Further Education and Skills Data Dashboard guidance

This document provides guidance on the measures used to populate the further education and skills Data Dashboard. Specifically, it provides information on the definitions used, the limitations of the data and any changes in methodology that may have impacted on the data.

The information provided in the sub-sections details the definitions underlying the measures. Please refer to the issues section at the end of each sub-section for information on methodological changes affecting trend data.
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General information

The further education and skills Data Dashboard provides high-level performance data for providers inspected under the *Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2012*¹, where data are available.

The *Common inspection framework* applies to the inspection of provision either wholly or partly funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) or Education Funding Agency (EFA) in:

- further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent specialist colleges
- independent learning providers: companies
- community learning and skills providers: local authorities, specialist designated institutions and not-for-profit organisations
- employers
- higher education institutions providing further education
- providers of learning in the judicial services.

Where providers do not have data for the measures included on the Data Dashboard, they will not have a dashboard displayed.

The Data Dashboard can be used by governors, leaders and senior managers to assess the performance of the college or other training provider in which they are interested. The Data Dashboard is a starting point for governors to access a high-level summary of performance data for individual colleges or training providers, to generate questions about the quality and impact of their provision. The Data Dashboard does not provide financial data about the college or provider.

Parents/carers and prospective learners can use the following websites to find useful information to help them choose where to learn or train:

- Learner View – https://learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk
- FE Choices – http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk
- National Careers Service – https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

The Data Dashboard is split into measures for 16 to 18 year olds and those aged 19 years old and over. ‘16 to 18’ refers to the age of learners undertaking further education and skills courses. This includes those studying as part of the Department for Education 16–19 study programme.

It is important to note that the measures included are not directly comparable to each other. For instance, overall and timely apprenticeships success rates should not be directly compared with GCSE and A-level success rates, but should be compared with national rates for these qualifications.

The aggregate success rate can be used as a starting point for comparing institutions but differences could be the result of a change or difference in the mix of qualifications being offered. Governors can find suggestions on additional data sources within the context tab.

More detailed success rate data are available through the qualification success rate (QSR) reports which are provided to colleges and providers by the Skills Funding Agency, and the national success rate tables: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/sfa-national-success-rates-tables-2013-to-2014

Measures and data sources

Qualification levels

Qualification-related measures are presented at qualification notional levels, as defined by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

QSR measures

The QSR approach and method of calculation for 2013/14 are based upon key policy, business and technical Individualised Learner Record (ILR) rules and changes. Following the confirmation from the SFA of the change to have consistent methods of QSR calculations across all provision funded by the Adult Skills Budget (ASB), a single business rules document relating to QSR for 2013 to 2014 has been produced and is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-business-rules

There are now two separate QSR methods: the overall QSR and the timely QSR. The overall QSR calculation measures the number of learning aims or Apprenticeship frameworks that are successfully achieved at any time. This method is based on the hybrid end date of a learning aim/framework, defined as the later of the planned or actual end date. The timely QSR is the number of learning aims/frameworks with a planned end date in the reporting period that are successfully achieved on or before their planned end date or within 90 days thereafter.

QSR results are calculated separately for classroom based learning and apprenticeships using the overall and timely methods. The FE and Skills Dashboard shows classroom measures based solely on the overall method, but apprenticeship measures are based on both the overall and timely methods.
Classroom learning measures

All classroom learning measures are sourced from the ILR data², provided by the Skills Funding Agency and Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). Classroom learning is defined as all learning delivered in the ‘classroom’, i.e. not in the workplace. Qualifications must be included on the learning aim reference application and funded through the EFA for 16 to 18 year olds or the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) for learners aged 19 or over.

The categorisation of classroom learning aims now follows the direction of the new simplified funding calculation. As a result, classroom based learning is no longer calculated and grouped by planned duration.

The charts shown on the Data Dashboard incorporate both the overall success rate and retention rate. Because of the changes to the business rules to show overall and timely measures for classroom based learning in 2013/14, success and retention rates for previous years are not shown.

The success rate indicates the number of learning aims successfully achieved at any time expressed as a percentage of the number of learning aims with a hybrid end date within the reporting period. This is shown as the ‘% achieved’ in the chart.

The retention rate indicates the number of completed learning aims expressed as a percentage of the number of learning aims with a hybrid end date within the reporting period. This is the ‘% achieved’ + ‘% completed but not achieved’ in the chart.

A learning aim is defined as a single element of learning that attracts funding. For example, if a learner is taking three qualifications that equates to three learning aims.

The classroom learning rates relate to the following measures:

16–18 measures

- Entry level qualifications
- Entry level qualifications in English and mathematics
- Level 1 qualifications
- Level 1 qualifications in English and mathematics
- Full level 2 qualifications
- A levels
- AS levels

Full level 3 qualifications

19 and over measures

- Entry level qualifications
- Entry level qualifications in English and mathematics
- Level 1 qualifications
- Level 1 qualifications in English and Mathematics
- Full level 2 qualifications
- Level 2 English and mathematics qualifications
- A level qualifications
- AS level qualifications
- Full level 3 qualifications.

Apprenticeship measures

The apprenticeships success rate data are sourced from the ILR and provided by the Skills Funding Agency.

The charts shown in the Data Dashboard incorporate overall and timely success rates:

- The overall success rate measures the proportion of framework aims that are completed at any time, irrespective of when the aim was due to be completed.
- The timely success rate is the proportion of framework aims with a planned end date in the reporting period that are achieved by their planned end date, or within 90 days thereafter.

As the timely success rates were published for the first time in 2012/13, data for 2011/12 is not shown.

It is important to note that the measures included are not directly comparable to each other. For instance, overall and timely apprenticeships success rates should not be directly compared with A-level success rates, but should be compared with national rates for these qualifications.

Department for Education measures

Some of the 16 to 18 measures shown on the Data Dashboard are sourced directly from the Department for Education (DfE).
Measures sourced from the DfE performance tables\(^3\) are explained below.

**Academic and vocational value added scores**

The value added score shows how much progress is made by students between the end of Key Stage 4 and end of Key Stage 5. Value added scores are given as a proportion of grades above or below the national average. Positive scores indicate students made more progress than the national average, and negative scores indicate students made less progress than the national average.

The academic score is shown as the proportion of one A-level grade above or below the national average level of progress for student of a similar prior ability.

The vocational score is shown as the proportion of one BTEC subsidiary diploma grade above or below the national average level of progress for student of a similar prior ability.

The pie charts show the proportion of entries in 2013/14 that were academic or vocational.

More information about how value added scores are calculated can be found at: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/16to18_13/documents.html](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/16to18_13/documents.html).

Other DfE measures are explained below:

**The percentage of students who did not attain at least grade C in GCSE English by academic age 15 in 2010/11, who attained at least grade C by 2012/13**

This measure is taken from the DfE statistical first release\(^4\) and data are experimental. The following should be noted:

- GCSE attempts and achievements include regulated certificates and their unregulated legacy iGCSE versions. It is not a requirement for English literature to have been taken alongside English language at post-16
- This data only includes students who were aged 15 at the start of the 2010/11 academic year.
- It only includes 16–18 year olds recorded as full-time at some point during the reporting period
- It includes students who did not have any record of a GCSE entry in the subject by age 15. Of these, any pass grade achieved post-16 is deemed to be an improvement.

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\(^3\) [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance).

Minimum standards

This measure can be found in the performance tables download data section\(^5\).

This data shows percentage of students who achieved academic points per entry of 172 points or more and the percentage of students who achieved vocational points per entry of 194 points or more.

The standards are based on all level 3 qualification entries that students aged 16 to 18 take in schools and colleges. The standards use the same data that are reported in the Key Stage 5 performance tables.

The national level and quintile includes all further education and skills providers and school sixth forms.

Destinations

Destination data provide crucial information on where learners go after completion of learning or training.

The destination data for 16 to 18 learners covers those who have completed Level 3 learning, and provides information for the following destinations:

- Higher education
- Other education
- Employment
- Not in education, employment or training (NEET) or destination not sustained
- Unknown.

The DfE is planning to extend destination data to cover level 2 learners in future years.

There may be differences to the data provided in the DfE statistical first release\(^6\) due to rounding and data suppression. For example, as the DfE provide more detailed breakdowns of education destinations, it is possible that some figures will be suppressed at more detailed level, and will not completely match with the aggregated data shown on the Data Dashboard.

\(^5\) [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/download_data.html](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/download_data.html).

Context

The following data are provided in the context page:

Number of learners

This is the total number learners funded by the Skills Funding Agency or Education Funding Agency as recorded at the end of the academic year (known as the ILR return 14). This includes all learners taking any qualification of any duration and is sourced from the Skills Funding Agency, BIS.

It excludes learners that started before 1 August 2012 and after 31 July 2013 and includes learners that transferred in or out of the provider.

The most recent published data can be accessed here:


Number of starts or enrolments

This is the total number of funded starts or enrolments based on learning aims at the end of the academic year (known as the ILR return, R14).

Classroom-based learning and community learning figures (or non-accredited provision) are based upon enrolments, while apprenticeships and work-place learning are based upon starts. This is in line with the BIS statistical first release. Ofsted will review how this section is calculated for future updates.

This includes all starts or enrolments on all qualification types and all duration of courses and is sourced from Information Management Services, BIS. Data for 2011/12 are not shown.

Known issues with 2011/12 data are published here:


Proportion of starts by each level

This includes all funded starts on all qualifications and provides a breakdown by notional level. These data are sourced from Information Management Services, BIS. Please note that this includes functional skills, which may inflate figures at level 1.

Proportion of provision types

This shows the proportion of funded starts or enrolments by type of provision. These data are sourced from Information Management Services, BIS.
Sector subject area by starts or enrolments

This displays the proportion of funded starts or enrolments by sector subject area tier 1, taken from the end of year (known as the ILR return, R14) data. Annex A shows the sector subject areas are tier 1 and tier 2. Sector subject area 7 (retail and commercial enterprise) has been shown at tier 2 level due to the diverse range of subject sector areas covered.

This includes all starts or enrolments taking any qualification of any duration. The data source is the Information Management Services, BIS.

A number of qualifications have ‘unknown’ sector subject areas; this is largely due to the tutorial and enrichment studies for full time 16–18 year old students studying GCSEs and A levels. The Data Dashboard excludes these ‘unknown’ sector subject areas.

Priorities for industry development

The key priorities for industry development in local enterprise partnerships are taken from the National Careers Service website\(^7\). This information should be used with caution, as while these provide an indication of key sectors in the local area, they may not result in large numbers of vacant jobs.

Data issues

- Data for classroom based overall success rates has only been made available for the latest year, 2013/14. This is because this is the first year that data have been made publicly available.
- Data for apprenticeship timely success rates has only been made available for 2012/13 and 2013/14. This is because data were not made publicly available prior to this.
- Data for GCSE attainment and 16 to 18 destinations are experimental and are only available for 2012/13.
- Destination data for 16 to 18 year olds only covers learners who have completed Level 3 courses. The DfE plan to extend this measure in future years to cover Level 2 learners.
- There may be differences to historic figures in national success rate tables and additional tables, as the Data Dashboard reflects the QSR report methodology, which is to apply the current business rules to recalculate the provider success rates for previous years.

\(^7\) https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/LMIMaps/Pages/LMIAreaMap.aspx
National levels

The national levels shown on the Data Dashboard reflect all providers who have data available for this provision type.

Classroom-based learning success rates

Measures relating to classroom-based learning are produced by the Skills Funding Agency for further education and skills providers inspected under the Common inspection framework.

The national success rates provided in the Data Dashboard (national % achieved) are calculated based upon the QSR report methodology.

Apprenticeships

Measures relating the apprenticeships are produced by the Skills Funding Agency for all providers delivering apprenticeships.

The Data Dashboard will provide comparisons to all providers, and will not provide comparisons to sub-groups of providers, such as sixth form colleges. All providers should ensure that their learners gain the qualifications needed to move into sustained employment or education. Measures of progression such as ‘value added’ will be provided where available to show the progress made by learners, including those with lower starting points. Users will be able to access national success rates by provider groups from the success rate tables.
**Quintiles**

In order to see how the provider of interest compares with ‘all providers’, the Data Dashboard includes quintiles. Quintiles split the data into five sections, with approximately 20% of the data held in each.

**Providers included**

The quintile measure provides comparisons with all providers, and not sub-groups of providers. This includes all providers who have this data available. Where data are available this will include school sixth forms.

**Quintile calculation**

For the comparison with ‘all providers’, the quintiles are calculated by taking all of the data of interest for all of the providers and allocating approximately 20% of providers to each quintile using the following process:

- The data for the specific measure and the group of interest are selected – for example, the percentage achieving an entry level qualification in ‘all providers’.
- The scores for all providers are then ranked.
- The ranks are split into five sub-groups, each group representing approximately 20% of the ranks in the whole group.

For example, if a dataset had ranks 1–100, then ranks 1–20 would be allocated to a quintile, as would ranks 21–40, 41–60, 61–80 and 81–100.

These groups do not necessarily have the same number of providers in them because identical percentages or scores would be allocated to the same quintile.

The quintiles for both ‘all providers’ are labelled as follows:

- Highest
- 2nd quintile
- 3rd quintile
- 4th quintile
- Lowest.

In order to provide a simple means of visualising provider performance, a colour code is provided, with green indicating that the provider is in the top quintile (highest 20%) and red indicating that the provider is in the bottom quintile (lowest 20%).
The full colour coding is:

- Top 20%
- Bottom 20%

**Data management**

**Rounding**

Classroom-based and apprenticeship success rate data sourced from the Skills Funding Agency, BIS are rounded to one decimal place, in accordance with published data.

On the context page, the percentage of starts or enrolments by sector subject area are rounded to one decimal place as this level of precision was needed to display all areas.

Data originating from the DfE are rounded to zero decimal places, in accordance with published data.

**Percentage points**

The Data Dashboard measures changes over the most recent two years in terms of percentage points.

The term ‘percentage point’ refers to an absolute change between two percentage units. This is in contrast to actual percentage change, which refers to a relative change based on the original value.

For example, the percentage is 4.5% in 2011/12 and 6.7% in 2012/13, therefore:

- the change in percentage points is calculated as: 4.5–6.7% = an increase of 2.2 percentage points
- the change in percentage would be calculated as \((\frac{6.7 - 4.5}{4.5}) \times 100\) = an increase of 48.9%.

**Data suppression**

Data are suppressed based on the suppression rules applied by the data owner.

For DfE measures, the data are suppressed if they are based on a denominator of five or less.
For BIS measures, the data are suppressed if they are based on a denominator of less than five.
Annex A: Sector subject area breakdown at tier 1 and tier 2

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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Science and Mathematics</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Construction, Planning and the Built Environment</td>
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