



## Qualification achievement rates (QARs) 2017 to 2018 – in-year data release Q&A

Last updated: 06 July 2018

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## **Purpose of document**

This document is for technical users of QAR data, including those responsible for Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data returns, MI managers and software writers.

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?**

This new, in-year Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) release will provide indicative apprenticeship and education & training QARs based on the 2017 to 2018 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) R10 data. Although you may not have recorded all of your achievement data at this time, this early sight of your data will give you the opportunity to identify and resolve potential data issues prior to the ILR R14 hard close on 18 October 2018.

This is an in-year QAR and it may differ from your provisional and final QAR if we update the methodology following your feedback.

## **Where can I find it?**

We will publish the in-year data on the Hub and through an additional Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard. Your 2016 to 2017 QAR data will continue to be available in the current QAR dashboard.

The in-year dashboard will be in a similar format to that provided for the 2016 to 2017 Provisional release and therefore will not contain National and Provider type QAR's, Pass Rates or Retention Rates. We will publish the 2017 to 2018 BI dashboard guidance before we release the data at the end of June.

We will publish the QAR extract files on the Data Returns page on the Hub. The files can be accessed, along with the extracts from previous years, from the 'QAR Reports' section on the Active, Completed or Archived tabs.

To access these documents you will need to have an IDAMS account with the relevant user roles. For guidance on how to request or review your IDAMS account, refer to the [IDAMS guidance documents](#). If you already have an IDAMS account please [sign in](#) here to access the dashboard and select the BI Tools tab.

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

- key communications about QARs and minimum standards
- [business rules and dataset specification](#) documents
- [Minimum standards](#)
- [National Achievement Rate tables](#)
- [Guidance documents](#) for:
  - [IDAMS accounts](#).
  - using the BI Dashboard. We will publish the 2017 to 2018 guidance before we release the in-year QAR; although the main contents will be the same as in the 2016 to 2017 guidance.
  - using the Data extracts - these guidance documents are published under the [dataset specifications link](#). We will publish the 2017 to 2018 guidance before we release the in-year QAR; although the main contents will be the same as in the 2016 to 2017 guidance.

## What should I do with this data?

Early sight of the data allows you the opportunity to check your data and be able to correct any issues before the 2017 to 2018 ILR hard close on 18 October 2018.

We recommend that you review your in-year QAR data before submitting your R14 data.

Common data issues that you may want to review include:

- 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'.

Please refer to the [2017 to 2018 dataset specification](#) documents for further details about these. The [Funding Rules Monitoring](#) reports also identify some QAR data issues as detailed in [Inform](#) last month.

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

The purpose of this release is to help you to identify any issues in your ILR data that will affect your QAR results. You will have until 18 October 2018 (ILR R14) to rectify any data issues identified. You will not be able to amend your 2017 to 2018 ILR data after this date; any issues in the data that are not resolved may affect your QARs.

You can contact the [service desk](#) with queries but we cannot amend your data for you. If you have specific data queries, please complete a [data query form](#), email this to the service desk and ask us to assign it to the 'ESFA Business Operations QAR' group.

## **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, minimum standards or activities such as performance management and we will not be sharing this data with Ofsted. We may however contact you to provide support where we identify significant data issues.

We will not normally lift any Notices or additional condition of funding / contractual obligations based on this data; but may factor in-year QAR into our considerations about broader compliance if we think it is right to do so.

We have based references to minimum standards in the in-year data release on the 2016 to 2017 minimum standards thresholds to give an indication of performance. These may be different to the final 2017 to 2018 minimum standards thresholds. When the 2017 to 2018 minimum standards are available, we will publish them on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK).

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

The scope of these in-year results is the same as the full QAR that we will produce in early 2019, using the same business rules. The main difference is that the records used in the full-year version will be more complete, using R14 data from 2017 to 2018 and merging in the relevant achievement records from the R04 return in 2018 to 2019.

Any additional 2017 to 2018 aims added after R10 and up to R14 this year, that have a planned end date within the 2017 to 2018 academic year, will be added to your cohort in the full year results.

## 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 2017 to 2018.

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 is 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.

### Q2. The number of records in my data extract for the hybrid end year 2017.5 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 2017.5 where the 'Learning actual end date' is not returned in your 2017 to 2018 R10 ILR submission.

Once you complete the 'Learning actual end date', we will classify the record as hybrid end year 2017 or before.

### Q3. What records do you use in the in-year QAR?

We use the following datasets for the in-year QAR:

- 2013/14 R14 (ILR and LEOP)
- 2014/15 R14 (ILR and LEOP)
- 2015/16 R14 (ILR)
- 2016/17 R14 (ILR)
- 2017/18 R10 (ILR)

For the in-year QAR we treat the R10 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?**

Please refer to the following [guidance documents](#) on the QAR webpage:

- Guidance for using the Business Intelligence (BI) QAR dashboard
- Guidance for IDAMS accounts

**Q6. My in-year QAR rate is below the minimum standard threshold. Will formal intervention action take place as a result?**

The in-year data is indicative and intended for your internal use only. We will not use the data for national statistics, minimum standards or activities such as performance management and we will not be sharing this data with Ofsted. We may however contact you to provide support where we identify significant data issues.

We will not normally lift any Notices or additional condition of funding / contractual obligations based on this data; but may factor in-year QAR into our considerations about broader compliance if we think it is right to do so.

**Q7. 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 FRM10 [funding rules monitoring](#) report, which identifies breaks in learning that last for more than 365 days.

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.

**Q8. Why are records in my dataset flagged as overdue continuing learners when I returned it in 2016 to 2017?**

We flag a record as an overdue continuing learner if the record was marked as continuing in the 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR return, but you did not return it to us in the 2017 to 2018 ILR.

You should also check your FRM03 [funding rules monitoring](#) report, which identifies records reported as continuing in the 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR return but do not have a corresponding record in the 2017 to 2018 ILR.

You must return data in the 2017 to 2018 for learners reported as continuing in the 2016 to 2017 R14 ILR. If the learner has since withdrawn, you must record this in the 2017 to 2018 ILR with the relevant dates, please refer to the [provider support manual](#) for guidance.

**Q9. If I start a learner between R10 and R14 will these be included in the final QAR?**

Yes. We will bring through all of your 2017 to 2018 ILR data into the QAR data set, regardless of what the actual or planned end date is that you have returned to us.

**Q10. Will you be producing another in-year QAR at R11 or R12?**

We do not intend to produce another in-year QAR until the provisional window in January (that uses R14 data and R04 2018 to 2019 data).

**Q11. How do I raise a query with my data?**

You can contact the [service desk](#) with queries but we cannot amend your data for you. If you have specific data queries, please complete a [data query form](#), email this to the service desk and ask us to assign it to the 'ESFA Business Operations QAR' group.

**Q12. What data do you exclude from QARs?**

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

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