



QOF Assessor Validation Report Generator Frequently Asked Questions

QUICK QUESTION FINDER

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Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I download the QOF software from?

You can download the software from <http://www.apollo-medical.com/qof/downloads.htm>

Please read the introduction and instructions carefully before proceeding, then scroll to the bottom of the page and select the download appropriate to your GP clinical system.

How long will it take to download the QOF software?

Downloading the QOF software will typically take between fifteen and twenty minutes to complete. NB for those Practices not having an N3 link to the internet, i.e. dial-up connection only, the operation will take longer – one hour plus not being unusual.

If you feel the download will take too long due to the speed of your GP practice connection, please request an installation CD from the Apollo web site download page for your specific clinical system.

As an EMIS practice how do I know if a PC has been patched with the QOF shortcut?

After patching to the server by EMIS, check to see if the following icon (Fig.1) is on any of the practice desktops:



Fig.1 - Icon indicating patched EMIS server

If this icon is present on a PC with the appropriate specification, it may be used to download the QOF Wizard onto the PC. All you will need to do is to double-click the icon to commence the installation process.

If the icon is not present, please contact the Apollo Support department by calling 0191 516 6684 or emailing support@apollo-medical.com where one of their operatives will assist you.

On which PC should I install the QOF Wizard?

A workstation with a minimum of Excel 97 installed (Excel 2000 or above is preferable) and which meets the requirements below should be selected. Excel is a mandatory component of the QOF solution.

- Access to the practice GP clinical system
- Access to the internet
- Microsoft Excel 97 or higher (2000 or above is preferable)
- A minimum of Win 98 operating system (Win 2000 or above is preferable). **Please note that EMIS cannot patch any servers running MS Windows NT 4.0**

- A minimum of 64MB RAM
- A minimum of 200MB hard disk space free

Please be aware that the above specification is the absolute *minimum* and we can therefore only offer limited support if your system runs extremely slowly.

Can I install the QOF software onto more than one PC?

No. This software should be loaded onto **one** PC only. This is to avoid the possibility of two instances of the A3 scheduler trying (and conflicting) to run the reports at the same time.

How can I tell if the QOF software is already installed or not?

You should have a shortcut in the Start Menu, by going to **All Programs > Apollo Medical Systems > Run QOF Wizard**. If you wish, you can add a shortcut to your desktop at this stage by right-clicking where it says 'Run QOF Wizard' and choosing **Send To > Desktop (Create Shortcut)**. Double-clicking on the desktop icon will then launch the QOF Wizard.

NB: If you think a colleague MAY have installed the software you may have to check every workstation

Do I have to reboot my computer after installing the QOF Wizard?

Yes. In fact it is always good practice to reboot the computer after *any* software installation. This is because some Windows system files needed by the software cannot be updated whilst Windows is still running, so restarting your machine allows those updates to occur during the Windows startup process.

In any case, if your computer is set to receive automatic Windows updates, you will be prompted to reboot on a regular basis in order for the updates to take effect.

Who do I call for technical support?

Please contact the Apollo Support Desk on 0191 516 6684 or e-mail support@apollo-medical.com

Who do I call for support on using the reports for the visit?

Contact your local Primary Care Contracting Advisor.

What do I do with the QOF Assessor reports?

Reports should be emailed to your PCT QOF Lead in advance of your QOF practice review visit. Discuss this with your QOF Lead.

When will I be receiving my QOF Assessor visit?

Your PCT QOF Lead will advise you if/when you will receive your visit.

What is the Apollo QOF website address?

www.apollo-medical.com/qof

How do I run the QOF Wizard?

You should not need to run the QOF Wizard manually as the reports are scheduled to run automatically every Sunday. (see below) However, you will need to know how to do it if you wish to run the 'Get A Record' report.

On the PC installed with the QOF Wizard, from the Start Menu select **All Programs > Apollo Medical System > Run QOF Wizard**.

The Wizard will take a couple of minutes to load and you will then be able to click on the option "Start Wizard" to enable it to retrieve the list of reports from the database backend. Please be patient; this can take over five minutes in some cases. Once the list of reports appears, you can start to run one or more reports.

IMPORTANT! You *must* run the Preliminary Report before attempting to run any of the other reports, otherwise you will get an error message. The preliminary report gathers all the information it needs from the clinical database in order to produce the other reports, so it can often take quite some time, particularly if you have a large number of patients, say >10,000.

In any case, most of the time you will not need to run the reports manually as they are scheduled to run automatically.

When do my automatic reports run?

After the Apollo software has been installed it will attempt to auto-generate the reports each week, initially on Sunday, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

It may be that some or all of the reports cannot be generated on a Sunday because, for example, the practice machine is switched off or the report software clashes with other scheduled jobs, for example backups or database reindexing.

Where this occurs then the software will attempt to run the (remaining) reports on the following morning between the hours of 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. and, if necessary each subsequent morning until all of the reports have run successfully.

If required, the Practice can override the auto-runs by manually scheduling the report run. A full description of how this is achieved can be found under the heading "Scheduling Report Runs" at <http://www.apollo-medical.com/qof/scheduling.htm>. The reports can be manually scheduled to run on any day of the week. When selecting a time for the report run to start, the practice should ensure that it is outside of the working day and does not clash with any surgeries, practice housekeeping or networking tasks.

The first day of each month should also be avoided to prevent clashes with the job that collects and sends the QMAS data.

Is there patient identifiable data in the QOF results?

No. All data is fully anonymised.

I don't have an Excel spreadsheet for either the Preliminary Report or the 'Get A Record' report. Why not?

The Preliminary Report is important in that it initialises the database and gathers all the information it needs in order to populate the remaining reports. It does not actually produce any hard output, so you will not see an Excel sheet.

The 'Get A Record' report is not scheduled to run automatically as it is not always required. It produces additional data about one of the patients already included in one of the other reports. However, if you or your QOF assessor wish to run the report you must copy and paste the encrypted patient ID from one of the reports into the space provided when running the 'Get A Record' report; this will then produce additional data about that patient, whilst still preserving the patient anonymity. A separate document giving instructions for running this report is available or you can call Support on 0191 516 6684 for assistance.

How do I email the reports to my PCT QOF Lead?

The reports are saved as ordinary Excel files and, once complete, they can be viewed, copied and sent as email attachments. Simply run the QOF Wizard and, once the list of reports appears, click on the "Just View Files" option on the left-hand side. This will show you the five Excel sheets.

You can then right-click on each sheet and save a copy to a location of your choice, e.g. My Documents. Once you've done this the file(s) can be added to your email as an attachment in the usual way. If you need any assistance on adding attachments to an email, call the Apollo Support desk on 0191 516 6684.

I am getting an error message which says "Query locked by user..." Why is the query locked and how do I unlock it?

This error message occurs when a previous attempt to run one or more reports was aborted (either intentionally or accidentally). The software thinks the report is still in use and it locks it against access by another user. To unlock the report you will need to log into SQLSuite (ask your systems administrator if you don't know your login and password) and do the following:

1. In the list of available reports on the left-hand side, expand the list (by clicking on the plus sign to the left) to display the QOF Assessments reports.
2. The reports should show a green tick, but if you spot one with a little padlock icon you've found the locked report. (Fig.2) Click on the name of this report to select it.
3. On the toolbar, click the Unlock Query button (shown by a padlock icon)
4. You may see a message asking if you're sure you wish to unlock the query – say yes.
5. The padlock icon will change back into a green tick, indicating that the query is now unlocked.
6. Now try to re-run the report.

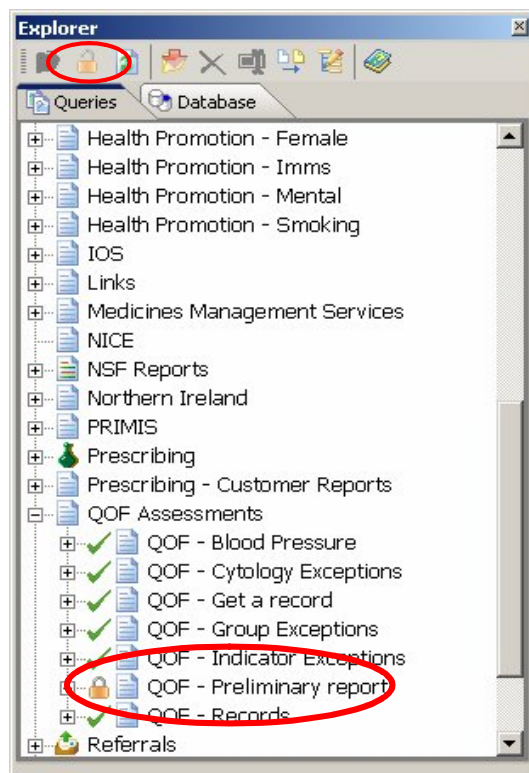


Fig.2 – Unlocking a locked query in SQLSuite

What is my password to access SQLSuite?

If you have not been provided with a password or you have forgotten it, please contact Apollo Support on 0191.516.6684 or email support@apollo-medical.com and someone will be happy to advise.

The QOF Assessor reports do not show free text, why?

Free text is not allowed as this can lead to a patient being identified, for example by notes added to their record. Not allowing free text ensures that the patient's anonymity is preserved. This is a requirement of the DH and endorsed by the General Practitioner Committee (GPC).

Do I need to leave the PC installed with the QOF software switched on at night?

For non-EMIS GP practices the selected workstation and clinical server must be left switched on and logged in to Windows at all times, including weekends, to ensure the QOF reports are able to run automatically. To maintain security on this workstation, a password-protected screensaver can be set up.

How do I set up a password protected screensaver?

Right-click on the Windows desktop and choose 'Properties', then click on the Screensaver tab (Fig.3). Decide how long you want to wait before the screensaver starts, e.g. 30 minutes, and enter this number in the box provided. Tick the box marked "On resume, password

protect”; this will bring up a screen prompting you to enter a password. PLEASE NOTE: You will need this password each time you start Windows – do not forget it!

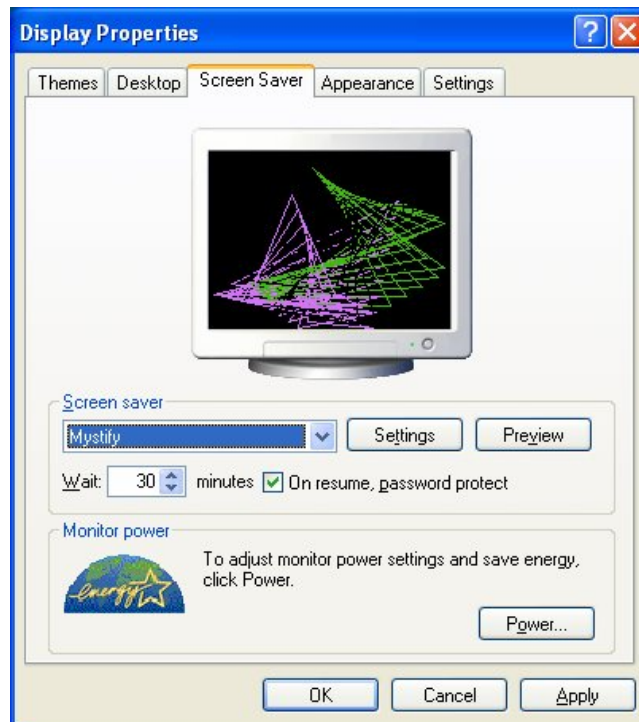


Fig.3 – Setting a Screensaver password

How do I interpret the QOF Assessor Validation reports?

Guidance on how to interpret the reports entitled ‘Establishing Accuracy in QOF Data – A PCT Assessors Guide and a full explanation of purpose of the QOF Assessor Validation reports can be found at the following link on NHS Connecting for Health’s web site:
<http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/delivery/programmes/qof>

For your convenience, web links are also given in the right-hand side of the main screen in the QOF Wizard.

Where do I find the QOF Business Rules?

These can be found at the following link on the NHS web site:
<http://www.primarycarecontracting.nhs.uk/145.php>