Apprenticeship Achievement Rates

Purpose
This paper is being made available alongside the 2020 to 2021 release of the National Achievement Rate Tables. It specifically looks at the position regarding apprenticeship frameworks and standards.

Care should be taken when comparing outcomes with previous years due to the effects of the pandemic. A number of things will have impacted these data. For example there was an increase in the number of breaks in learning and delayed assessments for those with 2019/20 expected end dates in which we can observe a large number of outcomes being delayed until 2020/21. Similarly a number of learners can be observed as expected to end in 2020/21 who are being carried forwards and are not included in these statistics. Outcomes for those learners will be included in future years publications. Further volatility can be expected in subsequent years.

Additionally the methodology for creating achievement rates has been partially affected. Government announced it will not publish any provider level educational performance data for the 2019/20 or 2020/21 academic years. Therefore to minimise burdens on providers, and to reflect that the data were not being used for detailed accountability at provider level, an additional stage of quality assurance which involves asking individual providers to check their data was paused. Whilst we were able to re-introduce the fuller QA process for the 2020/21 data, we are aware that providers were still affected by disruption due to the COVID pandemic.

Different sectors have been affected by the pandemic in different ways and **as a result care should be taken when comparing 2019/20 and 2020/21 data with previous years.**

Introduction

What are QARs?
Qualification Achievement Rates (QARs) measure how many apprentices at a training provider successfully achieve their apprenticeship. For apprenticeship standards this measures how many achieve the end-point assessment within a particular year. The introduction of the end-point assessment was a key element of the reform to improve quality and ensure employers have confidence that apprentices are fully occupationally competent when they complete the apprenticeship.

Compared with other success measures used in education, the Apprenticeship QAR measure is additionally reliant on the person's continued employment up to the point of assessment; retention is integral to the calculation.

QARs are used at an individual provider level and are published for transparency and stakeholder use to make informed choices about providers. The QAR is one of a range of measures that will be used to hold providers to account and to monitor the success of the apprenticeship programme, as set out in the accountability framework, in which no single measure should be considered in isolation.[1]

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1 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-training-provider-accountability-framework-20212022

What are National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs)?
The aggregation of the individual provider-level QARs are presented in the National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) to show learners and employers the relative quality of provision.

NARTs also provide stakeholders and the general public with access to QAR data, and allows providers to benchmark their provision against other providers.

In March 2020, the Secretary of State announced that the summer 2020 exam series in England would be cancelled to help fight the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). This announcement also stated that Government will not publish any school, college, or provider level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for the 2019/20 academic year. In February 2021, given the continued disruption, it was confirmed this would also be the case for the 2020/21 academic year.

As a consequence of the disruption to the assessment process the government announced a change to its accountability arrangements published here where it states providers will not be held to account on the basis of exams and assessment data from either summer 2020 or summer 2021. This release will therefore not contain any provider level data, including provider type.

What are standards?
From 1 August 2020 all Apprenticeship starts were on the new, employer-designed standards, replacing the previous apprenticeship frameworks. In the first quarter of 2021/22 take-up of standards represented 99.5 per cent of all starts.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education works with employers to develop each standard. Those standards describe the knowledge, skills, and behaviours an apprentice needs to develop by the end of their apprenticeship to be competent in a defined occupation. Standards are occupation specific, with a minimum duration of 12 months and require at least 20% off-the-job training.

All apprentices on standards need to pass a rigorous and independent end-point assessment (EPA) to complete their apprenticeship and demonstrate occupational competency at the end of their programme. For standards, it is the achievement of the end-point assessment which is used to determine the QAR data.

In comparison, frameworks are based on pathways and are primarily qualification focused so these apprentices are assessed throughout their apprenticeship. There is no overall end-point assessment.

Data for all apprenticeships

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Achievement Rate	65.1%	57.5%	57.7%
Retention Rate	66.1%	58.7%	58.8%
Pass Rate	98.5%	97.9%	98.1%
Leavers	294,990	270,470	275,380

The QAR uses the number of leavers as the denominator in calculating the achievement rate. This is based on the hybrid end year, which is the later of the expected end year, actual end year, achievement year (for standards), or reporting year for each individual programme undertaken by the learner.

Breakdown of frameworks and standards

	Framework			Standard		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Achievement Rate	69.2%	68.1%	68.9%	47.4%	45.2%	51.8%
Retention Rate	70.0%	69.2%	70.0%	48.8%	46.6%	53.0%
Pass Rate	98.7%	98.5%	98.5%	97.1%	97.0%	97.8%
Leavers	240,310	145,200	93,880	54,680	125,270	181,490

In 2019/20 the proportion of leavers on standards stood at 46%. For 2020/21 that has increased to 66%.

Breakdown of frameworks and standards by sector subject area

Frameworks

	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Achievement Rate	Leavers	Achievement Rate	Leavers	Achievement Rate	Leavers
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	73.3%	5,750	71.4%	3,580	72.1%	2,850
Arts, Media and Publishing	68.1%	470	68.8%	340	71.3%	160
Business, Administration and Law	66.4%	57,530	68.0%	27,810	69.9%	15,530
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	66.1%	15,940	64.9%	15,520	64.8%	10,680
Education and Training	73.6%	5,760	77.4%	4,310	77.4%	2,650
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	73.9%	47,680	70.1%	36,870	67.4%	26,440
Health, Public Services and Care	67.0%	66,880	63.1%	35,480	66.6%	20,840
Information and Communication Technology	80.1%	6,900	82.7%	6,160	83.1%	5,360
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	75.4%	8,550	70.6%	4,460	72.4%	3,040
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	67.1%	24,520	68.1%	10,570	69.1%	6,320
Science and Mathematics	73.9%	330	73.6%	120	50.0%	10
Total	69.2%	240,310	68.1%	145,200	68.9%	93,880

Standards

	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Achievement Rate	Leavers	Achievement Rate	Leavers	Achievement Rate	Leavers
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	46.8%	110	38.6%	1,100	51.5%	2,650
Arts, Media and Publishing	72.0%	310	62.9%	520	65.0%	820
Business, Administration and Law	47.3%	20,470	47.3%	50,490	52.3%	69,880
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	38.0%	660	38.8%	1,120	46.7%	5,790
Education and Training	88.2%	20	65.3%	650	57.2%	3,160
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	59.8%	2,910	49.7%	6,690	48.9%	13,920
Health, Public Services and Care	47.8%	10,430	43.6%	30,260	54.6%	44,890
Information and Communication Technology	50.9%	5,360	51.8%	8,880	59.6%	11,460
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	48.8%	320	27.1%	1,350	46.1%	1,310
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	43.3%	14,090	39.7%	24,210	44.7%	27,600
Science and Mathematics	no data	no data	77.8%	10	80.0%	20
Total	47.4%	54,680	45.2%	125,270	51.8%	181,490

Frameworks by Sector Subject Area and Level 2020/21

	Achievement Rate				Leavers			
	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher	Total	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher	Total
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	71.7%	72.3%	80.0%	72.1%	1,020	1,800	40	2,850
Arts, Media and Publishing	64.5%	72.9%	no data	71.3%	30	130	no data	160
Business, Administration and Law	70.3%	72.4%	64.4%	69.9%	10,190	3,240	2,100	15,530
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	61.3%	72.1%	72.9%	64.8%	7,230	2,390	1,060	10,680
Education and Training	79.8%	75.1%	-	77.4%	1,300	1,340	-	2,650
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	62.9%	71.6%	61.3%	67.4%	11,940	13,720	780	26,440
Health, Public Services and Care	69.1%	65.8%	64.9%	66.6%	6,200	10,120	4,520	20,840
Information and Communication Technology	87.4%	77.0%	78.7%	83.1%	3,120	1,950	290	5,360
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	60.2%	79.1%	no data	72.4%	1,080	1,960	no data	3,040
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	67.8%	71.1%	54.2%	69.1%	3,670	2,590	60	6,320
Science and Mathematics	-	-	-	50.0%	-	10	10	10
Total	67.8%	71.0%	65.9%	68.9%	45,790	39,240	8,860	93,880

Standards by Sector Subject Area and Level 2020/21

	Achievement Rate				Leavers			
	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher	Total	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher	Total
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	50.9%	54.4%	no data	51.5%	2,260	400	no data	2,650
Arts, Media and Publishing	-	67.1%	31.9%	65.0%	10	760	50	820
Business, Administration and Law	51.5%	54.0%	50.0%	52.3%	6,520	36,940	26,410	69,880
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	42.6%	56.9%	36.7%	46.7%	3,600	1,810	370	5,790
Education and Training	no data	62.0%	49.9%	57.2%	no data	1,920	1,240	3,160
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	48.3%	48.4%	54.3%	48.9%	4,000	8,730	1,200	13,920
Health, Public Services and Care	54.0%	51.3%	65.1%	54.6%	14,600	22,310	7,980	44,890
Information and Communication Technology	no data	60.7%	58.3%	59.6%	no data	6,440	5,020	11,460
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	58.5%	40.3%	no data	46.1%	420	890	no data	1,310
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	44.7%	46.1%	40.1%	44.7%	18,030	7,390	2,180	27,600
Science and Mathematics	no data	no data	80.0%	80.0%	no data	no data	20	20
Total	48.9%	52.8%	53.2%	51.8%	49,430	87,600	44,460	181,490

QARs measure how many apprentices at a specific training provider successfully achieved their apprenticeship within a particular year. Because the data is at provider level, it can include for example:

- o apprentices who have transferred to a different provider, even where they have continued and completed the same apprenticeship, and
- o learners who have transferred to a new learning aim with the same provider, e.g. the apprentice may have changed job and a more suitable apprenticeship was identified.

When looking at aggregate data, it can include a number of providers who have subsequently stopped delivering apprenticeship provision. These factors negatively impact the QAR and don't always mean the learner has withdrawn from the apprenticeship programme.

Achievement rates are important, but not always comparable with achievement on other training programmes because apprenticeships are paid jobs. Apprentices may not complete their apprenticeship for reasons outside the control of the training provider and that are not relevant to the training itself. Unlike other training and education programmes, the employer plays a crucial role in supporting the apprentice to reach end-point assessment. Labour market conditions including those that result in redundancy may have an impact. Reasons for non-completion can also include apprentices dropping out for personal reasons or apprentices moving to other employment, education or training.

Impact of standards

With frameworks, the main driver historically for the variation in achievement rates across sectors has been the rate of retention rather than the achievement element of the programme. In particular there have been retention issues in the areas of hospitality, customer service and management.

NARTs also show QARs at individual framework and standard level. Whilst it can be seen that QARs are on average 17.1 percentage points lower for standards compared to frameworks, a difference in apprenticeship achievement rates is not, at least initially, an entirely unexpected consequence of the apprenticeship reforms programme. Standards and frameworks are not directly comparable. Whilst some standards do have similar names to frameworks, standards are not designed to be a direct replacement for frameworks and as such, they should not be directly compared. Department for Education reforms changed what an apprenticeship is: standards are longer, with more training and an independent end-point assessment to test occupational competency at the end. End-point assessment is a new assessment method, making achievements on standards more demanding and this could also impact the QAR.