



Skills Funding Agency

Qualification achievement rates: business rules for 2016 to 2017

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Audience Of interest to colleges and training organisations

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Purpose

- 1 This document outlines the business rules that govern the method of calculation for the official qualification achievement rates (QAR) for apprenticeships and education and training, including education and training funded with Advanced Learner Loans for the 2016 to 2017 academic year.
- 2 The document also describes the changes to the business rules since the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

Main Changes from the 2015 to 2016 academic year

- 3 Former Community Learning activity that is now part of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) but is claimed using the 'non-formula funded' approach (funding model 10) will be excluded from the QAR calculations. Activity similar to former Community Learning, claimed by the formula funded methodology (funding model 35) will be included.
- 4 OLASS will be excluded from the QAR calculations because policy responsibility for education and training provision for those subject to adult detention in England transferred from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice on 01 October 2016.
- 5 Apprenticeship standards (identified using programme type 25) will be included in the QAR calculations.

Methods of calculation

- 6 We calculate overall and timely QAR, pass rates and retention rates from ILR and Large Employer Outcome Pilot (LEOP) data submitted by providers that is aligned with the appropriate specifications and requirements.

- 7 We take information for apprenticeships from the programme aim ILR record. For education and training we take the information from the learning aim level ILR record. The examples given below use learning aims to illustrate.
- 8 The overall QAR, pass rate and retention rate calculations are based on the hybrid end year of the aim, which is defined as the planned end year of the learning aim, or the actual end year of the learning aim or the reporting year, whichever is later.
- 9 The calculations use three values:
 - i. The number of aims that have ended - where an actual end date is present or where continuing learners and planned breaks did not return.
 - ii. The number of aims that were achieved. This includes reformed AS levels that are decoupled from the A Level and any pre-reform AS levels that were cashed.
 - iii. The number of aims where the learner has completed all the learning activities.
- 10 For any hybrid end year:
 - the overall QAR is calculated as the number of learning aims that have been achieved as a percentage of the total number of learning aims in the cohort that ended.
 - the overall pass rate is calculated as the number of learning aims that have been achieved as a percentage of the total number of learning aims that have completed all the planned learning activities.
 - the overall retention rate is calculated as 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.
- 11 The timely QAR calculation measures the number of aims that are achieved on or before their planned end date, or no more than 90 days after it, as a percentage of the number of aims that were planned to complete in the reporting year. Achieved aims with an actual end date more than 90 days after the planned end date are not counted as achievements in the timely method.
- 12 The last day of the reporting period for the 2016 to 2017 year will be 31 July 2017. In order for an aim to be included in the calculation the hybrid end date for the overall QAR, and the planned end date for the timely QAR, must be earlier than or equal to 31 July 2017.
- 13 Uncashed AS levels will be treated as failures. This relates to pre-reform AS levels.
- 14 The historical QAR results for all further education colleges that merged before the beginning of the 2016 to 2017 academic year are restated to include all learning provision in scope for the newly-merged further education college.
- 15 We may also produce QAR results for the previous constituent parts of merged colleges, or for other group structures, where this has been agreed as part of structural changes or as a result of area review recommendations.

- 16 Changes to learner reference numbers made through the learner reference number (LRN) change process or within the ILR record will be taken into account when calculating QAR.
- 17 ILR and LEOP data from the latest 5 years is merged to form the QAR dataset, from which reports are produced.

QAR Reporting

- 18 Overall QAR and timely QAR are calculated and reported for the 2016 to 2017 academic year and comparison values are provided for the previous two academic years using the same methodology.
- 19 Due to changes to the business rules between years or the late reporting or updating of data by providers the comparison values may be different from the officially published QAR for the previous years.
- 20 Overall QAR and timely QAR for subcontracted provision will be produced for education & training and apprenticeships.
- 21 The overall QAR is the method that we will use for Minimum Standards. The pass and retention rates and timely QAR will be used to provide additional important information about the delivery of provision.

Aims in scope of QAR

- 22 The learning aims and apprenticeships in scope of the QAR calculation are those in receipt of public funding through:
 - the Adult Education Budget (see exclusions) or that were previously funded through the Adult Skills Budget (classroom and workplace);
 - Apprenticeships – standards and frameworks;
 - Advanced Learner Loans;
 - the Large Employer Outcome Pilot;
 - the Education Funding Agency for learners aged 16 to 18; and
 - the Education Funding Agency for directly funded 14 to 16 year-old students, recorded in the ILR using LDM code 320
- 23 Apprenticeships or aims with a completion status of 1 (learner continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim) in the final return for an academic year that do not have a corresponding record in the following academic year, will be treated as a withdrawal for the overall methodology. Where this occurs the reporting year will be set as the year after the last submitted file containing the learning aim.
 - For example, if an aim with a planned end date in June 2016, with a completion status of 1 recorded in R14 of academic year 2015 to 2016, does not appear in the ILR R14 return of academic year 2016 to 2017 it will be treated as having withdrawn in the 2016 to 2017 academic year.

- 24 Apprenticeships or aims with a completion status of 6 (Learner has temporarily withdrawn from the aim due to an agreed break in learning), will be treated as a withdrawal for the overall methodology where:
- they do not have a corresponding restart record in the same academic year;
 - they do not have a corresponding restart record in the following two academic years; or
 - if the planned break was recorded in the ILR R14 return for academic year 2015 to 2016, they do not have a corresponding restart record in the R04 ILR return of the academic year 2017 to 2018.
- a) Where this occurs the reporting year will be set to one year after the latter of the expected end year or actual end year.
- For example, if an aim with a planned end date in July 2016 was recorded with a planned break in learning in April 2016, but did not have a restart record in 2015 to 2016 or 2016 to 2017 or by the R04 ILR return of 2017 to 2018, it will be treated as a withdrawn aim in the 2016 to 2017 academic year.
- b) Restart records will be matched to planned break records by matching on UKPRN, learner reference number and either programme type and framework code for Apprenticeships or learning aim reference for other aims; where the original learning start date on the restart record matches the learning start date or original learning start date (to allow for situations where the planned break was itself a restart) of the planned break record.

Exclusions

- 25 The following exclusions apply to all QAR, pass and retention rates. Those marked with an * 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) Transfers
- i. *Where a learner has transferred to a different programme or learning aim within the same provider.
 - ii. *Where a learner has transferred to a new provider as a consequence of intervention from us or the Education Funding Agency / Department for Education. The exclusion would apply to the original provider's QAR. The new provider is expected to assess the learners fully and plan their learning accordingly.
 - iii. Education and training learning aims without successful achievement following a transfer to other provision aligning with government strategy such as the [apprenticeship 2020 vision](#). Transfers from apprenticeships to other learning aims will not be excluded.
- b) *Planned breaks, where the learner has temporarily withdrawn due to an agreed break in learning the aim or apprenticeship will be excluded from the relevant hybrid end year. However, if a learner does not return from a planned break then any aims that have been excluded under this rule will be included in subsequent reporting years as outlined in paragraph 24.

- c) Any learning aim / apprenticeship within scope of QAR that a learner has withdrawn from within the respective funding qualifying period without achievement.
 - i. If the planned duration is 168 days or greater the qualifying period is 42 days.
 - ii. If the planned duration is between 14 and 167 days the qualifying period is 14 days.
 - iii. There is no qualifying period when the planned duration is less than 14 days.
- d) Innovation Code Learning Aims (referenced as ZINN000(1 to 6), Z0004474 to Z0007833).
- e) Instances where unemployed learners claiming Universal Credit, Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group) cannot continue their learning through to successful completion because they have gained employment.
- f) Learners undertaking a traineeship programme that are unable to continue or complete their learning aims because they have gained employment. We will identify full time employment from the learner's destination and progression record.
- g) Funded provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) or special educational needs (SEN) that is delivered by independent specialist providers.
- h) All European Social Fund (ESF)-funded aims.
- i) Aims funded as Former Community Learning using the 'non-formula funded' approach (funding model 10).
- j) The following aims;
 - i. Key skills;
 - ii. Employability Skills Programme (ESP) funded aims;
 - iii. foundation learning weekly aims;
 - iv. remaining 'First Steps' learning aims;
 - v. diagnostic tests;
 - vi. unitisation qualifications;
 - vii. additional units;
 - viii. tutorial support and complementary studies;
 - ix. work experience or work placement aims;
 - x. non regulated aims used to claim funding for additional ESOL learning needs;
 - xi. aims belonging to Learning Technologies Pilots identified using learning delivery monitoring code 337;
 - xii. **aims belonging to the Apprenticeship Seasonal Worker Pilot identified using learning delivery monitoring code 348;
 - xiii. OLASS learning aims identified using learning delivery monitoring code 034 as outlined in paragraph 4;
 - xiv. 18-21 Work skills pilots identified using FAM codes 332 or 341
 - xv. Joint Investment Programme aims; and
 - xvi. Access to Apprenticeships pathway provision where the learner is not employed.

** This is a new exclusion and applies to adult apprentices on the Apprenticeship Seasonal Worker Pilot that started in April 2016.

Further details

- 26 We will issue more detailed information within the associated technical documentation when that is published on our website.

To Note

- 27 We intend to review the inclusion of non-regulated aims in the QAR for 2017 to 2018 and beyond.
- 28 For 2017 to 2018 and beyond we will review the categorisation of QAR for reporting purposes as a result of the independent review of technical education and implementation of the Post-16 Skills plan (reference <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>).