



Education and training national success rates tables for the 2012/2013 academic year

Guidance notes

Date of issue 16 April 2014

Publication intent NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

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Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose of this document

1. This document provides information about the education and training national success rates tables for the 2012/2013 academic year.

Purpose of the education and training national success rates tables

2. The national success rates tables for education and training set out levels of success of further-education (FE) institutions in England for the 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 academic years. We publish national success rates tables every year.
3. The information in the tables is consistent with the classroom-learning qualification success rates reports for 2012/2013 published in January 2014. It expands upon the information made available in the January statistical first release (see www.gov.uk/government/publications/learner-participation-outcomes-and-level-of-highest-qualification-held).
4. Education and training national success rates tables help institutions to raise the standard of their work. It allows institutions to assess their performance, and helps them plan action programmes to improve their success rates, retention rates and achievement rates.
5. Throughout this guidance we refer to 'national success rates tables' rather than 'benchmarking data'. National success rates tables allow for comparison, and are not a standard of best practice.

Location of national success rates tables

6. The national success rates tables for 2012/2013 are on the data.gov.uk website at (enter URL).

Changes to the national success rates tables for 2012/2013

The changes made to the education and training national success rates tables for 2011/2012 are as follows.

- The information for 2012/2013 has been added.
- The information for 2009/2010 has been removed.

Section 2 – Education and training national success rates tables worksheets

Contents of the tables

7. Our aim in publishing the education and training national success rates tables is to provide a useful but manageable amount of information, drawing on existing statistics.
8. The information in the education and training national success rates tables has been created from institutions' Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns, and they provide a range of national-level and institution-level statistics for success, retention and achievement rates. The method of calculating success rates is available on the gov.uk website at www.gov.uk/government/publications/classroom-learning-qualification-success-rates-2012-to-2013.
9. The education and training national success rates tables contain success rates for three academic years (2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013). The information for each academic year is sourced from the success rates dataset produced for that year, calculated using the method that applied to that year.
10. As the rates are calculated for each qualification, learners studying more than one qualification will appear against each qualification.

Format of the education and training national success rates tables

11. The education and training national success rates tables are published as six compressed files. Each compressed file holds a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that contains a number of worksheets. The separate spreadsheets are:
 - Overall report;
 - Sector subject area report;
 - Other qualification success rates;
 - A, AS, NVQ, BTEC, IB, GCSE success rates;
 - Institution report; and
 - Excluded qualifications report.

The contents of the spreadsheets are shown below.

Overall report

12. The overall report contains separate worksheets that show national success rates, achievement rates and retention rates at a headline level, which is an overview of all national success rates. This report also presents the success rates by:
 - age group;
 - length and level of qualification;
 - qualification type;
 - sex;
 - learning difficulty or disability;
 - ethnic background;
 - the learners' local authority (based on the learners' home postcodes); and



- the local authority for where the learning is delivered (based on the postcodes of the institutions' delivery locations).

13. The overall report also shows percentile information on a separate worksheet. For a further explanation of percentiles for success rates, retention rates and achievement rates, and how they are calculated, see paragraphs 42 to 46. The report shows percentiles at headline level and by:

- age group;
- length and level of qualification;
- qualification type;
- sex;
- ethnic background; and
- learning difficulty or disability.

14. Percentile sheets for learners' and delivery locations' local authorities have not been included in the overall report as the dataset includes many small groupings (cohorts), would have a significant effect on the rates presented.

Sector subject area report

15. Each sector subject area has its own worksheet that shows the national success rates, achievement rates and retention rates by:

- qualification type;
- qualification level; and
- length of qualification.

Qualification type reports

16. The qualification type reports contain worksheets that show the national success rates, achievement rates and retention rates for individual qualifications. For each rate the worksheets show the:

- qualification code;
- qualification type;
- qualification level;
- qualification title;
- sector subject area tier 1; and
- length of qualification.

17. Due to the limit on the number of rows in Microsoft Excel 2003 (65,536), the qualification type report is split into two spreadsheets:

- A-levels, AS-levels, GCSEs, BTECs, NVQs & International Baccalaureate qualifications; and
- other qualifications (for example, 14-19 diploma).

Institution report

18. The institution report contains worksheets that show the national success rates, achievement rates and retention rates for:

- length of qualification;
- qualification level;
- sex;
- ethnic background;
- learning difficulty or disability;
- sector subject area tier 1; and

- delivery location local authority.

Excluded qualifications report

19. Due to the rules described in section 5, the full coverage of qualifications delivered is not available in the spreadsheets for qualification types. The excluded qualifications are included in the excluded qualification report to allow the full scope of qualification delivery to be seen. There is a separate worksheet listing the excluded qualifications, and the reasons why they are excluded, for:

- 2010/2011;
- 2011/2012; and
- 2012/2013.

Section 3 – education and training national success rates tables open data files

Format of education and training national success rates tables open data files

20. The education and training national success rates tables are also published in a non proprietary format to make sure they meet the ‘three-star open data standard’. The comma separated variables (CSV) file is our preferred non-proprietary format. For more information on open data, see the published white paper written by the Cabinet Office. This is on the website at www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-data-white-paper-unleashing-the-potential.

21. The education and training national success rates tables open data files are published as 24 separate compressed files. The contents of each file, and where the information comes from, are listed below.

Overall report

22. There are 14 files containing data from the overall report worksheets explained in paragraphs 12 and 13.

- NSRT101 – headline success rates
- NSRT102 – headline percentiles
- NSRT103 – success rates by age group, length of qualification and qualification level
- NSRT104 – Percentiles by age group, length of qualification and qualification level
- NSRT105 – Success rates by qualification type
- NSRT106 – Percentiles by qualification type
- NSRT107 – Success rates by gender
- NSRT108 – Percentiles by gender
- NSRT109 – Success rates by ethnic background
- NSRT110 – Percentiles by ethnic background
- NSRT111 – Success rates by learning difficulty or disability
- NSRT112 – Percentiles by learning difficulty or disability
- NSRT113 – Success rates by learners’ local authority

- NSRT114 – Success rates by delivery locations' local authority

Sector subject area report

23. The sector subject area report explained in paragraph 15 will be published into a single file.

- NSRT115 – Success rates by sector subject area

Qualification type report

24. The three qualification type report explained in paragraphs 16 and 17 will be published in a single file.

- NSRT116 – Success rates by qualification type

Institution report

25. There are seven files containing the information from the institution report explained in paragraph 18. They are as follows.

- NSRT117 – Headline success rates
- NSRT118 – Success rates by qualification level
- NSRT119 – Success rates by gender
- NSRT120 – Success rates by ethnic background
- NSRT121 – Success rates by learning difficulty or disability
- NSRT122 – Success rates by sector subject area
- NSRT123 – Success rates by delivery locations' local authority

Excluded qualifications report

26. The excluded qualifications report explained in paragraph 19 is published into a single file below.

- NSRT124 – Excluded qualifications

Section 4 – Contents of national success rates tables

27. This section explains the selected columns in the columns in the education and learning national success rates tables worksheets.

Report columns

Institution type

28. Each institution is classified into one of six institution types. The institution types are as follows.

- General further-education or tertiary college
- Other publicly funded institution
- Private-sector publicly funded institution
- School
- Sixth-form college
- Specialist college

29. The 'specialist college' category includes agriculture and horticulture colleges, and art, design and performing arts colleges. An 'all institution type' summary is also available on some of the worksheets.

Age group

30. The age group of a cohort is based on their age as at 31 August in the year they started their learning aim. Learners of unknown age are included in the 19 and over age group. Learners under 16 are included in the 16 to 18 age group. All tables show the information divided into the following age groups.

- 16 to 18
- 19 and over
- All ages

Length of qualification

31. Each qualification is classified into one of the following three lengths.

- Long The expected length is 168 days (24 weeks) or more.
- Short The expected length is more than 34 days and less than 168 days (between five and 24 weeks).
- Very Short The expected length is 34 days (less than five weeks) or less.

An 'all short' category and an 'all length' category are also available. The 'all short' category combines 'short' and 'very short'. The 'all length' category combines all the lengths listed above.

Qualification level

32. Learning aims are grouped according to their qualification level recorded in our learning aims reference application (LARA). The levels are as follows.

- Level 1 – includes qualifications at level 1 and level 'E' (entry level), such as NVQs and other foundation or pre-foundation qualifications
- Level 2 – includes level 2 NVQs, intermediate NVQs and precursors (BTEC first certificate or first diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at intermediate level), GCSEs and other intermediate-level qualifications
- Level 3 – includes level 3 NVQs, advanced NVQs and precursors (BTEC national certificate or national diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at national level), advanced VCEs, GCE A, A2 and AS levels and other advanced-level qualifications
- Level H – higher levels 'H', all level-4 and level-5 qualifications including HNCs and HNDs
- Unknown – qualifications with unknown level 'U', mixed levels 'M', or classified as not applicable 'X'.

An 'all levels' category is also available. This combines all the levels listed above.

Qualification types

33. Learning aims are grouped according to their qualification type. The types are as follows.

- A-level
- A2-level
- AS-level
- BTEC or OCR
- GCSE
- International Baccalaureate
- NVQ
- Other

An 'all types' category is also available. This combines all the qualification types listed above.

Qualification codes

34. The qualification codes shown for the qualification levels come from the learning aim reference application (LARA) hierarchy file, which can be found on the gov.uk website at www.gov.uk/government/publications/lara-learning-aim-reference-application-hierarchy-file. If a qualification has a map code in the LARA hierarchy file, this is used on the report. Otherwise the learning aim reference is used.

Number of starters (not including transfers)

35. The number of 'starters, excluding transfers' is the number of learners who were enrolled on learning aims in the academic year and were expected to complete the aims in that academic year. Details of the definition are shown below.



- The number of starters does not include any learner who transferred onto another learning aim at the same institution. The learning aim the learner transfers onto will be included as a start on the new aim.
- Learners who start on a learning aim expected to last at least 168 days and withdraw within 42 days of starting are considered as not funded and are not included in the number of starters.
- Each learning aim a learner is enrolled on is shown as a separate 'start'.
- As classroom learning is based on expected end of year, if there is a cohort of learners on a two-year programme who then withdrew before the expected completion date, they would still be classified as a starter.

36. The number of starters for a sub-cohort (a distinct group of learners within a cohort) may not add up to the total cohort because:

- the number of starters is rounded to the nearest 10 at all levels; and
- small cohorts of starters (fewer than five) are not included in the published tables.

Report measures

37. The success rates, retention rates and achievement rates are calculated in line with our classroom learning qualifications success rates business rules and methods. These are on the gov.uk website at www.gov.uk/government/publications/classroom-learning-qualification-success-rates-2012-to-2013.

Success rates

38. Success rates are calculated as the number of learning aims achieved divided by the number of starters (not including internal transfers within an institution). It can also be calculated by multiplying the achievement rate by the retention rate.

Retention rates

39. The retention rate is the number of learning aims completed, divided by the number of learners who started the aim (not including internal transfers within an institution). For programmes of study of two years or more, retention rates are calculated across the whole programme (that is, from the start of the aim to the end of it).

Achievement rates

40. The achievement rate is the number of learning aims fully achieved divided by the number of completed aims (including those completed aims recorded with unknown outcomes in the ILR, for example outcome code 4 'exam taken but result not known' or 'learning activities are complete but exam has not yet been taken'). Incomplete achievements are not included in achievement rates.

41. In a very small number of cases achievement rates higher than 100% are recorded. These are cases where transfers that achieve their aims have been correctly recorded as achievements.

Percentiles

42. Percentiles for success rates, retention rates and achievement rates allow institutions to compare their results against the range for the sector or particular groups of institutions.

One way of interpreting percentiles is as follows.

- Institutions with a success, retention or achievement rate on or above the 90th percentile are in the top 10% of institutions.
- Institutions with a success, retention or achievement rate on or above the 75th percentile are in the top 25% of institutions.
- Institutions with a success, retention or achievement rate on or above the 50th percentile are in the top 50% of institutions.
- Institutions with a success, retention or achievement rate below or on the 25th percentile are in the bottom 25% of institutions.
- Institutions with a success, retention or achievement rate below or on the 10th percentile are in the bottom 10% of institutions.

This is illustrated by the following table. An institution with a success rate of 45% would be in the bottom 10% of institutions, whereas an institution with a success rate of 82% would be in the top 10 % of institutions.

Percentile	Example success rate
10	46.5%
25	59.4%
50	68.6%
75	74.5%
90	81.3%

43. An alternative way of looking at this for institution types is as follows.

- The top 10% of institutions in an institution-type category have a success, retention or achievement rate on or above the 90th percentile.
- The top 25% of institutions in an institution-type category have a success, retention or achievement rate on or above the 75th percentile.
- The top 50% of institutions in an institution-type category have a success, retention or achievement rate on or above the 50th percentile.
- The bottom 25% of institutions in an institution-type category have a success, retention or achievement rate below or on the 25th percentile.
- The bottom 10% of institutions in an institution-type category have a success, retention or achievement rate below or on the 10th percentile.

44. Percentiles are calculated at institution level in order to display the differences between institutions. This is different from the success, retention and achievement rates that are calculated as the mean rate for all the relevant starters, averaging each starter equally.

45. When calculating percentiles, the success rate, retention rate and achievement rate for each institution are used to create an average. This means that learners in smaller



institutions have a greater bearing on results than those from larger institutions. The results for small groupings, such as learning aims being studied by adults in sixth-form colleges, will affect the average more.

46. The mean success rates, retention rates and achievement rates, and the percentiles, are valid and useful measures, depending on whether you are interested in the overall performance of the sector (consider mean success, retention and achievement rates) or the differences between institutions (consider percentiles).

Section 5 – Exclusions from the national success rates tables

Excluded qualifications

47. The aims excluded from classroom-learning qualification success rate reports are also excluded from the education and training national success rates tables. The main exclusions are key skills, functional skills and offender learning and skills service (OLASS) provision. The full list of exclusions is described in the classroom-learning business rules, which are on the gov.uk website at www.gov.uk/government/publications/classroom-learning-qualification-success-rates-2012-to-2013.

Excluded cohorts, suppression rules and rounding rules

48. The rules on excluding small cohorts, suppressing figures and rounding figures in the success rate worksheets are listed below.

- Cohorts with fewer than five starters are not shown.
- Cohorts with between five and 29 starters had the number of starters replaced with a dash (–).
- If the number of starters is five or more, but the number of completers is less than five, the achievement rate is replaced with a dash (–).
- All numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. This prevents the possibility of individual learners being identified.
- The 'starters (excluding transfers)', success rates, retention rates and achievement rates on the institution spreadsheet have been replaced by an asterisk (*).

49. The rules on exclusions, suppressions and rounded figures on the percentiles worksheet are listed below.

- If there are 20 or more institutions, the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th and 90th percentiles are shown on the worksheet.
- If there are between 11 and 19 institutions, only the 50th percentile is shown on the worksheet.
- If there are 10 or fewer institutions, no percentiles are shown on the worksheet.

50. Where individual qualification success rates are reported, if a qualification is only delivered at a single institution, the qualification is not included in the report. This is to prevent individual achievements from being identified. Any qualifications that are excluded are listed in the excluded qualifications report, together with the reasons why they are excluded.

51. As rows on the qualification worksheets are excluded, the total number of starters for the individual institution types may be less than the number of starters for the 'all institution type' row. The excluded institution types are shown in the excluded qualifications spreadsheet, together with the reason for them being excluded.

Section 6 – Choosing information on the national success rates tables

52. The success rates, achievement rates and retention rates are presented as a series of rows in Excel worksheets. Each row shows the success rate, achievement rate and retention rate of a specific cohort of learners. Summary information is shown at many levels (for example, all ages, all lengths, all institution types). All the columns in the worksheets contain drop-down menus that allow you to choose the information you want.

53. The screenshot below shows an example of how the information will appear in the age, length and level success rate worksheet.

	Institution Type	Expected End Year	Age	Length	Qualification Level
4					
5	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Long	1
6	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Long	2
7	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Long	3
8	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Long	H
9	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Long	Unknown
10	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Long	All Levels
11	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Short (5-24 wks)	1
12	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Short (5-24 wks)	2
13	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Short (5-24 wks)	3
14	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Short (5-24 wks)	H
15	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Short (5-24 wks)	Unknown
16	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	Short (5-24 wks)	All Levels

54. The drop-down menus are used to choose the level of information. The screenshot below shows the effect of using the drop-down menus to choose success rates for all lengths and all qualification levels.

	Institution Type	Expected End Year	Age	Length	Qualification Level
4					
5	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	16-18	All Length	All Levels
6	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	19+	All Length	All Levels
7	General FE and Tertiary College	2012/13	All Age	All Length	All Levels

Further information and help

55. If you would like any more information about the education and training national success rates tables, phone our service desk on 0870 267 0001 or email servicedesk@sfa.bis.gov.uk.
56. We produce education and learning national success rates tables in line with our classroom learning qualifications success rates business rules. The business rules and technical specifications are on the gov.uk website at www.gov.uk/government/publications/classroom-learning-qualification-success-rates-2012-to-2013).
57. If you need more help, give our service desk a detailed explanation of your query.

Published by: Skills Funding Agency
Version: 1.0
Date: 16 April 2014

