

Higher Education Reporting in Apprenticeship (HERA)

Effective use guide

*How can Hera be used to inform planning / progress and align
with qualitative intent?*

October 2024

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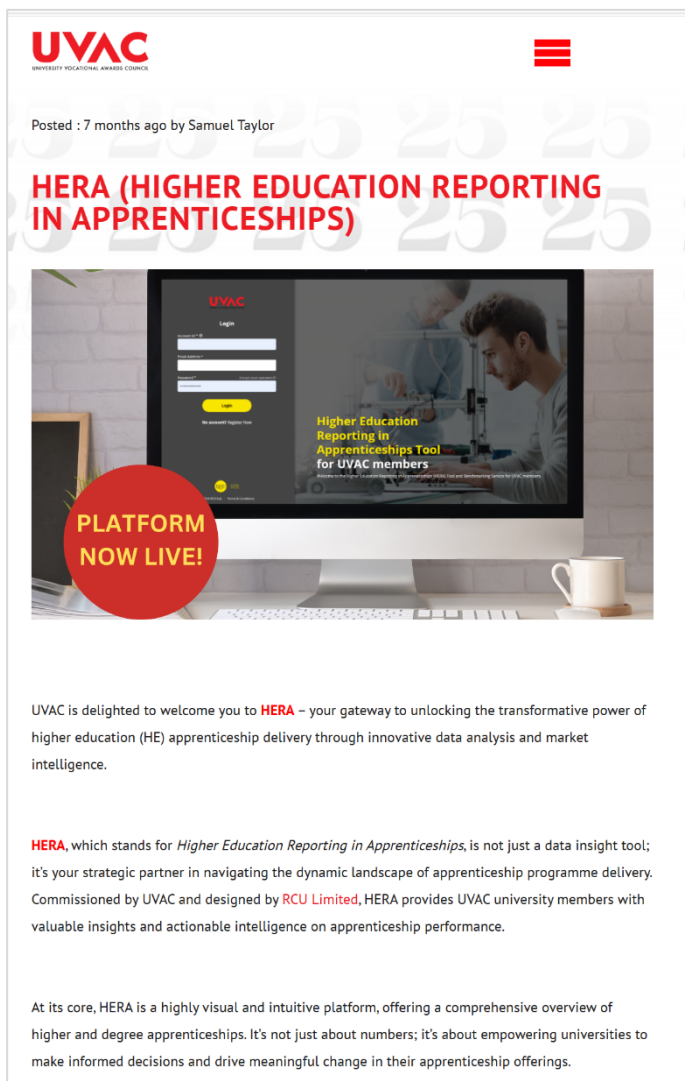
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1. What is HERA and what is it for?

The Higher Education Reporting in Apprenticeships (HERA¹) tool commissioned by UVAC and designed by RCU Limited was produced to provide data analysis and market intelligence in Apprenticeship delivery by UVAC members, allowing users to benchmark their performance and to inform strategic business development within the apprenticeship sector.

The tool enables users to make informed decisions, improve quality standards, and strategically grow their provision.

The users of HERA are likely to be individuals or teams in the areas of Quality Management or Business Development but equally the data insights may be useful for faculty and delivery functions to contextualise their offer and experiences against those of the sector as a whole.



Posted : 7 months ago by Samuel Taylor

HERA (HIGHER EDUCATION REPORTING IN APPRENTICESHIPS)

UVAC is delighted to welcome you to **HERA** – your gateway to unlocking the transformative power of higher education (HE) apprenticeship delivery through innovative data analysis and market intelligence.

HERA, which stands for *Higher Education Reporting in Apprenticeships*, is not just a data insight tool; it's your strategic partner in navigating the dynamic landscape of apprenticeship programme delivery. Commissioned by UVAC and designed by **RCU Limited**, HERA provides UVAC university members with valuable insights and actionable intelligence on apprenticeship performance.

At its core, HERA is a highly visual and intuitive platform, offering a comprehensive overview of higher and degree apprenticeships. It's not just about numbers; it's about empowering universities to make informed decisions and drive meaningful change in their apprenticeship offerings.

This document was designed to be a useful user guide to some of the key benefits and functions of the tool, supplementing the advice within the platform to outline some specific steps you can take to use the data and help users make the most of its capabilities.

For more guidance on the basic workings of the platform the software developers created a useful run through of the key functions².

¹ <https://uvac.ac.uk/hera/>

² <https://youtu.be/Pb5oKZn8r4Y>

2. The Purpose of this guide - Why do we need to plan, monitor progress and align with qualitative intent?

This guide is to help use HERA as a tool to support the identification of the objectives and intent of an institution and generate the foundations of new or improved opportunities.

We have done this in two broad sections.

The first is **“Using HERA for benchmarking performance”** (chapter 3 of this guide).

The second is **“Using HERA for business development”** (chapter 4 of this guide).

Each chapter is written for an audience in that role however benefit can be obtained for all users from each of the chapters.

HERA has individual guidance on its pages that offer some advice on how to use the page however each page presents information where we can draw wider conclusions from the information it presents and allow more effective planning.

Naturally planning, monitoring progress and aligning with qualitative intent are essential for maintaining strategic direction. Planning provides a clear roadmap for institutions and can help ensure all efforts across functions are aligned with the institution’s vision and objectives. This would include for example setting realistic recruitment targets for a business development function and ensuring the quality management function has the resources in place to deliver an excellent student (apprentice) and employer experience that can meet or exceed those of its peers.

Monitoring progress allows for the identification of deviations from the plan, enabling timely adjustments to stay on track and manage risks proactively.

Aligning with qualitative intent ensures a focus on delivering high-quality outcomes for learners and gives a competitive advantage to those institutions and we can do this better when we understand the national picture and the performance of our peers. Regular monitoring subsequently helps identify potential risks early, allowing for proactive measures to be put in place to mitigate them.

These practices support continuous improvement by evaluating progress and informing future decisions.

3. Using HERA for Benchmarking Performance

In this section, we will explore how a Quality, faculty or other delivery function can use HERA to benchmark performance, providing valuable insights to enhance your operations.

We will cover how HERA can be used to:

- **Compare against sector standards:** Use HERA to benchmark performance in terms of Ofsted, published achievement rates, and trends in the volume of starts.
- **Identify potential new offers:** Identify standards that align with the existing skills of your curriculum delivery team, enabling more effective collaboration with the business development team to uncover growth opportunities.
- **Identify best practices:** Analyse performance data to uncover industry best practices and identify potential collaboration opportunities with other providers.

By the end of this section, you should have a good understanding of how to use HERA to benchmark performance and drive continuous improvement in your operations.

3.1 Understanding the national picture (In year and full year)

The **Provider Summary**, found under the State of the Nation header, offers an overview of the level 4+ apprenticeship sector. It categorises all metrics by three groups or types of providers: HEIs & Other Public Funded providers, Private Sector Public Funded providers, and Colleges. The page includes filters for route, level and region, and is updated with full year results, followed by updates after the release of the Q1 and Q2 results.

The screenshot shows the 'Provider Type Summary' page for the 'Full Year (2022/23)'. It includes filters for 'All Routes', 'All Levels (Levels 4+)', and 'All Regions'. The table displays the 'Standards Table Top 10' with columns for Standard, Level, HEI's & Other Public Funded Starts 2022/23, Private Sector Public Funded Starts 2022/23, College Starts 2022/23, and Total Starts 2022/23. The standards are ranked by Total Starts.

Standard	Level	HEI's & Other Public Funded Starts 2022/23	Private Sector Public Funded Starts 2022/23	College Starts 2022/23	Total Starts 2022/23
Operations or Departmental Manager	Level 5	460	8,389	921	9,770
Accountancy or Taxation Professional	Level 7	4	9,523	20	9,547
Senior Leader	Level 7	3,165	2,940	0	6,105
Data Analyst	Level 4	16	5,289	71	5,376
Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	Level 4	19	4,288	402	4,709
Police Constable (Integrated Degree)	Level 6	4,064	490	0	4,524
Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	Level 5	4,323	23	178	4,524
Leader in Adult Care	Level 5	22	3,701	206	3,929
Associate Project Manager	Level 4	46	2,821	292	3,159
Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)	Level 6	2,649	0	51	2,700

This table shows the largest standards (top 10 maximum) within the selected Subject, Level, and Geography. Standards are ranked by Total Starts (in 2022/23).

Figure: 3.1.1

The **Provider Summary** helps you identify the ten most popular standards based on your selected filters and the Total Starts (see Figure 3.1.1). You can sort these standards by the HEIs and Other Public Funded Starts 2022/23 column by clicking on the column header. However, please note that this will only sort the existing ten standards and will not introduce any new ones. Therefore, you will not be seeing the top standards by this category, and some may be missing.

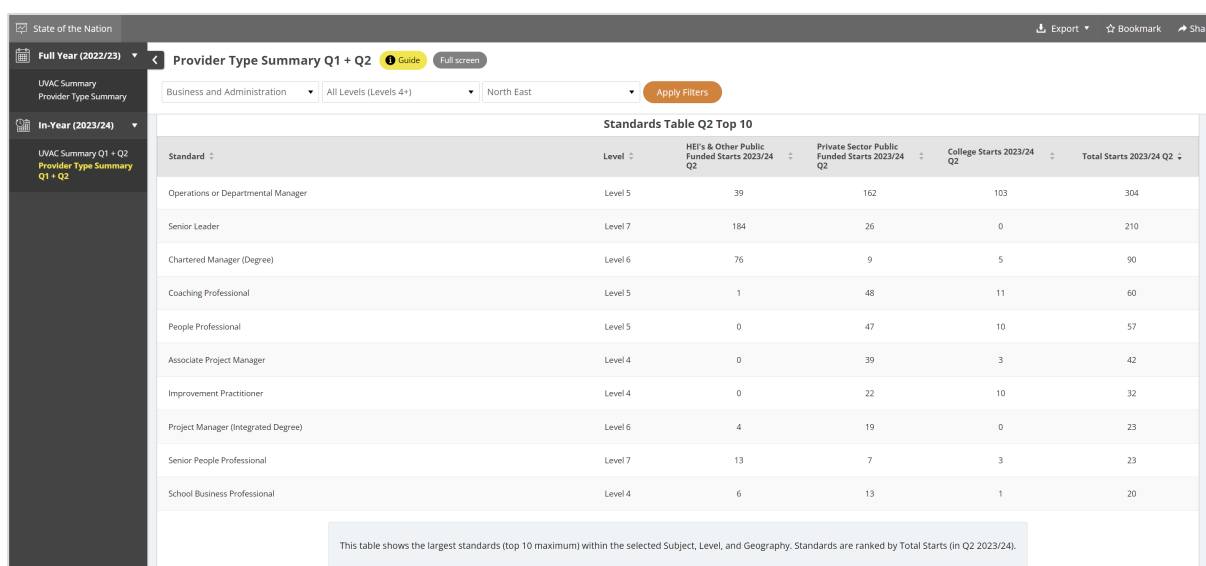
3.2 Using routes, levels and regions (SON) to identify potential new standards

The **Standards Top 10 table** (See Figure 3.2.1) can help identify popular standards not currently in your portfolio and provide a general guide to the volume in popular subjects based on the latest quarter's figures.

Your curriculum delivery team has unique knowledge and skills that could be transferable to similar standards with proven demand in your region.

For example, if you were based in the Northeast by selecting 'Business and Administration' under the Route filter and the Northeast under the Region filter, you can identify standards that complement your existing portfolio mix. This would support growth discussions with your Business Development Team.

You could also identify common standards in other regions that are not common in your region, this would also present possible growth opportunities.



Standard	Level	HE's & Other Public Funded Starts 2023/24 Q2	Private Sector Public Funded Starts 2023/24 Q2	College Starts 2023/24 Q2	Total Starts 2023/24 Q2
Operations or Departmental Manager	Level 5	39	162	103	304
Senior Leader	Level 7	184	26	0	210
Chartered Manager (Degree)	Level 6	76	9	5	90
Coaching Professional	Level 5	1	48	11	60
People Professional	Level 5	0	47	10	57
Associate Project Manager	Level 4	0	39	3	42
Improvement Practitioner	Level 4	0	22	10	32
Project Manager (Integrated Degree)	Level 6	4	19	0	23
Senior People Professional	Level 7	13	7	3	23
School Business Professional	Level 4	6	13	1	20

Figure: 3.2.1

The **Standards Summary** can be used to find the average achievement rate for a specific standard (see Figure 3.2.2). When assessing current performance naturally the achievement rate (more commonly known as Qualification Achievement Rate – QAR) will inform what has previously been performed in a given standard. QAR moves slowly and an apprentice count in their hybrid end year, which is the latter of planned end, actual end, achievement or reporting year and only when they have left positively or negatively. So, a 2022-23 rate is based on students that may have withdrawn from a three-year course in year 2019-20. See chapter 7 for more on Qualification Achievement Rates and their calculations.

The summary also highlights the risks and rewards of introducing new standards. The institution should consider their position against that QAR, and to what extent you have contributed to it.

Standards with low achievement rates could negatively affect the overall QAR of an organisation, potentially putting the organisation at risk under the ESFA's Accountability Framework³.

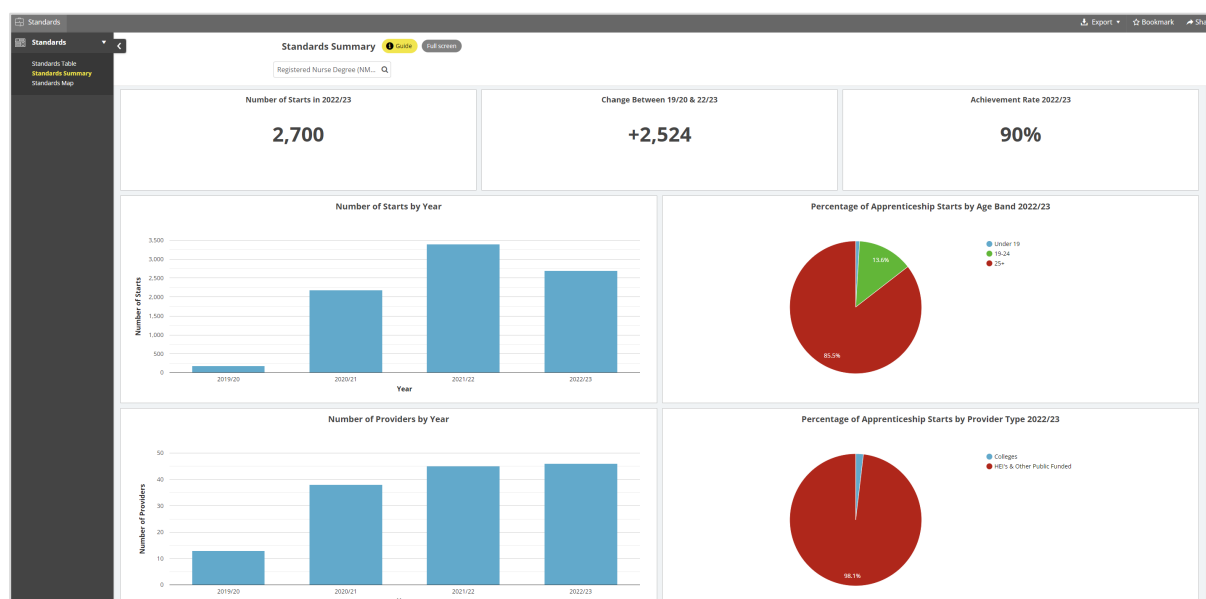


Figure: 3.2.2

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-training-provider-accountability-framework>

3.3 Benchmarking Ofsted Results

Within the **Provider Summary** dashboards, a stacked bar chart summarises the overall Ofsted grades received by HEIs and other publicly funded providers. Hovering over the chart reveals a box showing the percentages within each category.

In this instance, we have filtered by the Business and Administration route, Level 7 for all regions (see Figure 3.3.1 below). Hovering over the green 'Outstanding' section of the HEIs and Other Public Funded providers category, shows that 4.35% of this category have an 'Outstanding' rating. As an Outstanding provider, you could claim to be among the top 4.35% of Business and Administration, HEI and Other Public Funded providers for Level 7 standards across England.

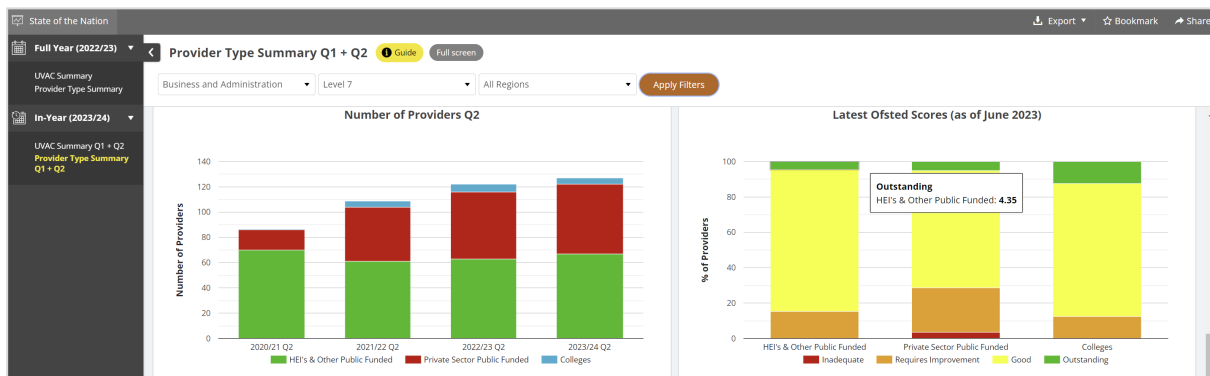


Figure: 3.3.1

You can also benchmark regionally here: to benchmark against providers within the Northeast, for all routes and levels, you can see in Figure 3.3.2 below that 3.23% of HEI's and Other Public Funded providers have an Outstanding Ofsted rating.

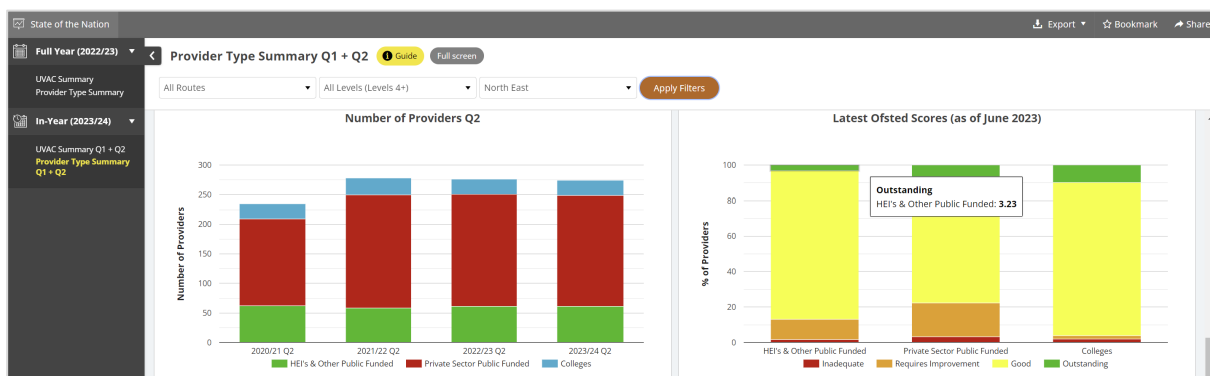


Figure: 3.3.2

This chart does not find a provider to benchmark against from this chart, so it is advisable to refer to the source data outside of HERA for further analysis. You can download a CSV file from the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2023-to-august-2024>

Opening this file in Excel, you could filter on column G (Region) for Northeast and then filter on column E (Provider Group). You can also find more data externally at the .gov site for Inspection performance⁴.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Provider UR	Provider UKPRI	Provider name	Provider type	Provider group	Local authority	Region
771	133812	10007143	University of Durham	Higher education institution	Higher education institutions	Durham	North East
801	133852	10007799	University of Newcastle Upon Tyne	Higher education institution	Higher education institutions	Newcastle upon Tyne	North East
803	133854	10001282	University of Northumbria At Newcastle	Higher education institution	Higher education institutions	Newcastle upon Tyne	North East
820	133881	10007159	University of Sunderland	Higher education institution	Higher education institutions	Sunderland	North East
826	133894	10007161	Teesside University	Higher education institution	Higher education institutions	Middlesbrough	North East

Figure: 3.3.3

The grades in columns P to T correspond to the Ofsted grades as follows: 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Good, 3 = Requires Improvement, 4 = Inadequate. To benchmark against an Outstanding provider, filter on the 1's and then visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/> to find their Ofsted report. Reading these reports can provide you with ideas for best practices. This file can also assist you in identifying Ofsted Outstanding providers outside the HEI sector within a specific region.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/education/inspection-and-performance-of-further-education-providers>

3.4 Comparing Your Achievement Rates to the Average by Standard

Once the Quality Achievement Rates (QAR) for the full year are published, you will be able to view your achievement rate for each standard on the View your Data platform: <https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/>

The national data set for all providers is published in March each year and HERA will be updated with that position soon after that release. In March 2024 the 22-23 data set was produced, so in March 2025 you will see the 23-24 data set shown.

You can also use HERA to identify other providers delivering a same standard as you, allowing you to benchmark against those with high achievement rates. These providers are operating under similar market conditions and supporting comparable workforces. Go to the **Standards Summary** and you can see the average achievement rate.

Here (Figure 3.4.1), we have selected the Leader in Adult Care standard:

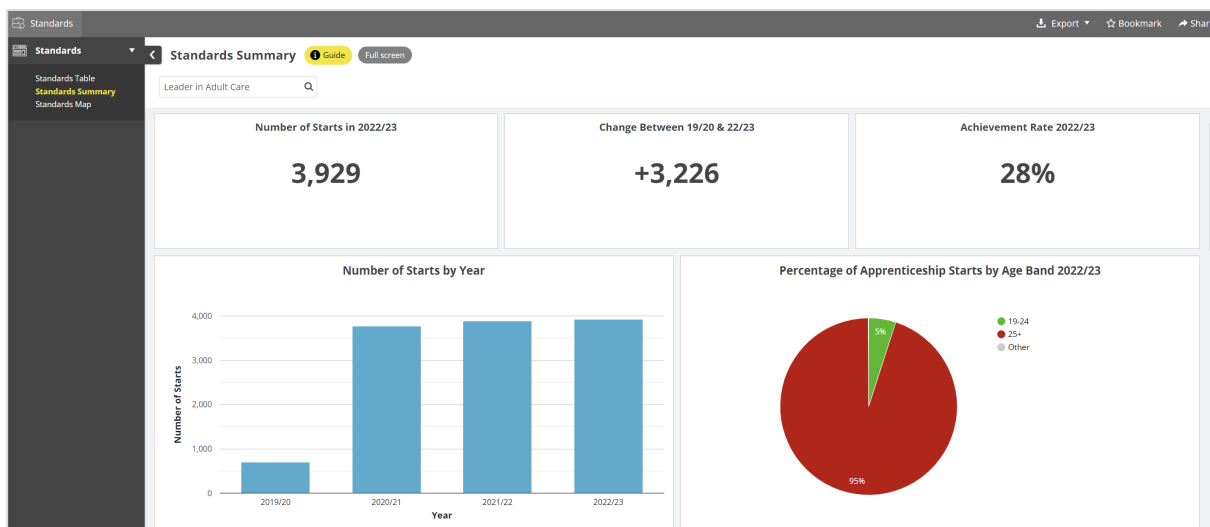


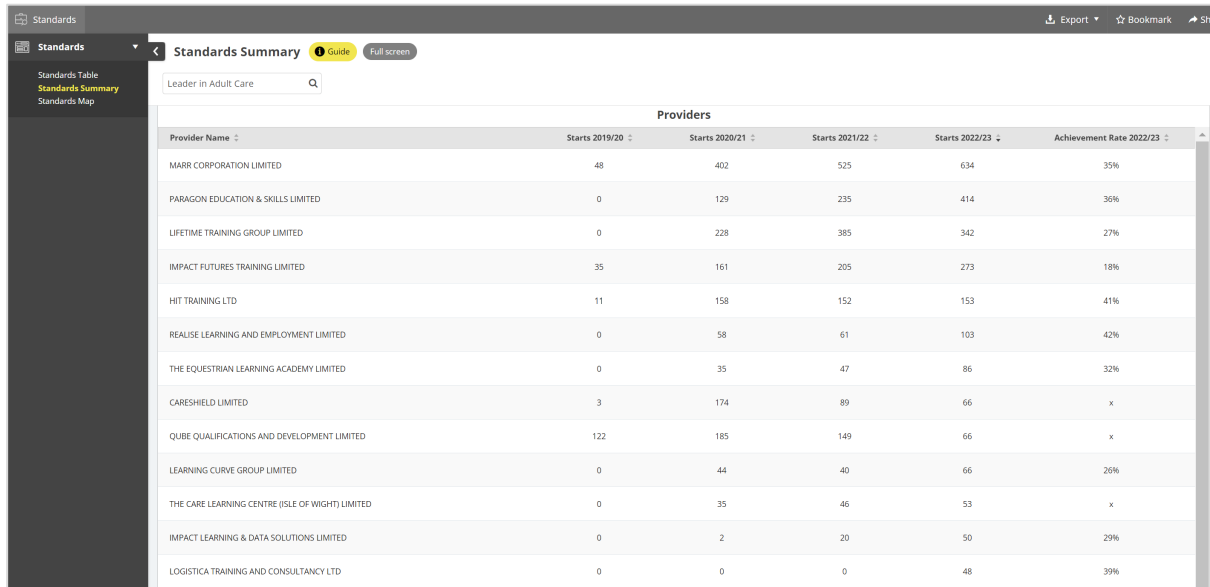
Figure: 3.4.1

The achievement rate for 2022/23 is 28%, which is low compared to the national average of 54.6% for the same year, suggesting unique factors are affecting this workforce, such as high staff turnover in the care sector and the complexity of the role. If your achievement rate is 40%, you are below the national average but above the average for that specific standard and this can help in management conversations.

This information can support discussions with the ESFA around the Accountability Framework. By demonstrating relative success despite challenging conditions, you can build a strong case for realistic improvement activities and internally for continued funding or additional resources. Showing a clear understanding of your achievement rate and the challenges faced, can further strengthen your position.

3.5 Benchmarking Achievement Rates Against Peers by Standard

Another valuable use of the **Standards Summary** is benchmarking against high-performing peers. You can sort the table at the bottom of the page by achievement rate or volume of starts by clicking on the column headers (see Figure 3.5.1).



The screenshot shows a web application interface for 'Standards Summary'. It features a sidebar with navigation options: 'Standards Table', 'Standards Summary' (highlighted), and 'Standards Map'. The main content area has a search bar with the text 'Leader in Adult Care'. Below the search bar is a table titled 'Providers' with columns for 'Provider Name', 'Starts 2019/20', 'Starts 2020/21', 'Starts 2021/22', 'Starts 2022/23', and 'Achievement Rate 2022/23'. The table lists 14 providers with their respective start counts and achievement rates.

Provider Name	Starts 2019/20	Starts 2020/21	Starts 2021/22	Starts 2022/23	Achievement Rate 2022/23
MARR CORPORATION LIMITED	48	402	525	634	35%
PARAGON EDUCATION & SKILLS LIMITED	0	129	235	414	36%
LIFETIME TRAINING GROUP LIMITED	0	228	385	342	27%
IMPACT FUTURES TRAINING LIMITED	35	161	205	273	18%
HIT TRAINING LTD	11	158	152	153	41%
REALISE LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT LIMITED	0	58	61	103	42%
THE EQUESTRIAN LEARNING ACADEMY LIMITED	0	35	47	86	32%
CARESHIELD LIMITED	3	174	89	66	x
QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LIMITED	122	185	149	66	x
LEARNING CURVE GROUP LIMITED	0	44	40	66	26%
THE CARE LEARNING CENTRE (ISLE OF WIGHT) LIMITED	0	35	46	53	x
IMPACT LEARNING & DATA SOLUTIONS LIMITED	0	2	20	50	29%
LOGISTICA TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY LTD	0	0	0	48	39%

Figure: 3.5.1

You could use this to identify a HEI with a high achievement rate across various standards that aligns with your portfolio of apprenticeship standards. Once you have identified a high-performing HEI, you could perhaps collaborate with UVAC to establish a partnership or approach them directly. Through a collaboration, you can reach out to this HEI and ask to share their best practices that contribute to their high achievement rates. This can include arranging meetings, site visits or joint workshops where they can provide insights into their successful strategies, teaching methods, and support systems. By learning from their experiences, you can implement similar practices to enhance your own organisation's performance.

3.6 Using My Benchmarks

The **My Benchmarks** dashboard is an invaluable tool for assessing your performance within the sector, with the ability to filter by Subject Sector Area (SSA) Tier 1. You can select a comparator based on provider type, including HEI's and other publicly funded providers, colleges, private sector publicly funded providers, and UVAC providers. Please note that the filters default to UVAC providers when you first open the page.

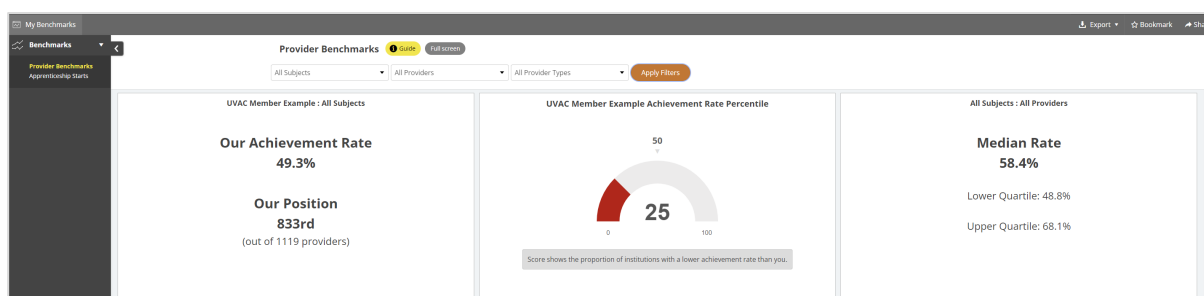


Figure: 3.6.1

On this page, HERA displays your achievement rate and rank, specifically for providers delivering level 4 standards and above. In Figure 3.6.1 above, we have filtered the data for the entire sector and can see that we are ranked 833rd out of 1,119 providers. The average (median) achievement rate is 58.4%. Providers with an achievement rate of 48.8% or lower fall into the bottom 25% of the population, while those with a rate of 68.1% or higher are in the top 25%. Interestingly, in this example, the gauge shows a score of 25, representing the proportion of institutions with a lower achievement rate than this example provider. The gauge is coloured red to indicate that this achievement rate is below average and may therefore be at risk.

In Figure 3.6.2 below, we have filtered the data by Business, Administration and Law, showing that we are ranked 215th out of 665 providers. The average (median) achievement rate is 58.8%. Providers with an achievement rate of 48.3% or lower fall into the bottom 25% of the population, while those with a rate of 67.1% or higher are in the top 25%. The gauge shows a score of 68, representing the proportion of institutions with a lower achievement rate than this example provider. Given that the overall achievement rate is flagged as at risk in red in Figure 3.6.1, we can summarise that the Business, Administration and Law sector is a strength of the organisation and that other areas of the organisation may be underperforming. We can use HERA to investigate this.

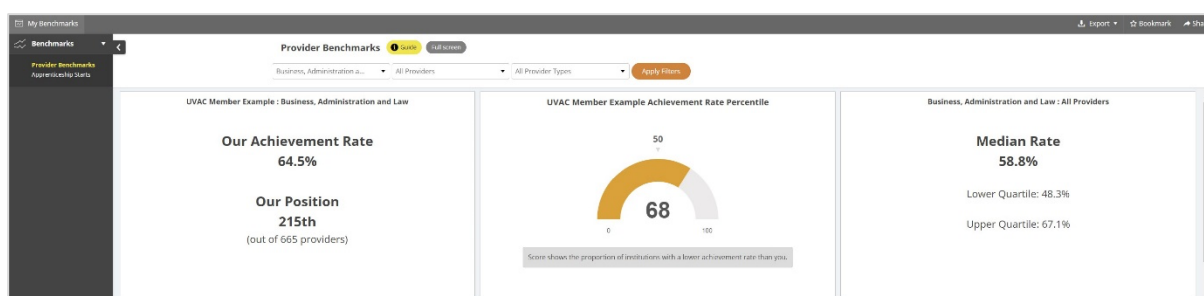


Figure: 3.6.2

Next, we can compare our Business, Administration and Law subject sector area against all other HEI's and other publicly funded providers (see Figure 3.6.3). Our achievement rate is still 64.5%, but our rank is now 50th out of 126 providers. The average (median) achievement rate is 60.0%. Providers with an achievement rate of 49.2% or lower fall into the bottom 25% of the population, while those with a rate of 71.4% or higher are in the top 25%. The gauge shows a score of 61, representing the proportion of institutions with a lower achievement rate than this example provider.

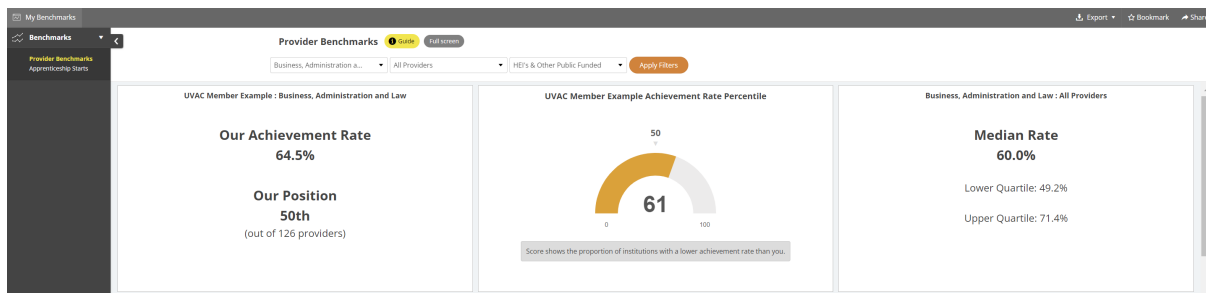


Figure: 3.6.3

By examining these rankings, we can establish KPIs focused on our position within the sector. This approach considers external market influences, providing a more comprehensive performance measure than setting a single overall target achievement rate.

As you scroll down the **My Benchmarks** page, there are other visualisations to consider. In Figure 3.6.4, we can examine the starts and achievements by year for our example provider, compared to HEI's and other publicly funded providers.

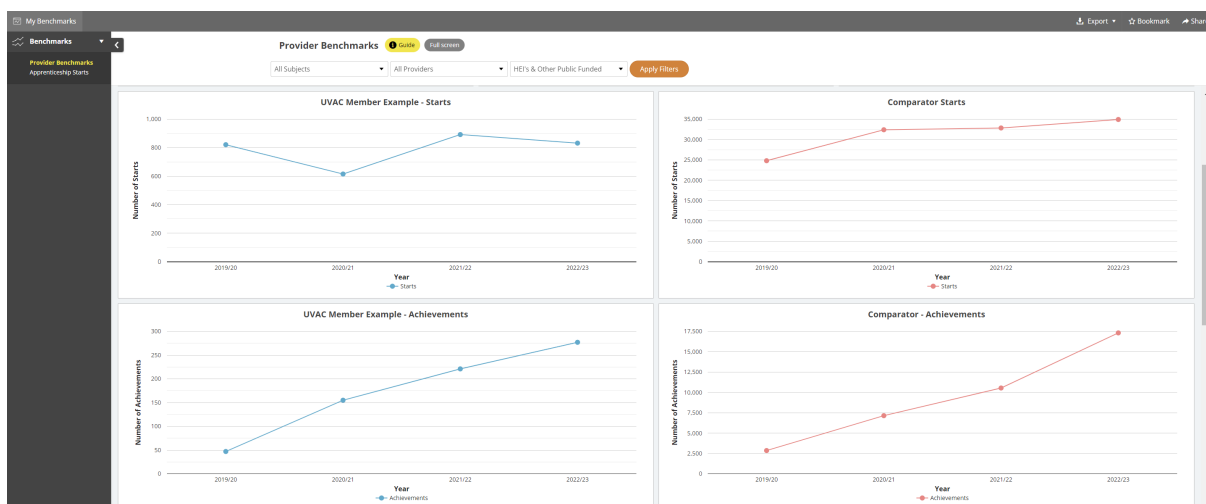


Figure: 3.6.4

We can see that our starts in 2020/21 dropped, while the comparators did not. This raises important questions. Does this indicate that other providers were more robust during the pandemic? Were they able to adapt more quickly than our organisation? Did their portfolio have a

more diverse mix and experience less impact from the pandemic? These data points can be the starting point for strategic discussions about future development.

If we scroll further down the page, we can see some more charts (see Figure 3.6.5).

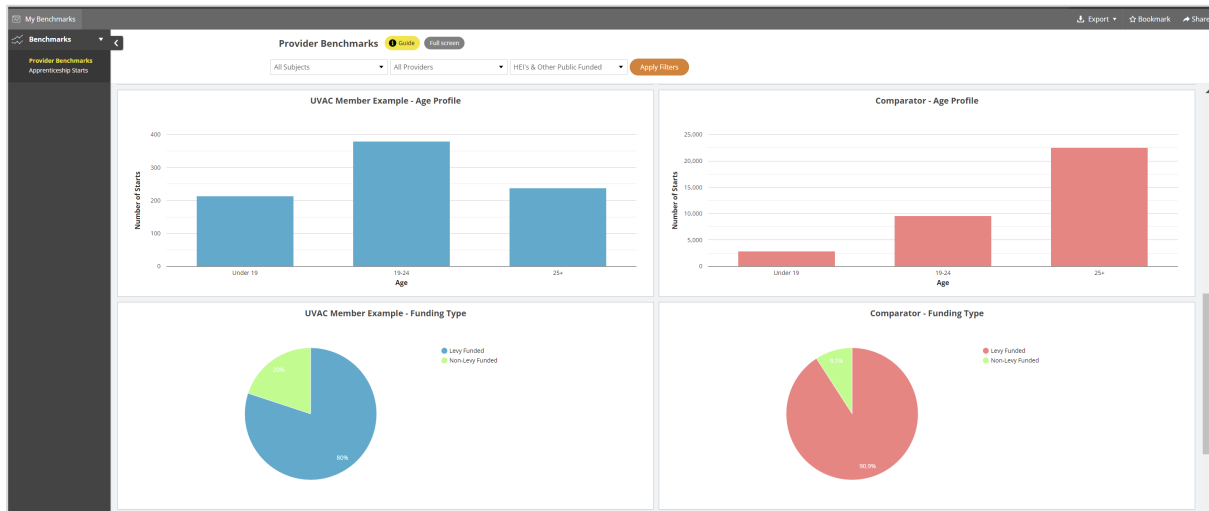


Figure: 3.6.5

The **Comparator – Age Profile** bar chart indicates there is a higher proportion of learners aged 25 and above compared to the age profile of our learners. Are we confident that our recruitment policies are not inadvertently discriminating against this older age group, or do we simply have a stronger share of the younger age category? Quality Management teams and Business Development teams can work together to identify areas for improvement or opportunity.

The **Comparator – Funding Type** pie chart in Figure 3.6.5 indicates that other HEIs and public funded providers have a higher proportion of levy learners compared to our learners. This suggests that we might be supporting more learners from smaller employers, who may have different needs to those from larger employers. Managing the expectations of a larger number of diverse, smaller employers can require additional resources from the delivery team which requires a different approach. From a business development perspective, it could be more efficient to recruit larger volumes of learners from a smaller number of employers.

The **Largest Standards table** shows a list of the top 10 standards within the selected subject area (see Figure 3.6.6), based on the number of comparators starts. While this is limited to just 10 standards, the table can be sorted by clicking on the column headers. By sorting the table by Comparator Starts, you may be able to identify opportunities where other HEIs have successfully recruited. Before adding these to your portfolio, consider the achievement rate as discussed in section 3.2 above.

Largest Standards					
Standards title	Level	My Provider Starts	My Achievement Rate	Comparator Starts	Comparator Achievement Rate
Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	Level 5	103	55.7%	4,323	76.2%
Police Constable (Integrated Degree)	Level 6	0	x	4,064	79.9%
Senior Leader	Level 7	1	68.8%	3,165	58.6%
Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)	Level 6	0	x	2,649	91.4%
Chartered Manager (Degree)	Level 6	15	x	1,903	61.5%
Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Integrated Degree)	Level 7	0	77.8%	1,301	72.4%
Digital and Technology Solutions Professional	Level 6	7	x	1,139	70.8%
Social Worker (Integrated Degree)	Level 6	0	x	1,063	90.1%
Paramedic	Level 6	0	x	795	91%
Chartered Surveyor (Degree)	Level 6	104	13.6%	778	14.5%
This table shows a list of the largest standards (top 10 maximum) within the selected subject area. Standards are ranked by Comparator Starts in 2022/23. Achievement Rates are based on 2022/23 QAR data.					

Figure: 3.6.6

3.7 Additional steps

The **Apprenticeship Starts table** under **My Benchmarks** can be filtered by year, age group, route and level. This can then be exported to Excel for further analysis. Your provider starts will also be included in the HEIs and Other Public Funded Starts column. In Excel, you can sort this data by Total Starts (largest to smallest) and add a rank column. You can also sort by HEIs and do the same. Additionally, you can add a formula column to calculate your provider starts as a percentage of total starts or HEI starts. This will enable you to calculate your share of the overall market or specifically within the HEI market.

HERA allows you to export most dashboards as PDFs, which can be included in your governance meeting information packs. If you only want to show specific charts, you can capture screenshots of the information using the **Snipping Tool app**⁵ from your Microsoft Start menu. Additionally, by clicking the Share button in the top right-hand corner of each dashboard, you can invite others to view the information, even if they do not have direct access to HERA.

⁵ <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/use-snipping-tool-to-capture-screenshots-00246869-1843-655f-f220-97299b865f6b>

4. Using HERA for Business Development

In this section, we will explore how HERA can be used to gain actionable insights about the apprenticeship sector and therefore enhance your business development strategies. Specifically, we will cover how HERA can be used to:

- **Understand the apprenticeship population by standard:** Analyse data to identify trends within various apprenticeship standards.
- **Drill down to a potential offer:** Use detailed insights to carry out market research on potential new standards and set recruitment targets.
- **Consider regional populations:** Evaluate regional data to understand local apprenticeship dynamics and opportunities.

By the end of this section, you will have a clear understanding of how to use HERA to strategically grow your business within the apprenticeship sector. Additionally, you can refer to section 3.6, which covers benchmarking processes that overlap with the quality function's benchmarking activities, providing opportunities for strategic cross-functional discussions.

4.1 Using the standards table to understand population (Standards)

The **Standards Table** allows you to view apprenticeship standard starts and achievements by provider type, helping you understand the population by standard. You can see which standards are being delivered by other HEIs. You can filter the report by year, age, route, and level, which is useful for identifying the most popular standards within each age bracket which alongside awareness of your population can flag potential opportunities.

After applying the filters, you can sort the table in ascending or descending order by clicking on the column headers. The Compare feature allows you to view two filtered tables side by side, which can be useful to spot changes in demand between two time periods.

In Figure 4.1.1, we examine the Health and Science route for the full year 2022/23 and the Q1 and Q2 starts for 2023/24.

Standards title	Level	UVAC Members	Other HEIs & Other Public Funded	Colleges	Private Training Providers	All Apprentices
Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	Level 5	3,792	531	178	23	4,524
Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)	Level 6	2,333	316	51	0	2,700
Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Integrated Degree)	Level 7	1,216	85	0	9	1,310
Associate Ambulance Practitioner	Level 4	0	652	154	257	1,063

Standards title	Level	UVAC Members	Other HEIs & Other Public Funded	Colleges	Private Training Providers	All Apprentices
Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	Level 5	2,089	267	77	33	2,466
Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)	Level 6	1,501	192	72	21	1,786
Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Integrated Degree)	Level 7	909	76	0	20	1,005
Assistant Practitioner (Health)	Level 5	349	13	114	15	491

Figure: 4.1.1

Here, the top three standards remain consistent across both time periods, with HEIs holding much of the market share. However, the number of starts by Private Training Providers has increased, totalling 32 for the full year 2022/23, and already reaching 74 for the first half of 2023/24. This indicates growing competition from outside HEIs that an organisation should be aware of.

HERA enables you to export this table into Excel for further analysis. You could add a column to rank the standards in order. Additionally, by clicking the Share button in the top right-hand corner of each table, you can invite others to view the table, even if they do not have access to HERA.

4.2 Drilling down to a potential offer

The **Standards Summary** provides more information about a specific standard (Figure 4.2.1). This can be a useful overview if you are considering new standards to deliver. You can observe population size and any trends in starts over the last 4 years.

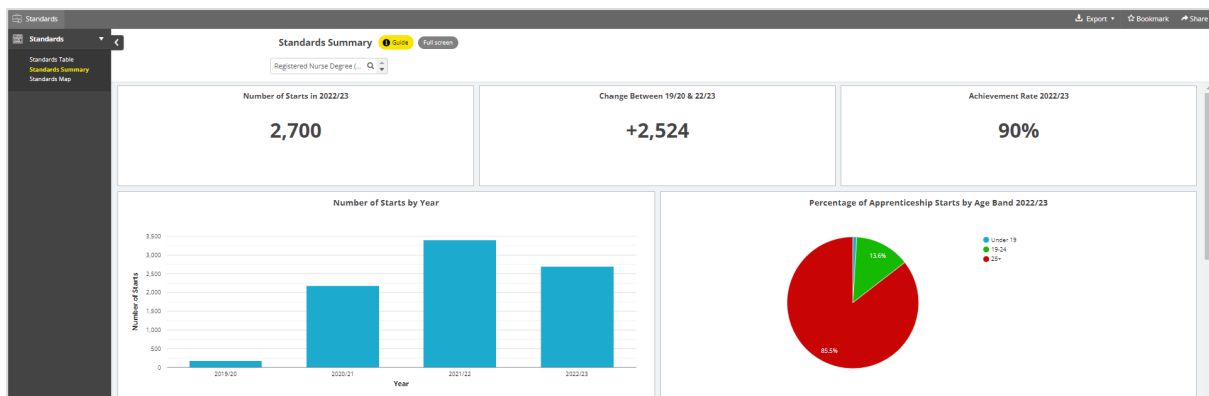


Figure 4.2.1

The **Percentage of Apprenticeship Starts by Age Band** and **Provider Type** pie charts offer visual representations of the data held in the **Standards Table**, making it easier for users to interpret. These visualisations can assist the business development team in understanding the age profile of learners, enabling them to tailor their marketing campaigns accordingly. Additionally, the bar chart displaying the volume of starts by region offers a useful overview and provides insights that can be explored in the **Standard Map** (see section 4.3 below).

The **Number of Starts by Year** bar chart and **Number of Providers by Year** bar chart are useful for observing trend in volumes over time (see Figure 4.2.2). However, combining the information from these charts can provide deeper insights into the market growth of a specific standard. Hovering over the charts displays a label, and we can use these figures to calculate the average cohort size and see if this has changed year on year.



Figure: 4.2.2

Examining the Nursing Associate standard for 2022/23 in Figure 4.2.2, there were 4,524 starts and 59 providers. By dividing the total starts by the number of providers, we find an average cohort size of 77 learners per provider. This means each provider had an average of 77 starts during that year. If we are already delivering this standard, we should assess whether our recruitment numbers were above or below this average but also start to examine what would be viable cohorts based on funding band and retention rates. Additionally, we should identify our target market position and forecast future recruitment numbers.

If you are considering a new potential offer, it is essential to examine the market size, number of competitors and average cohort size over time. You can compile this information into a table like

the one below (see Figure 4.2.4). To find the maximum and minimum (non-zero) cohort sizes, refer to the table at the bottom of the **Standards Summary** page (see Figure 4.2.3). Sort the table by each of the years in turn to identify the largest and smallest cohort sizes.

Provider Name	Starts 2019/20	Starts 2020/21	Starts 2021/22	Starts 2022/23	Achievement Rate 2022/23
BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY	224	246	249	275	59%
TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY	143	145	263	268	82%
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM	0	0	33	248	x
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD, THE	91	194	226	162	79%
THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON	101	249	122	148	82%
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY	165	124	94	147	75%
COVENTRY UNIVERSITY	85	121	112	145	76%
MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY	182	145	121	143	60%
THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON	104	133	124	133	82%

Figure: 4.2.3

You can calculate market share by dividing the number of starts by a specific provider by the total number of starts for that standard. Examining the market share of the largest provider delivering that standard can be insightful, as it helps to determine the influence they have within the market.

We now have the following information in one place.

Nursing Associate	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number of Starts	3,377	4,180	4,093	4,524
Number of Providers	42	51	55	59
Average Cohort	80.4	82.0	74.4	76.7
Maximum Cohort	224	249	263	275
Minimum Cohort (non-zero)	12	6	2	5
Range in cohort size	212	243	261	270
Market share of largest provider (Max cohort/No. of starts)	6.6%	6.0%	6.4%	6.1%

Figure: 4.2.4

So, what insights can we gain from this table?

- **Number of Starts:** The number of starts increased by 10.5% in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. Do our provider start figures show a similar trend?

- **Number of Providers:** The number of providers has consistently increased over the years, suggesting low barriers to entry for new providers to deliver this standard.
- **Average Cohort:** This has remained consistent over time and could be used as a target for the business development team.
- **Maximum/minimum Cohort:** There is moderate growth in the maximum number. These figures can help set SMART targets for the business development team. Small providers can potentially enter the market.
- **Market share of largest provider (Maximum Cohort/Number of Starts):** This has remained consistent over time suggesting there is no dominant influence in the sector.

Finally, you can use the **Standards Summary Provider Table** (see Figure 4.2.3 above) to identify competitors to benchmark against based on their growth over time or volume of starts. You could then visit their websites to continue your market research.

We can examine this for a different standard: Data Analyst standard.

Data Analyst	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number of Starts	2,371	3,717	4,016	5,376
Number of Providers	59	62	61	57
Average Cohort	40.2	60.0	65.8	94.3
Maximum Cohort	439	1,401	1,749	2,659
Minimum Cohort (non-zero)	1	1	1	1
Range	438	1,400	1,748	2,658
Market share of largest provider (Max cohort/No. of starts)	18.5%	37.7%	43.6%	49.5%

Figure: 4.2.5

This market is very different to the Nursing Associate, so what insights can we get from this table?

- **Number of Starts:** The number of starts has increased steadily each year.
- **Number of Providers:** The number of providers has decreased over time, suggesting this market could be more challenging to enter and sustain a presence in.
- **Average Cohort:** This has grown significantly, reflecting the increase in starts. However, one provider holds 49.5% of the market share, which skews the average cohort size. By removing this provider and recalculating, the average cohort size is 48.5. This may be a more realistic starting point when setting recruitment targets.

Once you have decided on your recruitment target, you can estimate your potential earnings by multiplying this target by the maximum funding figure found in the **Standards Summary**. For example, if you aim to recruit 48 learners for the Data Analyst apprenticeship, your potential earnings could be £720,000 though naturally not all of these individuals will get to the end of the programme and you will also have third party end point assessment receiving a proportion of that funding should the individual get to end point assessment. So, it is useful that following identification of potential standards you should engage with your Finance and Curriculum Delivery teams to discuss the delivery of the standard and associated costs, ensuring it is a feasible option for your organisation.

4.3 How the Standards map can help

The **Standards Map** enables you to select an apprenticeship standard and view the volume of starts in the most recent full year by local authority district in England. This can help you identify areas of opportunity and where particular standards are prevalent or non-prevalent. Additionally, the feature to compare two standards side by side makes it an invaluable tool when considering learner progression from one area to another.

The Institute of Apprenticeships publishes occupational maps that can be used to chart a potential learner's journey⁶. These are organised according to the technical routes, which are used in the map's search function.

In this example we look at the level 5 Nursing Associate and level 6 Registered Nurse as a potential career path for a learner as they are two closely linked standards with a natural progression pathway. In the screen shot below we can see the North-East regions.

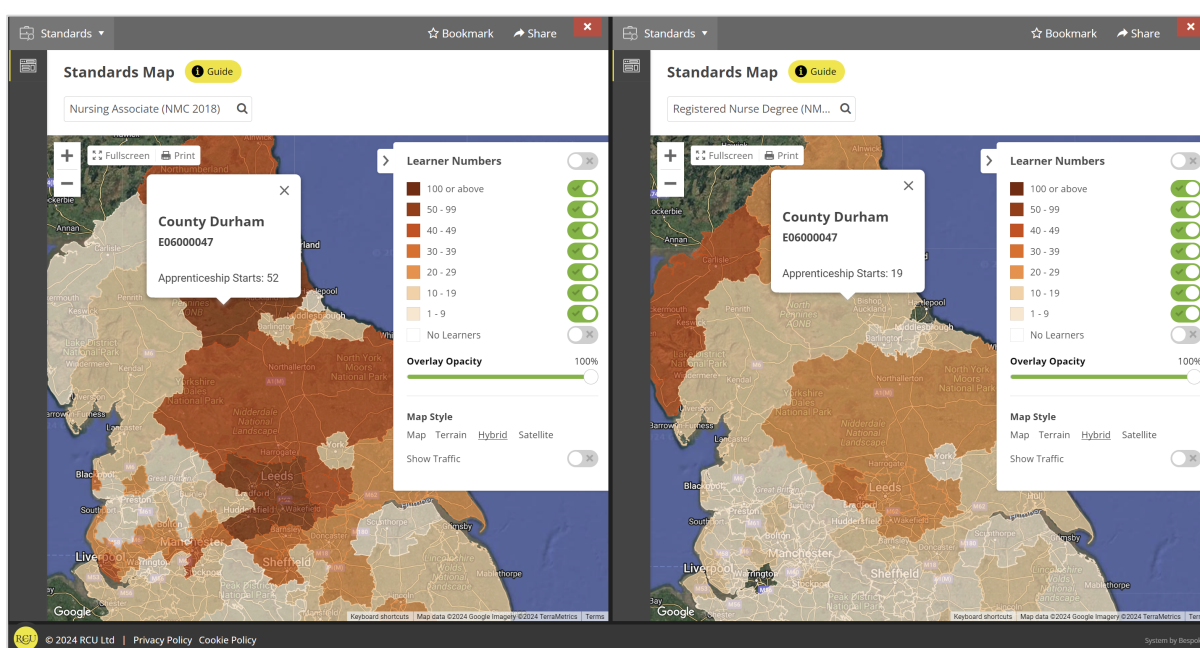


Figure: 4.3.1

Clicking on each region brings up a box with the number of starts. The Nursing Associate standard had 52 starts in County Durham in the most recent full year. We can use the following link to see that this standard is typically delivered over 24 months: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

We can begin to forecast when these learners will complete their current programme and direct our business development team to explore this and promote transition to the Registered Nurse standard. We can set targets for the business development team to ensure a smooth progression for these learners but naturally there would be commercial and contractual factors to consider, in terms of employer relationships. But if you identify the provider delivering the Associate

⁶ <https://occupational-maps.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>

programme, perhaps they have no capacity to deliver registered nurse, so collaboration may be possible.

HERA does not support exporting in this dashboard, but you can capture a screenshot of the information for your internal reports using the ***Snipping Tool app*** from your Microsoft Start menu. Additionally, by clicking the Share button in the top right-hand corner of each map, you can invite others to view the map, even if they do not have access to HERA.

It is worth noting that employers do commonly offer tender opportunities without any geographical limitations.

4.4 Additional steps

HERA only contains data about Level 4 standards and above, but you should examine level 3 apprenticeships when considering progression planning. An interactive tool published by the Department for Education is available here:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjojODI2OTE0NGQ0ODIyOS00NjU5LTk3NDktN2QyMTQxMmNiNTc4IiwidCI6ImZhZDI3N2M5LWM2MGEtNGRhMS1iNWYzLWl3YjhiMzRhODJmOSIsImMiOiJh9>

If you navigate to page 8 of 14 at the bottom of the tool, you can filter to see all advanced apprenticeship starts (level 3 only) by clicking on the Advanced Apprenticeship bar in the **Starts by Level bar chart**, in the top left-hand corner (see Figure 4.4.1 below).

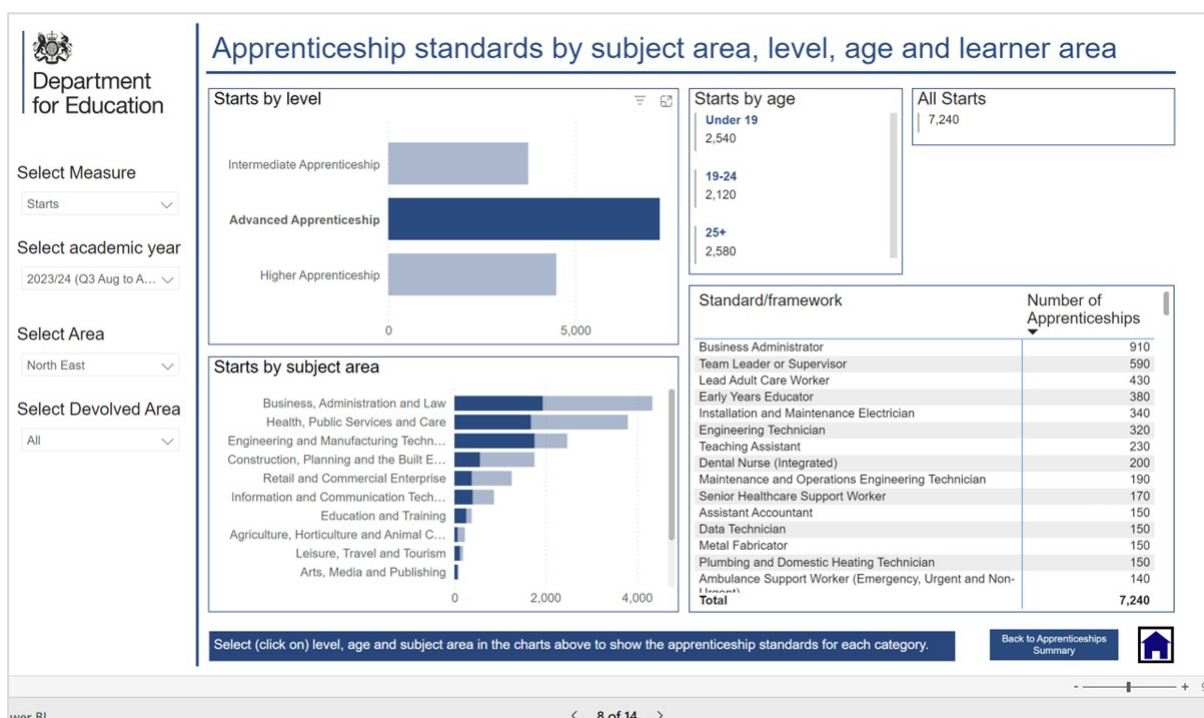


Figure: 4.4.1

This is an interactive Power BI dashboard, so clicking on any element of a chart or table, will filter all the other visualisations. Here in Figure 4.4.1, the page is filtered by 2023/24 (Q3 Aug to Apr), Northeast, Advanced Apprenticeships. You can identify which standards align with your current offering, spot potential demand for new standards to be delivered, and then create tailored marketing campaigns.

5. Top 5 tips

Here we list our top give tips for using HERA effectively:

1. **Start with HERA for market analysis:** Use HERA as a starting point for your market analysis, keeping in mind it only includes level 4 and above when considering learner progression.
2. **Use levels and routes filters:** Assess your position in the sector by using levels and routes filters to identify your strengths and areas for improvement.
3. **Benchmark against providers:** Compare your performance with other providers based on Ofsted results and achievement rates to identify benchmarks and create KPIs however supplement your work with the explore education statistics platform.
4. **Evaluate standards:** Assess your current standards and potential new standards using the Standards Summary to inform strategic decisions but ensure you take into account the market forces affecting qualification achievement rates and that funding bands are not the value you will draw down unless the apprentice completes.
5. **Export data for further analysis:** Export data into Excel for additional analysis, such as adding rankings. Take screenshots to use in governance reporting.

6. References and other useful data sources

References

- HERA Video: <https://youtu.be/Pb5oKZn8r4Y>
- ESFA Accountability Framework: [Apprenticeship training provider accountability framework - GOV.UK](#)
- Ofsted Reports: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>
- View your data: <https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/>
- IFATE Occupational Maps: <https://occupational-maps.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>
- Qualification Achievement Rates 23-24: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-2023-to-2024>
- ILR Specification: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individualised-learner-record-ilr>

List of useful data sources:

- Education Statistics: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships>
- Ofsted Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2023-to-august-2024>
- IFATE: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>
- Education Statistics Power BI tool: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrljoiODI2OTE0NGQtODIyOS00NjU5LTk3NDktN2QyMTQxMmNiNTc4IiwidCI6ImZhZDI3N2M5LWM2MGEtNGRhMS1iNWYzLWlzMzRlODJmOSIsImMiOjdh9>

7. What are Qualification Achievement Rates?

Qualification Achievement Rates in Apprenticeships are a common metric seen in HERA and are a key measure of provider success in the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework. The ESFA guidance⁷ is quite thorough but it can be difficult to explain. The position is based on your individualised learner record data that you submit to the ESFA, and it is a key metric that providers should closely monitor and predict. The apprenticeship technical specification⁸ explains how it is calculated but can be summarised as follows:

To count in QAR an apprentice must have met the qualifying period for start of 42 days and then left the institution positively (as an achiever – passed the standard EPA) or negatively (did not pass the standard or left early). The apprentice is then included in a cohort year as either an achiever or non-achiever. The year a learner counts in cohort is where providers often get it wrong:

The ESFA base the QAR on the hybrid end year, which is the later of:

- The achievement year of an apprenticeship (ILR achievement date field - when the last part of EPA was sat)
- the actual end year of an apprenticeship (ILR actual end date field)
- the planned end year of an apprenticeship (ILR planned end date field)
- the reporting year (the year the data was sent to the ESFA)

There are some exclusions:

- if circumstances affect QARs where the ESFA have agreed an exception (for example, if the learner transferred to new provision due to intervention from)
- if the ESFA did not fund the apprenticeship
- if the apprentice has transferred to another apprenticeship within 120 days of finishing the old apprenticeship
- An apprentice on a break in learning unless they have not returned in the subsequent funding year.

But critically it is a slow-moving entity. If you enrol somebody on a three-year programme in 2024/25 with a planned end year of 2027/28, if they meet the qualifying period for start the earliest, they will be counted would be 2027/28.

So consider that if the apprenticeship standard has a long duration then the success rate is impacted by withdrawals in previous years so a low rate for a year may be reflected of legacy issues rather than recent issues and so the rate is only of limited use, though as a comparison against other providers it can have value.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/introduction-to-qualification-achievement-rates-qars>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-2023-to-2024>

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