

## Higher education provider guide to DfE performance measures

UCAS, together with the Department for Education, has developed these FAQs to answer some of the most common questions asked by higher education providers about changes to performance measures. These FAQs cover the key changes to performance measures and changes to qualification and subject take-up for both Key Stage 4 (KS4), including GCSE, and Key Stage 5 (KS5), including A levels and other Level 3 qualifications.

### Key Stage 4 – what is changing, when, and why?

#### 1. When did reformed KS4 performance measures come into effect?

This will be the second year the reformed KS4 performance measures will be published for all secondary schools. They were first introduced in 2016, and this year will be based on results in summer 2017 exams.

#### 2. What are the performance measures for schools in England at KS4?

The headline measures of performance for secondary schools in 2017 are:

- Progress 8 – showing pupils' progress across eight qualifications, compared to other pupils with the same starting point at the end of Key Stage 2
- Attainment 8 – showing pupils' average achievement in the same suite of qualifications as the Progress 8 measure
- percentage of pupils achieving the threshold in English and mathematics (a grade 5 'strong pass')
- percentage of pupils achieving<sup>1</sup> the English Baccalaureate<sup>2</sup>
- percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate
- percentage of students staying in education or employment after KS4 (destinations)

Grades are converted into performance table points to calculate Progress 8 and Attainment 8.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of pupils achieving a grade 9 - 5 or A\* - C in the English Baccalaureate subjects.

<sup>2</sup> From 2018, the EBacc average point score that measures pupil point score across the five pillars of the EBacc will replace the existing headline EBacc attainment measure, and the threshold measure will become an additional measure.

In 2016, GCSEs graded A\* - G were awarded performance table points on an eight point scale, where 1 was equivalent to a grade G GCSE, and an increase in one point represented an increase of one GCSE grade up to 8, which was equivalent to an A\* GCSE.

In 2017, reformed GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics will be included for the first time in performance table measures. Further reformed GCSEs will be introduced in 2018 and 2019. These qualifications will use the new 9 to 1 grading scale. Points will be allocated to the reformed GCSEs on a 9 to 1 point scale corresponding to the new 9 to 1 grades, e.g. a grade 9 will get 9 points in the performance measures. During this transition period, where a combination of reformed and old style GCSEs count towards performance measures, DfE will convert the point scores for old GCSEs to meet the new 9 to 1 performance points system. Further information can be found at annex A of the Progress 8 technical guide at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure).

From 2017, the Government will no longer be reporting on the 'good pass'. Instead, it will distinguish between a grade 4 and above 'standard pass' and a grade 5 and above 'strong pass' and report on both. The 'strong pass' will be the headline measure for school performance. For pupils, the expectation will be a 'standard pass' at grade 4 or above, a

similar level of achievement to a grade C or above using the current grading scale. This is the level pupils must achieve in order not to be required to continue studying English and maths post-16.



Grading new GCSEs from 2017

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5 <b>STRONG PASS</b>	
4 <b>STANDARD PASS</b>	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

The Secretary of State wrote to the Education Select Committee in March to provide certainty about how the new grading will work, and in particular for grades 4 and 5. You can view this letter at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-grading-justine-greenings-letter](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-grading-justine-greenings-letter).

Employers, colleges, and universities will continue to set their own entry requirements, based on their own criteria and needs. DfE and the exams regulator in England Ofqual are working with employers, colleges, and universities to make sure they understand how the new 9 to 1 GCSE grading scale aligns with the old A\* to G

scale. For example, if their current minimum requirement is a grade C, then the nearest equivalent is a grade 4.

### **3. What is the intent of the changes at KS4?**

At KS4, by focusing on progress, school performance will be judged based on the performance of all pupils, not just those at the C/D borderline. DfE has designed Progress 8 to retain a focus on an academic core, while giving scope for pupils to pursue their personal interests by allowing a wide range of other approved qualifications to count.

## **Key Stage 4 measures – key questions for HE**

### **4. What is Progress 8?**

In 2016, Progress 8 replaced 5 A\* - C including English and maths as the measure of secondary school performance that determines the floor standard. It shows pupils' progress across eight qualifications, compared to other pupils with the same starting point at the end of Key Stage 2.

Further information about Progress 8 can be found in the Progress 8 technical guide at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure). In addition, DfE has also published a short video at <https://youtu.be/4IAEgFMSGDY>, that provides information about the Progress 8 measure.

## **Key Stage 4 – effect on subject and qualification take-up**

### **5. What are the possible implications for subject take-up and HE preparation?**

Progress 8 is deliberately designed to encourage and recognise a broad curriculum, with a focus on an academic core: maths and English (double weighted to emphasise their importance), three further EBacc qualifications, and three other qualifications, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or any other approved qualifications.

## **Key Stage 5 – what is changing, when, and why?**

### **6. When do the new KS5 performance measures come into effect?**

The summer 2016 A level results were the first results to contribute towards the new KS5 performance measures. 2017 will be the second set of results under the reformed accountability system. Because some students take three years to complete KS5 there may be some results from summer 2015 included in the published performance tables this year.

## 7. What are the new performance measures for schools in England at KS5?

The headline measures of performance at KS5 are:

- progress
- attainment
- progress in English and maths (for students without GCSE grades A\* - C, or grades 9 - 4 in these subjects)
- retention
- destinations

At KS5 students study a range of qualifications. The performance tables are designed to recognise each qualification route equally, and should not influence the take-up of one qualification type over another. The three current Level 3 qualification routes are academic (A levels will also be shown separately), Applied General, and Tech Level.

From 2017 there will be additional performance measures included in the 16-18 performance tables, to be published from January 2018 onwards. These are:

- Outcomes from level 2 vocational qualifications,
- Two supporting retention measures showing which students return in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 16-18 study, and which students are also assessed at the end of their study.

In future, as outlined in the post-16 Skills Plan, students at age 16 will have a choice between high quality academic or technical options. As announced in the Skills Plan, DfE is looking at the contribution of Applied General qualifications in preparing students for success in higher education, what part they can play in a reformed system, and the impact any reform would have on the Government's ambitions for widening participation. Further announcements will be made in due course. Applied General qualifications will remain as a category in performance tables for 2017/18, and 2018/19.

The Skills Plan is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education).

## 8. How are the new AS and other Level 3 qualifications treated under DfE performance measures?

Level 3 qualifications will be assigned points in DfE performance measures according to the new 2016 points score system. More information can be found in the technical guide at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/482225/16\\_to\\_19\\_accountability\\_headline\\_measures\\_technical\\_guide.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482225/16_to_19_accountability_headline_measures_technical_guide.pdf).

There are separate point scales for each qualification grading structure based on levels of demand. DfE takes decisions about the demand of each qualification grading structure individually, and assigns point scores accordingly. For each qualification, points vary based

on 'size' and 'challenge'. Size is a measure of the average length of time it takes to teach the qualification. Average time is taken from the guided learning hours (GLH) from the Ofqual Register. Challenge includes the level of the qualification and grade achieved.

DfE AS level points are 50% of the A level points. This differs to the points allocated in UCAS Tariff scores because performance table points serve a different purpose.

## **9. What is the intent of the changes at KS5?**

At KS5, changes to the school and college accountability systems are intended to set higher expectations, and to make the system fairer, more ambitious, and more transparent. The accountability system should encourage high quality provision for all students, support students in making informed choices, and identify poor performance quickly.

As well as the headline measures above, a range of supporting data will help to achieve these aims. However, these will not be headline measures, and will not be used for intervention purposes. Full details of supporting data can be found in the technical guide above.

Supporting data includes the Technical Baccalaureate performance measure. This will recognise the achievement of students taking advanced (Level 3) programmes, which include an approved Tech Level, Level 3 maths and Extended Project Qualifications. This is to incentivise providers and students to undertake a challenging technical programme.

## **Key Stage 5 measures – key questions for HE**

### **10. How will retention for the first year at university be measured?**

DfE publishes destination measures which show whether or not a student has progressed into a sustained education or employment destination in the year after taking A levels or other Level 3 qualifications. HE destinations are included and HESA data are used for this purpose. The student has to remain at their next destination (including university) for six months (October to March) in order for the destination to meet the 'sustained' criteria.

### **11. How do destination measures work? Is there a hierarchy of destination?**

Destination measures show where students progress to. The data may be accessed at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations).

Points are not awarded and there is no hierarchy of destination.

## **Key Stage 5 – effect on subject and qualification take-up**

### **12. What impact will the new performance measure criteria for Tech Levels and Applied General qualifications have on schools?**

The criteria that have been set in order for these qualifications to be included in performance tables are designed to ensure rigour and, most importantly, enable students to progress into further or higher learning or skilled employment.

The performance tables are designed to recognise each qualification route equally, and should not influence the take-up of one qualification type over another.

**13. What will the take-up be for different qualifications and subjects when these new performance measures come into effect?**

Ofqual publishes provisional figures for summer exam entries each year. The data for 2017 are available at [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/summer-2017-exam-entries-gcses-level-1-2-certificates-as-and-a-levels-in-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/summer-2017-exam-entries-gcses-level-1-2-certificates-as-and-a-levels-in-england).

DfE also publishes statistics on the attainment of 16 to 19 year olds in England in October and January. These statistics include entry data and are available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-attainment-at-19-years#a-and-as-levels](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-attainment-at-19-years#a-and-as-levels).

**14. Are there performance measures to encourage take-up of the new Core Mathematics qualification?**

There will be an additional performance measure from 2017 performance tables onwards, that will show the numbers of students achieving an approved Level 3 maths qualification. This will not be a headline performance measure.

**15. Are there performance measures to encourage schools to offer a broad curriculum at KS5?**

Study programme guidance encourages a broad curriculum at KS5. The guidance can be accessed at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-study-programmes-advice-on-planning-and-delivery](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-study-programmes-advice-on-planning-and-delivery).

Ofsted inspects schools and colleges against a Common Inspection Framework. Under that framework, inspectors make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management within an institution. The evaluation criteria cover the extent to which leaders, managers and governors provide learning programmes or a curriculum that have suitable breadth, depth and relevance to meet any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children, learners, and employers, nationally and in the local community. There are eight evaluation criteria in the Common Inspection Framework for assessing the effectiveness of leadership and management within an institution. The Common Inspection Framework can be viewed at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).

## **Key Stage 5 – Sainsbury review**

### **16. Will the Sainsbury review impact on performance measures, and if so how?**

DfE will be keeping the 16-18 performance measures under review, to ensure they are still appropriate once the Sainsbury reforms are implemented. DfE will keep stakeholders informed of any changes to performance measures.