also share provider level QARs with relevant Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) for devolved AEB funded provision.

13 Due to the continued impacts of Covid19 on providers, we are maintaining our position from 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 and we will not calculate timely QAR.

14 The section [the learning aims we exclude from QARs](#) is revised to provide distinction on permanent and time limited exclusions.

About QARs

15 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.

16 We include QARs in the [Explore our statistics and data – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#) to show learners, providers and employers the relative quality of provision. The data also contributes to The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills’ (Ofsted) risk assessment for provider inspections.

17 We merge data from the last 5 years into a QAR dataset, which we use for reporting. We use data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) submitted by providers.

18 We will calculate the following measures from this QAR dataset:

- a overall QARs
- b pass rates (excluding Traineeships)
- c retention rates

19 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

20 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

21 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

22 The overall QAR is the method we will use to inform outcomes for all age apprenticeships, Traineeships, and education and training provision. We use the pass rates and retention rates to provide additional information about the delivery of provision.

College structural change and learner reference number changes

College structural change

23 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

24 We will treat college mergers in the same way as in 2020 to 2021:

- a For Further Education college mergers that take place up to and including 31 July 2022, we will combine the ILR learning aims from any pre-merger UKPRNs and we will produce the QAR for the 2021 to 2022 reporting year for the post-merger UKPRN
- b Where the Further Education college merger took place on or after 1 August 2022, we will produce the QAR for the 2021 to 2022 reporting year under the pre-merger UKPRNs

25 Where there is college structural change, between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022, we will aim to produce the QARs, including the historical trend, using the following principles:

- a For learners still in learning on 31 July 2021, we will attribute these to the provider who continues to deliver the learning from 1 August 2021
- b For learners who have already finished their learning and have a hybrid end year of 2020 to 2021 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 2021 (i.e. a hybrid end year of 2021 to 2022 or after), we will attribute these to the provider who 'owns' the campus from 1 August 2021

26 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.

Learner reference number changes

27 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. For more information about recording this correctly, please refer to the Provider Support Manual.

What we will produce for providers, share and publish

What we will produce for providers

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

- a Education and Training for 2021 to 2022 only
- b Apprenticeships 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
- c Traineeships for 2021 to 2022 only

29 Normally we provide comparison values for the previous 2 years using the same methodology to show a trend, however due to arrangements around the impact of covid19, we cannot retrospectively apply business rules for 2021 to 2022 to historical years where this would include data previously excluded or out of scope.

- a As we did not supply 2019 to 2020 data, the data for this academic year will not be provided at provider level as trend data for 2021 to 2022.
- b 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 will not apply in 2021 to 2022 and the expectation is all qualifications have returned to normal assessment arrangements and therefore in scope for QAR. We cannot retrospectively apply the 2021 to 2022 business rules to 2020 to 2021 and include data previously identified as out of scope. Therefore, only one year (2021 to 2022) of data will

be produced and shared for Education and Training and Traineeships at provider level.

- c 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.

30 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.

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

32 We will produce summary data that contains various views of your QAR data, for example, by sector or by qualification type. We will also produce a data extract that contains the detailed information that allows you to recreate the dashboards along with guidance that explains how to do this.

33 We will produce the summary data and data extract 4 times a year. These will be an in-year release based on R10 and R12 data, a provisional QAR in January 2023 (following the R04 submission and time to process the data) and a final QAR in March 2023. The provisional QAR enables you to check your data and ensure that we have applied our published methodology correctly.

What we will share with external stakeholders

34 We will produce provider level QARs and share these securely with Ofsted, and relevant Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) for devolved AEB funded provision.

What we will publish

35 Up to 2018 to 2019, we published on detailed final QAR information through the National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) and their transparency tables ([Statistics: national achievement rates tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-achievement-rates-tables)). From 2019 to 2020, QAR information is published through the [Explore our statistics and data – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk).

36 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 are to be published at provider level. This is 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](https://www.gov.uk).

37 A separate Traineeships QAR was introduced from 2020 to 2021. We will not recreate the Traineeships QAR for 2019 to 2020 or before. All Traineeship aims that were delivered in the 2019 to 2020 funding year will continue to be recorded under the Education and Training QAR historical trends.

38 As previously announced, we will be publishing information at provider level for 2021 to 2022. Subject to data quality, for transparency we will review reinstating producing final QAR results for college structural change and campus level data as follows:

- a Transparency reports to show the trends before and after college structural change. 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.
- b Campus level data, where providers have been issued with a campus ID and have recorded these, we will include them in the QAR dataset.

The learning aims we include in QARs

39 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#) at the start of the academic year.
- e Traineeships recorded in the ILR where the Programme Type is 24.

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

How we calculate withdrawals

41 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 2021 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 2020 to 2021, and does not appear in the R14 ILR in 2021 to 2022, will be a withdrawal in the 2021 to 2022 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 2020 to 2021 has no corresponding restart record in the R04 ILR return of 2022 to 2023

If this scenario happens, we will set the reporting year to one year after the later of the expected end year or actual end year. For example, if you recorded an aim with a 'Learning planned end date' in July 2021 with a planned break in learning in April 2020, this will be a withdrawn aim in the 2021 to 2022 funding year if there is no restart record in:

- c the R14 ILR return in 2020 to 2021, **OR**
- d the R14 ILR return in 2021 to 2022, **OR**
- e the R04 ILR return of 2022 to 2023

43 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:
 - 'Programme type' and 'Framework code'/'Standard code' for apprenticeships, **OR**
 - 'Learning aim reference' for other aims

44 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

45 We 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.

46 The following permanent and time limited 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). Time limited exclusions refer to exclusions applied in the current academic year business rules but may change to be included in future academic years.

47 Permanent exclusions:

- a 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')
- b Transfers:
 - i. 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
 - ii. 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
 - iii. Education and training learning aims without successful achievement following a transfer to other provision with another provider to undertake learning that meets a specific government strategy
 - iv. From a traineeship to an apprenticeship, other sustained employment or appropriate further learning (as defined in the Funding Rules for a 'positive outcome')

We will not exclude transfers from apprenticeships to non-apprenticeship learning aims.

- c 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
- d 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
- e European Social Fund funded learning aims recorded under Funding model 70 ('ESF')

- f Community Learning funded learning aims using the 'non-formula funded' approach recorded under Funding model 10 ('Community Learning')
- g 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)
- h Where an instance of learning generates no funding
- i Learning Technologies Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 337
- j Apprenticeship Seasonable Worker Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 348
- k Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) learning aims identified using LDM code 034
- l 18-21 Work skills pilot learning aims identified using LDM codes 332 or 341
- m Employer Ownership Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 351
- n Innovation Code learning aims (references ZINN0001 to ZINN0006 and Z0004474 to Z0007833)
- o Unitisation qualifications (learning aim type code 8008 and 8009)
- p Work experience or work placement aims
- q Portable Flexi-job Apprenticeships Pilot using LDM code 383

48 Time Limited Exclusions

- a T-Level and T-Level Transition Programme aims
- b Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies (FJAAs) using LDM code 386

49 More information about how we identify and exclude these aims is included in the Technical specifications available from the [QAR collections page](#) under the relevant academic year.



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