



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

# **Qualification achievement rates business rules 2019 to 2020**

**Version 1**

**January 2020**

## Contents

Introduction and purpose of document .....	3
Understanding the terminology .....	3
Changes from the 2018 to 2019 business rules.....	3
About QARs.....	4
The different measures within QARs .....	4
Structural change and learner reference number changes .....	6
Mergers .....	6
Structural change such as de-mergers.....	6
Learner reference number changes .....	6
What we will produce for you and what we will publish.....	7
What we will produce for you .....	7
What we will publish .....	7
What we will publish for mergers .....	8
What we will publish for structural change such as de-mergers .....	8
What we will publish for colleges who are part of groups .....	8
The learning aims we include in QARs .....	8
How we calculate withdrawals.....	9
The learning aims we exclude from QARs.....	10

## 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 2019 to 2020 funding year (1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020).

2 We will publish the initial draft dataset specifications by the end of February 2020 to give early sight of any changes; these will contain the detailed technical rules. We will publish these on the [QAR website](#).

## Understanding the terminology

3 The terms 'we' and 'ESFA' refer to the 'Education and Skills Funding Agency' 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, 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 of these.

6 The term 'Education and training' means all ILR records that are recorded for 16-19 study programmes, the adult education budget (AEB) including the devolved AEB, and advanced learner loans – it no longer includes Traineeships from 2019 to 2020.<sup>39</sup>

## Changes from the 2018 to 2019 business rules

7 The main methodology and principles for calculating apprenticeship and education and training QARs have not changed from 2018 to 2019.

8 However, Traineeship learning aims will no longer be part of the Education and Training QAR for 2019 to 2020. There will now be a separate traineeship QAR, which will consist of three achievement rates based on:

- a learner progression to apprenticeships, other sustained employment and further learning
- b work preparation and flexible learning aims
- c English and maths.

9 The traineeship QAR will report solely on traineeship provision delivered. The main change to previous years is that learner progression will be treated positively up until 180 days after completing the traineeship programme. The traineeship component aims (the work preparation, flexible learning aims, English and maths aims) will continue to follow the same methodology as the education and training QAR. No minimum standards will be applied for Traineeships for 2019 to 2020, this will be reviewed after the first year's publication.

10 We will have three QARs:

- a Apprenticeships
- b Traineeships
- c Education and Training (now excluding Traineeship learning aims).

11 We will include devolved delivery recorded under Funding Model 35 ('Adult Skills') in the ILR in the Education and Training QARs. For more information on devolution please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-devolution>.

12 We have changed the apprenticeship rules to account for the 2019 to 2020 ILR changes for apprenticeship standards. These are the changes to when you record the 'Learning planned end date', the 'Actual end date' and the 'Achievement date' fields in the ILR for apprenticeship standards only. Because of these ILR changes, we are reviewing how we calculate QARs for apprenticeship standards for 2020 to 2021. However, they will be unchanged for 2019 to 2020.

## About QARs

13 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.

14 We use QARs in the [National Achievement Rate Tables](#) to show learners, providers and employers the relative quality of provision. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) use them as part of their inspection process.

## The different measures within QARs

15 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.

- 16 We calculate the following measures from this QAR dataset:
- overall QARs
  - timely QARs – excluding apprenticeship standards
  - pass rates – for education and training only
  - retention rates – for education and training only.
- 17 The **overall QAR**, **pass rate** and **retention rate** calculations use the hybrid end year of the learning aim. The hybrid end year is the latter of the:
- achievement year (for apprenticeship standards on funding model 36 only)
  - planned end year of the learning aim
  - actual end year of the learning aim
  - reporting year.
- 18 The calculations use three values:
- 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.
  - The number of aims achieved. This includes reformed AS levels that are decoupled from the A Level and any cashed pre-reform AS levels.
  - The number of aims where the learner has completed all the learning activities.
- 19 The different measures for each hybrid end year are:
- 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.
  - 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.
  - 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.
- 20 The **timely QAR** calculation uses the planned end year of the learning aim. This calculation measures the number of aims achieved on or before their planned end date, or no more than 90 days after it, as a percentage of the number of aims planned to complete in the reporting year. We do not count achieved aims with an actual end date more than 90 days after the planned end date as achievements in the timely method.

## Structural change and learner reference number changes

### Mergers

- 21 We will treat mergers in the same way as in 2018 to 2019:
- a For Further Education college mergers that take place up to and including 31 July 2020, we will combine the ILR learning aims from any pre-merger UKPRNs and we will produce the QAR for the 2019 to 2020 reporting year for the post-merger UKPRN.
  - b Where the Further Education college merger took place on or after 1 August 2020, we will produce the QAR for the 2019 to 2020 reporting year under the pre-merger UKPRNs.

### Structural change such as de-mergers

- 22 The term structural changes covers various scenarios where a provider may:
- a Sell a campus(es) to another provider(s)
  - b Sell a delivery site(s) to another provider(s)
  - c Closes a site or a campus
  - d Sells part of their business to another provider
- 23 Where there is structural change, between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, we will aim to produce the QARs, including the historical trend, using the following principles:
- a For learners still in learning on 31 July 2019, we will attribute these to the provider who continues to deliver the learning from 1 August 2019
  - b For learners who have already finished their learning and have a hybrid end year of 2018 to 2019 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 2019 (i.e. a hybrid end year of 2019 to 2020 or after), we will attribute these to the provider who 'owns' the campus from 1 August 2019.

- 24 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

- 25 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 you and what we will publish

### What we will produce for you

26 We will calculate overall and timely QARs for the 2019 to 2020 funding year; we provide comparison values for the previous two years using the same methodology to show a trend. 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.

27 We will produce overall and timely QARs for subcontracted provision for education and training, Traineeships and apprenticeship frameworks, although this is not available for apprenticeship standards.

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

29 We will produce the summary data and data extract four times a year. These will be an in-year release based on R10 and R12 data, a provisional QAR in January 2021 (following the R04 submission and time to process the data) and a final QAR in March 2021. The provisional QAR enables you to check your data and ensure that we have applied our published methodology correctly. We will share the provisional and final QARs with Ofsted. We will only include comparison values against the sector in the final reports once we publish the [National Achievement Rate tables](#) (NARTs).

30 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, retention rates and timely QAR to provide additional information about the delivery of provision.

### What we will publish

31 We will publish on gov.uk detailed final QAR information through the [NARTs](#) and their [transparency tables](#). This allows you to benchmark your performance against other providers and provider types.

32 We will automatically redact data from the published [NARTs](#) where you do not return valid ILR data after the R11 ILR return. Because you did not submit at either the R12, R13 or R14 ILR returns, we cannot be sure of your data accuracy. However, we will publish the headline data separately in the NARTs [transparency tables](#).

33 As we have created a new Traineeships QAR there will be a new set of tables in the NARTs for Traineeships for 2019 to 2020. These tables will be for 2019 to 2020 data only, we will not recreate the Traineeships QAR for 2018 to 2019 or before. All Traineeship aims that were delivered in the 2018 to 2019 funding year will continue to be recorded under the Education and Training QAR historical trends.

### **What we will publish for mergers**

34 We will produce final QAR results for the previous UKPRNs of colleges that merged in 2019 to 2020 for transparency. 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.

### **What we will publish for structural change such as de-mergers**

35 We will follow a similar principle for structural change to how we treat mergers. We will publish transparency reports to show the trends before and after structural change.

### **What we will publish for colleges who are part of groups**

36 For colleges who are part of groups, who we have allocated campus identifiers, we will publish the data according to how long you have had the identifiers for:

- a For those groups who were first given the identifiers in 2019 to 2020, we will treat this data as shadow data. We will not publish the disaggregated campus data for in the official [NARTs](#); however, we will publish this data in parallel with the NARTs through the [NARTs transparency](#) reports.
- b For those groups who were first given the identifiers in 2018 to 2019, we will include this data in the official [NARTs in transparency tables](#).

37 We will make decisions on publishing 2019 to 2020 QAR data for delivery sites in due course, when we have reviewed the experimental first year data collected in 2018 to 2019. If we decide to publish the 2019 to 2020 data, publication would not be in the official NARTs.

## **The learning aims we include in QARs**

38 The last day of the reporting period for the 2019 to 2020 year is 31 July 2020. To be included in the calculations, the hybrid end date (for the overall QAR) and the planned end date (for the timely QAR) of the learning aim must be on or before 31 July 2020.



39 The learning aims we include in the QAR calculation are those in receipt of public funding through:

- a 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')
- b Apprenticeships; this includes all standards and frameworks recorded in the ILR through Funding models 35 ('Adult Skills'), 36 ('Apprenticeships') and 81 ('Other Adult')
- c Advanced Learner Loans recorded in the ILR under Funding model 99 ('Non-funded') using the Learning Delivery Funding and Monitoring Code 'ADL'
- d 16 to 19 allocations recorded in the ILR under Funding model 25 ('16-19 (excluding Apprenticeships)').

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

## How we calculate withdrawals

40 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 2019 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 2018 to 2019, and does not appear in the R14 ILR in 2019 to 2020, will be a withdrawal in the 2019 to 2020 year.

41 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 two funding years, **OR**
- b the planned break recorded in the R14 ILR return for 2018 to 2019 has no corresponding restart record in the R04 ILR return of 2020 to 2021

If this scenario happens, we will set the reporting year to one year after the latter of the expected end year or actual end year.

For example, if you recorded an aim with a 'Learning planned end date' in July 2019 with a planned break in learning in April 2018, this will be a withdrawn aim in the 2019 to 2020 funding year if there is no restart record in:

- a the R14 ILR return in 2018 to 2019, **OR**
- b the R14 ILR return in 2019 to 2020, **OR**
- c the R04 ILR return of 2020 to 2021

42 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.

43 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

44 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.

45 The following 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). Those marked with an asterisk (\*) will only be excluded under the timely QAR methodology if they occur on or before or within 90 days of the planned end date:

- 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 Apprenticeship standards **for timely QARs only**
- c 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, aligning with government strategy such as the [apprenticeship 2020 vision](#).
  - 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.

- d \*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.
- e 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.
- f European Social Fund funded learning aims recorded under Funding model 70 ('ESF')
- g Community Learning funded learning aims using the 'non-formula funded' approach recorded under Funding model 10 ('Community Learning')
- h 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).
- i Where an instance of learning generates no funding.
- j Learning Technologies Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 337

- k Apprenticeship Seasonable Worker Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 348
- l Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) learning aims identified using LDM code 034
- m 18-21 Work skills pilot learning aims identified using LDM codes 332 or 341
- n Employer Ownership Pilot learning aims identified using LDM code 351
- o Innovation Code learning aims (references ZINN0001 to ZINN0006 and Z0004474 to Z0007833)
- p Unitisation qualifications
- q Work experience or work placement aims

46 More information about how we identify and exclude these aims will be published in the Technical specifications published on gov.uk.



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2019

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

download [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Reference: [000-000-000]



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)