



The effects of the changes to Qualification Success Rate methodologies in 2013/14

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Introduction

This paper describes the effect on Qualification Success Rates (QSR) reported in the Further Education & Skills Statistical First Release¹ (SFR) and the National Success Rate Tables² (NSRT) due to the changes in QSR methodologies in the 2013/14 academic year.

Background

Prior to 2013/14 success rates were calculated using different methodologies for each of the different strands of further education provision. Employer-based provision (apprenticeships and workplace learning (WPL)) both used a primary Overall success rate measure (based on the later of the actual and planned end dates) and a secondary Timely measure (based on the planned end date). However Education and Training (E&T) provision had a different measure which was based upon the learning planned end date.

In the 2013/14 academic year the QSR methodologies³ have been aligned to give a consistent method of calculation across all provision areas, following recent changes⁴ to government-funded learning provision

QSR methodology changes in 2013/14

In 2013/14, E&T provision has adopted the Overall and Timely measures for QSRs as used in apprenticeships and WPL. The Overall measure will be the principal measure and will also be used to assess the quality of provision against the

¹ The Further Education and Skills: Statistical First Release is published quarterly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/learner-participation-outcomes-and-level-of-highest-qualification-held>

² The SFA National Success Rate Tables (NSRT) are published annually for apprenticeships and Education & Training.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-national-success-rates-tables>

³ The 2013/14 QSR business rules were published on 31st March 2014 and updated on 8th October 2014.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules>

⁴ Qualification Success Rates: Rationale for the method to be used from 2013 to 2014, published 28th May 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-rationale-for-2013-to-2014>

minimum standards⁵ that are expected for funded training. The Timely measure will also be produced as a supporting measure.

The change in E&T QSR methodology causes a break in the time series of these statistics and means that the qualification success rates for 2013/14 cannot be directly compared with those from the previous years.

Change in national success rates

The change in QSR methodology will not impact apprenticeship or WPL QSRs as they already use the Overall and Timely measures. Therefore only E&T QSR figures will be affected by the change in methodology.

Using the Overall measure from new methodology there has been a small (0.8%) decrease in the national success rate for Education & Training provision between 2012/13 (85.5%) and 2013/14 (84.7%). As the E&T success rates published in previous years were calculated using different methodology and therefore cannot be directly compared.

QSR Methodology	Expected End Year	Hybrid End Year	Starts /Leavers	Achievers	Success Rate
2012 Methodology <i>E&T Measure</i>	2011	<i>n/a</i>	3,669,100	3,083,000	84.0%
	2012	<i>n/a</i>	3,934,200	3,383,200	86.0%
2013 Methodology <i>Overall Measure</i>	<i>n/a</i>	2011	4,043,000	3,362,700	83.2%
	<i>n/a</i>	2012	4,565,300	3,901,000	85.5%
	<i>n/a</i>	2013	4,439,000	3,758,800	84.7%

Table 1 – Differences in National E&T success rates using the different methodologies.

Inclusions/Exclusions

As well as the change in QSR methodology between academic years 2012/13 and 2013/14, there have also been changes to the business rules that determine which aims are included/excluded from the success rate calculation. These changes have led to a significant increase in the cohort size; Table 1 above shows approximately 1 million more leavers included for 2012. This increase can be mainly attributed to the inclusion of Functional Skills aims (641,400 leavers) and stand-alone QCF units (353,300 leavers) which were previously excluded as new qualifications generally are until they become established.

Presentational changes to QSR reporting

E&T and WPL qualification categories

The qualification categories used in E&T QSR have changed. The previous categorisation was based on the qualification type and the planned duration of the qualifications as set by providers. This meant that the same qualification could appear in different categories if delivered over different timeframes. The new categories (see Appendix A) are based on the qualification type, a pre-determined attribute of the qualification and so eliminates such obfuscation.

⁵ How the Skills Funding Agency will apply minimum standards for 2013/14, published 27th November 2014.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-minimum-standards>

Year	Qualification Code	Qualification Title	Length	Success Rate
2012/13	B0220054	GCSE Biology	Long	83.4%
2012/13	B0220054	GCSE Biology	Short (5-24 wks)	88.0%

Table 2 – An example of how different national success rates have been reported for a single qualification when delivered over different timeframes under the previous qualification reporting categories. Figures taken from the 2012/13 E&T NSRT reports.

Apprenticeships age groupings

Success rates for apprenticeship provision are to be reported under different age groupings to those used in previous publications. This change has been introduced to align better with the Skills Funding Agency funding model. The 2013/14 apprenticeship NSRT reports will use the new age grouping for all three years.

Age Group	Previous Reporting Age Grouping <i>(pre-2013/14)</i>	New Reporting Age Grouping <i>(from 2013/14)</i>
1	16-18	16-18 (unchanged)
2	19-24	19-23
3	25+	24+

Table 3 – Changes to age grouping in Apprenticeship QSR reporting.

Appendix A - Education & Training QSR qualification categories

Qualification Categories

(Pre-2013/14)

A Levels
A2 Level
AS Levels
BTEC / OCR
GCSE
International Baccalaureate
NVQ
Other

New Qualification Categories

(post 2012/13)

A levels
Access to HE
AS levels
Award
Certificate
Diploma
ESOL
Functional skills (Skills for life)
GCSE maths and English
GCSE other
Other non-regulated
Other regulated
QCF unit