



FAQS

Q. The model does not give additional Tariff points to English apprentices that have achieved above a pass grade. Why is UCAS not recognising those that have achieved a merit or distinction grade?

A. UCAS recognises that apprentices that have achieved above pass may wish to be recognised as such. However, the potential grade outcomes for apprenticeships at End Point Assessment in England vary across the different standards, therefore not all apprentices in England will have the opportunity to achieve a merit or distinction at their End Point Assessment. Apprentices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland also do not have the opportunity to achieve anything other than a pass grade in their apprenticeship. This disparity could create a sense of unfairness in terms of outcome.

Guidance provided by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is that 'pass' in an apprenticeship is the 'gold standard' and the outcome that determines an individual's occupational competence, therefore this grade should be the only recognised grade in the UCAS Tariff.

Apprentices will still be encouraged to advise HE providers of the grade they achieved in their apprenticeship as part of the admissions process and recognition of any grade beyond 'pass' can be evidenced via the certificate provided by IfATE. UCAS will work with providers to determine the exact process and guidance for this

Q. The Tariff points in the model are set too low to facilitate access to some higher education courses. Why are the points allocated not higher?

A. The UCAS Tariff is a broad tool used to describe the size and grading structure of a programme of study. Providers consider grades and Tariff points alongside other admissions criteria to make a decision on acceptance for a higher education course, so the UCAS Tariff is part of a wider picture of the applicant. UCAS believes that the proposed model will enable apprentices from all backgrounds to benefit from a clearer, more defined route into higher education after achieving a Level 3/SCQF Level 6 apprenticeship if they so wish, and is also a significant step towards signalling parity with other programmes of study.

UCAS understands the concerns around the number of Tariff points proposed, and appreciates the significant learning, experience and preparedness for higher education that an apprenticeship can bring. However, UCAS has a responsibility to ensure that the UCAS Tariff does not indicate that an apprentice is necessarily better prepared for higher education than those that have completed an A-Level, T-Level, Scottish Highers, or other equivalent programmes of study. Guidance provided by the Department of Education in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) specification relating to prior attainment lists a 'full Level 3' achievement as 'two or more advanced level passes'. In the UCAS Tariff, a 'full Level 3' is a 24 month, full time programme of study. Based on this guidance, the proposed model gives the same number of Tariff points to a 24 month Level 3/SCQF Level 6 apprenticeship as is given to two A Levels at Grade A.



Q. Using recommended duration as a measure of size does not fairly represent the amount of learning that takes place on an apprenticeship. Has UCAS considered using other measures, such as credit?

A. After engagement over 14 months with 60 organisations, recommended duration was chosen as the best method of measuring the size of an apprenticeship to present in the public engagement exercise in Summer 2024. UCAS recognises that recommended duration is set by regulators, differs across the four nations of the UK and cannot reflect the amount of learning and experience gained from a Level 3/SCQF Level 6 apprenticeship. However, alternative measures such as guided learning hours and credit were explored and ruled out.

The use of a credit system was suggested by a small number of stakeholders. UCAS explored the possibility of using a credit system, but decided not to proceed on the following basis:

- ▶ Guidance from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) indicated that recommended duration is the best measure of size.
- ▶ Credit is not consistently applied to apprenticeships in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is not within the remit of UCAS to establish a system of credit for apprenticeships, this would lie with regulators.
- ▶ UCAS modelled the use of credits based on 10 Guided Learning Hours per credit for Level 3/SCQF Level 6 apprenticeships. The modelling did not show any significant difference in the use of credit when compared to recommended duration.

UCAS believes that use of recommended duration in the proposed model is the best and only viable method of measuring the size of an apprenticeship to promote clearer pathways into higher education for apprentices.

Q. In February 2025, the Department for Education announced that the minimum duration of an apprenticeship in England will be reduced from 12 months to 8 months. How will Level 3 apprenticeships that are achieved in fewer than 12 months be included in the UCAS tariff?

A. Guidance from the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) advises that apprenticeships will continue to cover full occupational competency, as set out in its approved occupational standards, and learners will still achieve this in full where the duration of training is 8 months and over. The size band of an apprenticeship in the UCAS Tariff model for apprenticeships is determined by the recommended duration, as set out by IfATE. Given the guidance from IfATE and to account for any changes in the recommended duration that the minimum duration flexibilities might allow for, the lowest size band for an apprenticeship in the UCAS model will be changed from '12 – 17 months' to 8 to 17 months. For context, large numbers of apprenticeships with a typical duration of less than 12 months are not expected. The UCAS Tariff aims to be responsive to changes in government policy as and when it is implemented.



Q. Some SCQF Level 6 apprenticeships in Scotland have SCQF Level 7 elements embedded. Will the Level 7 elements be included in the UCAS Tariff?

A. No. In line with the purpose and principles of the UCAS Tariff, only SCQF Level 6 programmes of study are awarded Tariff points. Similar approaches are taken in the other UK nations where only RQF Level 3 elements receive points. There are currently no plans to broaden the scope of the Tariff beyond these levels.

Q. Will guidance be created for stakeholders prior to the launch of Level 3/SCQF Level 6 apprenticeships in the UCAS Tariff?

A. Yes. Guidance for students, universities, schools and colleges will be published to support preparation for the launch.

Q. Some apprenticeships have an embedded mandatory qualification. Will Tariff points be allocated to the apprenticeship and the qualification?

A. It may be the case that both the apprenticeship and the qualification will be included in the UCAS Tariff. Students and universities will be advised only to consider the larger programme of study in applications.