



A Handy Guide to 16-19 performance tables

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Introduction

A significant reform of the accountability system for 16-19 providers comes into effect with the publication of results for summer 2016 – meaning that it is the students who started level 3 courses in September 2014 who will be the first to be reported on.

This guide answers the following questions:

1. What are the qualification categories?
2. What are the headline performance measures?
3. What about Independent schools?
4. What else is being measure and reported?
5. What if a qualification is not on one of the vocational lists at Levels 2 and 3?
6. What if a student takes an AS and then completes an A level, tops up a BTEC or takes a Technical Certificate and then completes a Tech Level?
7. What if a student takes a qualification at the end of their first year, and then leaves our college?
8. We have students who will only complete their Level3 programme after a third year of study – how will that be reported?
9. How will 'progress' be calculated and reported for academic and applied general qualifications?
10. How will the combined completion and attainment measure be calculated and reported for tech level and technical certificate qualifications?

1. Qualification categories

Level 3 qualifications have been divided into three categories:

- **Academic qualifications** cover A levels and a range of other academic qualifications taken at level 3, including AS levels, the International Baccalaureate, Applied A levels, Pre-U, Free-standing mathematics qualifications and the extended project.
- **Applied general qualifications** are defined by the DfE as 'rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students who wish to continue their education through applied learning and that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills.'
- **Tech levels** are defined by the DfE as 'rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry or occupation and that develop specialist knowledge and skills to enable entry to employment or progression to a related higher education course.'

From 2017, achievement in level 2 qualifications will also be reported in 16-19 performance tables:

- In 2017 and 2018, all level 2 vocational qualifications with a size equivalence of at least 2 GCSEs (145+ GLH) will be reported. A new category of **Technical certificates** has been created by the DfE and defined as 'rigorous level 2 qualifications that equip post-16



students with specialist knowledge and skills and enable entry to employment within sectors where employers recognise entry at this level or are required for progression to a tech level.' In 2017 and 2018 these Technical Certificates will be reported as a sub-set of overall level 2 achievement; from 2019 only those qualifications approved as Technical Certificates will be reported.

DfE publishes an annual list of the qualifications that are eligible for inclusion in each of the vocational categories.

2. What are the headline measures?

For 2016 there will be up to four sets of headline measures published for each provider, focusing on each of the qualification types offered in the school or college. As well as the headline Academic, Applied General and Tech level categories, there will be a sub-set of the Academic results that will just report on A levels. In 2017 there will be a fifth list, reporting all level 2 achievement (qualifications at least equivalent in size to two GCSEs), with an indication of the proportion of these which were Technical Certificates. From 2019 only Technical Certificates will be reported. Each set of headline measures will report on:

- **Progress** (for academic and applied general qualifications) or a combined completion and attainment measure for tech level and level 2 qualifications
- **Attainment**
- **Retention**
- **Destinations**

A fifth headline measure, relating to the whole institution, will report on **Average change in grade for English and maths** for those without a good pass (GCSE grade C) at key stage 4.

Progress will be reported using achievement at key stage 4 as the benchmark. It will be a value added measure showing the progress made by individual students compared with the average progress made by all students nationally who had the same level of prior achievement. It aims to show whether students in the school or college have made better, worse or the same amount of progress as the national average. This score will be reported as a proportion of a grade above or below the national average. The benchmark for academic qualifications will be based on achievement in all GCSEs, while the benchmark for applied general qualifications will be based on all qualifications (including vocational) achieved at key stage 4.

Completion and attainment will be used for tech level and technical certificate qualifications, as there is a weak relationship between the more academic achievement at key stage 4 and achievement in these qualifications. This measure will compare the attainment of individual students with the national average attainment of all students taking each qualification. Completion is incorporated by treating as a 'fail' any student who fails to complete the course, unless it was to progress to an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship. This score will be reported as a proportion of a grade above or below the national average.

Attainment will report the average grade attained by students. Unlike the combined 'completion and attainment' measure, it will only include those who complete the course and are entered for an examination or, in the case of vocational qualifications, receive a qualification result.

Retention will report on the proportion of students who get to the end of the core aim on which they have enrolled.

Destinations will become a full headline measure as soon as the data are deemed to be sufficiently robust. At present data are reported as experimental statistics only.



The average grade change for English and maths will report on the outcomes of all students arriving at the provider without a grade C GCSE in one or both subjects. Unlike the other headline measures which report by qualification category, this will be a single report for the whole school or college.

3. What about independent schools?

Not all data about independent schools is available to DfE, so reporting will be limited to the *Progress*, *Attainment* and *English and maths* measures.

4. What else is being measured and reported in 2017 and 2018?

A range of additional measures below the headlines is also going to be reported:

- **A level attainment:** this will report on the best 3 outcomes of students on A level only programmes – it will not include AS results, and will not include the A level achievement of students taking A levels as part of a mixed programme of qualifications.
- **AAB in facilitating subjects at A level:** this measure reports on the achievement of students who have achieved AAB grades in at least two facilitating subjects.
- **Attainment of an approved level 3 mathematics qualification:** this will report on the proportion of students entering the school or college with GCSE grade C or above, and who go on to achieve an approved level 3 mathematics qualification (including AS and A level, and core mathematics).
- **TechBacc:** this will report on the number of students achieving the required combination of a tech level, a recognised mathematics qualification at level 3, and the extended project.
- **Disadvantage measures:** This measure will apply students' disadvantage status to each of the headline measures, and will report on the achievements of students who were in receipt of pupil premium when they were in their last year of key stage 4.

5. What if a qualification is not on one of the post-16 vocational lists at levels 2 and 3?

It is important to recognise a significant difference between the principles underlying KS4 headline measures, and those underlying headline measures for 16-19 year olds.

Key stage 4 headline measures report on students' achievement across a *programme* of qualifications – up to 2015 it is the proportion achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics, and from 2016 it will be achievement across the qualifications making up 'Progress 8'. In both cases there is a penalty if the student does not achieve all of that requirement: achieving fewer than 5 GCSEs A*-C with English and mathematics means that student is not included in the measure; with Progress 8 a student's results will still be counted if they achieve fewer than 8 qualifications, but each 'missing' qualification is treated as having 0 points, bringing down average achievement.

Post-16 headline measures are based on *individual* qualification outcomes rather than a programme of qualifications. Headline measures currently report only on four categories – academic, applied general, tech level or technical certificate – and results for qualifications that are not assigned to one of these categories do not impact on those headline measures. If a student takes 3 A levels and an AS, then all four results will be reported under the 'academic' category; another student taking an applied general and an A level will have one result assigned to each of those categories. A third student taking a tech level and a qualification not on any list will have their tech level result assigned to that category, and the other qualification will simply



not feature anywhere. It cannot be counted as some sort of '0' and have a negative impact on any of the categories.

In 2017 and 2018, all vocational qualifications of 145 GLH and above will be reported in headline measures, not just those on the Technical Certificate list.

6. What if a student takes an AS and then completes an A level, tops up a BTEC or takes a technical certificate and then completes a tech level?

It is a general principle that the highest level results achieved by the student when they leave the school or college are the ones reported. If a student takes an AS and goes on to achieve an A level in the same subject, only the A level result will be used for performance measures. Likewise if a student takes a BTEC National 90 Credit Diploma in year 1 and tops up to an Extended Diploma in year 2, it is only the Extended Diploma result that will be reported.

This principle works across levels too – a student initially taking a level 2 vocational qualification and then achieving at level 3 will have their level 2 result discounted and it is the level 3 result that will be reported.

7. What if a student takes a qualification at the end of their first year, and then leaves our college?

Results are normally reported at the end of the year in which the student turns 18. If a student leaves at the end of the first year of post-16 study any eligible results will be reported the following year. These results will be assigned to the college where they achieved those results, even if the student moves to a different college to complete their studies.

In such cases, the first college will report the first year results, and the second college will report their subsequent achievement. There is no 'discounting' across institutions, so if the student takes an AS at the end of the first year, and completes the A level at a different college in their second year, at the end of that second year the first college will have that AS result included in their performance measures, and the second college will report the full A level.

8. We have students who will only complete their level 3 programme after a third year of study – how will that be reported?

A school or college can apply to have reporting on a student's achievement deferred by a year through the performance tables checking exercise each autumn so that it reflects achievement at 19 rather than 18.

9. How will 'progress' be calculated and reported for academic and applied general qualifications?

The process is fully described in the [DfE technical guide](#), but in summary:

- For each student taking a particular qualification (eg A level History, or BTEC National Diploma in Business), their average prior attainment at key stage 4 is calculated and mapped against their actual A level or BTEC result.
- Further calculations allow a line to be plotted on a chart showing the average A level or BTEC attainment across the whole cohort in relation to prior attainment at key stage 4.



- For each student, their actual result can be compared to the national average to see the extent to which they have made greater or less progress than others with the same prior attainment. The outcome is reported as a positive or negative value added score, expressed in grades or fractions of a grade.
- The example below shows an example of how this will work for a student taking an A level: the line of average attainment has been plotted, and the grades for two students plotted. One student with prior attainment just below C has gained a grade E in their A level. The line of average attainment shows that the average grade in this subject for students with this prior attainment is grade D. This student therefore has a value added score of -1 grade. The second student has performed better than average for students with the same average achievement, and has a value added score of +2 grades.

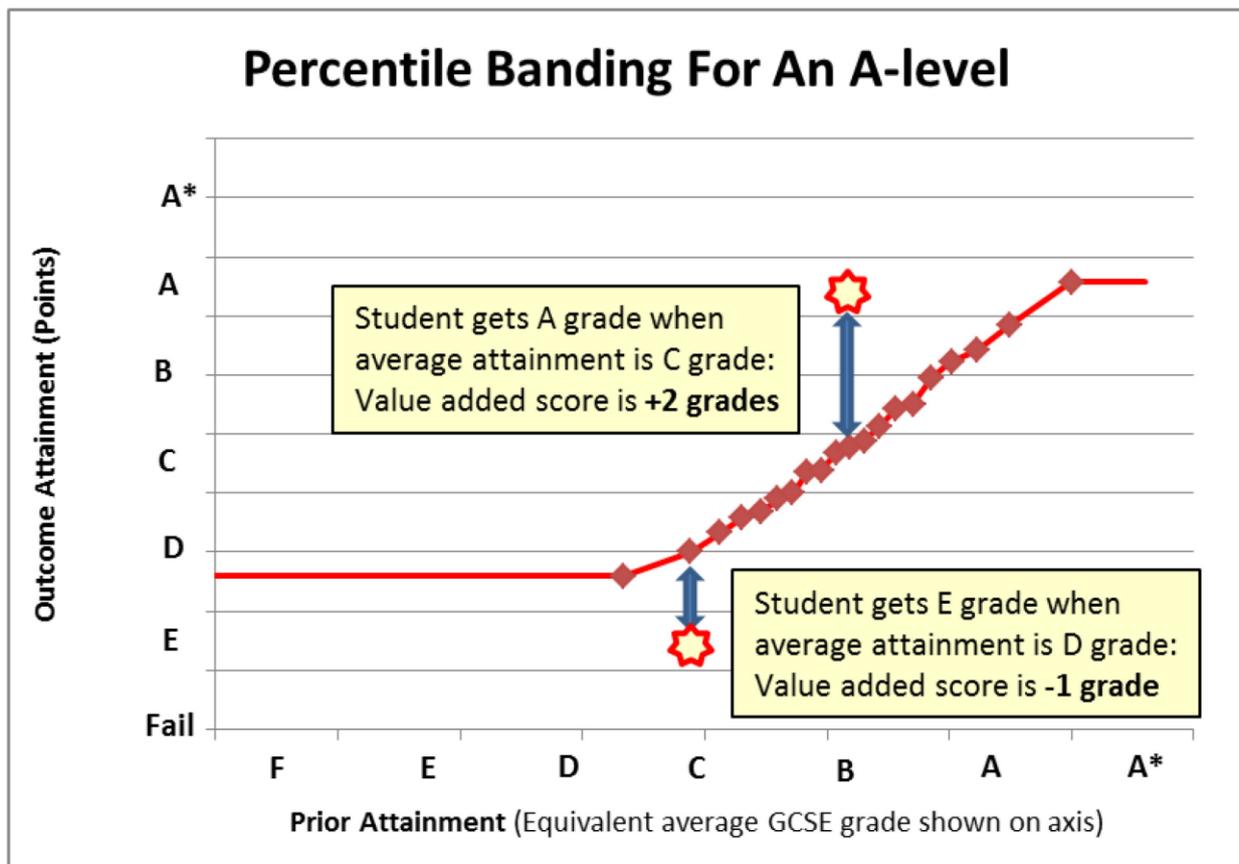


Diagram courtesy of DfE

10. How will the combined completion and attainment measure be calculated and reported for tech level and technical certificate qualifications?

The process is fully described in the [DfE technical guide](#), but in summary:

- Each qualification grade is assigned a number of points. For a BTEC Subsidiary Diploma this would be 50 points for Distinction*, 35 points for Distinction, 25 points for Merit and 15 points for Pass. Students not completing the course or failing the qualification will get no points.
- The results for all students taking a particular qualification in a school or college (including fail grades and non-completions) are converted to points, and the average point score is calculated. This average point score is then compared to the average point



score achieved across all students in the national cohort to give a relative attainment score – how many points above or below than average.

- The relative attainment scores across all subjects are aggregated to give a total tech level (or technical certificate) score for the college or school. For tech levels, that total is divided by 10 to convert the point score to a grade score. A worked example is shown below.

	Entry	Outcome (Points)	Subject Level Attainment	Compare With National Average	Provider's Overall Score
Hairdressing (level 3)	Student A	Distinction (35)	Institution Average Point Score = 25 points (equal to a merit)	Hairdressing National Average = 24 points Difference = 25 – 24 = +1 point	Weighted Average = $(5 \times 1) + (4 \times -1.5)$ 5 + 4 = -0.11 points A score of -0.11 points is equivalent to being - 0.01 grades below average.
	Student B	Merit (25)			
	Student C	Pass (15)			
	Student D	Distinction* (50)			
	Student E	Fail (0)			
Plumbing (Level 3)	Student F	Withdrawal (0)	Institution Average Point Score = 27.5 points (just above a merit)	Plumbing National Average = 29 points Difference = 27.5 - 29 = -1.5 points	
	Student G	Distinction* (50)			
	Student H	Merit (25)			
	Student I	Distinction (35)			

Diagram courtesy of DfE

References

- 16-19 Accountability Headline Measures: Technical Guide for measures in 2016 and 2017 (DfE, January 2017) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-accountability-headline-measures-technical-guide>
- Reforming the accountability system for 16-19 providers (DfE, March 2014) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365979/DfE_consultation_response_16-19_Accountability_final.pdf
- 2016 School and college performance tables: statement of intent (DfE, August 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-performance-tables-2016-statement-of-intent>