



Qualification achievement rates 2017 to 2018 in-year data release

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Purpose of document

This document is to support technical users of Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) data, including those responsible for Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data returns, MI managers and software writers.

We will continue to update this document to provide answers to the most common questions users of the in-year QAR data are raising.

What is it?

This new, in-year Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) release provides indicative apprenticeship and education & training QARs based on the 2017 to 2018 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) R10 data. Although you may not have recorded all of your achievement data at this time, this early sight of your data will give you the opportunity to identify and resolve potential data issues prior to the ILR R14 hard close on 18 October 2018.

This is an in-year QAR and it may differ from your provisional and final QAR if we update the methodology following your feedback.

Where can I find it?

We published the in-year data on the Hub and through an additional Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard. Your 2016 to 2017 QAR data will continue to be available.

The in-year dashboard has a similar format to that provided for the 2016 to 2017 Provisional release and therefore does not contain National and Provider type QAR's, Pass Rates or Retention Rates.

We have published the QAR extract files on the Data Returns page on [the Hub](#). The files can be accessed, along with the extracts from previous years, from the 'QAR Reports' section on the Active, Completed or Archived tabs.

To access these files you will need to have an IDAMS account with the relevant user role. For guidance on how to request or review your IDAMS account, refer to the [IDAMS guidance documents](#).



From 1 October 2018, the My BI (Birst) dashboards will no longer be available and you will not be able to access the BI Tools tab on the Hub. We will provide your 2016 to 2017 final and 2017 to 2018 in-year QAR dashboard data in alternative Excel reports. These reports will be available on the Data Returns page alongside your QAR extract files and will contain the same data as was in the dashboards. Please refer to [Q16](#) for further details.

You can access all information about QARs through the [QAR webpage](#). This webpage contains the:

- key communications about QARs and minimum standards
- [business rules and dataset specification](#) documents
- [Minimum standards](#)
- [National Achievement Rate tables](#)
- [Guidance documents](#) for:
 - [IDAMS accounts](#)
 - using the QAR reports
 - using the Data extracts - these guidance documents are published under the [dataset specifications link](#)

What should I do with this data?

Early sight of the data allows you the opportunity to check your data and be able to correct any issues before the 2017 to 2018 ILR hard close on 18 October 2018.

We recommend that you review your in-year QAR data before submitting your R14 data.

Common data issues that you may want to review include:

- learners not included or excluded from the QAR calculations as expected
- overdue continuing aims
- overdue planned breaks
- incorrect recording of the ILR field 'Learner reference number in previous year'.

Please refer to the [2017 to 2018 dataset specification](#) documents for further details about these. The [Funding Rules Monitoring](#) reports also identify some QAR data issues as detailed in [Inform](#) last month.



What do I do if I find issues in my data?

The purpose of this release is to help you to identify any issues in your ILR data that will affect your QAR results. You will have until 18 October 2018 (ILR R14) to rectify any data issues identified with your 2017 to 2018 ILR data; **you cannot amend R14 ILR data that you submitted in 2016 to 2017 or before**. You will not be able to amend your 2017 to 2018 ILR data after this date; any issues in the data that are not resolved may affect your QARs. See Q13 for further information.

You can contact the [service desk](#) with queries but we cannot amend your data for you. If you have specific data queries, please complete a [data query form](#), email this to the service desk and ask us to assign it to the 'ESFA Business Operations QAR' group.

Will you use this for performance management or minimum standards?

This data is indicative and intended for your internal use only. We will not use the data for national statistics, minimum standards or activities such as performance management and we will not be sharing this data with Ofsted. We may however contact you to provide support where we identify significant data issues.

We will not normally lift any Notices or additional condition of funding / contractual obligations based on this data; but may factor in-year QAR into our considerations about broader compliance if we think it is right to do so.

We have based references to minimum standards in the in-year data release on the 2016 to 2017 minimum standards thresholds to give an indication of performance. These may be different to the final 2017 to 2018 minimum standards thresholds. When the 2017 to 2018 minimum standards are available, we will publish them on [GOV.UK](#).

What data will be included in the in-year QAR?

The scope of these in-year results is the same as the full QAR that we will produce in early 2019, using the same business rules. The main difference is that the records used in the full-year version will be more complete, using R14 data from 2017 to 2018 and merging in the relevant achievement records from the R04 return in 2018 to 2019.

Any additional 2017 to 2018 aims added after R10 and up to R14 this year that have a planned end date within the 2017 to 2018 academic year, will be added to your cohort in the full year results.



Questions and answers

Q1. **Why is my QAR lower than I expected?**

We base the in-year QAR data set on the ILR data that you have returned to us so far in 2017 to 2018.

As achievement data maybe incomplete at this stage, your QAR may be lower than you expect.

Providers traditionally do not record achievement data for Education and Training is until the end of the academic year, meaning that the number of leavers, in particular for 16 to 18, will be lower than the final QAR data set that we produce.

Q2. **The number of records in my data extract for the hybrid end year 2017.5 is higher than expected. Why is this?**

One of the parameters in the hybrid end year calculation is the ILR 'Learning actual end date'.

We place records in the hybrid end year 2017.5 where the 'Learning actual end date' is not returned in your 2017 to 2018 R10 ILR submission.

Once you complete the 'Learning actual end date', we will classify the record as hybrid end year 2017 or before.

Q3. **What records do you use in the in-year QAR?**

We use the following datasets for the in-year QAR:

- 2013/14 R14 (ILR and LEOP)
- 2014/15 R14 (ILR and LEOP)
- 2015/16 R14 (ILR)
- 2016/17 R14 (ILR)
- 2017/18 R10 (ILR)

For the in-year QAR we treat the R10 data as if it is an end of year dataset. This means that we bring through all the data you have returned to us into the QAR matching logic.



Q4. Why are there duplicate records in my data extracts?

There are several reasons why records may appear multiple times in your extracts. You should check the following:

- Have you recorded the previous learner reference number if the 'Learner reference number' has changed between academic years?
- Have any of the key criteria (such as Learning start date, Learning aim reference, Framework code, Standard code) changed compared to previous years? If they have, then the records will not have matched between years resulting in duplicate records.

Q5. How do I use the dashboard and data extracts?

Please refer to the following [guidance documents](#) on the QAR webpage:

- Guidance for using the QAR reports
- Guidance for IDAMS accounts

Q6. My in-year QAR rate is below the minimum standard threshold. Will formal intervention action take place as a result?

The in-year data is indicative and intended for your internal use only. We will not use the data for national statistics, minimum standards or activities such as performance management and we will not be sharing this data with Ofsted. We may however contact you to provide support where we identify significant data issues.

We will not normally lift any Notices or additional condition of funding / contractual obligations based on this data; but may factor in-year QAR into our considerations about broader compliance if we think it is right to do so.

Q7. Why are records in my dataset flagged as overdue planned breaks?

We flag a record as an overdue planned break if we cannot find a corresponding restart record in the same funding year or following funding year.

You should also check your FRM10 [funding rules monitoring](#) report, which identifies breaks in learning that last for more than 365 days.

The [provider support manual](#) contains guidance about how to record a restart when a learner returns from a break in learning, or what to do if a learner withdraws without returning from their break in learning.



Q8. What are overdue continuing aims and why are they important?

We flag a record as an overdue continuing aim if the record was reported as continuing in the 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR return (Completion status code 1), but there is no record of the aim in the 2017 to 2018 ILR. These aims are identified in your data extract by a value of 1 in the column `Overdue_Continuing_Aims`.

The QAR calculation treats these aims as withdrawn, which will lower your achievement rate.

You should check your data to ensure that you correctly report any aims identified as overdue continuing aims before the 2017 to 2018 R14 hard close.

You must return data in 2017 to 2018 for all aims reported as continuing in the 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR. If the learner has since withdrawn from the aim, you must record this in the 2017 to 2018 ILR with the relevant dates. Please refer to the [provider support manual](#) for guidance.

You can also check your FRM03 [funding rules monitoring](#) report, which identifies continuing learners from 2016 to 2017 who do not appear in the 2017 to 2018 ILR.

Q9. If I start a learner between R10 and R14 will these be included in the final QAR?

Yes. We will bring through all of your 2017 to 2018 ILR data into the QAR data set, regardless of what the actual or planned end date is that you have returned to us.

Q10. Will you be producing another in-year QAR at R11 or R12?

We do not intend to produce another in-year QAR until the provisional window in January (that uses R14 data and R04 2018 to 2019 data).

Q11. How do I raise a query with my data?

You can contact the [service desk](#) with queries but we cannot amend your data for you. If you have specific data queries, please complete a [data query form](#), email this to the service desk and ask us to assign it to the 'ESFA Business Operations QAR' group.

Q12. What data do you exclude from QARs?

See the 'Exclusion sections in the [technical specification documents](#) for more details of what is excluded from QARs.



Q13. Can I change data if it is wrong?

If you find errors in your 2017 to 2018 QAR data, you can correct these by amending your ILR data when:

- The data relates to 2017 to 2018 ILR data and the R14 hard close has not passed.
- In specific instances where the data relates to 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR data, the 2017 to 2018 R14 hard close has not passed, and the error is covered by the provider support manual in the section 'Correcting errors' (section 5 in the [2017 to 2018 provider support manual](#)).

You can amend your 2017 to 2018 ILR data to correct data errors up until the R14 hard close on 18 October 2018.

Final ILR data, as returned at R14 in previous years, **cannot be changed**; we are not able to amend your 2015 to 2016 R14 or 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR data even if you discover a data error.

Always check your R14 ILR data carefully before the hard close to ensure that it is both accurate and complete.

Q14. Why are apprenticeship standards included in my QAR when the learner withdrew within the funding qualifying period?

We have identified an issue affecting the funding qualifying period exclusion rule. Apprenticeship standards on Funding model 36 are incorrectly being included in QAR calculations when learners withdrew from the standard within the qualifying period.

The provisional QAR data in January will correct this issue.

Q15. How do you calculate hybrid end year?

To understand the logic that hybrid end year uses, it is important to highlight the key QAR derived variables that we use to calculate the hybrid end year, and then how we use these in the calculation. The following examples relate to the 2017 to 2018 QAR data set and we refer to this as the current QAR.

The key derived variables are:

- **Actual End Year** – this is the same as P_Actendyr in the QAR dataset specification
- **Planned End Year** – this is the same as P_Expendyr in the QAR dataset specification



- **Reporting Year** – this refers to the academic year you submitted the learning aim to us. If the academic year is after the current QAR year, then we set this variable to 2017.5 (for example, if you report the learning aim in 2018 to 2019).
- **Overdue Continuing Aim** – this is the same as Overdue_Continuing_Aim in the QAR dataset specification
- **Overdue Planned Break** – this is the same as Overdue_Planned_Break in the QAR dataset specification
- **Year First Reported Completed** – this refers to the academic year you first reported the record with a Completion status of code 2 ('Complete') or 3 ('Withdrawn'). If the academic year you first reported the record with a Completion status of code 2 or 3 is after the current QAR year, then we set this variable to 2017.5 (for example, if you report the learning aim in 2018 to 2019).

We then implement two steps to calculate the hybrid end year:

Step 1:

We assign all records an initial value in step 1, based on the Actual End Year (P_Actendyr) and Planned End Year (P_Expendyr) derived variables. The table below explains the conditions we use to set the values. If the data does not meet the first condition, then we apply the second condition. If the data does not meet the second condition, then we apply the third condition.

Condition	Outcome	Example
If the actual end year is unpopulated...	...we set hybrid end year to 2017.5.	
If the planned end year is greater than or equal to the actual end year...	...we set hybrid end year to equal the planned end year.	The planned end date is 31/08/2017. The actual end date is 30/05/02017. The planned end year is 2017. The actual end year is 2016. 2017 is greater than 2016, so the hybrid end year is set to 2017.
Else...	...we set hybrid end year to equal the actual end year.	



Step 2:

We use the output from step 1 for step 2, when we account for the other derived variables.

Condition	Outcome	Example
If the record is marked as an overdue continuing aim...	...we set the hybrid end year to the maximum value recorded in the actual end year, planned end year and reporting year derived variables.	The record is marked as an overdue continuing aim, the reporting year is 2015, the actual end year is unpopulated and the planned the planned end year is 2017. The hybrid end year is set to 2017.
If the record is marked as an overdue planned break and the hybrid end year from step 1 is after the current QAR year...	...we set the hybrid end year to 2017.5.	
If the record is marked as an overdue planned break and the hybrid end year from step 1 is not after the current QAR year...	...we set the hybrid end year to the hybrid end year from step 1 plus one year.	The record is marked as an overdue planned break, the planned end year is 2016 and the actual end year is 2015. The hybrid end year from step 1 is 2016, the hybrid end year in step 2 is set to 2016 plus one year, so the hybrid end year is set to 2017.
If the year first reported completed is after the hybrid end year from step 1...	...we set the hybrid end year to equal the first year reported complete.	The planned end year is 2016, the actual end year is 2015, the year first reported complete is 2017. The hybrid end year from step 1 is 2016, the year first reported complete is after this, so the hybrid end year is set to 2017.
Else...	...hybrid end year is set to the value from step 1.	



Q16. The BI Tools tab isn't appearing on the Hub, where can I find my QAR data?

From 1 October 2018, the dashboards accessed through the BI Tools tab on the Hub will no longer be available. We will publish your QAR dashboard data in an Excel format instead; you can find the new reports on the Data Returns page of the Hub.

You will have access to both your final 2016 to 2017 QAR data and your in-year 2017 to 2018 QAR data in the Excel reports. These reports will contain the same data as the dashboards.

We will publish a user guide for the new reports onto the [QAR webpage](#).

You will need to ensure that you have the correct user role to access the new reports:

- If you can currently access the Data Returns page on the Hub then you do not need to take any action.
- If you cannot currently access the Data Returns page on the Hub then you will need to ensure you update your user role.

To update your user role, please follow the guidance on how to request and review your IDAMS account in the [IDAMS guidance documents](#). You need one of the 'Data Exchange Service' user roles to access the Data Returns page; the 'BI Hub User' role will no longer be available.

If you have any queries or feedback about the new QAR reports, please contact the [service desk](#) and ask us to assign your query to the 'ESFA Business Operations QAR' group.

Q17. There are QAR files on the Hub called 'V1' and 'V2', which ones should I use?

Your final QAR 2016 to 2017 final data extract and in-year QAR 2017 to 2018 data extract appear as files ending 'V1'.

Your BI reports for the final QAR 2016 to 2017 and in-year QAR 2017 to 2018 appear as files ending 'V2'.



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