Skills Funding Agency

Education and training national success rates tables for the 2013/2014 academic year

Guidance notes

Date of issue   08 April 2015

Contents

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose of this document

1. This document provides information about the education and training national success rates tables for the 2013/2014 academic year.

Purpose of the education and training national success rates tables

2. The education and training national success rates tables set out levels of success, in terms of the achievement of qualifications, of further-education institutions in England for the 2013/2014 academic year. 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 2013/2014 made available to each institution in January 2015. It expands upon the national success rates published in the January statistical first release (at https://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. They allow institutions to assess their performance, and help them to plan action programmes to improve their qualification 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 2013/2014 are on our website (at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/sfa-national-success-rates-tables-2013-to-2014).

Changes to the national success rates tables for 2013/2014

7. The main changes made to the education and training national success rates tables to those produced for 2012/2013 are as follows.

   - The qualification success rates methodology used to calculate education and training success rates has changed to be the same as the overall and timely methodology used for apprenticeships. This methodology is based on leavers, whereas the previous classroom learning was based on starts.
   - Only data for a single academic year (2013/2014) is present in the reports. Data for previous years is not present as a different success rate methodology was applied prior to 2013/2014. The change in the education and training success rates 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.
   - The qualification success rates methodology includes functional skills and QCF units, which were excluded in previous years.
   - Length of qualification is no longer used when reporting education and training success rates and has been removed from the reports.
   - The classification of learning aims has changed. The new classifications used are shown in paragraph 31.

- Timely qualification success rates are shown at national and institution level
- Tables have been added that show qualification success rates by:
    - The Local Enterprise Partnership of the learner's home postcode;
    - The Local Enterprise Partnership of the delivery location postcode;
    - The region of the learner's home postcode; and
    - The region of the delivery location postcode.

8. The rationale for the change of education and training success rate methodology is available on the gov.uk website (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-rationale-for-2013-to-2014).

9. Because of the change to the overall and timely methodology, and the inclusion of functional skills and QCF units, it is not advisable to make comparisons between the qualification success rates for 2013/2014 and those for earlier years, which were published in previous national success rate tables.

Section 2 – Education and training national success rates tables worksheets

Contents of the tables

10. 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.

11. The information in the education and training national success rates tables has been created from institutions' Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns, and the tables provide a range of national-level and institution-level statistics for success, retention and achievement rates. The method of calculating qualification success rates is available on the gov.uk website (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules).

12. The education and training national success rates tables contain qualification success rates for a single academic year (2013/2014). The information for the 2013/2014 academic year is sourced from the qualification success rates dataset produced for 2013/2014, calculated using the method that applied to the 2013/2014 academic year.

Format of the education and training national success rates tables

13. 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:
- headline report;
- qualification level report;
- institution report for the overall measure;
- institution report for the timely measure;
- excluded qualifications report; and
- timely national report.

The contents of the spreadsheets are shown below.

Headline report

14. The headline report contains separate worksheets that show national qualification success rates, achievement rates and retention rates at a headline level, which is an

overview of all national qualification success rates. This report also presents the qualification success rates, achievement rates and retention rates by:

- qualification type;
- gender;
- learning difficulty or disability;
- ethnic background;
- sector subject area tier 1, qualification type and qualification level;
- learners' local authority (based on the learners' home postcode);
- learners' Local Enterprise Partnership;
- learners' region;
- delivery local authority for where the learning is delivered (based on the postcode of the institutions' delivery location);
- delivery Local Enterprise Partnership; and
- delivery region.

15. The overall report also shows percentile information on a separate worksheet. For a further explanation of percentiles for success rates, achievement rates and retention rates, and how they are calculated, see paragraphs 44 to 46. The report shows percentiles at headline level and by:

- qualification type;
- gender;
- ethnic background; and
- learning difficulty or disability.

Qualification level report

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

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

17. Due to the limit on the number of rows in Microsoft Excel 2003 (65,536), the qualification level report is split into four worksheets containing:

- A-levels, AS-levels and GCSEs;
- QCF qualifications, which consist of QCF units, awards, certificates and diplomas;
- ESOL and Functional Skills SfL; and
- other qualifications.

18. Access to higher education qualifications are not present in this report as access to higher education qualifications are normally delivered at a single institution. Data suppression rules mean that qualifications delivered at a single institution are not shown in the reports.

Institution report for overall measure

19. The institution report contains worksheets that show the overall qualification success rates, achievement rates and retention rates of each institution, by:

- qualification level;
- gender;
- ethnic background;
- learning difficulty or disability;

- sector subject area tier 1;
- delivery local authority for where the learning is delivered (based on the postcodes of the institutions' delivery locations);
- delivery Local Enterprise Partnership; and
- delivery region.

Institution report for timely measure

20. The institution report contains worksheets that show the timely qualification success rates of each institution, by:
    - qualification level;
    - gender;
    - ethnic background;
    - learning difficulty or disability;
    - sector subject area tier 1;
    - delivery local authority for where the learning is delivered (based on the postcodes of the institutions' delivery locations);
    - delivery Local Enterprise Partnership; and
    - delivery region.

Excluded qualifications report

21. Due to the suppression rules described in section 5, the full coverage of qualifications delivered is not available in the qualification level spreadsheets. The excluded qualifications are included in the excluded qualification report to allow the full scope of qualification delivery to be seen.

22. Access to higher education qualifications are not present in this report as access to higher education qualifications are normally delivered at a single institution, and qualifications delivered at a single institution are suppressed..

Timely National report

23. The timely national report contains a worksheet that shows the national timely qualification success rates by age band and qualification level.

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

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

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

25. The education and training national success rates tables open data files are published as 36 separate compressed files. The contents of each file, and which report the information comes from, is shown below.

File number	File contents	Source report
NSRT101	Headline overall success rates	Headline

File number	File contents	Source report
NSRT102	Headline overall percentiles	Headline
NSRT103	Overall success rates by qualification type	Headline
NSRT104	Overall percentiles by qualification type	Headline
NSRT105	Overall success rates by gender	Headline
NSRT106	Overall percentiles by gender	Headline
NSRT107	Overall success rates by ethnic background	Headline
NSRT108	Overall percentiles by ethnic background	Headline
NSRT109	Overall success rates by learning difficulties or disabilities	Headline
NSRT110	Overall percentiles by learning difficulties or disabilities	Headline
NSRT111	Overall success rates by sector subject area	Headline
NSRT112	Overall success rates by learners' Local Enterprise Partnership	Headline
NSRT113	Overall success rates by delivery locations' Local Enterprise Partnership	Headline
NSRT114	Overall success rates by learners' region	Headline
NSRT115	Overall success rates by delivery locations' region	Headline
NSRT116	Overall success rates by learners' local authority	Headline
NSRT117	Overall success rates by delivery locations' local authority	Headline
NSRT118	Overall success rates by qualification	Qualifications
NSRT119	Overall excluded qualifications	Excluded qualifications
NSRT120	Headline overall success rates for institutions	Overall institution
NSRT121	Overall success rates for institutions by gender	Overall institution
NSRT122	Overall success rates for institutions by ethnic background	Overall institution
NSRT123	Overall success rates for institutions by learning difficulties or disabilities	Overall institution
NSRT124	Overall success rates for institutions by sector subject area tier 1	Overall institution
NSRT125	Overall success rates by delivery locations' Local Enterprise Partnership	Overall institution
NSRT126	Overall success rates by delivery locations' region	Overall institution
NSRT127	Overall success rates by delivery locations' local authority	Overall institution
NSRT128	Headline timely success rates for institutions	Timely institution
NSRT128	Timely success rates for institutions by gender	Timely institution
NSRT130	Timely success rates for institutions by ethnic background	Timely institution
NSRT131	Timely success rates for institutions by learning difficulties or disabilities	Timely institution
NSRT132	Timely success rates for institutions by sector subject area tier 1	Timely institution
NSRT133	Timely success rates by delivery locations' Local Enterprise Partnership	Timely institution
NSRT134	Timely success rates by delivery locations' region	Timely institution
NSRT135	Timely success rates by delivery locations' local authority	Timely institution
NSRT136	Timely national success rates	Timely national

Section 4 – Contents of national success rates tables

26. This section describes selected columns in the education and learning national success rates tables worksheets.

Report columns

Institution type

27. Each institution is classified into one of six institution types. The institution types are:

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

28. 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

29. 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 age groups:
- 16 to 18
- 19 and over
- All ages

Qualification level

30. Learning aims are grouped according to their qualification level recorded in our learning aims reference system (LARS). The levels are:

- Level 1 – qualifications at level 1 and level 'E' (entry level)
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level H – all level 4 and level 5 qualifications
- 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 type

31. Learning aims are grouped according to their qualification type. The types are:

- A Levels
- Access to HE
- AS Levels
- Award
- Certificate

- Diploma
- ESOL
- Functional Skills SfL
- GCSE Maths and English
- GCSE Other
- Other Regulated
- Other Non-Regulated
- QCF Unit

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

Qualification codes

32. The qualification codes shown for the qualification levels come from the LARS hierarchy file (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lara-learning-aim-reference-application-hierarchy-file). If a qualification has a success rate map code in the LARS hierarchy file, this is used on the report. Otherwise the learning aim reference is used.

Report measures

33. The success rates, retention rates and achievement rates are calculated in line with our classroom learning qualifications success rates business rules and methods (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules).

Overall qualification success rate

34. The overall qualification success rate measures the percentage of learning aims achieved against the overall number of learning aims completed. The overall qualification success rate is based on the hybrid end year.

35. The hybrid end year is the actual learning end year or the planned learning end year of an apprenticeship, whichever is later.

Timely qualification success rate

36. The timely qualification success rate measures the percentage of learning aims that were achieved by their planned end date, or within 90 days after their planned end date, against the number of learning aims that were expected to be completed.

Overall retention rate

37. The retention rate measures the percentage of learning aims successfully completed against the number of learning aims that have been completed.

Overall achievement rate

38. The achievement rate measures the percentage of learning aims that have achieved against the number of learning aims successfully completed.

Overall and timely leavers

39. In the reports the term 'leavers' is used as shorthand for 'learning aims completed by, or expected to be completed by, learners'.

40. The full list of exclusions are detailed in the classroom-learning success rates dataset specification (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules).

41. The 'overall leavers' column shows the number of learning aim that were planned to be completed, or have actually completed, within a given hybrid end year.

42. The 'timely leavers' column shows the number of learning aims that are expected to be completed by their planned end date, or within 90 days of their planned end date, within a given academic year.

43. The number of leavers in a sub-cohort (a distinct group of learning aims within a cohort) may not add up to the total number of learning aims in the cohort because:
   • the number of leavers is rounded to the nearest 10 at all levels; and
   • small cohorts of leavers (fewer than five) are not included in the published tables.

Success rates percentiles

44. Percentiles for qualification success rates, retention rates and achievement rates allow institutions to compare their results against the range for the sector or particular groups of institutions. The 50th percentile is the median success rate.

One way of interpreting percentiles is:

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

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

45. An alternative way of looking at this for institution types is:

   • The top 10% of institutions in an institution-type category have qualification success, retention or achievement rates on or above the 90th percentile.
   • The top 25% of institutions in an institution-type category have qualification success, retention or achievement rates on or above the 75th percentile.

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

46. Both the qualification 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 qualification success, retention and achievement rates) or the differences between institutions (consider percentiles).

Section 5 – Exclusions from the national success rates tables

Excluded qualifications

47. A number of learning aims are not included when calculating the qualification success rate. The main reasons for not including a particular learning aim are that it:

- relates to new activity that providers need time to get used to delivering;
- is delivered as part of a pilot programme;
- is not funded by us or the Education Funding Agency, or is not financed by a 24+ advanced learning loan;
- is not a qualification;
- is affected by circumstances beyond the provider's control (for example, if the learner is transferred to a new provider due to intervention from us or the Education Funding Agency.)

48. The aims excluded from classroom-learning qualification success rate reports are also excluded from the education and training national success rates tables. The full list of exclusions are detailed in the classroom-learning success rates dataset specification (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules).

Excluded cohorts, suppression rules and rounding rules

49. The rules on excluding small cohorts, suppressing figures and rounding figures in the success rate worksheets are listed below:
- Cohorts with fewer than five leavers are not shown on any worksheets.
- Cohorts with five or more leavers but fewer than 30 have the number of leavers replaced with a dash (–).
- If the number of leavers is five or more, but the number of completers is less than five, the achievement rate is replaced with a dash (–).
- The number of leavers is rounded to the nearest 10. This prevents the possibility of individual learners being identified.

50. The rules on exclusions, suppressions and rounded figures on the percentiles worksheet are:

- 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.

51. 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.

52. Where individual qualification success rates are reported, the exclusion rules mean that the total number of leavers for the individual institution types may be less than the number of leavers for the 'all institution type' row.

Section 6 – Choosing information on the national success rates tables

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

54. The screenshot below shows an example of how the information will appear in the headline success rate worksheet.

	Institution Type	Hybrid End Year	Age	Qualification Level
3	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	16-18	1
4	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	16-18	2
5	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	16-18	3
6	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	16-18	H
7	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	16-18	Unknown
8	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	16-18	All Levels
9	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	19+	1
10	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	19+	2
11	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	19+	3
12	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	19+	H
13	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	19+	Unknown
14	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	19+	All Levels
15	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	1
16	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	2
17	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	3
18	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	H
19	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	Unknown
20	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	All Levels

55. 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 ages and all qualification levels.

2	Institution Type	Hybrid End Year	Age	Qualification Level
20	General FE and Tertiary College	2013/14	All Age	All Levels
38	Other Public Funded	2013/14	All Age	All Levels
56	Private Sector Public Funded	2013/14	All Age	All Levels
68	Schools	2013/14	All Age	All Levels
86	Sixth Form College	2013/14	All Age	All Levels
103	Specialist College	2013/14	All Age	All Levels
121	All Institution Type	2013/14	All Age	All Levels

Further information and help

56. We produce education and learning national success rates tables in line with our classroom learning qualification success rates business rules. The business rules and success rates dataset production specification are on the gov.uk website (at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules.).

57. If you need more information about the education and training national success rates tables, please phone our service desk on 0370 267 0001 or email servicedesk@sfa.bis.gov.uk. Please provide a detailed explanation of your query.

Published by: Skills Funding Agency
Version: 1.0
Date: 08 April 2015