

This factsheet is **for advisers to use with staff in schools and colleges**. It explains:

- how the new UCAS Tariff differs from the current Tariff
- the impact for students, schools and universities and colleges
- when the new Tariff will come into effect
- what additional support will be available to support you in implementing the new Tariff

Background on the UCAS Tariff

Some universities and colleges make reference to UCAS Tariff points in their entry requirements. UCAS Tariff points are allocated to a range of qualifications generally studied when learners are aged 16 to 18. The qualifications are Level 3/SCQF Level 6¹ on the national qualifications framework managed by UK qualification regulators. They are designed to support progression into higher education, employment, apprenticeships and training.

The UCAS Tariff was introduced in 2001 when many alternative qualifications to A level started to appear. Its purpose was to help universities and colleges understand the wide range of different qualifications students could study in terms of their size and depth of study and to enable easy comparison.

Whilst many universities and colleges use specific qualifications and grades to describe their entry requirements and offers, some use the UCAS Tariff points to describe entry requirements and offers to learners.

About the new UCAS Tariff

The new UCAS Tariff points, which will be used for courses starting from September 2017, are based on a very different number system.

For example, today entry requirements or offers made using Tariff points may say:

- 280 UCAS Tariff points: can include A levels, Scottish Highers, or BTECs
- 280 UCAS Tariff points: including A levels in chemistry and biology
- 280 UCAS Tariff points: including 120 points from Chemistry A level

¹ In all instances references to Level 3 encapsulate Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level 6 plus the Advanced Higher in Scotland.

Under the new Tariff, the same entry requirements or offers would be expressed as:

- 112 UCAS Tariff points: can include A levels, Scottish Highers, or BTECs
- 112 UCAS Tariff points: including A levels in chemistry and biology
- 112 UCAS Tariff points: including 48 points from Chemistry A level

Although the number of points required appears to be less i.e. 112 instead of 280, this is because the new UCAS Tariff points system is based on much lower numbers. For example, an A* at A level gets 140 points under the current UCAS Tariff and will get 56 points under the new UCAS Tariff point system. The value of the A level grade A* has not changed.

Overall, students will still need to achieve the same grades at A level, Scottish Advanced Highers, Scottish Highers or BTEC, or in any other qualification they are taking to meet higher education course entry requirements.

It is important to note that sometimes universities and colleges that refer to UCAS Tariff points will also state that certain qualifications **cannot** count towards the total number of points. Just because a qualification has UCAS Tariff points does not mean it is considered suitable for entry onto higher education courses by all universities and colleges. For example:

- 112 points: General Studies A level and AS qualifications and key skills qualifications **will not** be considered

One key change that has been made under the new UCAS Tariff is to the points allocated to the AS qualification. Under the current Tariff it has points worth 50% of an A level but under the new Tariff it is allocated points worth 40% of an A level. . UK qualification regulators manage the standards of A levels and AS qualifications and this change is in line with their view of the AS qualification. In Wales and Northern Ireland, where the AS qualification will continue to form the first part of an A level qualification, government departments have confirmed that the reformed AS will contribute 40% of the marks to the overall A level. Some universities and colleges do not currently accept the AS qualification as part of their entry requirements. Universities and colleges that do accept the AS qualification will need to review their entry requirements and make it clear whether they will continue to accept the AS.

Impact on students

The new UCAS Tariff points should not have any impact on students' decisions about qualification choices at school or college, or their preparation or application to a higher education course.

Teachers and advisers at school or college will continue to provide the best advice and information to ensure learners continue to study the most appropriate

qualification based on their learning style and progression aspirations, which may be to progress into higher education, employment, further training or an apprenticeship.

The primary purpose of the new Tariff is to provide a broad measure of Level 3/SCQF Level 6 qualifications that can be used by universities and colleges for reporting purposes. The new UCAS Tariff, like the current Tariff, will be used by higher education funding bodies that collect data from universities and colleges each year. The new Tariff simply provides a new way of calculating the points for this purpose.

Impact on university and college entry requirements

The new Tariff should not in itself change entry requirements for university and college courses. Universities and colleges are autonomous organisations and each year they decide how to set their entry requirements.

Those universities and colleges that use UCAS Tariff points to describe their entry requirements will simply set their requirements using the new number system. Students should always check individual course requirements.

Why UCAS changed the Tariff

Universities asked UCAS to make changes to the Tariff so that more vocational qualifications and international qualifications can attract points.

UCAS also needed to make changes to accommodate the reforms to qualifications that are taking place across the UK.

The new Tariff has been developed in partnership with representatives from the university sector, schools and colleges. It is the result of a substantial programme of modelling, testing and evaluation.

The new Tariff is designed to provide a fair and more transparent process of allocating Tariff points across a wider range of qualifications, to support widening participation.

Implementation timeline for the new UCAS Tariff

The new UCAS Tariff points will apply to higher education courses starting from September 2017.

This means that from 2015 universities and colleges that use the UCAS Tariff may start to refer to the new UCAS Tariff points. Universities and colleges may start to refer to the new UCAS Tariff points in their 2016 course prospectuses, alongside current Tariff points, because earlier prospectuses are often used by younger

students to research different higher education courses.

2017 courses advertised on the UCAS search tool from September 2016 will refer to the new UCAS Tariff points only, not the current UCAS Tariff points.

The current UCAS Tariff points will stop being used for courses starting in September 2016 once the UCAS search tool closes for the 2016 entry cycle.

New UCAS Tariff tables are available on the UCAS website at www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/advisers-and-referees/tariff-2017. The tables show the new UCAS Tariff points allocated to all the qualifications currently on the Tariff. This document is a reference guide for use by teachers and advisers involved in supporting students applying to higher education courses starting from September 2017.

Additional support on the new Tariff

The UCAS correspondent at your school or college will be able to provide more information and show you the new *UCAS Tariff tables: New Tariff points for entry to higher education from 2017*.

UCAS will be developing a regional training programme on the new Tariff for schools and colleges. Further details and regular updates on the new Tariff will also be provided in the monthly advisers' newsletter, on ucas.com and at the UCAS Teachers and Advisers Conference in February 2015.

If you have any questions or would like to give UCAS your feedback about the new Tariff, please email newtariff-feedback@ucas.ac.uk.