



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Qualification achievement rates 2020 to 2021 in-year data releases

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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.

What is it?

3. There are 2 in-year QAR releases this year. The in-year QAR releases provide indicative QARs for apprenticeships and education & training based on the 2020 to 2021 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 21 October 2021. **It is important that you use this in-year QAR to review your data, as you cannot change the 2020 to 2021 data after the final R14 window closes.**
4. 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?

5. We will publish the 2020 to 2021 in-year data through our Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard [View Your Education Data \(VYED\)](#). To access data via VYED, please ensure you have the correct IDAMS user access. The [IDAMS user guides](#) provide detail for creating access or checking your user permissions.
6. Your 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 QAR data will continue to be available until the final QAR data for 2020 to 2021 is published. Normally we provide comparison values for the previous 3 years using the same methodology to show a trend, however as we did not supply 2019 to 2020 data, we will provide 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 data as a comparison.
7. The in-year dashboard will have a similar format to the 2018 to 2019 provisional release.
8. We will publish the QAR data extract files on the Data Returns page through [View Your Education Data](#). 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 user guides](#).

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

- key communications about QARs
- [business rules and technical specification](#) documents
- [National Achievement Rate tables](#)
- [IDAMS accounts](#)
- [guidance documents](#) for:
 - using the QAR reports
 - using the data extracts

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 2020 to 2021 ILR hard close on 21 October 2021. **You cannot, and we cannot, change your 2020 to 2021 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 are identified in the later section 'Common questions and answers' that you may want to review including:

- 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 [2020 to 2021 technical specification](#) documents for further details about these areas and how they impact the QAR calculations.

14. We also recommend reviewing the following ILR submission reports as these identify some QAR data issues:

- FRM06 - Continuance Issues
- FRM08 - Breaks In Learning: Duration
- FRM09 - Transfers with no return

15. You will find the submission reports on [Submit Learner Data](#) after you upload an ILR file. To access them, select the 'Download reports' option next to your latest ILR submission. In the downloaded file, open the document named 'Funding Rules Monitoring Report'.

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

16. You have until 21 October 2021 (ILR R14) to rectify any data issues identified with your 2020 to 2021 ILR data. **You will not be able to amend your 2020 to 2021 ILR data after this date, neither can we.** Any issues in the data that are not resolved by R14 may affect your QARs. See Q12 for further information.

17. If you have any queries in relation to QAR, please contact us via our [online enquiry form](#), select the QAR query type, and ask us to assign your query to 'ESFA Business Operations QAR'. Where the enquiry relates to specific learner queries, please also complete and submit the data query form which can be downloaded from [Qualification achievement rates \(QAR\) 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

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, or activities such as performance management and we will not be sharing in-year data with Ofsted. We may however contact you to provide support where we identify significant data issues.

The use of minimum standards has now finished for all-age apprenticeships, up to 2018 to 2019, and Adult Education and Training, up to 2017 to 2018. The processes and policies that related to minimum standards can be found through the [QAR webpage](#). As set out in [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), we will *"introduce a new approach to the accountability system, considering a wider set of quality measures to support provider improvement and more timely intervention. As part of this, we will improve our internal risk assessment and quality assurance of existing providers to intervene where we identify non-compliance or quality risks"*. More information will be made available soon.

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

18. The scope of these in-year results is the same as the full QAR that we will produce in early 2020, using the 2020 to 2021 business rules. The main difference is that the records used in the full-year version will be more complete, using R14 data

from 2020 to 2021 and merging in the relevant achievement records from R04 in 2021 to 2022.

19. Any additional 2020 to 2021 aims added after R10 up to R14 this year that have a planned end date within the 2020 to 2021 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 2020 to 2021. 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.

In addition, to be aware as set out in the business rules, qualifications that are subject to alternative assessment arrangements will not be included in institution level QARs shared with providers for 2020 to 2021. We will produce QARs for those qualifications subject to normal assessment arrangements in 2020 to 2021, namely apprenticeships and some Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) relating to occupational professions.

Q2. The number of records in my data extract for the hybrid end year 2020.5 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 2020.5 where the 'Learning actual end date' is not returned in your 2020 to 2021 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 [2020 to 2021 QAR technical specification documents](#) for examples.

In addition, as the R10 ILR collection close date is before the end of the 2020 to 2021 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 2020.5. 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:

- 2016/17 R14
- 2017/18 R14
- 2018/19 R14
- 2019/20 R14 (however because QARs were not published for 2019/20, this hybrid end year will not be included in the data extracts)
- For 2020/21 we use the latest 2020/21 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. 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 Breaks In Learning: Duration report on [Submit Learner Data](#), which identifies breaks in learning that last for more than 365 days. For more information about how to access this report, see paragraphs 14 and 15.

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.

Q7. 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 2019 to 2020 R14 ILR return (Completion status code 1), but there is no record of the aim in the 2020 to 2021 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 2020 to 2021 R14 hard close.

You must return data in 2020 to 2021 for all aims reported as continuing in the 2019 to 2020 R14 ILR. If the learner has since withdrawn from the aim, you must record this in the 2020 to 2021 ILR with the relevant dates. Please refer to the [provider support manual](#) for guidance.

You can also check your FRM06 Continuance Issues report on [Submit Learner Data](#), which identifies continuing learners from 2019 to 2020 who do not appear in the 2020 to 2021 ILR. For more information about how to access this report, see paragraphs 14 and 15.

Q8. 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 2020 to 2021 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 2020 to 2021 are in scope for the 2020 to 2021 QAR.

Q9. Will you be producing another in-year QAR?

We will produce another in-year QAR for 2020 to 2021 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 2021 to 2022 data).

Q10. How do I raise a query with my data?

If you have any queries in relation to QAR, please contact us via our [online enquiry form](#), select the QAR query type, and ask us to assign your query to 'ESFA Business Operations QAR'. Where the enquiry relates to specific learner queries, please also

complete and submit the data query form which can be downloaded from [Qualification achievement rates \(QAR\) 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101111/Qualification_achievement_rates_QAR_2020_to_2021_-_GOV.UK.pdf).

Q11. What data do you exclude from QARs?

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

Q12. Can I change data if it is wrong?

If you find errors in your 2020 to 2021 QAR data, you can correct these by amending your ILR data when:

- the data relates to 2020 to 2021 ILR data and the R14 hard close has not passed.
- in specific instances where the data relates to 2019 to 2020 R14 ILR data, the 2020 to 2021 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 [2020 to 2021 provider support manual](#)).

You can amend your 2020 to 2021 ILR data to correct data errors up until the R14 hard close on 21 October 2021.

Final ILR data, as returned at R14 in previous years, **cannot be changed**; we are not able to amend your 2017 to 2018 R14 or 2018 to 2019 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.

Q13. 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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