



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

# Minimum Standards

Minimum Standards for 2017 to 2018  
for all age apprenticeships and adult (19+)  
education & training

August 2018

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

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## **Introduction and purpose of this document**

1. This document sets out the Minimum standard thresholds for the 2017 to 2018 funding year (1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018) for all age apprenticeships and adult (19+) education and training and how we apply them.
2. To understand how the funding system works, read this document together with the following:
  - [Business rules for QAR 2017 to 2018](#)
  - [Technical specifications for 2017 to 2018](#)
3. Minimum standards are also calculated for 16 to 18 year old learners in schools and colleges, but are not covered in this document. For guidance on the 2017 minimum standards for 16 to 18 year olds, refer to [16 to 18 minimum standards](#).
4. Information about the 2018 minimum standards for 16-18 year olds will be published in the autumn term. The publication will consider how the Secretary of State's [announcement](#) on the principles for a clear and simple accountability system impact on the 16 to 18 minimum standards.

## **Understanding the terminology**

5. The terms 'we' and 'ESFA' refer to the 'Education and Skills Funding Agency' and associated staff.
6. When we refer to 'you' or 'providers', this includes colleges, Higher Education Institutions, training organisations, local authorities and employers that receive funding from us to deliver education and training.

## **How we will apply Minimum Standards for 2017 to 2018**

7. We will use the overall qualification achievement rate (QAR) methodology when calculating Minimum Standards.
8. In 2017 to 2018 we will calculate minimum standards for:
  - apprenticeships - all ages for both frameworks and standards, regardless of how they are funded by us
  - education and training – adult learners only

9. We review thresholds and tolerance levels annually to consider any policy requirements and/or the impact on QAR of recent QAR business rule or other policy rule changes.
10. The thresholds and tolerance levels will remain the same as in 2016 to 2017.

## Thresholds

11. The thresholds in table 1 are applied to QARs when we calculate minimum standards at:
  - a. individual learning aim reference level for education and training - it is not applied at a qualification type level but for each learning aim reference
  - b. programme level for apprenticeships - for frameworks this is for each framework and framework level combination, for standards this is for each individual standard

**Table 1: Minimum Standards thresholds for 2017 to 2018**

<b>Qualification Type</b>	<b>Threshold (%)</b>
Apprenticeships (framework or standard)	62
Access to HE	70
A-Levels	75
AS-Levels	63
Award	80
Certificate	80
Diploma	70
ESOL	70
Basic Skills Maths and English	63
GCSE Maths and English	75
GCSE Other	75
Other non-Regulated	85
Other Regulated	70
QCF Unit	85

Minimum Standard thresholds are not a target to achieve, they are the minimum acceptable level of performance.

## Tolerance level

12. The tolerance level will remain at 40% for apprenticeships and education and training in 2017 to 2018.

13. If the QAR for an apprenticeship or aim is below the relevant threshold in table 1, we will classify that apprenticeship or aim as falling below the minimum standard.
14. We will calculate how many of the apprenticeships or education and training aims delivered by a provider are below the minimum standard thresholds. If this is more than 40% of the total cohort for apprenticeships or education and training the provider will be in scope for intervention.
15. Due to the nature of the minimum standard calculation it is possible to fall below the tolerance level and have an overall QAR above either the national or provider type rates. For example, a provider delivering 100 apprenticeships in the 2017 to 2018 hybrid end year delivered:
  - a. 50 retail apprenticeship frameworks with a QAR of 60%
  - b. 50 engineering apprenticeship frameworks with a QAR of 82%

The overall QAR would be 71% but the provider would fall below minimum standards because more than 40% of their cohort were on an apprenticeship framework with a QAR below the 62% threshold used for apprenticeships.
16. If a college or training organisation fails to meet minimum standards, our [approach to intervention](#) will apply. We may also use the results of minimum standards to inform business decisions. If we do this, we will specify how as part of those business processes.

## **Proportionality**

17. Where the underperforming provision exceeds the tolerance level but the cohort (we regard 'All age apprenticeships' and 'Adult (19+) education & training' as cohorts) is small and it is predominately new or immature provision that is below the minimum standard threshold, we will take this into account when making our intervention decision. We expect a provider in this position to set quality improvement targets for the poor provision as a priority.

## **Traineeships**

18. Through our engagement with the sector we recognise the importance of having the right quality and intervention measures that align across apprenticeships and Further Education where appropriate, whilst maintaining the principle of also measuring the success of traineeships through learner progressions to positive outcomes.
  
19. We will continue to apply the existing minimum standards methodology for 2017 to 2018 while we consider quality measures for traineeships in line with wider FE and apprenticeship performance measures.

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