



SFR 03/2016, 21 January 2016

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. About the statistics	2
Data sources	2
How the statistics are created	3
Relevance	4
Timeliness	4
Punctuality	5
3. Accuracy and reliability	5
Measurement error	6
Validation and quality assurance of source data	6
Disclosure Control	7
Reliability	7
4. Accessibility and Clarity	8
5. Coherence and Comparability	9
Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)	9
Wider UK education data	9
Other statistics from the Department for Education	10
6. Got a query? Like to give feedback?	11
Annex A: Further detail on institution characteristics	12
Annex B: Derived variables	15

About this document

This document provides an overview of the data used in the production of the 'A level and other level 3 results' statistical first releases (SFRs) and the 16-18 schools/colleges performance tables.

It describes the methodology used to calculate student attainment in these publications. It provides information on the data sources, coverage, quality and how the data is validated and processed.

It is based on the Office for National Statistics' [guidelines for measuring statistical quality](#).

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Introduction

This document provides an overview of the data used in the production of the 'A level and other level 3 results' statistical first releases (SFRs) and the 16-18 school and college performance tables. It describes the methodology used to calculate student attainment in these publications. It provides information on the data sources, coverage, quality and how the data is validated and processed. It is based on the Office for National Statistics' [guidelines for measuring statistical quality](#).

An introduction to attainment data in the performance tables and SFRs can be found in the '[About Administrative data](#)' section of the performance tables website. A wider overview of how the department collects, processes and quality assures the attainment data relating to key stage 2, key stage 4 and 16-18 education can be found in the '[The Statement of Administrative Sources for Attainment Data](#)' published by the department.

1. About the statistics

National and local authority (LA) information on the A level and other level 3 results in England is published in statistical first releases (SFRs) available online here: [16-18 statistics](#). The provisional SFR is published in October, and the revised SFR is published in January.

School and college level information for 16-18 students at the end of level 3 study in England can be found on the [performance tables](#).

Data sources

Level 3 qualification entries and attainment

The awarding organisations (AOs) deliver entries and examination results for qualifications reported in this SFR and 16-18 performance tables for students at the age of 16-18. The AOs hold information on their qualifications, the students who have entered them and the results awarded. The department collects data from AOs via an external contractor.

Key stage 4 prior attainment

The department collects key stage 4 attainment for pupils at the end of key stage 4. The information is used to calculate the level 3 value added (VA) to measure the progress students have made between the end of key stage 4 and the end of advanced level 3 study. For information on key stage 4 methodology and results, please see the following link: [Key stage 4 methodology](#).

Pupil characteristics

The A level and other level 3 results SFR publishes statistics by gender. Information on pupil characteristics, such as gender, is collected through the department's school census. The school census is a statutory termly data collection, during which schools/LAs send the department details of the pupils they have on their roll and their characteristics.

The following school types participate in the pupil level school census.

- Local authority-maintained schools: community, foundation, voluntary-aided, voluntary-controlled schools, Pupil referral units (PRUs) and special schools (including hospital schools)
- Academies, including alternative provision (AP) academies

- Free schools, including AP free schools
- Studio schools
- University Technical Colleges (UTCs)
- Non-maintained special schools

More detail is available from the following link: [school census guidance](#)

For colleges and independent schools, information on individual pupil is taken from the awarding organisation data. The school census does not collect individual pupil level information from colleges and independent schools.

Institution characteristics

Information on school or college type and phase of education is taken from Edubase. EduBase is a register of educational establishments providing compulsory, higher and further education in England and Wales, maintained by the Department for Education. More information on Edubase is available at the following link: [edubase guidance](#)

The school and college types that are reported in the 2014/15 SFRs have been taken as at the start of the 2014 academic year. Any schools or colleges which converted to an academy on or before 12 September 2014 have been published as an academy and those that have converted after this date have been treated as their predecessor school or college type.

How the statistics are created

The entries and awards for qualifications at key stage 4 and 16-18 are submitted by awarding organisations to an external contractor, who processes the data and completes a set of quality checks on behalf of the department.

Once the latest entries and results data has been submitted to the contractor in August 2015, this is matched to students' characteristics and information on students' prior attainment to calculate performance measures for each pupil/student. These student level performance measures are then aggregated to give the overall results for schools, colleges, local authorities, regions and England as a whole. A number of performance measures and other derived variables (see Annex B) are added during this process. This data is then used to produce the provisional SFR released in mid-October.

The data is checked with schools and colleges during the performance tables checking exercise from September to early October. The student attainment data is updated to take on board any amendments, and any late results submitted by awarding organisations. This updated data is used to produce the statistics published in the revised SFR and performance tables in January 2016. Following publication of the performance tables, there is a short errata process where schools and colleges can inform us of any additional changes that should be made to the data. Following this process, the performance tables' data is finalised and the performance tables website updated. The final data is used to update the time series in the following year's SFR.

This process is illustrated in the process map in the [About Administrative Data](#) section on the performance table website.

Relevance

This section describes the degree to which the statistics meet current and potential needs of the users.

Key users

The school and college performance statistics are used by a wide range of users, from parents to different organisations. For example, the Department for Education uses the national figures to determine whether education standards at 16-18 are improving or declining, whereas students at the end of key stage 4 may use the information when deciding on applications for sixth form places. More detailed information about key users and how they use the data can be found at the '[Our key users](#)' page on the performance tables website.

Key strengths of the data

The key strength of the data is that it is derived from an administrative data collection. This means that it can supply accurate data down to small geographical areas and school and college level. In addition, the data is merged with other administrative data held by the department (the school census) to provide detailed information on sub-groups of the school/college population. Student level data from different key stages can also be merged so that we can produce precise measures of student progress between one key stage and another.

However, the student counts for some groups particularly at local authority or school/college level can be small. In these cases, data is suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individuals and this can limit the usefulness of the data.

Timeliness

Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between the period to which the data refer and the publication of the estimates.

The department quality assures the data, produces statistics and publishes the provisional 'A level and other level 3 results in England' SFR after receiving the provisional data from the contractor. This process takes four weeks to complete.

Revised level 3 results and additional information such as mathematics and sciences results tables and breakdowns by school locations are published in January. These statistics include school level information that gets released at the same time as the performance tables.

A more detailed production time table is shown as below.

May and June

Main A level and AS level examinations are taken.

July and August

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) collects results data from the awarding bodies. JCQ publish A level and AS level results in mid-August.

The department's contractor collects attainment data from awarding organisation (data is collected throughout the year but the majority is collected in the summer).

September

The department receives unamended attainment (provisional) data from the contractor.

The schools and colleges performance tables checking exercise takes place in late September/early October providing schools and colleges with the opportunity to check and, where necessary, amend their results. In addition, institutions such as colleges which do not complete the school census can check that students assigned to them are on roll.

October to December

The department publishes the provisional A level and other level 3 results SFR in mid-October based on unamended data.

Amendment requests from schools and colleges are scrutinised following the checking exercise. The department normally receives three sets of revised data during November and December, which take account of changes made during the checking exercise, and any late results.

January

The department publishes the revised A level and other level 3 results SFR and the 16-18 performance tables, based on the revised version of the data.

January to February

Post errata period commences for schools and colleges. This provides a further opportunity to request additional amendments to the data.

March

The department receives final (post errata) data from the contractor and updates the performance tables with this data.

Punctuality

Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication.

The proposed month of publication is announced on gov.uk at least twelve months in advance and precise dates are announced in the same place at least four weeks prior to publication. In the unlikely event of a change to the pre-announced release schedule, the change and the reasons for it would be announced.

2. Accuracy and reliability

Accuracy describes the closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value.

Data coverage

The source data covers all eligible population for the SFR and 16-18 performance tables, as the department collects annual data on all results achieved by students. The eligible population for the level 3 qualification data collection is all 16 to 18 year old students who, by the end of the 2014/15 academic year have completed advanced level studies (akin to a traditional school sixth form) in schools and colleges in England. Students who are not at the end of advanced level studies, were part time or work-based learners, or are doing re-sits are to be excluded from the calculations. However, as these students cannot be identified centrally, those aged 16 achieving a single level 3 qualification in 2014/15 are excluded from calculations.

During the September checking exercise schools and colleges may apply for students to be removed from their figures for a number of reasons, for example, the student is not at the end of 16-18 study, if the

student has permanently left England, if the student is a work- based learner or part-time, or if the student is deceased.

Schools and colleges cannot remove students in certain circumstances for example; they are on roll at the school or college in January of the reporting year, even though they subsequently leave, or if the student is an add-back student.

Measurement error

Measurement error is the difference between the actual value of a quantity and the value obtained by a measurement.

The following steps are taken to minimise measurement error in examination results.

Clear guidance is provided to schools and colleges regarding the administration of advanced level examinations, including instructions for keeping the exam materials secure prior to the exams and storage of completed scripts until they are collected for marking.

Once schools and colleges have completed their advanced level exams they are required to send their exam materials and attendance registers to the awarding organisations for external marking and data capture.

The exam papers are externally marked by the awarding organisations to ensure that marking is consistent between institutions. There are no quotas set or underlying assumptions about the proportion of students who should be at each grade. Proportions are decided entirely by how student attainment measures up to the exam standards.

After marking, results are returned to schools and colleges. In 2015 this was 13 August. Data is then passed from the awarding organisations to the department's contractor for use in the SFRs and 16-18 performance tables. If schools and colleges have concerns over the marking of an exam paper, they may request for it to be re-marked. Outcomes of reviews are not reflected in the provisional SFR data but are included in the revised data and [performance tables](#).

Further information on the general regulations for schools and colleges and how exams are conducted and marked can be found on the JCQ website: [Joint Council for Qualifications \(JCQ\) website](#)

Qualifications

Ofqual sets the standards and rules that awarding organisations need to meet when they design, deliver and award regulated qualifications. They monitor awarding organisations and qualifications to maintain standards. They are a risk-based regulator and concentrate their resources on where they are most needed. For example, they may discover that an awarding organisation's processes need updating or that there are risks connected to a qualification taken by thousands of students every year. Further guidance on the role of Ofqual can be found at: [How Ofqual regulate](#)

Validation and quality assurance of source data

School and college checking exercise

As a further check of the accuracy of the underlying data, the department collates the data into institution level information and shares this with schools and colleges, together with the underlying student level data, during the performance tables checking exercise in September/October. Schools and colleges are required to check the data and notify the department of any students that are included in their school or college in

error, or of any missing students. They can also notify us of any other potential errors in the data. Any changes requested are validated to ensure that they comply with the rules before being accepted. As a guide, in previous years approximately 60 per cent of schools and colleges check their data during this process.

Following the checking exercise the revised data is supplied to the department through our contractors. This data takes account of changes requested during the checking exercise, including successful marking reviews, late results and changes to number of students on roll. The data is then published in the revised SFR and in the 16-18 performance tables in January.

Following publication of the performance tables, some schools and colleges notify us of further changes required to the data. These changes are validated in the same way as those which are received during the checking exercise and final data is produced in March in the performance tables but is not updated in the SFR. However the final data will be used to update any time series in the following year's statistical first release.

Departmental quality assurance

The department applies a set of internal quality protocols to ensure the published data is accurate. First, the data production process is subject to a 'dry run' during the summer. This involves producing a dummy dataset, from the previous year's data, which conforms to how the current year's data will be supplied (e.g. if new subjects have been introduced, then dummy data would be added to last year's data to simulate these). This dummy dataset is used to test the contractor's systems and the department's checking processes. This allows potential problems to be resolved prior to the receipt of the live data.

In addition, at every stage in the data cycle, the department checks all calculations used in the production of the figures by independently dual-running the methodologies at institution, local authority and national level. Further quality assurance is then carried out on the data produced (see examples in the box to the right). Any discrepancies in the data are discussed and resolved prior to publication.

Examples of additional checks

Comparisons with previous figures to identify any large changes

Comparisons with provisional data to identify any large changes (revised/final data only)

Check totals are consistent across tables

Check patterns in the data are as expected

Check figures against those produced by our contractor for the performance tables

Check the data format against specifications

Disclosure Control

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.

In the statistical first releases, an 'x' indicates that a figure has been suppressed due to small numbers. Values of 1 or 2 or a percentage based on 1 or 2 pupils who achieved, or did not achieve, a particular level are suppressed. Some additional figures may be suppressed to prevent the possibility of a suppressed figure being revealed. This suppression is consistent with the [departmental statistical policy on confidentiality](#).

In the school/college level data, any figures relating to a cohort of 5 pupils or fewer are suppressed.

Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which an estimate changes over different versions of the same data.

Change between releases

The figures published in the SFR may change between provisional and revised releases; however there tends to be a slight increase in the headline national performance measures rather than any significant fluctuation in the statistics. This is due to the combined effect of removals of students that should not be included and due to re-marking and submission of late results by Awarding Organisations.

The size and impact of the updates made to 2015 A level and other level 3 results was low and broadly comparable with previous years. Further details are below:

- At national level, the average point score per entry for A level cohort increased by 0.7 points from 215.4 to 216.1. In 2014, the average point score per entry for A level cohort increased from 214.8 to 215.5.
- The average point score per entry for vocational cohort increased by 0.2 points from 219.3 to 219.5. In 2014, the average point score per entry for the vocational cohort increased from 216.3 to 216.6.
- At local authority level, the average point score per entry for A level cohort change ranged from -0.5 points to +5.1 points. Over half of them saw changes of 0.5 points or less. In 2014, the change ranged from -2.4 points to +8.7 points. Over half of them saw changes of 0.6 points or less.
- The average point score per entry for A level cohort change ranged from -4.3 points to +4.4 points at local authority level. Over half of them saw changes of 0.8 points or less. In 2014, the change ranged from -1.9 points to +4.1 points. Over half of them saw changes of 0.5 points or less.

Comparability of SFR and performance tables

The cohort results published within the revised SFR and the performance tables are the same. Both publish data on cumulative results for students at the end of their 16-18 study. The same methodology is used in both so national and LA figures will match. In addition, the SFR includes additional A level examination results based on a single year of academic study (tables 2-11), which is not published within the performance tables.

Changes over time

There have been some changes to 16-18 attainment measures as well as education policy which can make comparisons over time difficult in some cases. Information about the way that performance measures have changed over time can be found on the performance tables website [here](#). In order to provide a historical context of attainment a supplementary table (table S1) showing average point score by cohort since 2008/09 is published in the SFR.

3. Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data. It also relates to the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information.

Clarity is the extent to which easily comprehensible metadata are available, where these metadata are necessary to give a full understanding of the statistical data.

The SFR text is published in pdf format so that it is accessible to all users irrespective of their choice of software. Care is also taken to ensure that the document meets accessibility guidelines. Key figures are highlighted in the SFR text which draws out the key messages such as changes over time and differences between groups of pupils. Small tables or charts illustrating key figures are also included in the text.

Each SFR is accompanied by formatted excel tables with clear titles which allow general users to find more detail than can be provided in the SFR text. Any important limitations or inconsistencies in the data are mentioned in footnotes so that users don't have to refer to the text or this document. Where there are large

numbers of tables, these are split into manageable sections (for example, national tables in one file, LA tables in a separate file) so that users don't need to download larger files than necessary for their needs.

Underlying data for all the tables and metadata describing that data is also provided in csv format so that users can load this into an analysis package of their choice.

The performance tables website provides a number of ways of searching for schools or colleges of interest (for example, by name of school/college, by town, within x miles of a postcode or all schools and colleges within an LA area) and presents the data in a series of web pages showing different aspects of the data. The selected schools and colleges are shown in alphabetical order by default but can be sorted by any measure if the user requires ranked data. Hover text is used on the website to provide fuller descriptions of the column headings and any abbreviations used.

Users can also download the data for all schools and colleges in either excel or csv format. Comprehensive metadata is provided for these files.

Any user wishing to conduct more detailed research or analysis may request an anonymised pupil/student level extract of the [national pupil database](#).

4. Coherence and Comparability

Coherence is the degree to which the statistical processes, by which two or more outputs are generated, use the same concepts and harmonised methods.

Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time, region or other domain.

We use the same methodology to produce the data within our SFRs and the performance tables. We also use a dataset produced at the same time for the performance tables and the revised SFR. As a result, the national and LA figures included in both the revised SFR and the performance tables will match.

Similar statistics are also published by the Department for Education and other organisations. There are key differences to note, which have been summarised below.

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

The figures in the SFR and 16-18 performance tables differ from those published by JCQ in August 2015. JCQ figures relate to the outcome of all students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of their age. The examination results published in this SFR are for the 2014/15 academic year and include the performance of students aged 16, 17 or 18 taking these examinations in England only.

Wider UK education data

The Welsh Government has published the results of external examinations taken by students aged 15 or 17 in 2014/15, available at:

[Welsh government statistics and research](#)

The Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) publishes AS and A level headline statistics here:

[Department for Education Northern Ireland \(DENI\)](#)

The publication, '*Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No. 5: 2015 Edition*', is published by the Scottish Government and is available at:

[The Scottish Government website](#)

Other statistics from the Department for Education

The statistics shown below are produced by the Department for Education but provide different information to what is published in the 16-18 SFR and performance tables.

Destination measures	<p>Figures for young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Two destination measures are published to show the destinations of young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The KS4 measure is based on activity at academic age 16 (i.e. the year after the young person finished compulsory schooling)• The 16-18 measure is based on activity in the year after the young person took their A Level or other level 3 qualifications.
Participating in education, training and employment by 16 18 year olds in England	<p>Estimates of participation in education, training and employment and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) for 16, 17 and 18 year olds in England.</p>
Key stage 4	<p>GCSE and equivalent results for key stage 4.</p>
Key stage 2	<p>National curriculum assessments and review outcomes at key stage 2 (KS2), including measures of progress between KS1 and KS2.</p>
Key stage 1	<p>National curriculum assessments at key stage 1 and phonics screening check results.</p>

5. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

If from the media Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.
020 7783 8300

If non-media Tingting Shu, Education Data Division, Department for Education, 53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH.
0114 2742117 statistics.attainment@education.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A: Further detail on institution characteristics

This section provides further detail on the school/college characteristics.

School Admission Basis

The school admission basis is taken from Edubase. Schools and colleges are classified as per their status on 12th September. They are defined as follows:

Comprehensive schools	Takes all pupils, usually regardless of their ability, aptitude or whether they have been selected for a place at a selective school. Includes school operating pupils banding admission arrangements.
Modern schools	Takes pupils regardless of their ability or aptitude, including those who have not been selected for a place at a local selective school.
Selective schools	Admits pupils wholly or mainly with reference to ability. These schools are formally designated as grammar schools.

Institution Type

The institution types are taken from [Edubase](#) and are given at 12th September at the start of the academic year. They are defined as follows:

Academy Sponsor Led	Sponsored academies are all-ability, state-funded schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds, including high performing schools and colleges, universities, individual philanthropists, businesses, the voluntary sector, and the faith communities.
Academy Converter	Schools that have chosen through Governing Body Resolution and application to the Secretary of State to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010.
Free School	Free Schools are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to what local people say they want and need in order to improve education for children in their community. They have the same legal requirements as academies and have the same freedoms and flexibilities.
Further Education (FE) colleges	Sixth form and other FE sector colleges (including other government funded and special colleges).

Studio School	Studio schools are all-ability and mixed sex state funded schools, independent of local authorities. They are an innovative new model of educational provision, delivering mainstream qualifications through practical project-based learning. They are not extensions or conversions from existing provision, but are new 14-19 academies, typically with around 300 pupils.
University Technical College (UTC)	UTCs are all-ability and mixed sex state funded schools, independent of local authorities. They are not extensions of or conversions from existing provision, but new 14-19 Academies, typically with 500-800 pupils. UTCs specialise in subjects that need modern, technical, industry-standard equipment, such as engineering and construction, and teach these disciplines alongside business skills and a broad, general education. Pupils integrate academic study with practical learning, studying core GCSEs alongside technical qualifications.
City Technology College	Independent all-ability, non-fee-paying schools offering students and pupils the opportunity to study a curriculum geared, with the help of private sector sponsors, towards the world of work.
LA maintained school	Schools fully or partially under LA control that are state-funded, mainly by the Dedicated Schools Grant. These include community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided school and voluntary controlled schools and also LA maintained special schools.
Registered independent school	Any school which provides full time education for 5 or more students which is not state-funded or a non-state-funded special school.
Independent special school	Approved by the Secretary of State for Education. They are run on a not-for-profit basis by charitable trusts and normally cater for children with severe and/or low incidence special educational needs. This group includes non-maintained special schools.
State-funded school	Includes LA maintained schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges and state-funded special schools (excluding hospital schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision and independent schools).
State-funded mainstream schools	Includes LA maintained mainstream schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges (excluding all special schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision and independent schools).
State-funded special schools	Includes LA maintained special schools, academy sponsor led special schools, academy special schools and special free schools.

All independent	Includes independent schools, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools.
Pupil referral unit (PRU)	A PRU is established and maintained by a local authority which is specially organised to provide education for children who are excluded, sick or otherwise unable to attend mainstream school and is not a special or other type of school
Alternative provision (AP)	Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

Annex B: Derived variables

A number of derived variables are produced in response to changes in education policy and statistical methodology. More information about the history of the 16-18 performance measures can be found in the [‘Performance tables: development timeline’](#) document. The following derived variables are added to calculate student level results in 2015 SFR and performance tables.

Examination point score and size

Points are allocated to each of a student’s exam results using the scoring systems set out in the [Point Score Allocation](#) document on the performance tables website. This is done by calculating GCE A level size equivalence using the Guided Learning Hours (GLH) from Ofqual register and the base points for each grade from the level and grade structure. More technical details about how point score and size are calculated can be found in the [Performance points: a practical guide to key stage 4 and 5 performance points](#) document.

This enables the calculation of average level 3 point scores for 16 to 18 year old students at the end of advanced level studies.

Eligible students

Students will be eligible to be reported in this SFR and the 2015 16 to 18 performance tables if they satisfy the following criteria:

1. Were aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2014
2. Were on roll in January 2015
3. Were in, or deemed to be in, Year 13
4. Completed their advanced studies in the 2014/15 academic year
5. Entered for an A level or substantial level 3 qualification equal in size to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year

In addition, as part of the performance tables checking exercise, institutions are able to request that their students’ results are deferred from the performance tables by one year if they have not reached the end of 16-18 study. The following year, these students will be added back into institution figures to count towards that year’s results, regardless of whether they have achieved any further results. A student cannot be deferred at academic age 18 as they will be outside the scope of performance tables the following year.

Tables 1a-e; 12a and 12b of the SFR show cumulative results obtained by level 3 16-18 students.

Qualifications reported

Results reported only cover level 3 academic and vocational qualifications approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act (2000). Other qualifications or learning provision such as Graded Exams, level 2 qualifications or work-based learning are not included.

Institutions reported

The performance of schools and colleges are in scope for reporting purposes but other education and training provider types are not, such as independent training providers (see annex A for further information).

Discounting flags

Discounting is used to ensure that, when a student takes two or more qualifications in the same subject area and where there is significant content overlap, the performance measures only give credit once for teaching a single course of study. For example, where a student has gained an AS en route to an A level in the same subject, only the A level result will count (i.e. the AS is 'discounted' as it is part of the A level). However, if a student fails to obtain a pass grade at A level, the AS pass grade would be reported in the SFR. For further information on discounting rules, please see the [Discounting of Qualifications](#) section on the performance tables website.

By applying discounting, the number of examination entries and results is underestimated for the reporting year in this SFR. In order to show the effect of AS discounting, this SFR shows two sets of AS tables, one with discounting applied (Table 3) and one which shows the discounted AS entries (Table 4).

A level, academic, and vocational cohorts

The data is broken down into the following student cohort types:

1. A level cohort: students entered for at least one A level, applied single award A level or applied double award A level in the 2014/15 academic year
2. Academic cohort: students entered for a substantial advanced level academic qualification in the 2014/15 academic year. The Academic cohort includes A level cohort students.
3. Vocational cohort: students entered for a substantial advanced level vocational qualification in the 2014/15 academic year.

Average point score

Average point score per examination entry gives an indication of the average grade achieved by students at a school or college. The measure is expressed as a point score and the grade equivalent to support interpretation. Further details on the way in which these measures are calculated can be found in 'Average point scores calculations' and 'Average grade calculation' under [Methodology and technical guides](#) on the performance tables website.

Average point score per full-time equivalent student measures the average size of study programme taken by students at a school or college and the average cumulative results achieved. The more qualifications taken by students and the higher the grades, the higher the average point scores per student. To recognise students who are undertaking a mix of academic and vocational qualifications, this measure is calculated using the number of full-time equivalent students in each cohort. Further details on the way in which this measure is calculated can be found in [Average point scores calculations](#) document under Methodology and technical guides.

A level AAB measures

The A level 'AAB' measures for A level cohort students (see tables 1a, 1c, 12a, 12b) shows the proportion of students achieving grades AAB at A level (including applied single award A level or applied double award A level), in at least two facilitating subjects, and three facilitating subjects respectively.

Facilitating subjects cover biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, further mathematics, geography, history, English literature, modern and classical languages. A full list of facilitating subjects is available here: [Facilitating subjects for the AAB indicator](#).

The 2015 performance tables report only the percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects.



© Crown copyright 2016

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [Open Government Licence](#) or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at Tingting Shu, Education Data Division, Department for Education, 53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH.

020 7340 7712 statistics.attainment@education.gsi.gov.uk

This document is also available from our [website](#).