

2008/09 School Sixth Form Data – Frequently Asked Questions

Version 4 - 23rd November 2010

1. What is this exercise all about? Why is it important?

This exercise provides School Sixth Forms with the opportunity to review and amend their Success Rate. The Success Factor is an element of the Provider Factor, which is multiplied by National Rate and Standard Learner Number to calculate financial allocations for School Sixth Forms. The data School Sixth Forms submitted for 2008/09 will be used in the Success Factor that will be used to calculate your financial allocation for 2011/12.

2. Did I have to do this last year?

The process this year is very similar to last year's process where we gave schools the opportunity to review their success rate. The only difference is that to improve transparency we are also making available the data used to calculate the success factors, which the LSC was unable to do last year. The YPLA has written to all LAs and the RPG to inform them this is the approach we would take. Finally, the DfE Star Chamber explicitly instructed the YPLA to take this approach.

3. Do I have to take part in this exercise?

No, participation in this exercise is voluntary. Only those School Sixth Forms who believe their Success Rate to be significantly incorrect should participate.

4. What is the YPLA in London doing to support this process?

YPLA London is taking extra steps to support its Local Authorities and School Sixth Forms. In addition to making the 2008/09 data available, we are also holding briefing events to help London LA and School Sixth Form colleagues to understand the data and its use. This is part of a wider London programme which supports LA and School Sixth Forms with data returns; in the summer we offered training on 2010 Census returns. This extra support is not being offered in other regions.

5. I don't agree with my success rate and data how do I appeal?

School Sixth Forms will need to complete the *Template for Business Case to Challenge 2008/09 Success Rates* which was sent to them with the letter from Mike Pettifer dated 26th October 2010. The form should be returned with supporting evidence. Changes to Success Factors will only be made where there is supporting evidence. Documentation should be submitted to the YPLA by 30th November 2010.

6. What evidence do I need to submit?

Local Authorities have responsibility for auditing School Sixth Forms. School Sixth Forms must hold fully auditable records. For the purpose of this exercise, schools only need to provide a sample of their full records to the YPLA. Schools should submit evidence for 2 students per category from Table 3 on the Business Case.

7. Do I need to resubmit my 2008/09 data return?

No, we do not want School Sixth Forms to resubmit their data return, only to provide evidence (eg from an awarding body) where it is incorrect.

8. How do I get my technical questions answered?

Technical questions should be submitted to the YPLA Senior Commissioning Advisor as soon as possible, who will log the query, if necessary seek advice, and respond to the Local Authority or School Sixth Form.

9. How does this relate to the census training that took place in the summer?

YPLA London offered training to support School Sixth Forms and Local Authorities in making accurate 2010 Census returns during Summer 2010. The training was offered to Local Authorities, who decided if a training event was required in the local area. The training was specific to the Autumn Census 2010, but much (not all) of the content would have provided useful background knowledge which will aid School Sixth Forms in the current exercise. These extra events were only run in London, not in other regions.

10. Why should I bother – will this affect my money?

The Success rate will affect a School Sixth Forms financial allocation. It is used to calculate your Success Factor. Success Factor is the halfway point between your success rate and 1:

- 50% Success Rate = 75% Success Factor
- 80% Success Rate = 90% Success Factor.

Therefore (all other things remaining equal), every 2% increase in an institution's Success Rate would equate to a 1% increase in funding.

11. How do the categories (1/2 or red/amber) work?

The categories are to assist School Sixth Forms in assessing how accurate their data is likely to be. It is not a judgement. Category 1/red indicates that the YPLA recommends that the School Sixth Form should review their data; Category 2/amber indicates that the data is more accurate, but Schools Sixth Form should still "sense check" their Success Rate. The categories are not a judgement about your Success Rate.

12. What's the most important thing to look for in my data?

Withdrawals and unknowns.

13. Why do I have to review data that is from years ago?

The 2008/09 data is being used to calculate the Success Factor and Provider Factor which will be used to calculate 2011/12 allocations for School Sixth Forms. The national timetable for data returns (set by the Department for Education) and the process of matching school data with awarding body data (managed by the Department for Education) both result in 2009/10 data being released too late for the YPLA to ensure that schools receive their 2011/12 financial allocation by 31st March 2011.

14. Where does the data come from?

The data which the YPLA will use to calculate Success Factor is School Sixth Forms' own data. Schools Sixth Forms submitted this data (mostly) via the *SOFTWARE*

SUPPLIER'S DATABASE in Autumn 2009 (S05). This data was received by the Department for Education (then DCSF) who tasked the *DfE CONTRACTOR* to match this data with data from awarding bodies. The Department for Education then provides this data to the YPLA to use in the calculation of financial allocation. The current exercise allows School Sixth Forms the opportunity to review the data which they previously submitted. The data that has been provided to the YPLA by the Department of Education has been sent to School Sixth Forms by the YPLA.

15. Can I have the source data?

The source data has not been released by the Department of Education. The YPLA does not have access to this data.

16. Are Academies in scope for this exercise?

London Academies are in scope for this exercise. They will be written to separately by the YPLA's Academy Team, but the regional office will provide any subsequent technical support.

17. What happens if my School Sixth Form wasn't operating in 2008/09?

You are out of scope for this exercise. The YPLA will use a regional average Success Factor.

18. How do you calculate Success Rate?

The simplest way of defining Success Rate is that it equates to the number of achievements divided by the number of starts that were due to complete in 2008/09.

19. How do you calculate Success Factor?

Success Factor = Success Rate/2 + 0.5

In other words it is the halfway point between the Success Rate and 100%. The reason that we provide this premium is that we recognise the value of education regardless of outcome.

20. What is an unknown?

This is where Fischer Family Trust have been unable to match a Learning Aim QAN from the school census data to an exam entry QAN from awarding body data.

21. What are withdrawals?

A withdrawal is where a learner has been recorded on *A SOFTWARE SUPPLIER'S DATABASE* as have withdrawn from a specific Learning Aim. Often learners that have withdrawn have not left the School Sixth Form but instead swapped subjects; these learners should be recorded as a transfer, which would not have a negative effect on success.

22. I have too many withdrawals listed

Sometimes School Sixth Forms do not record when a learner has swapped subjects. Instead of recording the learner as Transferred, the Learning Aim is left active and recorded as a fail at the end of the year, which consequently reduces the School Sixth Form's Success Factor.

23. Which achievements are counted?

All achievements are counted (at Level 3, 2, 1, but not Key Skills) on the condition that they are eligible for funding (refer to the funding guidance). The cap of 1.75SLN per learner only applies to SLNs, not the recording of achievement and success.

24. What do the headings on my data mean?

See data definitions document.

25. How does cashing-in affect my Success Factor?

A new rule which requires School Sixth Forms to cash-in qualifications at the end of the year was introduced in 2010/11. The 2008/09 data returns are not covered by this rule.

26. How do learning aim start and finish dates affect my success?

If an estimated completion date occurs before the actual completion date, then the learning aim will be recorded as Withdrawn.

27. Do I need to find QAN and DISC codes for 2008/09?

No, we do not want School Sixth Forms to resubmit their data return, only to provide evidence (eg from an awarding body) where it is incorrect.

28. What other information is available?

At the School Census training held in Summer 2010 (only some London Local Authorities accepted the offer of these events), YPLA London made the following documents available : 2010/11 departmental guidance (http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/ypla-school_sixth_form_guidance-gn-sep10-v1.pdf); and slides from the training event (http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/ypla-school_sixth_form_funding-br-sep10-v1.pdf). These documents are useful background reading, although it should be noted that because they relate to the Autumn 2010 School Census return some of the information may not be relevant to 2008/09 data; eg the new rules on cashing-in do not apply to 08/09 data.

29. What's the timetable for Academies?

Academies are on the same timetable as School Sixth Forms; submissions to be made by 30th November.

30. Has there been a change to how success is calculated?

Yes, a temporary proxy formula for calculating Success Rates was used in 2006/07 and 2007/08 due to the quality of the data. We have now reverted to using the standard post-16 formula for 2008/09 which makes School Sixth Form and Further Education success rates comparable.

31. We are in a consortium and entered the qualifications of our pupils taken in other schools; however the exam entry was carried out by the host school and we suspect these qualifications have not been matched.

The school should provide evidence that the learners achieved qualifications elsewhere (eg School Performance Table or Awarding Body evidence).

32. Why do I have "Unknowns"? They weren't unknown when I entered them into a SOFTWARE SUPPLIER'S DATABASE.

Some reasons that Unknowns might occur:

- The wrong codes have been entered onto a *SOFTWARE SUPPLIER'S DATABASE* (the census return)
- QAN codes are update regularly. The school may have used an out of date code
- The school syllabus has changed, but the codes haven't been updated
- A student has swapped courses but the *SOFTWARE SUPPLIER'S DATABASE* (the census return) has not been updated.

33. I've got lots of duplicate records

A small number of schools have got duplicate records within their data which are not the result of school's data entry. We are not sure where these have come from: it's possibly a problem with a *SOFTWARE SUPPLIER'S DATABASE* or with the matching process. In these cases schools should log the problem via a business case and the YPLA will amend the Success Rate.

34. All of my records are recorded as withdrawn.

One particular version of a *SOFTWARE SUPPLIER'S DATABASE* had an error in 2008/09. This resulted in a Learning Aim being recorded as withdrawn if the estimated completion date and the actual completion date were recorded as different days. In these cases schools should log the problem via a business case and the YPLA will amend the Success Rate.

35. Cert to Dip – can you only count one? If a child follows on to the Diploma – what should be claimed?

If the certificate was completed and assessed then the Learning Aim should be recorded as completed; and then a new Learning Aim should also be recorded for the subsequent Diploma qualification. If the certificate was not completed and assessed, then the Learning Aim should be recorded as "Transferred" to the Diploma (using the same date to end the Cert and Start the Dip).

36. I have questions about cashing-in. Where do I look for more information?

Please see the department's website, noting the *Cashing-in Q&A* on ...

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site_home&sid=3&pid=233&lid=698&ctype=Text&ptype=Single

If you have any additional questions on uncashed AS levels you should send an email to: uncashed.QUALIFICATIONS@dcsf.qsi.gov.uk

37. I'm concerned that my students who take maths and further maths A level qualifications will be adversely affected by cashing-in.

Please see Q8 on the *Cashing-in Q&A* on the department's website...

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site_home&sid=3&pid=233&lid=698&ctype=Text&ptype=Single

Or see Joint Qualifications Council...

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1237/Aggregation%20rules%20for%20HFEs%20-%20Version%20%20June%202010.pdf>

38. How do I calculate my Success Rate from the information shown on the Business Case?

Achievements ÷ (Starts – Unknown)

39. On the business case template what does starts mean?

“Starts” on the business case template equates to the total number of “Learning Aims” or the sum of withdrawals, unknowns and achievements. To calculate Success Rate, “Unknowns” need to be removed from this total. See Q38.

40. I’m having problems with my 2010 Census return.

Schools’ support on Census 2010 is available from the Department’s Data Services Group helpdesk on 01325 39 26 26 or dsg.helpdesk@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.

41. How can issues with 2010/11 data be sorted now as this may be used for 2011/12 allocation calculations?

Schools’ support on Census 2010 is available from the Department’s Data Services Group helpdesk on 01325 39 26 26 or dsg.helpdesk@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.

41. If an AS was never cashed in – does it count as unknown for both years?

If an AS was not cashed-in, it would

42. What happens if learner drops two aims, which aim should continue on to a 3rd aim?

Either aim can be withdrawn, it will not affect the success rate which is chosen.

43. Will the YPLA republish success rates?

No decision has been taken yet; but Success Rates are subject to Freedom of Information so if a request was made the YPLA would have to publish the revised success rates.

44. Can the YPLA make allocations statements available?

Final allocations were sent to schools in March 2010. If a copy of the notification is required please contact the YPLA London office.

45. What happens if any aim continues in to next year but not cashed?

The success would be claimed at the end of the second year.

46. How does International Baccalaureate contribute to success?

Each IB subject studied has its own learning aim. Therefore success is not recorded at IB programme level, but at subject level.

47. Where a new school only has data for Y12 only how does the YPLA calculate success.

The YPLA will use the Y12 success rate to calculate the whole sixth form’s allocation.

48. Do double awards (eg for BTEC) count as 2 successes or just 1?

One learning aim = one success. Double awards only count as one success. This is the same for FE providers.

49. Which data are we using?

The YPLA is using schools’ census data return S05 (OCT09). S05 is the last opportunity that schools had to update their 08/09 census return, but some school may not have taken this opportunity, so their last update would have been S04 in MAY09.

50. If a learner drops 2 qualifications in order to transfer to BTEC is this counted as 1 transfer and 1 withdrawal, or will it count as 2 withdrawals or will it count as 2 transfers and a start on a 3rd qualification? BTEC is equivalent to 3 qualifications.

The school should record both dropped learning aims as Transfers to the BTEC. Both dropped learning aims will then be excluded from the success calculation. The BTEC is only one learning aim. The school should note that the end date of the old qualification and the start date of the new qualification should be recorded as the same day.

51. How do I find my Unknowns?

Schools should look in the column named "UNKNOWN"; all learning aims recorded as "1" are unknown, "0" is known.

52. How do I find my Withdrawals?

Schools should look in the column named "UNKNOWN", select all known records (ie those recorded as "0"); then in the column named "ACHIEVE" select all records recorded as "0".

53. How do I find my Achievements?

In the column named "ACHIEVE" select all records recorded as "1".