

Guide to performance tables

Key Stages 4 and 5 Technical Qualifications



Contents

1. What are performance tables?	3
2. What qualifications will appear on performance tables?	4
3. How do performance tables differ at KS4 (14-16) and KS5 (16-19)?	5
4. What do the Technical Qualifications look like?	7
5. What about applied general qualifications?	9
6. How do I know which qualifications have been approved by DfE?	9
7. Can I still deliver qualifications that are not on performance tables?	9

1. What are performance tables?

Performance Tables give information on the achievements of pupils in primary, secondary and 16-18 provision in schools and colleges, and how they compare with other schools and colleges in the Local Authority area and in England as a whole. At Key Stages 4 and 5 they report achievements in public examinations and vocational qualifications in secondary schools and further education colleges.

Accountability systems are currently being reformed to set higher expectations for providers, making them fairer, more ambitious and more transparent. Accountability will be measured through revised performance tables – publishing information on attainment and progression. These performance tables will allow parents and learners to make informed decisions about where to study and are used by the government to monitor the overall attainment of learners and schools/colleges in England.

City & Guilds has a variety of vocational qualifications that currently sit on the performance tables. The Department for Education (DfE) publish a [list of qualifications](#) each year to identify which qualifications meet the rigour and quality they are looking for.

2. What qualifications will appear on performance tables?

Only DfE approved qualifications sit on performance tables. They fall into the following categories.

Key Stage 4 (KS4):

- GCSEs
- Technical Awards

From 2014 KS4 Performance Tables were restricted to qualifications that are high quality, rigorous and enable progression to a range of study and employment opportunities. Qualifications will only be included if they are the same size as a GCSE or larger.

Key Stage 5 (KS5):

- A Levels
- Applied Generals
- Technical Certificates
- Tech Levels.

3. How do performance tables differ at KS4 (14-16) and KS5 (16-19)?

KS4

Under the DfE rules all vocational education must meet the new guidance in regard to rigour and quality. KS4 qualifications have been designed specifically for 14-16 year old learners and can be taken alongside academic GCSEs.

These qualifications allow broad studies in a vocational theme and allow learners to make informed decisions about their progression once they reach 16. Alongside English and maths GCSE, they will be the only level 2 qualifications recognised in headline measures for 14-16 year-olds, underlining their importance in providing progression to employment as well as further study at 17 or 18.

At KS4 (14-16), performance will be measured through attainment and progress in eight subjects.

This will affect the reporting of exams taken in summer 2016 onwards. To encourage schools/colleges to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, progress and attainment will be measured in:

- English
- Maths (double weighted)
- Three English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects – Sciences, Computer Science, Geography, History, Languages
- Three further qualifications from the range of EBacc subjects, or any other high value arts, academic or vocational qualifications approved for inclusion in performance tables.

KS5

The 16-19 performance tables will report Technical qualifications and Applied General qualifications separately. Clearer and more comprehensive performance information about schools and colleges will be published, aiming to include a wider range of information on 16-18 year old students' attainment and progression. [These performance measures](#) include a set of headline measures.

A value added progress measure cannot be used for level 3 Tech Levels and level 2 Technical Certificates. This is because there is a weak relationship between students' average KS4 result, which is mainly made up of academic subjects, and their results in these qualification types. Instead a combined completion and attainment measure will be used. The measure will compare the attainment of students with the national average attainment for each qualification. Any student who fails to complete the subject studied will be treated as a fail. The scores for each qualification will be aggregated to give an overall provider score expressed as a proportion of a grade above or below the national average.

Headline measures for 16-19 will give a clear overview of the performance of a school or college in academic and vocational programmes compared with other institutions nationally in five key areas:

- **Progress** - attainment at A Level/Applied Generals compared to KS4 results, or for Tech Level/Technical Certificates (which bear no strong relationship to KS4 attainment or results) progress is measured against the national average (see above)
- **Attainment**
- **English and maths progress** – this applies to learners who have not yet received GCSEs at grade C or above
- **Retention** - the proportion of learners who reached the end of the study programme.
- **Destinations** - percentage of KS5 learners going to, or remaining in education and/or employment.

4. What do the Technical Qualifications look like?

KS4, Level 2 Technical Awards are broad, high quality qualifications that equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills not usually acquired through general education. At KS4, students are encouraged to take up to three technical awards alongside a minimum of five academic GCSEs from the list of EBacc subjects. DfE, July 2015

They must meet the DfE's new design principles:

- Content must relate to the qualification's purpose, focus on applied study of a sector or cover the acquisition of practical and technical skills, without focusing on a specific occupation.
- Must be at least 120 GLH Only one resit opportunity.
- At least 25% of the assessment must be external for 2017 performance tables rising to 40% for 2018 (first teaching 2016).
- Letters of support are required from centres to show they recognise these qualifications. These must be published on the Awarding Organisation's website.

KS5, Level 2 Technical Certificates are rigorous intermediate Technical Qualifications recognised by employers. They are for students aged 16 plus that wish to specialise in a specific industry or prepare for a particular job. They give students an opportunity to develop specialist knowledge and skills to help them get an apprenticeship or job, or progress to a higher level qualification, such as a tech level. DfE, Feb 2015

KS5, Level 3 Tech Levels are rigorous advanced Technical Qualifications on a par with A Levels and recognised by employers. They are for students aged 16 plus that want to specialise in a specific industry or prepare for a particular job. Tech levels give students an opportunity to develop specialist knowledge and skills to help them get an apprenticeship or job. Many higher education institutions, such as universities, have also pledged support for Tech Levels. DfE, Feb 2015. Level 3 Tech Levels have been allocated UCAS points depending on their size and the grade achieved.

At KS5, Technical Qualifications must meet the following design principles from DfE:

- Technical Certificates must be at least 150 GLH.
- Tech Levels must be at least 300 GLH.
- A significant proportion of the content must be mandatory, to provide employers and HEIs with confidence in the knowledge and skills of learners.
- A significant proportion of the content must be externally assessed.
- The proportion of externally assessed content, and the contribution to the overall grade, should reflect the purpose of the qualification and must be at least:
 - 25% of a Technical Certificate
 - 30% of a Tech Level qualification
- All learners are required to undertake meaningful activity involving employers during their study, which is relevant to their industry sector.
- Letters of support will be required from employers or professional/trade bodies which must be published on the awarding organisation's website.

All Technical Qualifications (KS4 and KS5) also require:

- **A detailed purpose** outlining objectives to help learners decide which qualifications to take.
- **Synoptic assessment** to help develop and demonstrate an understanding of the connections between different elements. There is no minimum contribution, however learners are required to demonstrate that they can identify and use an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories and knowledge from across the vocational area.
- **A distinction, merit, pass and fail structure** or a more detailed grading scale applying to a learner's attainment across the overall qualification.

5. What about applied general qualifications?

These are shorter (150 GLH or larger), rigorous advanced (level 3) qualifications that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills. They are for post-16 students wanting to continue their education through applied learning. They fulfil entry requirements for a range of higher education courses, either by meeting entry requirements in their own right or being accepted alongside and adding value to other qualifications at the same level.

City & Guilds does not offer applied general qualifications. Instead we have chosen to focus on Technical Qualifications with clear progression routes in terms of job outcomes, apprenticeships and higher education.

6. How do I know which qualifications have been approved by the DfE?

The DfE publishes updated lists of approved qualifications that appear on performance tables each year.

For more information visit the [DfE webpage](#). You can also find more by visiting cityandguilds.com/dfe

7. Can I still deliver qualifications that are not on performance tables?

You may offer qualifications that are not included in performance tables, if approved for teaching to 14-19 year olds, where this is in the best interests of the individual learners. These qualifications are approved under Section 96 – part of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 – for delivery to young people under 19. All qualifications with Section 96 approval can be taught in government funded institutions.

Current qualifications (that do not meet the new DfE design principles) may still be available for use, however it is important to note that these qualifications will not be reported in the performance tables and will not meet the new headline measures, these qualifications have not been approved by DfE to meet the rigour and quality standards of the new reforms.

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