Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Qualification achievement rates 2018 to 2019 in-year data releases

Version 2

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Contents

Purpose of document

1.   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.

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

Changes from Version 1 of this document

3.   We have clarified question 2 in the common questions and answers section.

What is it?

4.   There are two in-year QAR releases this year. The in-year QAR releases provide indicative QARs for apprenticeships and education & training based on the 2018 to 2019 ILR R10 and R12 data. Although you may not have recorded all of your achievement data at this time, this early sight of your data gives you the opportunity to identify and resolve potential data issues prior to the ILR R14 hard close on 17 October 2019. **It is important that you use this in-year QAR to review your data, as you cannot change the 2018 to 2019 data after the final R14 window closes.**

5.   The in-year QAR may differ from your provisional and final QAR if we update the methodology following your feedback.

Where can I find it?

6.   We will publish the in-year data on the Hub and through our Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard [View Your Education Data](#). Your 2017 to 2018 QAR data will continue to be available until the final QAR data for 2019 to 2020 is published.

7.   The in-year dashboard will have a similar format to the 2017 to 2018 provisional release and therefore does not contain National and Provider type QARs, Pass Rates or Retention Rates.

8.   We will publish the QAR data 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.

9.   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](#).

10.   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 technical 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 [Qualification achievement rates (QAR) data extract guidance 2018 to 2019](#)

What should I do with this data?

11.   Early sight of the data allows you to check your data and be able to correct any issues before the 2018 to 2019 ILR hard close on 17 October 2019. **You cannot, and we cannot, change your 2018 to 2019 ILR data once the R14 ILR window closes.**

12.   We recommend that you review your in-year QAR data before submitting your R14 data. Some common data issues that you may want to review include these below, for more detailed information about these and how you can review these areas, please refer to the published article in [Inform](#) last month:

- 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'.

13.   Please refer to the [2018 to 2019 technical specification](#) documents for further details about these areas and how they impact the QAR calculations.

14.   We also recommend reviewing certain [Funding Rules Monitoring](#) reports as these identify some QAR data issues. We published the relevant reports and more detailed information in [Inform](#) last month.

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

15.   You have until 17 October 2019 (ILR R14) to rectify any data issues identified with your 2018 to 2019 ILR data. **You will not be able to amend your 2018 to 2019 ILR data after this date, neither can we**. Any issues in the data that are not resolved by R14 may affect your QARs. See Q13 for further information.

16.   **After the R14 hard close, you cannot amend ILR data that you submitted in 2017 to 2018 or before, neither can we**. See Q13 for further information.

17.   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?

18.   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.

19.   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.

20.   We have based references to minimum standards on the 2018 to 2019 minimum standards thresholds; these are for apprenticeships only. For more information on the 2018 to 2019 minimum standards thresholds please see the 2018 to 2019 minimum standards document.

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

21.   The scope of these in-year results is the same as the full QAR that we will produce in early 2020, using the 2018 to 2019 business rules. The main difference is that the records used in the full-year version will be more complete, using R14 data from 2018 to 2019 and merging in the relevant achievement records from R04 in 2019 to 20120.

22.   Any additional 2018 to 2019 aims added after R10 up to R14 this year that have a planned end date within the 2018 to 2019 academic year, will be added to your cohort in the full year results.

Common 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 2018 to 2019. For the first in-year QAR this will be up to R10, and for the second in-year QAR it will be up to R12.

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 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 2018.5 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 2018.5 where the 'Learning actual end date' is not returned in your 2018 to 2019 ILR submission.

Once you complete the 'Learning actual end date', we will classify the records hybrid end year depending on the planned and actual end dates, please see 2018 to 2019 QAR technical specification documents for examples.

In addition, as the R10 ILR collection close date is before the end of the 2018 to 2019 academic year, we will also place records with a 'Learning planned end date' between the R10 collection close date and July 31st into hybrid end year 2018.5. This only applied for the in-year R10 QAR data set.

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

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

- 2014/15 R14

- 2015/16 R14

- 2016/17 R14

- 2017/18 R14

- For 2018/19 we use the latest 2018/19 ILR; we use R10 for the first in-year QAR and then R12 for second in-year release.

For the in-year QAR, we treat the latest available ILR 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?**

To use the dashboard, please refer to the guidance on [View Your Education Data](#).

To use the data extract, please refer to the [guidance document](#) on the QAR webpage.

Q6. **My in-year QAR rate is below the minimum standard threshold for apprenticeships. 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 FRM08 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. We also published more detailed information about overdue planned breaks in Inform last month.

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 2017 to 2018 R14 ILR return (Completion status code 1), but there is no record of the aim in the 2018 to 2019 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 2018 to 2019 R14 hard close.

You must return data in 2018 to 2019 for all aims reported as continuing in the 2017 to 2018 R14 ILR. If the learner has since withdrawn from the aim, you must record this in the 2018 to 2019 ILR with the relevant dates. Please refer to the provider support manual for guidance.

You can also check your FRM06 funding rules monitoring report, which identifies continuing learners from 2017 to 2018 who do not appear in the 2018 to 2019 ILR.

We also published more detailed information about continuing aims in Inform last month.

Q9. **If I start a learner after R10 and before 31 July will these be included in the final QAR?**

Yes. We will bring through all of your 2018 to 2019 ILR data into the QAR data set, regardless of what the actual or planned end date is that you have returned to us. However, only those with a planned end date in 2018 to 2019 are in scope for the 2018 to 2019 QAR.

Q10. **Will you be producing another in-year QAR?**

We will produce another in-year QAR for 2018 to 2019 at R12.

After the R12 in year QAR, the next available QAR dataset will be in the provisional window in January (that uses R14 data and R04 2019 to 2020 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 specifications for more details of what is excluded from QARs.

Q13. **Can I change data if it is wrong?**

If you find errors in your 2018 to 2019 QAR data, you can correct these by amending your ILR data when:

- The data relates to 2018 to 2019 ILR data and the R14 hard close has not passed.

- In specific instances where the data relates to 2017 to 2018 R14 ILR data, the 2018 to 2019 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 2018 to 2019 provider support manual).

You can amend your 2018 to 2019 ILR data to correct data errors up until the R14 hard close on 17 October 2019.

Final ILR data, as returned at R14 in previous years, **cannot be changed**; we are not able to amend your 2016 to 2017 R14 or 2017 to 2018 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. **How do you calculate hybrid end year?**

The Hybrid end year it is the later of the planned end year, actual end year or the year in which the data was reported.

We have included more information in the technical specifications to explain how we calculate the hybrid end year.

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