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# Piloting New Measures of Success: the Quality Improvement Pack



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# Piloting New Measures of Success: the Quality Improvement Pack January 2006 Update

This letter accompanies the distribution of the January 2006 release of the LSC New Measures of Success Quality Improvement Pack designed to support the implementation of the 'New Measures of Success'.

Over the last year the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), in partnership with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), has been developing a suite of measures designed to be used to measure the performance of LSC-funded providers for the purposes of accountability and stimulating reflection and improvement. These measures are termed the New Measures of Success and are a key component of *Success for All*. Further information about the measures is available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages.

The aim of the programme is to measure the success of learners and the performance of education and training providers more accurately and fairly. In doing so, this will help to demonstrate the sector's existing strengths and identify areas for improvement. The eight new measures are conceived as a package or 'basket' of measures which will allow institutions to present a more rounded and contextualised picture of their performance to those making judgements about the quality of provision offered in the sector. The major focus of the LSC's work is on making the data from these measures available to providers in a way which encourages reflection on current performance and stimulates quality improvement.

This update of the Quality Improvement Pack covers how the three new measures that have been implemented or are ready for national piloting can be used together to stimulate quality improvement:

- measures of Value Added (VA) for 16–19 learners and Distance Travelled (DT) for 16–19 learners
- a new measure of Qualification Success Rate
- Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA).

The pack also gives more information about:

- the Provider Gateway

- the New Measures of Success and the LSC's Business Cycle
- the Learner Satisfaction measure

The update to the Quality Improvement Pack will be published electronically in mid January 2006 and then will be released in hard copy in late January 2006 to coincide with the availability for piloting of the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT), a piece of software that is being developed by the LSC to assist with the use of VA and DT for 16–19 learners' data. The LAT software will be available to the sector through the new Provider Gateway and this edition of the Quality Improvement Pack contains further information on this. If you have any queries or comments about any of the New Measures of Success or have difficulty accessing the LAT, please contact your local LSC office.

During the piloting phase of VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT, which will begin in January 2006, the LSC will collect feedback from user groups on the measures and conduct a full evaluation. Details of how to get involved in this process can be found in Section 2: *Piloting Arrangements for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners*.

I hope that you find the Quality Improvement Pack and the LAT outputs useful.



Paul Martinez  
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# New Measures of Success Quality Improvement Pack: January 2006 Update

## Introduction

The first edition of the *New Measures of Success Quality Improvement Pack* was issued in July 2005 to provide an introduction to the New Measures of Success and to support the distribution of Value Added (VA) and Distance Travelled (DT) outputs for awareness raising. This update supports the release of the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) for the pilot phase of VA and DT. All amendments and additions will be indicated by a side line.

reporting of their achievements, both to the LSC and the Inspectorates.

The piloting phase for VA and DT for 16–19 learners gives the four partners time to evaluate these measures and collect feedback on their suitability as quality improvement tools.

Electronic copies of the Quality Improvement Pack are available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages and the Provider Gateway.

This pack contains updates to a number of the original sections of the July Quality Improvement Pack. It also contains a number of new sections. These comprise:

- a number of case studies. These focus on how the measures can be used coherently to target strengths and weaknesses, and to demonstrate how VA and DT, Qualification Success Rate (QSR) and Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) can be used together to assess performance and focus quality improvement strategies. It is envisaged that these case studies will be useful for practitioners and local LSCs
- an introduction to the Provider Gateway
- information on how the new measures will be integrated with the LSC Business Cycle, self-assessment and three-year development plans
- progress on the development of the Learner Satisfaction measure
- further information and glossary

The Quality Improvement Pack will continue to be developed as the other new measures are ready to be piloted nationally. The use of the Quality Improvement Pack as a definitive source of information on new measures supports the LSC's work in developing the measures so that they can be used together to provide a contextualised picture of the performance of institutions. The evidence from the new measures will also become a principal part of institutions' own

# The Provider Gateway

## What is the Provider Gateway?

### 1.1

The Provider Gateway (PG) is a secure internet website designed for the exchange of confidential documents and data between the LSC, providers and the Inspectorates.

### 1.2

The PG will include key documents, such as providers' Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) College Performance Reports (CPRs) and ALI Provider Performance Reports (PPRs) and will also be the primary means of delivering some of the New Measures of Success data to providers and the key partners.

### 1.3

Access to the PG will be available to all providers funded by the LSC, including colleges, schools with sixth forms, work-based learning (WBL) and adult and community learning (ACL) providers, as well as the LSC, Inspectorates and Local Authorities (LAs).

## What is the vision for the PG?

### 1.4

The PG is intended to create a secure, password-protected website resource for all LSC-funded providers and the key partners which will:

- provide a single easy-to-use source of data related to quality improvement and institutional accountability such as providers' SARs
- give providers the opportunity to upload their own information and access other data designed to support their efforts to improve the quality of their provision, including progressively more information on the new measures
- allow access to data at different levels of aggregation for the LSC, the Inspectorates, LAs, and other relevant stakeholders.

## What are the benefits of the PG?

### 1.5

The main benefits of the PG are that it will:

- reduce bureaucracy by ensuring that the collection of data is streamlined and that the

data is collected once and used many times

- give providers access to:
  - benchmarking data
  - data which can be imported into their own management information systems for further analysis
  - an alerting service when new public documents are added to the PG
  - a document tracking service for data and report submissions.
- allow Inspectorates:
  - access to information from and about providers, including SARs and local LSC provider briefings prior to notification of inspection, which will facilitate improved planning
  - to share CPRs and PPRs and other inspectorate documents with providers more efficiently
- give other stakeholders such as local LSCs and LAs access to the data they need to contribute to assessments and quality improvement strategies.

## How will stakeholders be involved in the development of the PG?

### 1.6

In order to steer the implementation of the project, an operational advisory group comprising representatives from providers, the Inspectorates and the LSC has been established. An Association of Colleges (AoC) sponsored focus group is also carrying out similar functions in respect of colleges only. The groups will be involved in monitoring progress of the PG, user-acceptance testing, advising on future development and evaluating the benefits of the PG.

## Timescale

### 1.7

The first release of the PG took place in August 2005. This created the facility for colleges to upload their SARs and download their CPRs.

1.8

A second major release of the PG in early 2006 will provide access to the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) for all providers registered as PG users. The LAT provides outputs relating to Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners (For more information see section: *Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners*). Access to the PG will be expanded to work-based learning providers, schools with sixth forms and LAs at this point.

1.9

By May 2006, all providers funded by the LSC, including adult and community learning providers, will be able to access the PG. The PG will also include:

- an alerting service for providers and other users which will operate when new documents are added to the public section of the website
- the facility to upload further key documents (for example, development plans)
- an improved user interface
- links to other useful websites.

### **Development of the PG beyond May 2006**

1.10

Over the next three years the PG will be progressively expanded. By the summer of 2008, it is intended that the PG will be the principal source of data for all the new measures such as: Qualification Success Rates for FE and WBL providers; the first elements of the responsiveness to employers measure; RARPA; and learner satisfaction. The precise timing on these further additions is not yet agreed.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***What information is currently available on the PG?***

1.11

The PG currently holds the CPR and the CPR supplement containing data for VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the college SAR. From early 2006 the LAT will be available through the PG. It is intended that PPRs and work-based learning SARs will also be uploaded to the Provider Gateway. Local LSC briefing reports on colleges will also be available on the PG from the end of January 2006.

#### ***Can providers see information about other providers?***

1.12

No. A provider will only be able to access information about their own organisation.

#### ***How can I get access to the PG?***

1.13

Access to the PG will be through a user name and password which will be allocated to you through your user approver (see paragraph 1.14 for more information).

#### ***What is a 'user approver'?***

1.14

A user approver is responsible for managing access to the PG for users within his/her organisation, whether a provider, a local LSC, and so on.

#### ***How do I know who the user approver in my organisation is?***

1.15

Each user-approver will inform members of his/her organisation of his/her role and responsibilities with respect to the gateway.

#### ***What about collaborative, shared or contracted out provision?***

1.16

Where responsibilities for data, inspection and quality improvement are shared by two or more agencies, the LSC will work with the other agencies and ensure that arrangements are as coherent as possible from the point of view of the provider.

Further information about the PG is available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages.

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# 1 Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners

## Introduction to Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners

### What do the Value Added (VA) and Distance Travelled (DT) for 16–19 learners measures do?

#### 1.1

VA and DT for 16–19 learners aim to show the progress of individual learners based on their prior attainment, and compare the results to the national average. By 'prior attainment' we mean the qualifications attained by a learner up to the end of Key Stage 4. Statistical analysis has shown that the prior attainment of a learner is the best predictor of future performance in post-16 qualifications for this age group. So a calculation which takes into account prior attainment and allows comparisons with all learners taking a particular qualification in a given year allows us to make judgements about:

- the performance of a provider compared to the national average
- whether learners at that particular provider perform at, below or above the national average for learners with the same prior attainment taking the same qualification
- how groups of learners on different qualifications and subjects perform at that provider and for VA, what grade might be appropriate for learners to aspire to achieving.

#### 1.2

VA and DT for 16–19 learners use slightly different methodologies to show the progress for learners on different types of qualifications. However, both use a statistical methodology called multi-level modelling (MLM). More information about MLM will be available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages in early 2006. The scope of each of the measures is set out in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*.

#### 1.3

The measures are intended for use by:

- providers, to help them assess and improve their

performance by providing information on the progress of learners at institutional, subject group, qualification and subject levels

- the LSC, to help contribute to three-year development plans
- the inspectorates, to inform their initial ideas on the progress of learners and then to support their judgements about institutional performance
- the DfES and other stakeholders, to help policy-making and monitoring.

#### 1.4

Further information about how the LSC, inspectorates and the DfES will use the outputs of VA and DT for 16–19 learners during the pilot, which will begin in autumn 2005, are included in Section 2: *Piloting Arrangements for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners*.

### The Learner Achievement Tracker

#### 1.5

The LSC has developed prototype software, the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT), to enable providers to use the VA and DT for 16–19 learners' outputs for the purposes of reflection and improvement. The prototype has been tested by providers from across the sector and key stakeholders.

#### 1.6

The LAT is a piece of software specifically designed to allow users to access and make use of the outputs from the calculation of VA and DT for 16–19 learners. The data from the calculations is converted into graphs and bar charts. These outputs will show a provider's performance compared to the national average performance of all learners who completed the given qualification or qualification and subject/subject group. In the case of VA, the LAT also allows users to access information about individual learners' achievement. The LAT will produce three main types of output reports:

- summary charts
- national comparison graphs
- national chances charts.

These reports are summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: LAT output reports**

Type of LAT report	What the report shows
Summary charts	<p><b>VA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For each organisation, one chart showing the VA scores for each qualification type, including an overall institutional VA score</li> <li>● For each qualification type, one chart showing the VA scores for each subject.</li> </ul> <p><b>DT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For each organisation, one chart showing the DT scores for each qualification type</li> <li>● For each qualification type, one chart showing each subject group.</li> </ul>
National comparison graphs	The performance of the provider in a given qualification (for example, NVQ* Level 3 in construction or A Level History) compared to the national performance in the same qualification across the full range of prior attainment.
National chances charts	The chances of a learner with a given prior attainment achieving a particular outcome in a given qualification at a nationally average institution. For example, the chances of a learner with a given prior attainment achieving grades A – E in A Level History or Level 1, 2 or 3 NVQ in construction.

Please note, it is not appropriate to calculate the overall difference in the expected achievement or success rate across all qualification types to produce an institutional DT score. This is because the qualifications included in the DT measure for 16–19 learners are not similar enough to make an overall DT score meaningful.

\*National Vocational Qualification



## 1.7

The LAT thus provides a powerful tool which should allow providers, local LSCs and other stakeholders to make judgements which can answer the following questions:

- which providers are particularly effective in maximising the performance of their learners and trainees?
- is a given provider performing better (or worse) than the national average, given the prior attainment of the learners and the types of qualifications offered?
- are there courses/subjects areas within a provider which are particularly strong or which are under-performing?
- are there areas of provision in which learners with particularly low or high prior attainment on entry do particularly well/badly?
- given their prior attainment, are learners being matched appropriately to programmes of learning?
- what levels of achievement can be expected from the current cohort of learners?

## 1.8

For graded qualifications, an additional question is answered:

- what are the appropriate target grades to set learners in a particular subject given their level of prior attainment?

## 1.9

The development of the LAT has been influenced by ongoing consultation with providers from across the sector to ensure that the software and the presentation of the VA and DT data are appropriate for all intended audiences.

### Using the LAT outputs for quality improvement

## 1.10

We would suggest that answering the questions in paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8 gives a provider or local LSC with a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of a provider which can be used to focus support for quality improvement. For instance, if the LAT shows that performance in a particular subject area is lower than the national average, providers may wish to target resources and quality improvement planning at that subject area. For an area in which performance is

particularly good, there may be opportunities to disseminate effective practice more widely across the institution. Similarly, there may be areas of provision where learners with particularly high or particularly low prior attainment are not achieving as well as other learners within the provider and some targeted support for individual learners may be appropriate to help them to improve their achievements.

## 1.11

It is anticipated that the outputs from the LAT will also be useful in:

- contributing to self-assessment reports
- setting out a quality improvement strategy in three-year development plans
- collating information about a provider's overall performance to inform inspection or other quality assurance processes.

## 1.12

Users of the LAT will undoubtedly find other ways to use the outputs provided and it is anticipated that the functionality of the LAT will be enhanced throughout the piloting phase. Links to case studies of current effective practice in using similar methodologies to VA and DT for 16–19 learners can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section.

## 1.13

Within the following sections you will find information about the:

- piloting arrangements for VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT
- scope of VA and DT for 16–19 learners
- data for VA and DT for 16–19 learners
- interpretation and application of the LAT outputs for reflection and quality improvement
- further questions
- further issues to be explored during the pilot.

## 2 Piloting Arrangements for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners

### When will VA and DT for 16–19 Learners and the LAT be piloted?

#### 2.1

The four partners will begin to pilot and evaluate VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT in November 2005. During the pilot and evaluation period:

- the LSC will pilot the use of the LAT by all LSC-funded providers, local LSCs and Local Authorities (LAs) for the purposes of reflection and quality improvement between January 2006–summer 2006. At the same time, the LSC will pilot the use of the measures in planning, self-assessment and discussions of three-year development plans.
- Ofsted will pilot the use of VA and DT for 16–19 learners in planning inspections and during inspections over a two-year period. In the second year of the pilot, inspectors will also review the progress being made by providers in using the measures for self-assessment and evaluation. During the pilot, inspectors will not base judgements solely on VA and DT data, but will compare the data within the LAT with evidence from other sources.
- ALI will pilot the use of DT for 16–19 learners in planning inspections and during inspections for work based learning (WBL) providers between autumn 2005 and summer 2006. ALI will evaluate the piloting to establish whether DT for 16–19 learners is robust enough to be used as a definitive source of evidence during the inspection process. If ALI believes that the measure is not robust enough to use as a definitive source of evidence for accountability purposes, they will continue to pilot DT for 16–19 learners until summer 2007.
- The DfES are involved in the development of VA for 16–19 learners and will be piloting the use of a VA measure in the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables (SCAAT) in 2006, with a view to rolling out nationally in the 2007 tables.

**Table 1: Timescale of the four partners' piloting activities**

Partner	Activity	Timescale
LSC	Pilot use of the LAT for reflection and quality improvement purposes	January 2006–summer 2006
ALI	Pilot use of DT for 16–19 learners for accountability purposes during the inspection process for WBL providers	Autumn 2005–summer 2006 (see paragraph 2.1 for further information)
Ofsted	Pilot use of VA and DT for 16–19 learners for accountability purposes during the inspection process	Autumn 2005–September 2007
DfES	Pilot inclusion of VA for 16–19 learners in the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables	spring 2006–summer 2007

## 2.2

Providers from across the sector will be involved in the pilot in different ways. Table 2 outlines the piloting activities taking place between May 2005 and February 2006. Further details about the LSC, Ofsted, ALI and DfES piloting activities can be found below.

**Table 2: Outline of the provisional timetable for the 2005/06 piloting activities for VA and DT for 16–19 learners**

	LSC	ALI	Ofsted		DfES
Sample involved in 2005/06	All LSC funded providers, local LSCs and LAs	Colleges and WBL providers being inspected during the piloting period	All colleges	A sample of schools with sixth forms being inspected during the year	A sample of around 200 schools and colleges
May-05					Invite schools and colleges to join the post-16 SCAAT pilot
June 05					
Jul-05	Suite of LAT output reports and Quality Improvement Pack distributed to full sample for awareness raising purposes. The output reports contained historical VA and DT data for 16 – 19 learners completing in 2003/04.		College Performance Report (CPR) supplement containing VA and DT data for 16–19 learners completing in 2003/04 distributed to lead inspectors and colleges on the Provider Gateway		Conferences for schools and colleges involved in the post-16 SCAAT pilot.
Aug-05					
Sep-05					Sample schools and colleges check the 04-05 results data (two-week period in September/October).
Oct-05					
Nov-05					
Jan-06	Providers have access to the LAT software. The LAT will contain WBL DT and unamended VA data for 16–19 learners completing in 2004/05. Updated Quality Improvement Pack distributed.	Provider Performance Reports (PPR) including summary WBL DT data for 16–19 learners sent to WBL providers and colleges, prior to inspection.			

**Table 1: Outline of the provisional timetable for the 2005/06 piloting activities for VA and DT for 16–19 learners (continued)**

	LSC	ALI	Ofsted		DfES
Feb-06	Release of FE DT data and amended VA data for 16–19 learners via the LAT. Pilot use of VA and DT for 16–19 learners in discussion with providers, particularly in relation to self assessment and three-year development plans	Inspectors start piloting WBL DT measures for 16–19 learners on all inspections.	Updated VA/DT CPR supplement for learners completing in 2004/05 to be issued to all colleges on the Provider Gateway		
Mar-06				VA data for 16–19 learners included in Performance and Assessment (PANDA) report	Consultation with pilot schools and colleges about the SCAAT VA measure to be piloted in 2006.

### 2.3

A full evaluation of the piloting activities will be undertaken to ensure that VA and DT for 16–19 learners, and the LAT, are fit for the purposes for which they are intended when they are officially launched.

#### **How will the LSC pilot the LAT and the VA and DT for 16–19 learners' measures?**

##### ***The release of LAT reports and the Quality Improvement Pack between July and September 2005***

### 2.4

Ahead of the piloting phase, the LSC released a suite of LAT reports containing data for learners who completed in 2003/04 and the Quality Improvement Pack to:

- local LSCs
- the inspectorates
- LSC-funded WBL providers, colleges and school sixth forms
- LAs.

### 2.5

The purpose of making the LAT reports available in advance of the pilot phase was to raise awareness of VA and DT for 16–19 learners and to help familiarise users with how the LAT reports will look. It is not intended that providers use these reports to make judgements about institutional performance. If you have any queries about the July release of the LAT outputs or the Quality Improvement Pack, please contact your local LSC office.

##### ***The release of the LAT software in January 2006***

### 2.6

In January 2006, the LSC will release the LAT to all:

- local LSCs
- the inspectorates
- LSC-funded WBL providers, colleges and school sixth forms
- LAs.

***How can I access the LAT and when will the VA and DT for 16–19 learners data be available?***

2.7

The pilot LAT will be accessible through the Provider Gateway. For more information about accessing the Provider Gateway, please see the introductory section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

2.8

The pilot LAT will contain VA and DT data for learners aged 16–19 who completed their courses in 2004/05. The data will be available as detailed below:

- unamended VA data will be available in January 2006
- DT data for WBL-funded provision will be available in January 2006
- DT data for FE-funded provision will be available in February 2006
- amended VA data will be available in February 2006.

Further information about amended and unamended data can be found in Section 4: *Data for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners*; paragraph 4.7.

2.9

Further information about the timing of the release of the LAT and the VA and DT data will be available from your local LSC and on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages during January.

2.10

In contrast to the limited suite of LAT reports released in July, providers will be able to use the LAT to generate reports for all of their provision which is within scope of the VA and DT measures. Providers will be able to access only their own data.

***What are providers expected to do with the LAT during the piloting phase?***

2.11

During the piloting phase, all LSC-funded school sixth forms, colleges and WBL providers will have access to the LAT, thereby allowing these providers to test the software. Providers are encouraged to offer feedback on the LAT and VA and DT for 16–19 learners in order to ensure that the software released in autumn 2006 is fit for the purposes of reflection and quality improvement. For further information about how to provide feedback and contribute to the evaluation of the LAT please see paragraph 2.19.

2.12

As detailed elsewhere in this section, both Ofsted and ALL will pilot the use of the VA and DT data within the LAT during the inspection process. For inspections taking place during the 2005/06 academic year and as part of the annual assessment visits to providers, inspectors may wish to seek the views of managers about the robustness of the 2004/05 data produced by the LAT. Where the provider is able to demonstrate that the information about learners' progress given in the 2004/05 VA and DT data within the LAT is supported by other evidence, inspectors may use the data to inform judgements about learners' progress. During this period, inspectors may also wish to discuss with managers any plans they may be making for training their staff on the effective use of the LAT and how they may be planning to use the information provided by the LAT for self-assessment/evaluation. The outcomes of these discussions will help to inform the first phase of evaluation being undertaken by the inspectorates. The inspectorates' evaluation will also consider how VA and DT will be used in inspections once the pilot is completed and how well they will complement other inspection evidence.

2.13

Following the piloting phase, VA and DT for 16–19 learners will be the indicators used by the LSC, inspectorates and DfES to measure VA and DT across the sector. Engaging with the pilot and testing the LAT will allow providers to familiarise themselves with the software and the measures prior to their official use for reflection and quality improvement and accountability purposes.

***What staff development resources for the LAT will be available during the pilot phase?***

2.14

The main focus of the LSC's staff development resources will be on the application of VA and DT for 16–19 learners for the purposes of reflection and improvement. The staff development materials will not include detailed technical information on how to use the LAT software to generate reports because it is intended that this will be covered within the technical help and tutorial in the software itself.

2.15

The VA and DT section of this Quality Improvement Pack is the first of the staff development materials designed to help users focus on:

- what each type of LAT report shows
- how each report can be interpreted to give meaningful information about performance of the provider, the group or individual learners

- what quality improvement action might be relevant. The Quality Improvement Pack will be developed as an ongoing resource so that further information can be added where necessary, materials that have been superseded or replaced can be withdrawn and amendments and examples of current effective practice can be provided.

#### 2.16

Alongside the Quality Improvement Pack, the LSC has commissioned the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to produce a guide to current effective practice in using VA systems to set targets and monitor and support learner progress. This guidance will also include a series of case studies from WBL providers, further education (FE) and sixth form colleges and schools, that can be used to help improve the processes of target setting and monitoring learners' progress. The effective practice guide and case studies will be available in January 2006. Further information about these resources can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section.

#### 2.17

In order to provide further support, the LSC intends to establish a provider champions network for VA and DT during summer 2006. It is anticipated that the champions will give time-limited guidance and support about VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT in person or by email or phone to particular providers or other local LSCs. The LSC also intends to release an e-learning resource in autumn 2006 to support the application of VA and DT for 16–19 learners for the purposes of reflection and quality improvement.

#### ***The role of local LSCs during autumn 2005–summer 2006***

#### 2.18

Local LSCs will play a major part in disseminating information for the VA and DT measures and encouraging use of the LAT outputs for quality improvement purposes. Local LSCs have been consulted on their preferred method of disseminating information about the measures. In some areas, a phased engagement with the VA and DT measures is planned, with some focusing of uptake to certain groups of providers, for example those providers being inspected during the pilot. The proposals for local LSC involvement are as follows:

- A network consisting of nine regional New Measures of Success leads will be established to lead on the implementation of the New Measures of Success within the LSC regions. They will also provide feedback on dissemination and implementation of the New Measures of Success to LSC national office.

- Local LSCs will be the first point of contact for providers enquiring about VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT.
- Each local LSC will appoint a VA and DT 'champion' who will lead on the implementation of the measures within their local area.
- Local LSC champions will receive and deal with queries about the measures from providers. They will also be able to access support from the regional New Measures of Success leads and LSC national office if they are unable to answer the queries from providers.

#### ***How will the LSC capture feedback from providers about VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT during autumn 2005 – summer 2006?***

#### 2.19

In order to capture feedback from providers, the LSC will establish national user groups for:

- WBL providers
- school sixth forms/ sixth form colleges
- Colleges
- LAs

#### 2.20

These user groups will provide feedback on a variety of issues including the:

- design, functionality and usability of the LAT
- staff development resources
- use of VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the LAT for reflection and quality improvement purposes.

#### 2.21

As well as establishing user groups, the LSDA will also conduct a full evaluation of the LSC's piloting activities. The evaluation will address whether the LAT and the measures themselves are fit for the purposes of reflection and quality improvement. Staff development and awareness-raising activities will also be evaluated. Based on the evidence captured during the evaluation, the LSDA will produce recommendations that will inform the further development of the LAT, the measures, staff development resources and awareness-raising activities.

#### 2.22

In addition to the user groups and evaluation activities, the regional New Measures of Success leads will also capture feedback, through local LSCs, from providers within their region.

## 2.23

Providers interested in joining a national user group or contributing to the evaluation of the piloting phase should contact LSC National Office at VADT@lsc.gov.uk. Information about local and regional activity will be available to providers and LAs through the local LSC.

## 2.24

Providers who would like to offer feedback during the piloting phase but do not wish to join a user group or directly participate in the evaluation activities should give any feedback to their local LSC who will report back to LSC National Office or to a regional New Measures of Success lead. Such feedback will contribute to the overall evaluation of the piloting phase.

### What are the LSC's plans for 'business as usual' after September 2006?

## 2.25

It is intended that the LAT for quality improvement will be launched in September 2006 and that a further update to the Quality Improvement Pack will be published at that time, containing more detailed information and guidance on the use of the LAT outputs. The update to the Quality Improvement Pack will be available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages and the Provider Gateway.

## 2.26

The 'business as usual' timetable for making the data available will come into force from 2006 as detailed below:

Early October	-	unamended VA data
Early December	-	DT data for FE- and WBL-funded provision
January	-	amended VA data.

### How will Ofsted pilot the VA and DT for 16–19 learners measures?

## 2.27

Before the start of the VA and DT for 16–19 learners pilot in November 2005, Ofsted issued to all colleges in September the college performance report (CPR) covering the three year period 2001/02 to 2003/4. For the purposes of awareness-raising, for both college users and inspectors, a 'VA and DT for 16–19 learners supplement' to the CPR was issued in September 2005. The supplement provided VA and DT information for a limited range of qualifications, using data supplied by the LSC, for learners completing their courses in 2003/04. The supplement is designed to complement the Quality Improvement Pack.

## 2.28

To complement the release of the LAT software in January 2006, Ofsted plans to provide to colleges an updated VA and DT for 16–19 learners supplement for learners completing their qualifications in 2004/05 in early spring. Ofsted also plans to release a VA and DT for 16–19 learners supplement to the Performance and Assessment Reports (PANDA) issued to schools with sixth forms in early 2006.

## 2.29

During the piloting and evaluation phase, Ofsted inspectors will use the measures to help inform judgements about learners' progress only where there is other supporting evidence available. The pilot will help colleges, schools and inspectors explore the validity and integrity of the measures together, and to assess how far the measures can help identify strengths and areas for improvement for both self-evaluation and inspection purposes. Ofsted inspectors will use the VA and DT measures as definitive inspection tools once the measures are proved to be fit for purpose.

## 2.30

During the piloting period, Ofsted will evaluate the fitness of the measures for the purpose of inspection, through assessing the robustness of the data, the methods used to determine the measures, and the presentation and interpretation of the data. The outcomes of the evaluation will inform the approaches to be taken in the implementation of the measures for inspection.

### How will ALL pilot the VA and DT for 16–19 learners measures?

## 2.31

WBL providers being inspected from 1 October 2005 onwards will receive a Provider Performance Report (PPR) developed by ALL, incorporating data relating to the New Measures of Success. The ALL anticipates that PPRs will be produced for all WBL providers in February 2006. Once the WBL DT data for 2004/05 is available, a supplement to the PPR will be developed. During the pilot, the DT supplement will only be available for providers being inspected, but this will be extended to all providers following the end of the pilot.

## 2.32

ALL inspectors will not use the DT for 16–19 learners measure as a definitive inspection tool during the piloting and evaluation period. However, the measures will be used to help inform judgements about learners' progress where there is other supporting evidence available. Inspectors will also consider providers' responses to the DT for 16–19 learners measure and how over time they are embedded within their quality assurance systems. The pilot will help providers and inspectors to explore the validity and integrity of the

measures together, and assess how far the measures can help identify strengths and weaknesses for both self-assessment and inspection purposes.

#### 2.33

During the piloting period, ALI will evaluate the fitness of the DT measures for the purpose of inspection through assessing the robustness of the data, the methods used to determine the measures, and the presentation and interpretation of the data. The outcomes of this evaluation will contribute to the overall evaluation and will inform the approaches to be taken in the implementation of the measures for inspection.

#### **How will DfES pilot the inclusion of the VA and DT for 16–19 learners' measures in the SCAAT pilot?**

#### 2.34

Working with a nationally representative sample of around 200 schools and colleges, the DfES will conduct a pilot testing the introduction of VA for 16–19 learners in the post-16 SCAAT.

#### 2.35

In the first year, the DfES will work with pilot institutions through autumn 2005 to test the feasibility of reporting all approved Level 3 qualifications in the average point scores already published in the SCAAT. That work will also test that QCA's newly developed point scoring system is fit for purpose. In early 2006, DfES will also consult with pilot institutions on the use of VA for 16–19 learners in the SCAAT. Further information about the QCA point scoring system can be found in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*.

#### 2.36

DfES expect that findings from the consultation with the pilot institutions will enable the development of a model for VA for 16–19 learners and data collection system that can be tested in 2006 and thus secure publication of the VA for 16–19 learners measure for all schools and colleges published in the 2007 SCAAT.



## 3 Scope of the VA and DT Measures for 16–19 Learners

### What do we mean by '16–19 learners'?

#### 3.1

For the purposes of the VA and DT measures, a cohort of learners is defined as those who completed their course between 1 September and 31 August in the previous academic year. '16–19 learners' are those who were aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August at the beginning of the year in which they completed their post-16 qualification.

#### 3.2

For the pilot year, DT data for WBL-funded provision will be available for some learners aged 19 at the beginning of the year in which they completed their post-16 qualification. As part of the piloting exercise, the robustness of this data will be evaluated with a view to providing information on learners aged 19 for other DT qualifications. This will enable DT information to be made available for learners on Apprenticeship frameworks who are unlikely to complete before they are 20.

### Which post-16 qualifications are included in the scope of VA and DT for 16–19 learners?

#### 3.3

VA and DT cover the majority of larger qualifications approved under Section 96 of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000*, taken by 16–19 learners. These include vocational and non-graded qualifications, that is, qualifications where learners either achieve or do not achieve the qualification and cannot be awarded a grade.

- VA for 16–19 learners measures attainment in Level 3 graded qualifications
- DT for 16–19 learners measures achievement and attainment in other approved qualifications at Levels 1, 2 and 3 including those that are non-graded.

#### 3.4

The DT measure will be calculated separately for FE-funded provision and WBL-funded provision. Further information about the outcome measures for DT for FE and WBL-funded provision can be found in paragraph 3.18. Currently, it is not possible to provide DT data for schools, as further information from the ILR is required to calculate the DT measure and schools do not make ILR returns to the LSC. The additional information from

the ILR is needed to identify those learners who complete but do not achieve a qualification. Currently no equivalent data source is available from schools to gain the information required, although this is being taken forward in line with the development of a qualification success rate for schools. The additional information required for the DT measure for schools is also needed to calculate the qualification success rate.

#### 3.5

During the piloting phase, VA and DT reports will include the qualifications listed in Table 1, on page 16:

Table 1: Qualifications included in the LAT pilot

Type of calculation	Qualification
Value Added	A Level/A2 Level AS Level/AVCE AS Level AVCE Single and Double Awards International Baccalaureate BTEC National Awards* BTEC National Diplomas OCR National Certificates* OCR National Diplomas OCR Extended National Diplomas ABC Diploma Foundation Studies (Art and Design) CACHE Diploma in Child Care BTEC Diploma Foundation Studies (Art and Design) BTEC National Certificates
Distance Travelled (FE-funded provision)	GCSEs  Edexcel First Diploma GNVQ at Levels 1 and 2 NVQ at Levels 1, 2 and 3 Key Skills
Distance Travelled (WBL-funded provision)	Full Apprenticeship Full Advanced Apprenticeship NVQ at Levels 2 and 3, as part of Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships, and as part of WBL programmes

\* Subject to available data in 2006

## 3.6

Coverage of these qualifications will result in approximately 90 per cent of 16–19 learners in the post-16 sector being included in the measure. Learners aged 16–19 years on entry level qualifications, Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes or non-accredited provision will be included in the scope of the Recognising and Recording Progression and Achievement (RARPA) extension (REX) project. For more information on the REX project, please see the RARPA section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

## 3.7

During the piloting phase, the LSC will explore the feasibility of expanding the scope of qualifications included within the VA and DT for 16–19 learners measures. The inclusion of Key Skills and Technical Certificates within the WBL DT measure will be investigated further during the piloting phase as more robust data becomes available.

#### Exclusion of fail data in the VA measure

## 3.8

Learners who fail will be excluded from the VA measure during the piloting phase, while further investigation is undertaken to establish how this information can be incorporated into the calculation without distorting the institution's VA score. Currently, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) points score system being piloted has a disproportionate gap between the lowest

achievement and a fail. Please note that fail data will be included in the calculation of VA national chances charts. For more information about QCA points, please see paragraph 3.9. For more information about the exclusion of fails data in the VA measure, please see Section 12: *Further issues to be explored during the pilot.*

#### What are QCA points?

## 3.9

The QCA has developed a system which assigns a point score to all Section 96 qualifications approved for 14–19 learners. The new point scoring system is being tested in the DfES SCAAT pilot and, subject to successful outcomes, will be approved by ministers for use in a live environment from September 2006. This point score is used to measure achievement in all qualifications included within the VA for 16–19 measure. The QCA point score is also used in the VA and DT for 16–19 learners' measures to calculate prior attainment.

## 3.10

The QCA point scores for some qualifications included in the scope of VA and DT for 16–19 learners are listed in tables 2 and 3. Definitive guidance on the QCA point scores can be found at the QCA website at the following address: [http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/developments/index\\_including-all-approved.htm](http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/developments/index_including-all-approved.htm).

**Table 2: Post-16 qualifications included in the VA measure and associated QCA point scores**

A Level and AVCE Single Award		AS Level		AVCE Double Award		BTEC National Diploma	
Grade Points	QCA Points	Grade	QCA Points	Grade	QCA Points	Grade	QCA Points
A	270	A	135	AA	540	DDD	810
B	240	B	120	AB	510	DDM	757.5
C	210	C	105	BB	480	DMM	705
D	180	D	90	BC	450	MMM	652.5
E	150	E	75	CC	420	MMP	600
Others	0	Others	0	CD	390	MPP	547.5
				DD	360	PPP	495
				DE	330	Others	0
				EE	300		
				Others	0		

## 3.11

The QCA points assigned to some of the most common post-16 qualifications in scope for the DT for 16–19 learners measure are shown in table 3. In the cases of GCSE and GNVQ, the same point scores are used in the calculation of prior attainment. In the case of NVQ, different point scores are assigned to different widths, so a range of typical scores is indicated.

**Table 3: Qualifications in scope for the 16–19 learners DT measure and prior attainment qualifications and their associated QCA point scores**

GCSE (Levels 1 and 2)		Foundation GNVQ (Level 1)		Intermediate GNVQ (Level 2)		NVQ (2 and 3)		
Grade	QCA Points	Grade	QCA Points	Grade	QCA Points	Level	Outcome Points	QCA Points
A*	58	Distinction	136	Distinction	220	2	Pass	196-480
A	52	Merit	112	Merit	184		Other	0
B	46	Pass	76	Pass	160	3	Pass	245-672
C	40	Other	0	Other	0		Other	0
D	34							
E	28							
F	22							
G	16							
Others	0							

### Banding of QCA points

## 3.12

For some of the LAT outputs, QCA points have been split into bands in order to present the VA and DT information. The DT national comparison graphs report the performance of groups of learners within particular bands of prior attainment. The reason for this is that the DT measure reports the performance of groups of learners with a particular range of prior attainment as opposed to an individual learner. National chances charts also use banded prior attainment to indicate the expected performance of a learner in the VA measure or a group of learners in the DT measure, in a given band of prior attainment. The size of the bands and the range of QCA points they cover will be evaluated during the pilot phase.

### What is included in the calculation of a learner's prior attainment?

## 3.13

The starting point for both the VA and DT calculations is the average attainment of the learner at the start of the programme of study:

- For VA, the prior attainment is calculated as the average of the learner's attainment at Level 2 and below (that is, Key Stage 4) up to two years before the learner's outcome for 17 and 18 year olds and up to one year before, for 16 year olds. This is converted into QCA points. Further information about QCA points can be found paragraph 3.9.
- For DT, the prior attainment for all ages is calculated as the learner's average attainment at Level 2 and below, up to and including 15 (that is, Key Stage 4). This is converted into QCA points.

For an explanation of how prior attainment is calculated please see paragraph 3.16.

## 3.14

Prior attainment will include all Section 96 approved qualifications at Level 2 and below taken up to Key Stage 4. Table 4 on page 19 shows the scope of qualifications included for learners at different ages.

**Table 4: Scope of qualifications included in prior attainment for 16–19 learners**

Age of learner*	Measure	Prior Attainment will include
16	VA	Level 2 qualifications and below up age 15 (that is, up to one year before)
17	VA	Level 2 qualifications and below up to age 15 (that is, up to two years before)
18	VA	Level 2 qualifications and below up to age 16 (that is, up to two years before)
16	DT	Level 2 qualifications and below up to age 15
17	DT	Level 2 qualifications and below up to age 15
18	DT	Level 2 qualifications and below up to age 15

\* Age at the beginning of academic year in which qualification completed.

### 3.15

By measuring prior attainment up to two years before a learner's outcome attainment, 18 year old learners with any attainment at Level 2 and below at age 16 (for example GCSE resits), have this taken into account. A worked example of this calculation can be seen in Annex A (worked example 1) of this sub-section.

Table 5, on page 20 outlines how these outcome measures will be applied to WBL and FE-funded provision.

### How is prior attainment calculated?

#### 3.16

Prior attainment is calculated by adding together the total QCA points attained for applicable qualifications and dividing the total by the size of the qualifications attempted by the learner. A worked example of this calculation can be seen in Annex A (worked example 2) of this sub-section.

#### 3.17

GCSEs are given a size of one in the QCA points system, GNVQ Levels 1 and 2 (Foundation and Intermediate) are assigned a size of four. GNVQ scores are therefore treated as if they are the equivalent of four GCSEs. A worked example of this calculation can be seen in Annex A (worked example 3) of this sub-section.

### What is the outcome measure for DT?

#### 3.18

During the piloting phase, two outcome measures will be used for DT:

- outcomes based on success rates
- outcomes based on achievement rates.

**Table 5: Outcome measures for FE and WBL-funded provision within the scope of DT for 16–19 learners**

Funding stream	Qualifications	Outcome Measure
WBL-funded provision	All	Success rate
FE-funded provision	All NVQs	Success rate
FE-funded provision	All qualifications except NVQs	Achievement rate

## 3.19

During the piloting phase, the LSC will capture feedback on the use of different outcome measures in the calculation of the DT measure for FE-funded provision in order to evaluate which outcome measure is the most useful to the sector. For further information about how to provide feedback and contribute to the evaluation of the LAT, please see *Section 2: Piloting Arrangements for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners*.

## Prior Attainment

### What is included in Prior Attainment?

#### Worked example 1

- a. Learner A takes 10 GCSEs at 15 and progresses to complete a Level 3 at 17. The prior attainment will be the average of the total QCA point score, divided by a volume of 10 (that is, 10 GCSEs with a size of one)
- b. Learner B takes four GCSEs in the academic year in which the learner turns 16 and an intermediate GNVQ. As one GNVQ is equivalent to four GCSEs, the prior attainment is the total QCA points score divided by a volume of eight (that is, four GCSEs with a size of one and one GNVQ with a size of four)

### How is prior attainment calculated?

#### Worked example 2

- c. Learner C attains two Bs, three Cs, and a U at GCSE and an intermediate GNVQ.
  - First, we add together the corresponding QCA points in Table 3, on page 18. The learner's total point score is  $(2 \times 46) + (3 \times 40) + (1 \times 0) + (1 \times 160) = 372$  QCA points.
  - The total is then divided by the size of the qualifications attempted, so  $372 \div 10$  (GCSE = 1 and intermediate GNVQ = 4) = an average prior attainment value of 37.2 QCA points.

#### Worked example 3

- d. Learner D attains six GCSEs at grade C at age 15 and a merit in an intermediate GNVQ at age 16, and then progresses to take an A level at age 18. The prior attainment for this learner is calculated for all attainment up to and including 16 (that is, GCSE and GNVQ attainment).
  - all six GCSEs are assigned 40 points
  - an Intermediate GNVQ merit is assigned 184 points, and is the equivalent of four GCSEs
  - total prior attainment is divided by the total size of all qualifications attempted:  $(\text{six GCSEs} \times 40 \text{ QCA points}) + 184 \text{ for the GNVQ} \div (\text{six GCSEs} + \text{the equivalent of four GCSEs})$ .

Alternatively,  $((6 \times 40) + 184) \div (6 + 4) = 42.4$  QCA points.

## 4 Data for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners

### What data will I receive in the measures in 2006?

#### 4.1

The LAT software released in January 2006 will contain data for the cohort of learners who completed their post-16 qualifications in 2004/05 (or 2003/04 and 2004/05 for AS Level qualifications, in accordance with the criteria detailed in paragraphs 4.13- 4.15).

### Will the timing of the availability of the data always be the same?

#### 4.2

Yes, the data will be made available at the same time each year. The 'business as usual' timetable for making the data available will come into force from 2006 and is detailed in Section 2: Piloting Arrangements for Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners, paragraphs 2.25 to 2.26.

### What is the source of the VA data?

#### 4.3

The data used to calculate the VA measure is obtained directly from awarding bodies. Attainment data for post-16 qualifications is subsequently matched to attainment information on pre-16 qualifications, using forename, surname, date of birth and gender.

### What is the source of the DT data?

#### 4.4

The process for sourcing the data for the DT measure is the same as for the VA measure, with the addition of individualised learner record (ILR) data. Data from the ILR is needed to:

- identify those learners who completed but did not achieve a qualification included in the scope of the DT measure
- obtain attainment data for the DT measure that is not included in the main dataset received from the awarding bodies due to the timing of this data collection. For example, data on full Frameworks and NVQs awarded up to 1 August is collected from the ILR.

### What happens after the pre-16 attainment data has been matched to the attainment data for post-16 qualifications?

#### 4.5

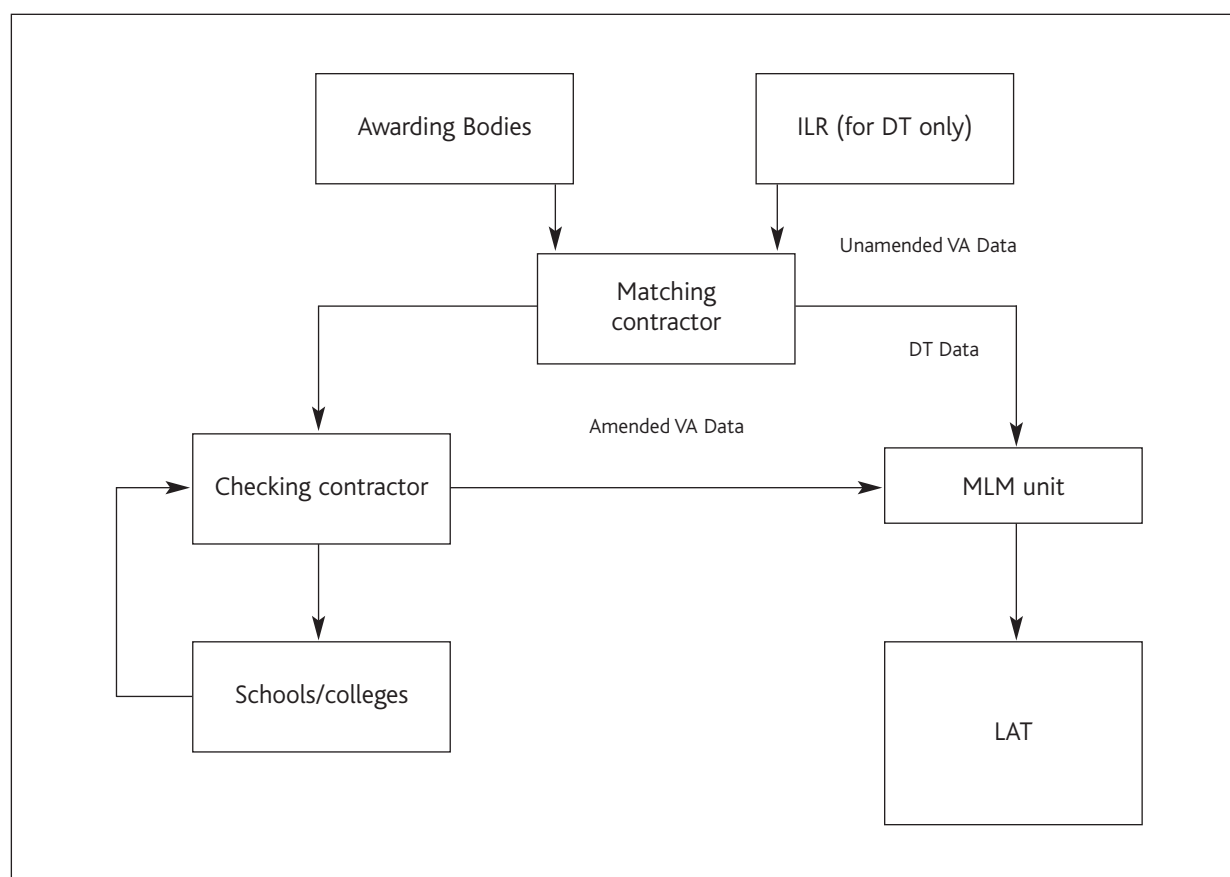
Once the data has been matched, it is credibility checked, and the attainment, provided by the awarding bodies in grades, is converted to QCA points. Further information on the use of QCA points can be found in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*. Discounting rules are applied to the dataset at this point, which identify whether an individual has already taken a qualification in the same subject. Please see paragraph 4.9 for further information about discounting.

#### 4.6

The data is then sent to the multi-level modelling (MLM) unit to calculate the national lines that give a picture of the average national performance. These national lines are fed into the LAT which then calculates the VA and DT scores for all subjects based on the national data set. The national data set is loaded into the LAT along with the national line information and this forms the basis of the VA and DT data produced in the LAT outputs. Figure 1 shows the data flow for the calculation of VA and DT for 16–19 learners.



**Figure 1 Data source and flow for the calculation of VA and DT for 16 – 19 learners**



**Will providers be able to check the accuracy of the data used to calculate VA and DT for 16–19 learners?**

**4.7**

Schools and colleges will be able to check the accuracy of the VA data as part of the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables (SCAAT) process. Unamended VA data will be made available through the LAT for initial reflection and VA will be recalculated using the amended data once it becomes available. Further information about the timetable for the release of the VA data can be found in paragraph 4.2.

**4.8**

During the pilot phase, further work will be done to develop a process for checking the DT data, feeding back amendments and recalculating the DT scores where applicable.

**What is discounting and how is it applied?**

**4.9**

Some qualifications are not counted in the calculation of the VA measure and these qualifications are said to

be discounted. If a qualification (for example, AS Level) can form part of a larger and/or higher level qualification (for example, an A Level) and the learner takes both qualifications during the period of study, then the smaller/lower level qualification (the AS Level) is discounted. Discounting across the programme of study of a learner ensures an individual learner and thus an institution is not credited, or penalised, for the same performance twice.

**4.10**

Please note that discounting rules only applies if the learner completes the larger qualification (for example A Level English) within two years of completing the smaller qualification in the same subject (AS Level English).

**4.11**

Discounting is also applied to National Awards and National Certificates, as these qualifications can then be counted towards a National Diploma, and to AVCE A Levels, if they are used as part of an AVCE A Level double award. Discounting cannot be applied across qualification types, even if they are taken in the same subject, for example, a National Diploma in Engineering would not discount an AVCE six unit in Engineering.

## 4.12

The DfES and the QCA develop and validate the rules as to which qualifications discount which other qualifications and in which subjects.

### Treatment of AS Level qualifications in the calculation of the VA scores

## 4.13

VA scores for AS Levels will be generated under the following conditions:

- if the learner completes a Level 3 programme of study within the two years following the completion of the AS Level, providing the AS Level is a stand alone qualification (i.e. if the learner does not progress onto an A Level in the same qualification within the two years following the completion of the AS Level)
- if the learner completes a Level 3 programme over three years, the AS Level qualification is counted even if an A Level is taken in the same subject.

## 4.14

Under the circumstances listed in paragraph 4.13 the learner's AS Level will be included in the calculation of VA when the learner completes their post-16 programme of study. Currently, the end of post-16 programme of study is defined as:

- when the learner has completed one qualification that is equal to or greater than 50 per cent of a Level 3 attainment (that is, an A Level)
- when an institution indicates that the learner has completed their programme of study during the data checking process for the SCAAT.

## 4.15

In addition to the criteria outlined above, discounting rules are also applied to AS Levels. For further information about discounting, please see paragraph 4.9.

## 4.16

Unlike the VA measure, the DT measure will not discount qualifications. This is because the relationship between a learner's progression to their outcome qualifications is different from that in VA. For instance, certain qualifications have pre-requisites which are not subject to discounting.

### Subject groupings in the calculation of the national average performance

## 4.17

The calculation of the national average performance in VA and DT will be undertaken for all subjects within a qualification taken by more than 80 learners nationally.

### The treatment of small subjects

## 4.18

A small subject is any subject within a qualification that is taken by less than 80 learners nationally, in a given year (for example, A Level Dutch). Whilst the number of learners who take small subjects is low, small subjects account for a substantial proportion of the subjects taken in most qualifications, and are offered by a relatively large number of providers.

## 4.19

It is not possible to generate a reliable national average performance for small subjects. Therefore, VA and DT scores for small subjects will be calculated on the national average performance for all of the aims in the Sector Subject Category (SSC) for that subject: table 1 shows the 15 sector subject categories. VA and DT scores for any subject with 80 aims (in other words, 80 learners within the national cohort) or greater, will be calculated using a national attainment line based solely on the aims in that subject. For example, if the national sample of 16–19 learners completing Level 2 NVQ in public services in a given year was 1,081, a provider's performance in Level 2 NVQ in public services will be compared to the national performance in the same qualification/subject area. These so called large subjects account for the majority of the aims taken.

## 4.20

For small subjects, a DT score will be calculated for each subject using a national line based on all of the aims taken by 16–19 learners in all of the subjects that are in the same SSC as the given small subject. For example, if the national sample of 16–19 learners completing Level 2 NVQ in community development in a given year was 20, a provider's performance in Level 2 NVQ in community development will be compared to the national performance in all of the subjects that are in the same SSC as community development (for example Health, Public Services and Care).

## 4.21

SSC has been chosen as it is being developed as the common subject classification for the entire sector. Further information about SSCs, including identification of which SSC a given subject belongs to, can be found at:  
<http://www.openquals.org.uk/openquals/SimpleSearch.aspx?nav=key>

## 4.22

There will be cases where the number of aims in a given qualification within an SSC will be less than 80. In these circumstances the national average performance will be based on all of the aims taken in that qualification.

## 4.23

For each qualification included in the VA and DT measures, a table of the number of aims taken nationally in each subject will be available in the documents area on the LAT. This table can be used to identify small subjects relevant to a provider's own provision.

## 4.24

The VA or DT scores for small subjects will be included in the aggregate VA or DT scores provided to an institution. However, such scores will be weighted by the number of aims taken.

**Table 1: Level 1 Sector Subject Categories**

SSC	SSC title
1	Health, Public Services and Care
2	Science and Mathematics
3	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
4	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
5	Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
6	Information and Communication Technology
7	Retail and Commercial Enterprise
8	Leisure, Travel and Tourism
9	Arts, Media and Publishing
10	History, Philosophy and Theology
11	Social Sciences
12	Languages, Literature and Culture
13	Education and Training
14	Preparing for Life and Work
15	Business, Administration and Law

## 5 Value Added summary charts

### What does the VA summary chart show?

#### 5.1

VA summary charts give an overview of a provider's performance across the range of provision compared to the national average performance. They are available at two levels:

- for each organisation, one chart showing the VA scores for each qualification type, for example; all A Levels, AVCEs and AS Levels. This type of summary chart will also show a provider's overall VA score
- For each qualification type, one chart showing the VA scores for each subject, for example; all A Level subjects taken by learners in the provider's . This type of summary will also show the VA score for the given qualification type, for example A Level.

#### 5.2

Please note a VA score will not be produced if the sample size of learners taking the subject group/qualification is lower than five. This is because judgements about a provider's performance in a given subject group and qualification cannot be made if the group size is lower than five.

#### 5.3

Figure 2 shows a VA summary chart of a provider's performance in A Level subjects.

#### 5.4

The **vertical axis** shows the VA score, indicated in QCA points. The VA score is the average difference in QCA points between the attainment of learners in this provider compared to the national average across the full range of prior attainment. For more information about the VA score and QCA points, please see Section 6: *Value Added national comparison graphs* and Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*, respectively. The national average attainment in each subject/qualification has been normalised and is represented by zero on the vertical axis. It is important to note that the summary chart does not indicate whether the national average attainment rate is high or low. In order to fully interpret this chart, the user will need to refer to qualification success rate data or the relevant VA national comparison graph to identify the level of the national average attainment.

#### 5.5

The **columns, labelled along the horizontal axis**, represent the provider's performance in each of the indicated subjects in the given qualification (subject/qualification). The VA score for each subject is indicated below the relevant column. Please note, if the sample size of the learners taking the indicated subject is lower than five, no column will be produced.

#### 5.6

**Shading** has been used to indicate the statistical significance of the VA score and to help users to identify strong and weak performance at a glance. **Shaded columns** indicate that the provider's performance is above (Figure 3a) or below (Figure 3c) the national average. **Unshaded columns** (Figures 3b and 3d) indicate that the provider's performance is similar to the national average. Please note: there are a number of reasons why some columns may not be shaded:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

The VA national comparison graph for the given subject/qualification will help to identify the potential reasons why the column may not be shaded.

#### 5.7

The **vertical line on each column** represents the 95 per cent confidence intervals and is generated from the data used to calculate the VA score. These intervals show us the range between which the provider's VA score actually lies. If the vertical line (or 95 per cent confidence interval) crosses the line at zero (Figures 3b and 3d), irrespective of whether the column is above or below this line, the provider's performance may not be different from the national average. When this is the case, the column will be **unshaded**. If the 95 per cent confidence intervals do not cross the line at zero, we can be confident that the provider's performance is above (Figure 3a) or below (Figure 3c) the national average. When this is the case, the column will be **shaded**.

5.8

**Please note:** the use of shading in the summary chart means that users do not need to consider the confidence intervals in order to establish whether the performance in a given subject/qualification is above or below the national average. For more information about 95 per cent confidence intervals, please see Section 11: *Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners: further questions*.

5.9

The use of the term 'significant' in the Key for the VA summary chart refers to whether the VA score is statistically valid and reliable. Please note that a VA score may be statistically significant and different from the norm, but that difference may be trivial.

5.10

The VA summary chart output reports produced by the LAT software released in January 2006 will also include a table, below the chart, containing the following information:

- qualification type or subject
- VA score
- 95 per cent confidence intervals.

#### How to interpret the VA summary chart

5.11

**If the VA score is positive and the column is shaded and above the national line**, represented as zero, (Figure 3a) we can be confident that the VA score is positive. In these cases, the VA score means that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is higher than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

5.12

**If the VA score is positive and the column is unshaded and above the national line** (figure 3b), we cannot be confident that the VA score is positive. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the VA score since there are several reasons why a column might not be shaded as discussed in paragraph 5.6. Further information about performance in the given subject/qualification can be found in the VA national comparison graph. Case study: school A within section 4 of this Quality Improvement Pack contains an example of how to interpret an unshaded column.

5.13

**If the VA score is negative and the column is shaded and below the national line**, represented as zero, (Figure 3c) we can be confident that the VA score is negative. In these cases, the VA score means that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is lower than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

5.14

**If the VA score is negative and the column is unshaded and below the national line** (Figure 3d), we cannot be confident that the VA score is negative. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the VA score since there are several reasons why a column might not be shaded as discussed in paragraph 5.6. Further information about performance in the given subject/qualification can be found in the VA national comparison graph. Case study: school A within section 4 of this Quality Improvement Pack contains an example of how to interpret an unshaded column.

#### How can VA summary charts be used for quality improvement?

5.15

The summary charts provide an immediate and clear opportunity to assess where there are particular strengths and areas for improvement within the provision of a particular institution. It is anticipated that a wide range of users, including senior managers, governors, heads of department and staff involved in quality assurance will find these outputs invaluable in indicating where good practice might be identified and disseminated and conversely, where there are areas which might benefit from additional quality improvement initiatives. Summary charts provide the first indication of how particular areas have performed in a given academic year but they only give an average of the VA across the range of prior attainment, that is, they do not show how the provider performs for learners at a different level of prior attainment. This information is available in the VA national comparison graph. Users can access the VA national comparison graph to drill down into the more specific subject/qualification to see a detailed picture of how the institution has performed. In the LAT software it will be possible to drill down to a national comparison graph for a given subject/qualification by clicking on the relevant column on the summary chart.

### How are VA summary charts calculated?

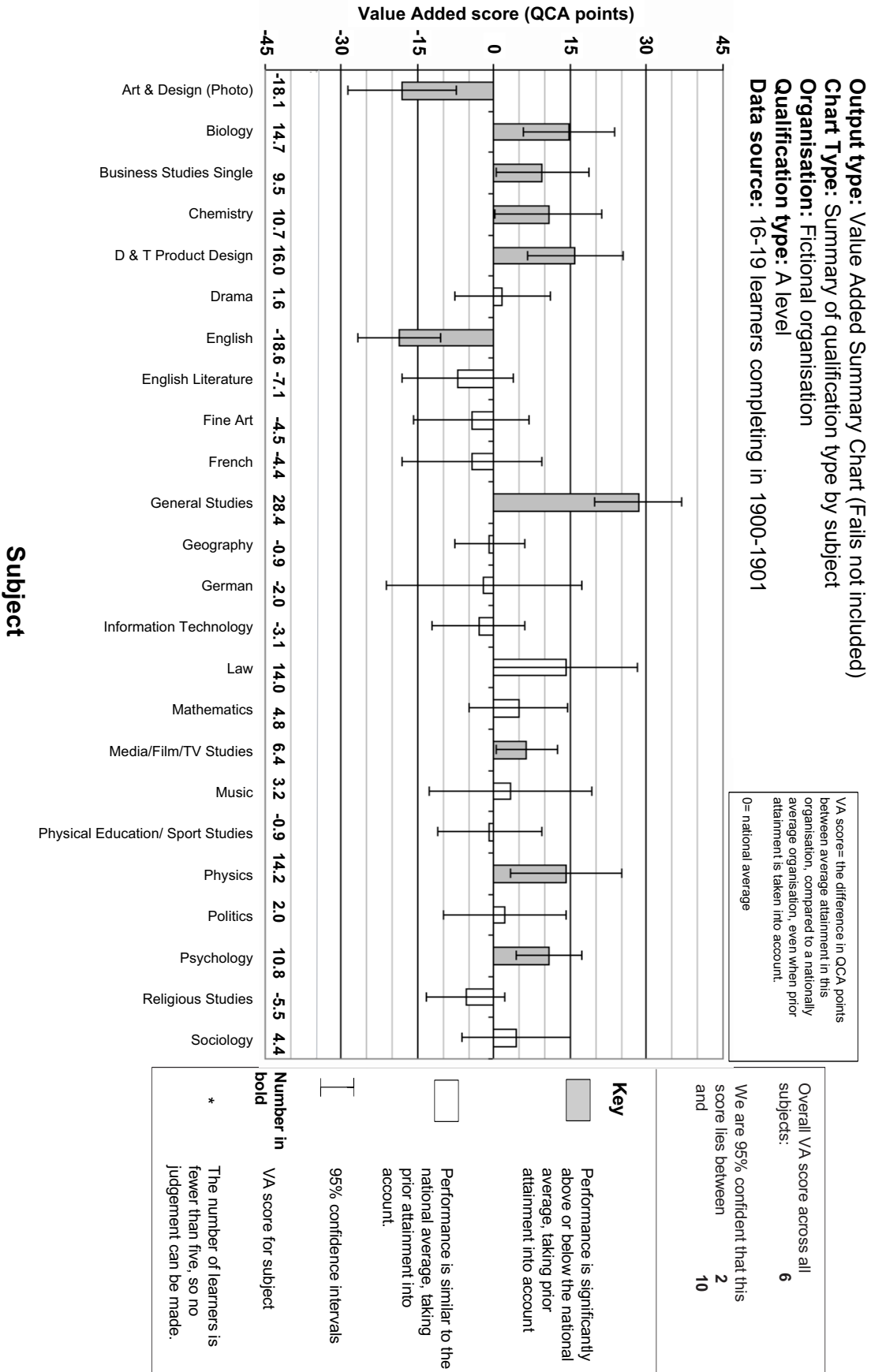
5.16

The VA scores generated from producing a national comparison graph for each subject for that qualification type are used to produce VA summary charts for a qualification type, such as in Figure 2. For more information about the VA national comparison graphs, see Section 6: *Value Added national comparison graphs*.

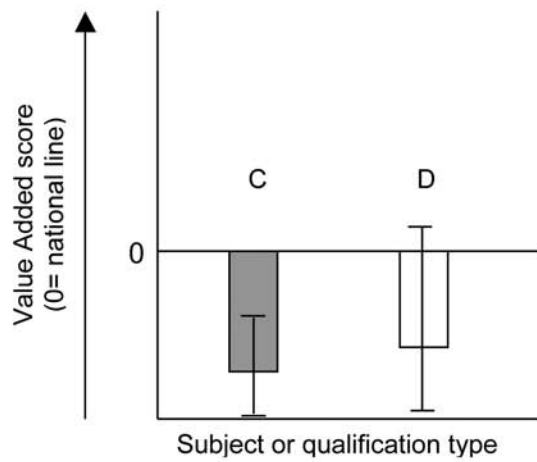
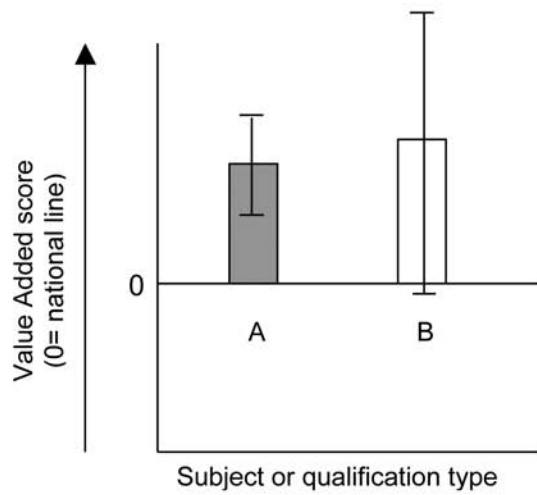
5.17

VA summary charts for all qualifications types are produced by aggregating the scores from all subjects within their qualification types and weighting them according to the numbers of learners in each. The overall VA score for all subjects is then presented in each case.

Figure 2: An example of a Value Added Summary Chart, showing an overview of a provider's performance across all A Level subjects



**Figure 3: Two examples of Value Added Summary Charts illustrating a variety of different interpretations.**





## 6 Value Added national comparison graphs

### What does the VA national comparison graph show?

#### 6.1

The VA national comparison graph shows the provider's performance in the given subject in the qualification (subject/qualification) compared to the national performance across the full range of prior attainment. Figure 4 shows a VA national comparison graph for A Level English.

#### 6.2

Please note the national comparison graph will not show the provider's performance or VA score in a given subject/qualification if the sample size of learners is lower than five. In these cases the national comparison graph will only show the average national performance, represented by the **solid line**, and the **individual points**. However, the LAT will also produce a table below the national comparison graph containing information about the provider's cohort of learners. For more information, please see paragraph 6.10.

#### 6.3

The **horizontal axis shows the prior attainment** of the cohorts of learners who took the subject/qualification in the previous academic year. The prior attainment is indicated in QCA points and is the average prior attainment for qualifications taken up to and including Key Stage 4. For example, a learner who gets five GCSEs at grade D will have an average prior attainment of 34 QCA points (that is,  $34 \times 5 / 5$ ). More information about prior attainment and QCA points can be found in Section 3: Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners.

#### 6.4

The **vertical axis shows the outcome of the post-16 qualification** for learners who took this qualification in the previous academic year. The outcome of the post-16 qualification is also measured in QCA points, for example a grade C at A Level is equivalent to 210 QCA points. For reference the corresponding grades are also plotted on the vertical axis.

#### 6.5

The **solid line is the national best fit line** and represents the average outcome attainment of *all* learners in England taking this subject/qualification in the previous academic year. The average outcome attainment is shown in relation to the prior attainment of the learners who took this qualification. For example, in figure 4, learners with an average prior attainment of

40 QCA points (that is, an average of grade C at GCSE Level or equivalent) achieved between 180 and 210 QCA points (that is, between a grade C and D) in A Level English. Learners with a prior attainment of 52 QCA points (that is, an average of grade A at GCSE or equivalent) achieved between 240 and 270 QCA points (that is, between a grade A and B) in the same subject.

#### 6.6

The **individual points** on the graph represent the learners who took this subject/qualification at the provider in the previous academic year. The points show the prior attainment and achievement of the post-16 qualification of the individual learners. Male learners are represented by squares and female learners are represented by triangles. In the future versions of the LAT software, it will be possible to identify name(s) of the learner(s) by moving the cursor over the individual points.

#### 6.7

The dotted line is the **provider's best fit line** and represents the best estimate of the provider's performance in this subject/qualification in the previous academic year relative to the prior attainment of the learners involved. The provider line is generated from information from both the individual learner points and the national data sample.

#### 6.8

The **shaded area** defined by dotted lines represents the 95 per cent confidence intervals associated with the provider best fit line. The confidence intervals are generated from the data used to produce the graph and show the range between which we are confident that the provider's best fit line actually lies. The shaded area tells us that 19 out of 20 times, the provider's best fit line will lie somewhere within the shaded area, but on average it will be where the dotted line is. The shaded area needs to be considered when interpreting the graph. For more information about 95 per cent confidence intervals, please see Section 11: *Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners: further questions*.

#### 6.9

The key for the graph shows the **VA score** in QCA points. In most cases, this score is the average distance between the national line and the provider line across the full range of prior attainment<sup>1</sup>. The VA score represents how much difference the provider has made to the achievement of its learners across the full range

<sup>1</sup> The VA score is the average of the distance from the individual learner points to the national line. In most cases this difference represents the average distance between the national line and the provider line.

of prior attainment compared to how those learners would have performed in a nationally average provider. In Figure 4, the VA score is -18.6 QCA points. This means that on average, learners within this provider achieve around 19 QCA points or just over half of an A Level grade lower than they might have performed in a nationally average provider (30 QCA points are equivalent to one A Level grade). The VA score also has associated 95 per cent confidence intervals, which are also indicated in the key. The confidence intervals show the range within which we are confident that the provider's VA score actually lies. The confidence intervals need to be considered when interpreting the VA score.

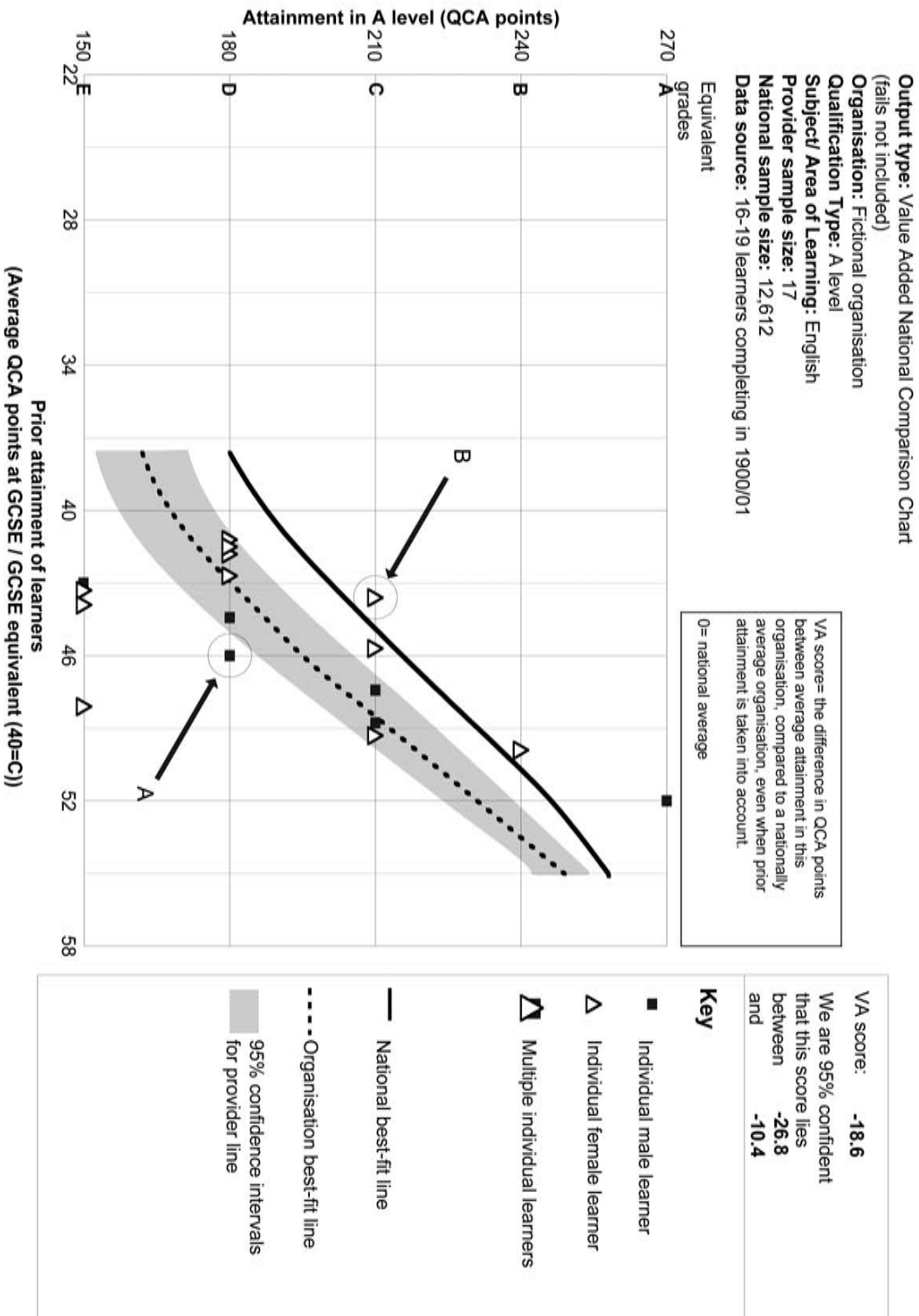
#### 6.10

The VA national comparison graph output reports produced by the LAT software released in January 2006 will also include a table, below the graph, containing information about:

- individual learner names
- individual learner prior attainment
- individual learner outcome attainment
- VA score for individual learners
- total number of learners
- 95 per cent confidence intervals.

Please note, Local LSCs and Local Authorities will not have access to individual learner level data.

**Figure 4: An example of a Value Added National Comparison Graph showing a provider's performance in A Level English, compared to the national performance across the full range of prior attainment.**



## How to interpret the VA score and associated confidence intervals

**Table 1: Summary of the interpretation of VA scores and the associated 95 per cent confidence intervals. Please refer to the text for further details**

	VA Score	Confidence intervals	Interpretation
<b>a</b>	Positive (for example, +8.0)	Between two positive numbers  (for example +5.0 to +11.0)	On average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance.
<b>b</b>	Positive (for example, +8.0)	Between a positive and negative number  (for example +10.0 to -1.2)	Care needs exercised when interpreting the VA score. Please see paragraph 6.12 for further information.
<b>c</b>	Negative (for example, -8.0)	Between two negative numbers  (for example, -5.0 to -11.0)	On average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance.
<b>d</b>	Negative (for example, -8.0)	Between a negative and a positive number  (for example, -15.0 to +11.0)	Care needs exercised when interpreting the VA score. Please see paragraph 6.14 for further information.

6.11

If the **VA score** and the **confidence intervals are positive** (a in Table 1), we can be confident that the provider's VA score is positive. In these cases, the VA score means that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is higher than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

6.12

If the **VA score is positive but the confidence intervals include a positive and negative number** (b in Table 1) we cannot be confident that the VA score is positive (above zero). In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the VA score and it may not be possible to make a judgement about performance in the given subject/qualification. There are several reasons why the confidence intervals might include a positive and negative number:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

The graph will help you identify why the confidence intervals include a positive and negative number. Case study: school A with in section 4 of this Quality Improvement Pack contains an example of how to interpret an unshaded column.

6.13

If the **VA score** and the **confidence intervals are negative** (c in Table 1) we can be confident that the VA score is negative. In these cases, the VA score means that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is lower than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

6.14

If the **VA score is negative but the confidence intervals include a positive and negative number** (d in Table 1) we cannot be confident that the VA score is negative. In these cases, we need to exercise caution

when interpreting the VA score and it may not be possible to make a judgement about performance in the given subject/qualification. Further information can be found in paragraph 6.12.

6.15

**Please note** that care must be taken in interpreting the VA score. The VA score is an average score across the range of prior attainment of learners at that provider. The graph shows how the performance of learners differs according to their prior attainment and this provides a more sophisticated interpretation of how the provider contributes to the attainment of learners with different levels of prior attainment.

### How to interpret the VA national comparison graph

6.16

If the **provider line and the shaded area are above the national line** (Figure 5a) across the full range of prior attainment, the graph shows that, on average, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of all learners who enter the programme with different levels of prior attainment compared to the national average performance.

6.17

If the **provider line and the shaded area are below the national line** across the full range of prior attainment (Figure 5c) the graph shows that on average the provider has a negative effect on the performance of all learners who enter the programme with different levels of prior attainment compared to the national average performance.

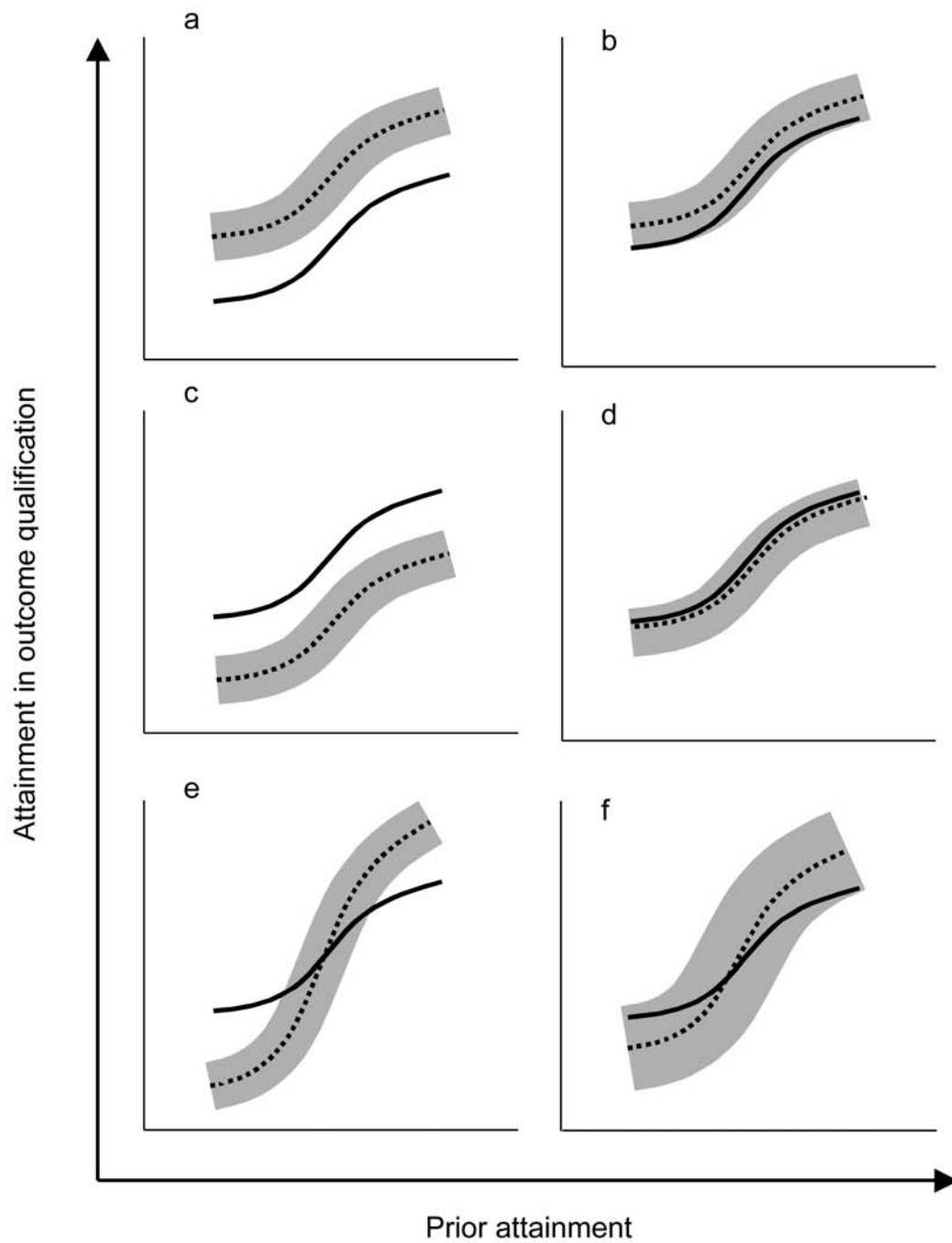
6.18

If the **provider line and the shaded area cross the national line** (Figure 5e) the graph shows that the provider's effect on the performance of learners in the given subject/qualification, relative to the national average, will vary according to the prior attainment of these learners. For example, the provider may have a positive effect on the performance of learners who enter the programme with high prior attainment. In contrast, the provider may have a negative effect on the performance of learners entering the programme with low prior attainment.

6.19

If the **provider line is above, below or crosses the national line but the shaded area contains the national line** (Figures 5 b, d and f) we cannot be confident that the provider has a positive or negative effect on the performance of all learners who enter the programme with different levels of prior attainment. In these cases, the graph suggests that the provider's effect on the performance of learners is similar to the national average performance.

**Figure 5: Six examples of Value Added National Comparison Graphs to illustrate a variety of different interpretations.**



### Interpretation of the points on the graph

6.20

The position of the points on the graph representing individual learners gives further information about how learners performed in the given subject/qualification and whether the prior or outcome attainment of the cohort are skewed. Points below the provider line, for example learner A in Figure 4, indicate that a learner achieved a lower grade than would be expected given their prior attainment. Similarly, points above the provider best fit line, for example, learner B in Figure 4, indicate that those learners achieved a higher grade than would be expected given their prior attainment.

### Using the information in the VA national comparison graph for reflection and quality improvement.

6.21

The information in national comparison graphs should allow providers to make judgements which can answer the following questions:

- are learners at this institution making better or worse progress than would be expected when compared to the national picture?
- do learners with a given prior attainment (for example a low or high prior attainment) make better or worse progress than expected?
- have any learners achieved higher or lower than expected?

6.22

Answering these questions will provide a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of a provider, which can be used to focus quality improvement strategies. For example, if the national comparison graph shows that performance in a particular qualification/subject (for example, A Level English) is worse than the national average, providers may wish to target resources and quality improvement in that area. Similarly, there may be areas of provision where learners with a particularly high or low prior attainment are not achieving as well as other learners within the provider. In such cases, some targeting of learners with a given prior attainment may be appropriate to improve their achievement.

6.23

The graphs will also show clearly where there are areas of demonstrably good practice, in which learners are performing substantially better than the national average when their prior attainment is taken into account. Institutions may wish to target this type of provision and use the practice identified in this area to drive quality improvement across the organisation.

### How are VA national comparison graphs calculated?

6.24

The information in the VA national comparison graphs is calculated using a statistical methodology called multi-level modelling (MLM). Further information about MLM will be available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages in early 2006.

## 7 Value Added national chances charts

### What does the VA national chances chart show?

#### 7.1

The VA national chances chart shows the chances of an individual learner with a given prior attainment achieving each of the possible grades for the subject/qualification. Figure 6 shows the chances of a learner with a prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points (that is, an average prior attainment of between C and B at GCSE or GCSE equivalent) achieving a grade A, B, C, D and E in A Level English. Please note Figure 6 uses fictional data from 1900-1901 for illustrative purposes.

#### 7.2

VA national chances charts for any given subject/qualification will be available for six bands of prior attainment. The LAT software will allow selection of these different bands of average prior attainment for each subject/qualification included in the scope of the VA measure. The VA national chances charts will also include fails, however, a column indicating the chances of fails will not be shown.

#### 7.3

VA national chances charts are based on the national data set. They do not take into account the difference made by a provider to a learner's chances. This means that all providers will receive the same set of VA national chances charts.

#### 7.4

The **vertical axis** shows the probability of achieving the possible grades for the given subject/qualification and is indicated as a percentage.

#### 7.5

The **horizontal axis shows** the different grades and each column represents the probability of attaining the indicated grade.

#### 7.6

Figure 6 (which uses fictional data from 1900-1901 for illustrative purposes) shows that, in 1900 - 1901:

- 14,958 of the learners who passed A Level English in 1900-1901 had an average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points
- of these 14,958 learners:
  - nine per cent achieved an E in A Level English
  - 21 per cent achieved a grade D in A Level English
  - 31 per cent achieved a grade C in A Level English
  - 28 per cent achieved a grade B in A Level English
  - 12 per cent achieved a grade A in A Level English
- in total, over half of this group of learners achieved grade C or higher in A Level English.

Please note that fails are not included in the VA chances chart illustrated in Figure 6. However, the VA national chances charts available in the LAT in January 2006 will include fails.

#### 7.8

Based on this information predictions can be made about how learners with similar prior attainment might achieve in the future.

### How can VA national chances charts be used for quality improvement?

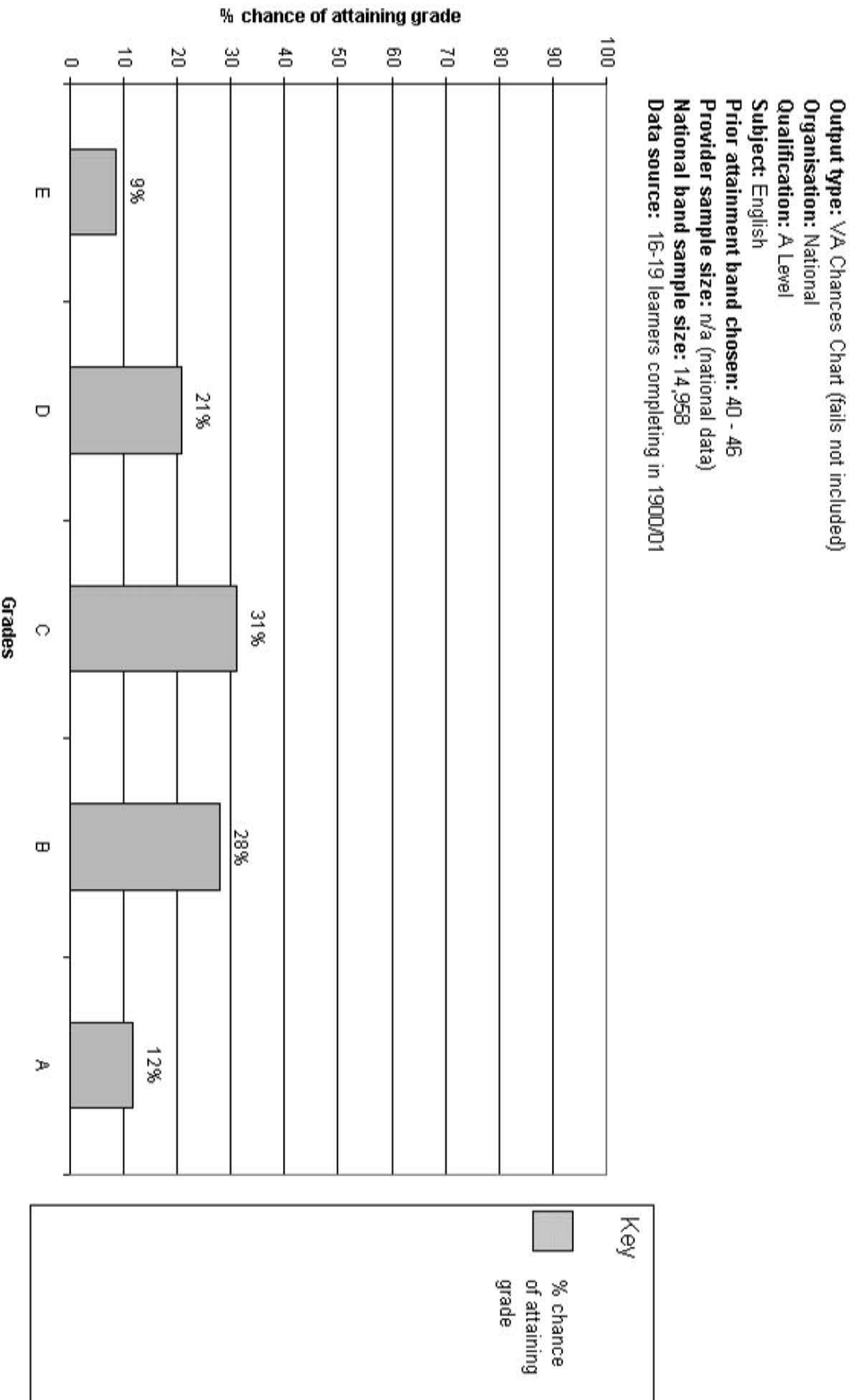
#### 7.9

VA chances charts can be used to support learner progress by helping:

- tutors to establish challenging but realistic targets for individual learners to aspire to
- to monitor a learner's progress throughout their course and judge whether it is in line with expectations
- to judge whether a learner is likely to need extra help and support to achieve their aims
- in combination with other factors, to help inform decisions about the selection of the most appropriate course for the individual learner, although it is not recommended that chances charts are used as the primary tool for recruitment.



**Figure 6: An example of a Value Added National Chances Chart, showing the chances of an individual learner with average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points attaining each of the possible grades in A Level English.**



## 7.10

Care should be taken over the use of chances charts and tutors will need to use their professional judgement to ensure that they are used as a motivational tool, where appropriate, to encourage learners to realise their potential. Chances charts could have a demotivating effect on individual learners if their chance of achieving their desired grade or qualification is low. Chances charts only take into account the average prior attainment of the learner. Other factors will influence the actual grade that the learner attains, and a personal tutor may wish to build discussion of these factors into their motivational target-setting process.

## 7.11

Combined with the application of the RARPA process, the VA chances chart should provide a powerful tool to enable providers to track the progress of individual learners towards their given target. There are many examples of the effective use of VA methods alongside effective tutorial and support arrangements to drive up achievement. Some of these examples will be available in the LSDA's effective practice guide in using VA systems to set targets and monitor and support learner progress, which will be available in January 2006. Further information about this resource can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section of this Quality Improvement Pack. More information about RARPA and its extension to accredited provision can be found in the RARPA section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

### How are VA national chances charts calculated?

## 7.11

VA chances charts are calculated in a different way from VA national comparison graphs. The VA chances charts are based on data from learners who pass their qualification only and does not take into account those learners who failed the given qualification. The outcome grade of each learner in their post-16 qualification within the national sample for the given subject and qualification is grouped into bands of prior attainment. The LAT then counts the number of learners within the given band of prior attainment who attained each of the grades and converts this number into a percentage of the sample size for the given prior attainment.

## 7.12

VA chances charts are calculated in a different way from VA national comparison graphs. Please note, fails are included in the calculation of VA national chances charts. The outcome grade of each learner in their post-16 qualification within the national sample for the given subject and qualification is grouped into bands of prior attainment. The LAT then counts the number of learners within the given band of prior attainment who

attained each of the grades and converts this number into a percentage of the sample size for the given prior attainment. An example is included at paragraph 7.6.

## 7.13

For example, 14,958 of the learners who passed A Level English in 1900–1901 had an average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points. Of these 14,958 learners, 4,637 achieved a grade C in A Level English. Expressed as a percentage, 4,637 out of 14,958 learners is 31 per cent.

## 8 Distance Travelled summary charts

### What does the DT summary chart show?

#### 8.1

The DT summary chart gives an overview of a provider's performance across the range of provision compared to the national average performance. They are available at the following levels:

- for each provider, one chart showing the DT scores for each qualification type, for example: NVQ Level 2, NVQ Level 3, Foundation GNVQ, Intermediate NVQ
- for each qualification type, one chart showing each subject grouping, for example: all subject groups offered within a provider's NVQ Level 2 provision. This type of summary will also show the DT score for the given qualification type, for example, NVQ Level 2.

#### 8.2

Please note, a DT score will not be produced if the sample size of learners taking the subject group/qualification is lower than five. This is because judgements about a provider's performance in a given subject group and qualification cannot be made if the group size is lower than five.

#### 8.3

Figure 7 shows a DT summary chart of a provider's performance in different subject groups where NVQ Level 2 provision is offered.

#### 8.4

**Please note** users seeking information about the interpretation and application of GCSE summary charts should see Section 5: *Value Added summary charts*.

#### 8.5

The vertical axis shows the DT score, indicated as the percentage difference in the provider's achievement or success rate\* compared to the national average. The national average achievement or success rate for each subject group has been normalised and is represented by zero on the vertical axis. It is important to note that the summary chart does not indicate whether the national average achievement or success rate is high or low. In order to fully interpret this chart, the user will need to refer to qualification success rate data to identify the level of the national average attainment.

\* DT scores are indicated as the percentage difference in an achievement or success rate, which takes into account prior attainment. For more information, please see Section 3 *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*, paragraph 3.18.

#### 8.6

The **columns, labelled along the horizontal axis**, represent the provider's performance in each of the indicated subject groups in the indicated qualification. The DT score for each subject group/subject is indicated below the relevant column. Please note: if the sample size of the learners taking the indicated subject group/qualification is lower than five, no column will be produced.

#### 8.7

**Shading** has been used to indicate the significance of the DT score and to help users to identify strong and weak performance at a glance. **Shaded columns** indicate that the provider's performance is above (Figure 8a) or below (Figure 8c) the national average. **Unshaded columns** (Figures 8b and 8d) indicate that the provider's performance is similar to the national average. Please note: there are a number of reasons why some columns may not be shaded:

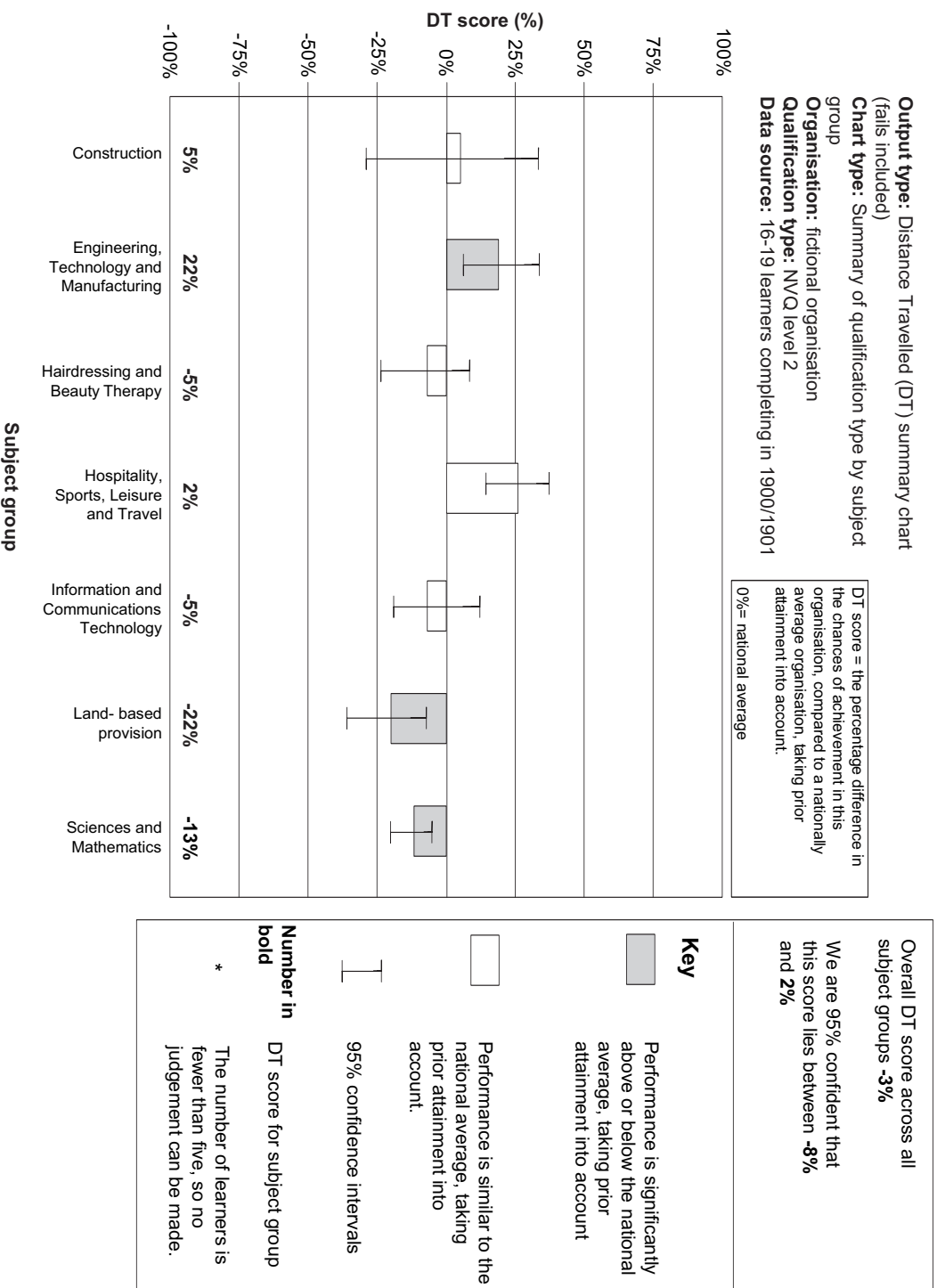
- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

The DT national comparison graph for the given subject group/qualification will help to identify the potential reasons why the column may not be shaded.

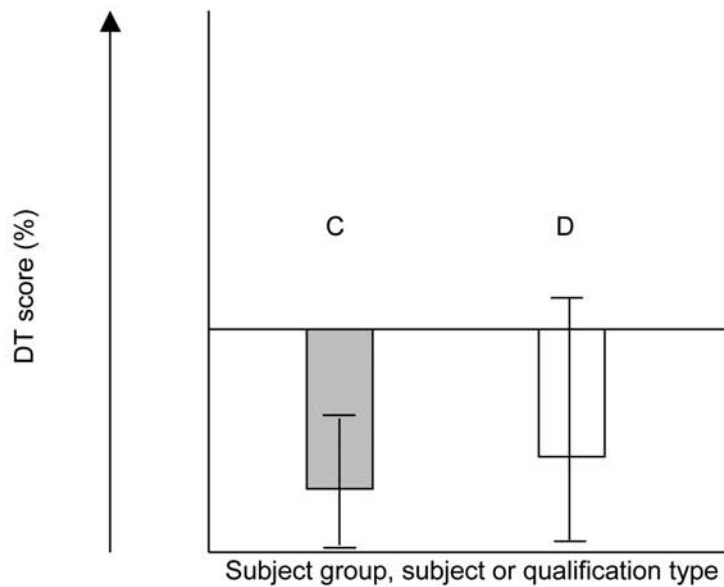
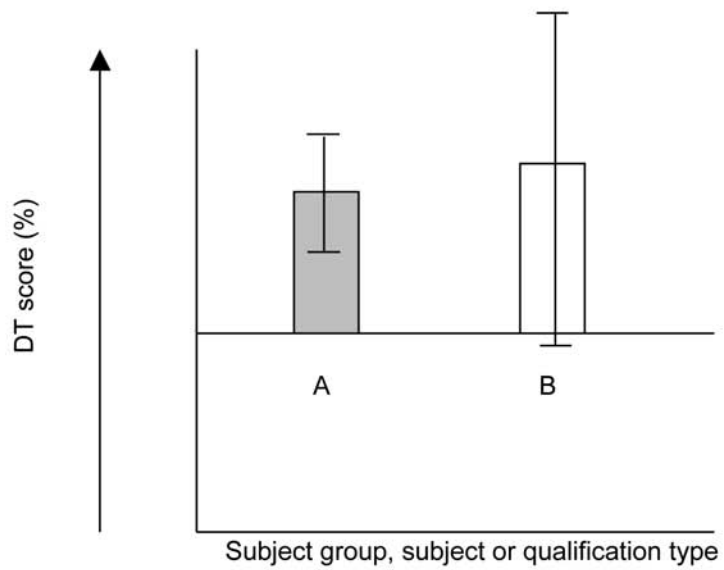
#### 8.8

The **vertical line on each column** represents the 95 per cent confidence intervals and is generated from the data used to calculate the DT score. These intervals show us the range between which we are confident that the DT score actually lies. If the vertical line (or 95 per cent confidence intervals) crosses the line at zero (Figure 8b and 8d), irrespective of whether the column is above or below this line, the provider's performance may not be different from the national average. When this is the case, the column will be **unshaded**. If the 95 per cent confidence intervals do not cross the line at zero, we can be confident that the provider's performance is above (Figure 8a) or below (Figure 8c) the national average. When this is the case, the column will be **shaded**.

**Figure 7: An example of a Distance Travelled summary chart, giving an overview of a provider's performance across the range of NVQ level 2 provision.**



**Figure 8: Two examples of Distance Travelled Summary Charts illustrating a variety of different interpretations. Please see text for details.**



8.9

Please note: the use of shading in the summary chart means that users do not need to consider the confidence intervals in order to establish whether performance in a given subject group/qualification is above or below the national average. For more information about 95 per cent confidence intervals, please see Section 11: *Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners: further questions*.

8.10

The use of the term 'significant' in the Key for the DT summary chart refers to whether the DT score is *statistically* valid and reliable. Please note that a DT score may be statistically significant and different from the norm, but that difference may be trivial.

8.11

The DT summary chart output reports produced by the LAT software released in January and February 2006 will also include a table, below the chart, containing the following information:

- qualification type or subject
- DT score
- 95 per cent confidence intervals.

### How to interpret the DT summary chart

8.12

**If the DT score is positive and the column is shaded and above the national line**, represented as zero, (Figure 8a) we can be confident that the DT score is positive. In these cases, the DT score means that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject group/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is higher than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

8.13

**If the DT score is positive and the column is unshaded and above the national line**, represented as zero, (Figure 8b) we cannot be confident that the DT is positive. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the DT score since there are several reasons why a column might not be shaded as discussed in paragraph 8.7. Further information about performance in the given subject group/qualification can be found in the DT national comparison graph.

8.14

**If the DT score is negative and the column is shaded and below the national line**, represented as zero, (Figure 8c) we can be confident that the DT score is negative. In these cases, the DT score suggests that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject group/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is lower than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

8.15

**If the DT score is negative and the column unshaded and below the national line**, represented as zero (Figure 8d) we cannot be confident that the DT score is negative. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the DT score since there are several reasons why a column might not be shaded as discussed in paragraph 8.7. Further information about performance in the given subject group/qualification can be found in the DT national comparison graph.

### How can DT summary charts be used for quality improvement?

8.16

The summary charts provide an immediate and clear opportunity to assess where there are particular strengths and areas for improvement within the provision of a particular provider. It is anticipated that a wide range of users, including senior managers, governors, heads of department and staff involved in quality assurance, will find these outputs invaluable in indicating where good practice might be identified and disseminated and conversely, where there are areas which might benefit from additional quality improvement initiatives.

8.17

Summary charts provide the first indication of how particular areas have performed in a given academic year, but they only give an average of the DT score across the range of prior attainment, that is, they do not show how the institution performs for learners at a particular level of prior attainment. This information will be available in the DT national comparison charts. Users will be able to access the DT national comparison charts to drill down into the more specific subject grouping and qualification type, to see a detailed picture of how the provider has performed which shows the profile of performance for the given area across the range of prior attainment of the learners.

### How are DT summary charts calculated?

8.18

The overall DT scores generated from producing a national comparison graph for each subject group for that qualification type are used to produce DT summary charts for a qualification type, such as Figure 7. For more information about the DT national comparison graphs, see Section 9: *Distance Travelled national comparison graphs*.

8.19

DT summary charts for all qualifications types/subject groups are produced by aggregating the scores from all subject groups and weighting them according to the numbers of learners in each. The aggregated difference in achievement or success rate over all subject groups is then presented in each case. This type of summary report is the highest level of aggregation possible in DT. It is not appropriate to calculate the overall difference in the expected achievement or success rate across all qualification types to produce an institutional DT score. This is because the qualifications included in DT are not similar enough to make an overall DT score meaningful.

## 9 Distance Travelled national comparison graphs

### What will the DT national comparison graph show?

#### 9.1

The DT national comparison graph will show the provider's performance in the given subject group in the given qualification (subject group/qualification) compared to the national performance across the full range of prior attainment. Figure 9 shows a national comparison graph for NVQ Level 2 in the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*.

#### 9.2

Please note, a DT score will not be produced if the group of learners taking the subject group/qualification with the given prior attainment is lower than five. This is because judgements about the performance of a group of learners with a given band of prior attainment, in a given subject group/qualification cannot be made if the group size is lower than five.

#### 9.3

The **horizontal axis shows the prior attainment** of the cohorts of learners who took the given subject group/qualification in the previous academic year. The prior attainment is banded and is indicated in QCA points and is the average prior attainment for qualifications taken up to and including Key Stage 4. For example, a learner who gets five GCSEs at grade D will have an average prior attainment of 34 QCA points (that is,  $34 \times 5/5$ ). More information about prior attainment and QCA points can be found in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*.

#### 9.4

The **vertical axis** shows the DT score, which is the percentage difference in the provider's achievement or success rate\* in the given subject group/qualification compared to the national average for the indicated band of prior attainment. The national average achievement or success rate for each subject group has been normalised and is represented by zero on vertical axis. It is important to note that the DT national comparison graph does not indicate whether the national average achievement or success rate is high or low. In order to fully interpret this chart, the user will need to refer to qualification success rate data to identify the level of the national average achievement or success rate.

#### 9.5

The **columns, labelled along the horizontal axis**, represent the performance of the provider's learners with the indicated bands of prior attainment labelled across the horizontal axis, who took this qualification in the previous year. The DT score for each band of prior attainment is indicated below the relevant column. If the sample size of the learners with the indicated band of prior attainment is lower than five, no column will be produced.

#### 9.6

**Shading** has been used to indicate the significance of the DT score and to help users to identify strong and weak performance at a glance. **Shaded columns** indicate that the provider's performance is above (Figure 10a) or below (Figure 10c) the national average. **Unshaded columns** (Figures 10b and 10d) indicate that the provider's performance is similar to the national average. Please note: there are number of reasons why some bars on the chart may not be shaded:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

#### 9.7

The **vertical line on each column** represents the 95 per cent confidence intervals and is generated from the data used to calculate the DT score. These intervals show us the range in which we are confident that the provider's DT score actually lies. If the vertical line (or 95 per cent confidence intervals) crosses the line at zero (Figure 10b and 10d), irrespective of whether the column is above or below this line, the provider's performance may not be different from the national average. When this is the case, the column will be **unshaded**. If the 95 per cent confidence intervals do not cross the line at zero, the provider's performance is above (Figure 10a) or below (Figure 10c) the national average. When this is the case, the column will be **shaded**.

\* DT scores are indicated as the percentage difference in an achievement or success rate, which takes into account prior attainment. For more information, please see section 3: Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16 – 19 learners, paragraph 3.18.



## 9.8

Please note: the use of shading in the summary chart means that users do not need to consider the confidence intervals in order to establish whether performance in a give subject/qualification is above or below the national average. For more information about 95 per cent confidence intervals, see Section 11: *Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners: further questions*.

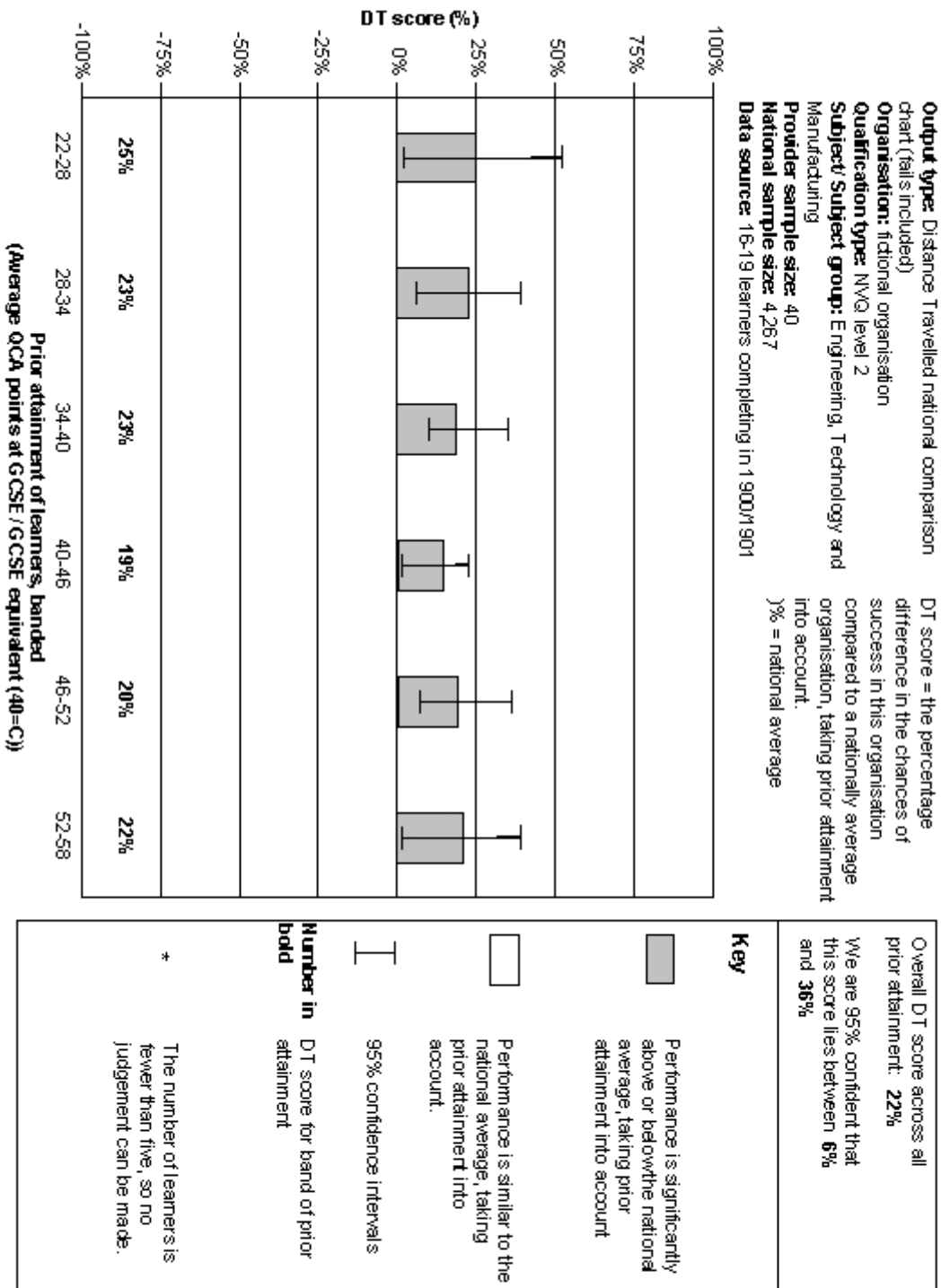
## 9.9

The use of the term 'significant' in the Key for the DT national comparison chart refers to whether the DT score is statistically valid and reliable. Please note that a DT score may be statistically significant and different from the norm, but that difference may be trivial.

## 9.10

The key for the graph shows the **overall DT score** across the full range of prior attainment. The overall DT score represents how much difference the provider has made to the achievement of its learners across the full range of prior attainment compared to how those learners would have performed in a nationally average provider. In figure 9, the DT score is 22 per cent. This means that on average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the achievement rate of learners completing *NVQ Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing* is 22 per cent higher than would have been expected had they completed the same qualification in a nationally average institution. The DT score also has associated 95 per cent confidence intervals, which are also indicated in the key. The confidence intervals show the range between which we are confident that the provider's DT score actually lies. The confidence intervals need to be considered when interpreting the DT score. The overall DT score and associated 95 per cent confidence intervals are used to generate the DT summary chart.

**Figure 9: An example of a Distance Travelled National Comparison Graph showing a provider's performance in NVQ Level 2 Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing compared to the national performance, in bands of prior attainment**



## How to interpret the overall DT score and associated confidence intervals

9.11

**Table 2: Summary of the interpretation of overall DT score and the associated 95 per cent confidence intervals. Please refer to the text for further details**

	Overall DT Score	Confidence intervals	Interpretation
<b>a</b>	Positive (for example, +8.0)	Between two positive numbers  (for example, +5.0 to +11.0)	On average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification compared to the national average performance.
<b>b</b>	Positive (for example, +8.0)	Between a positive and negative number  (for example -1.2 to +10.0)	Care needs exercised when interpreting the DT score. Please see paragraph 9.13 for further information.
<b>c</b>	Negative (for example, -8.0)	Between two negative numbers  (for example, -11.0 to - 5.0)	On average, when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject/qualification, compared to the national average performance.
<b>d</b>	Negative (for example, -8.0)	Between a negative and a positive number  (for example, -11 to + 5.0)	Care needs exercised when interpreting the DT score. Please see paragraph 9.15 for further information.

9.12

If the **overall DT score** and the **confidence intervals are positive** (a in table 2) we can be confident that the provider's DT score is positive. In these cases, the DT score suggests that when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject group/qualification, compared to the national average performance. This suggests that, on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is higher than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

9.13

If the **overall DT score is positive but the confidence intervals include a positive and negative number** (b in table 6) we cannot be confident that the DT score is positive. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the DT score and it may not be possible to make a judgement about performance in the given subject group/qualification. There are several reasons why the confidence intervals might include a positive and negative number:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

The chart will help to identify intervals why the confidence interval might include a positive and negative number.

9.14

If the **overall DT score** and the **confidence intervals are negative** (c in table 6) we can be confident that the DT score is negative. In these cases, the DT score suggests that on average when prior attainment is taken into account, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners in the given subject group/qualification compared to the national average performance. This suggests that on average, the performance of the provider's cohort of learners is lower than that of national average performance of learners with the same range of prior attainment.

9.15

If the **overall DT score is negative but the confidence intervals include a positive and negative number** (d in table 6) we cannot be confident that the DT score is negative. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the DT score and it may not be possible to make a judgement about performance in

the given subject group/qualification. Further information can be found in paragraph 9.13.

9.16

**Please note** that care must be taken in interpreting the DT score. The DT score is an average score across the range of prior attainment of learners at that provider. The graph shows how the performance of learners differs according to their prior attainment and this provides a more sophisticated interpretation of how the provider contributes to the attainment of learners taking a subject group/subject with different levels of prior attainment.

### How to interpret the DT national comparison graph

9.17

**If the DT score is positive and the column is shaded and above the national line**, represented as zero, (figure 10a) we can be confident that DT score is positive. In these cases, the DT score means that, on average, the provider has a positive effect on the performance of its learners with the given band of prior attainment compared to the national average performance.

9.18

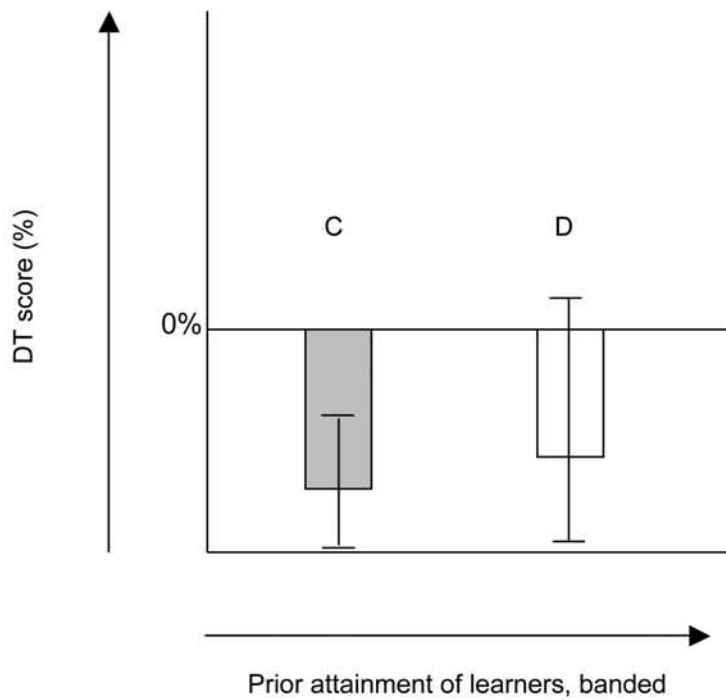
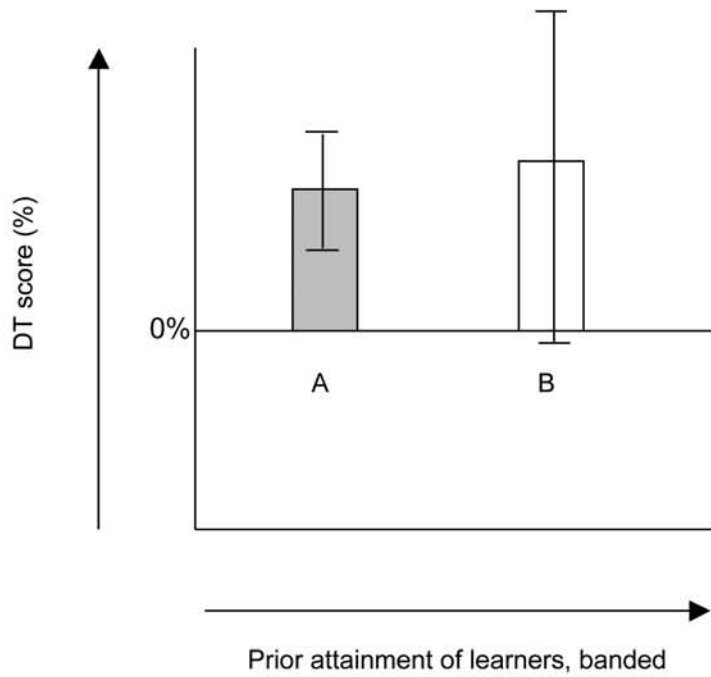
**If the DT score is positive and the column is unshaded and above the national line**, represented as zero, (figure 10b) we cannot be confident that the DT score is positive. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the DT score since there are several reasons why a column might not be shaded as discussed previously:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

9.19

**If the DT score is negative and the column is shaded and below the national line**, represented as zero, (figure 10c) we can be confident that the DT score is negative. In these cases, the DT score means that, on average, the provider has a negative effect on the performance of its learners with the given band of prior attainment compared to the national average performance.

**Figure 10: Two examples of Distance Travelled National Comparison Charts illustrating a variety of different interpretations. Please see text for details.**



9.20

**If the DT score is negative and the column is unshaded and below the national line**, represented as zero (figure 10d), we cannot be confident that the DT score is negative. In these cases, we need to exercise caution when interpreting the DT score since it may not be possible to make a judgement about performance in the given subject group/qualification. Further information can be found in paragraph 9.18

about MLM will be available on the LSC website's new measures of success pages in early 2006.

### **How can DT national comparison graph be used for quality improvement?**

9.21

The information in the DT national comparison graph should allow providers to make judgements which can answer the following questions:

- are learners at this institution making better or worse progress than would be expected when compared to the national picture?
- do groups of learners with a given band of prior attainment (for example a low or high prior attainment) make better or worse progress than expected?

9.22

Answering the questions in paragraphs 9.21 will provide a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of a provider, which can be used to focus quality improvement strategies. For example, if the national comparison graph shows that performance in a particular subject group or subject is worse than the national average, providers may wish to target resources and quality improvement in that area. Similarly, there may be areas of provision where learners with a particularly high or low prior attainment are not achieving as well as other learners within the provider and some targeting of learners with a given prior attainment may be appropriate to improve their achievement.

9.23

The graphs will also show clearly where there are areas of demonstrably good practice and where learners are performing substantially better than the national average when their prior attainment is taken into account. Institutions may wish to target this type of provision and use the practice identified in this area to drive quality improvement across the organisation.

### **How are DT national comparison graphs calculated?**

9.24

The information in the DT national comparison graphs is calculated using a statistical methodology called multi-level modelling (MLM). Further information

## 10 Distance Travelled national chances charts

### What does the DT national chances chart show?

#### 10.1

The DT national chances charts show the chances of an individual learner with a given prior attainment achieving a range of indicated outcomes. Please note that the GCSE chances charts show the probability of achieving a range of grades and are calculated using the same method as the VA chances charts. Users seeking information about the interpretation and application of the GCSE chances charts should see Section 7: *The Value Added national chances charts*.

#### 10.2

DT national chances charts for any given subject group will be available for six bands of prior attainment. The LAT software will allow users to select any one of the different bands of average prior attainment for each subject group included in the scope of the DT measure.

#### 10.3

DT national chances charts are based on national data. They do not take into account the difference made by an organisation to a learner's chances. This means that all providers will receive the same set of DT national chances charts.

#### 10.4

Figure 11 shows the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 28 and 34 QCA points (or between an average of a grade E and D at GCSE or GCSE equivalent) achieving an NVQ at different levels within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*. Please note, Figure 11 uses fictional data from 1900-1901 for illustrative purposes.

#### 10.5

Figure 12 shows the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of 22-28 QCA points (that is, just between an average of a grade E and F at GCSE or GCSE equivalent) achieving a GNVQ at different levels within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*. Please note, Figure 12 uses fictional data from 1900-1901 for illustrative purposes.

#### 10.6

The **vertical axis** shows the probability of achieving the possible outcomes for the given qualification and is expressed as a percentage.

#### 10.7

The **horizontal axis shows** the different outcomes. Each column represents the probability of achieving the

qualification at the different levels within that subject group.

#### 10.8

Based on information about the learners who completed these qualifications in 2004/2005, the information in the LAT can be used to make estimates about how learners with similar prior attainment might achieve in the future.

#### 10.9

Figure 11 (which uses fictional data from 1900-1901 for illustrative purposes) tells us that in 1900-1901, 4,267 of the learners who completed NVQ Levels 1, 2 or 3 within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing* had an average prior attainment of between 28 and 34 QCA points. Based on information in the chart, we can predict that learners with a prior attainment of 34 QCA points have a:

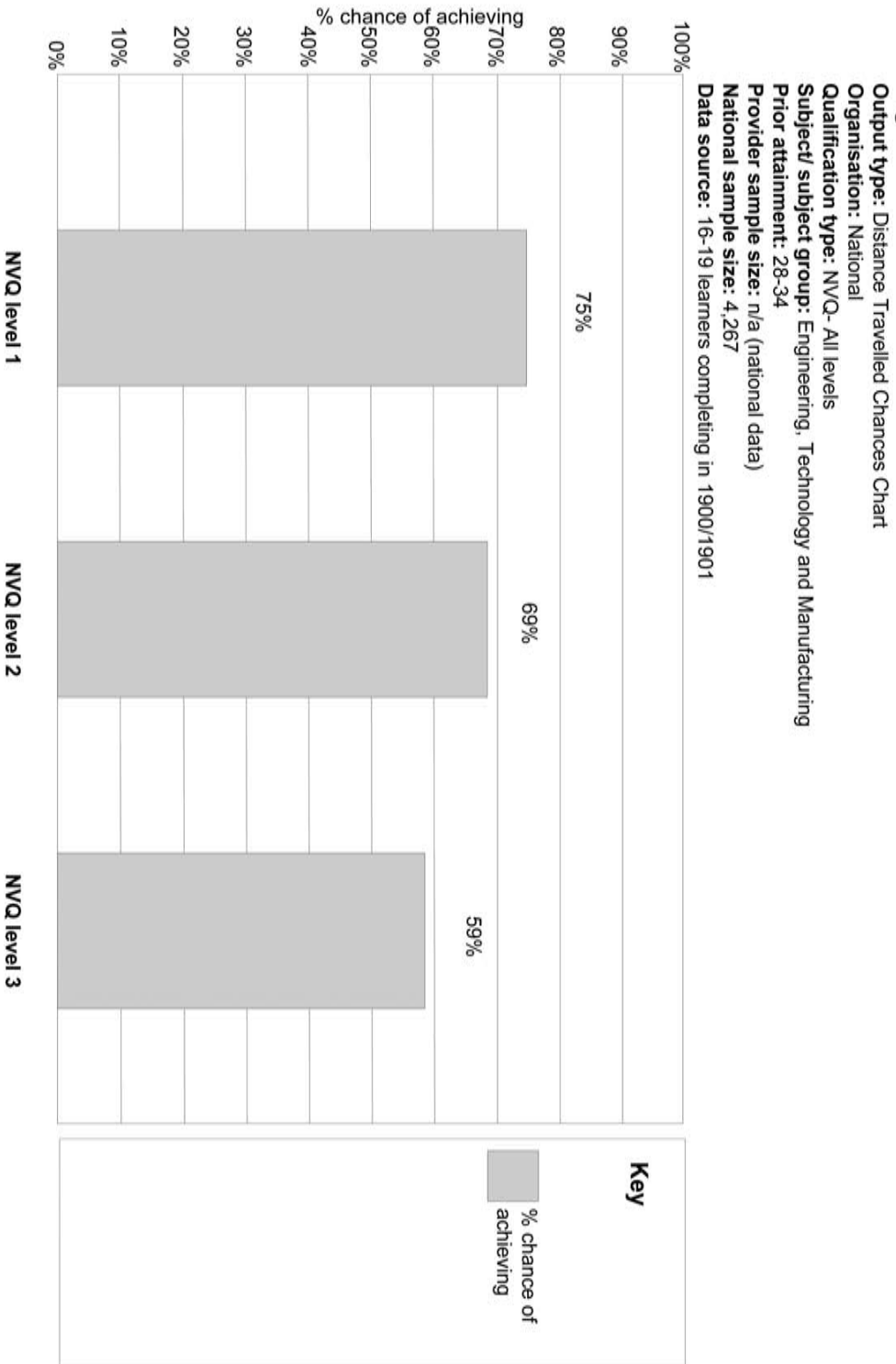
- 75 per cent chance of achieving on a Level 1 NVQ within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*
- 69 per cent chance of achieving on a Level 2 NVQ within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*
- 59 per cent chance of achieving on a Level 3 NVQ within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*.

#### 10.10

Figure 12 (which uses fictional data from 1900-1901 for illustrative purposes) tells us that, in 1900-1901, 637 of the learners who completed GNVQ Levels 1 or 2 within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing* had a prior attainment of between 22 and 28 QCA points. Based on information in the chances chart, we can predict that learners with a prior attainment of 23 QCA points have a:

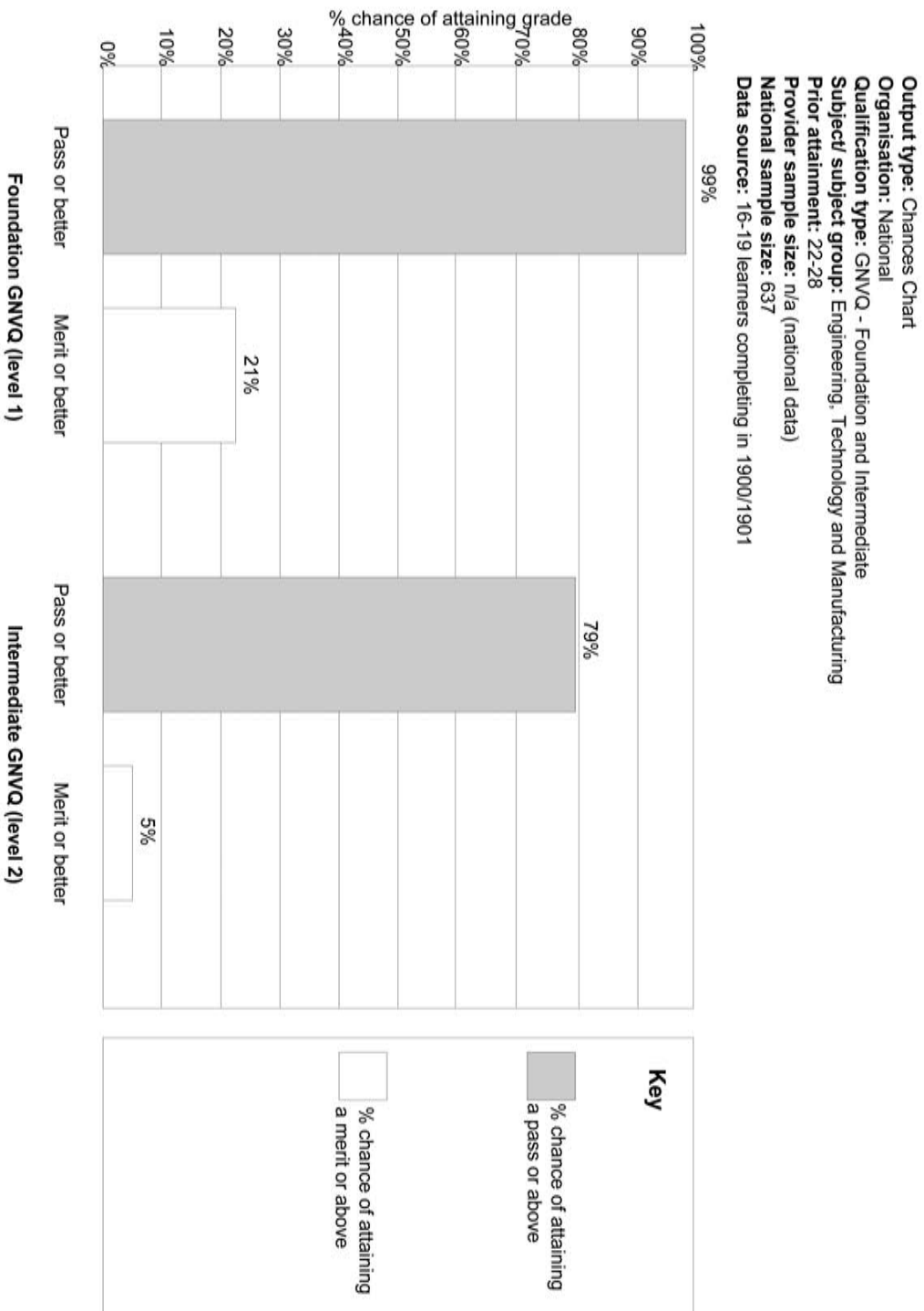
- 99 per cent chance of attaining a pass or better in a Foundation GNVQ within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*
- 79 per cent chance of attaining a pass or better in intermediate GNVQ within the subject group *Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing*
- higher chance of achieving a merit or better for Foundation GNVQ than for Intermediate GNVQ.

**Figure 11: An example of a Distance Travelled National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 28 and 34 QCA points achieving an NVQ at different levels within the subject group Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing**





**Figure 12: An example of a Distance Travelled National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of 22 - 28 QCA points attaining different grades in GNVQ at different levels within the subject group Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing.**



10.11

Due to the small number of distinction grades awarded nationally for GNVQ, we are unable to provide significant information about the probability of attaining a distinction, so merits and distinctions are counted together within the group 'merit or better'.

### **How can DT national chances charts be used for quality improvement?**

10.12

Chances charts can be used to support learner progress:

- in combination with other factors, to help inform decisions about the selection of the most appropriate course for the individual learner, although it is not recommended that chances charts are used as the primary tool for recruitment.
- to judge whether a learner is likely to need extra help and support to achieve their aims.

10.13

Care should be taken over the use of chances charts and tutors will need to use their professional judgement to ensure that they are used as a motivational tool, where appropriate, to encourage learners to realise their potential. Chances charts could have a demotivating effect on individual learners if their chance of achieving their desired grade or qualification is low. Chances charts only take into account the average prior attainment of the learner. Other factors may influence the actual grade that the learner attains, and a personal tutor may wish to build discussion of these factors into their motivational target-setting process.

10.14

Combined with the application of the RARPA process, the DT chances chart and data from the qualification success measure should provide powerful tools to enable providers to track and support the progress of individual learners towards their given target. There are many examples of the effective use of target-setting methods alongside effective tutorial and support arrangements to drive up achievement. Some of these examples will be available in the LSDA's effective practice guide on using chances charts to set targets and monitor and support learner progress which will be available in January. Further information about this resource can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section of this Quality Improvement Pack. More information about RARPA and its extension to accredited provision can be found in the RARPA section of this Quality Improvement Pack

## 11 Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 Learners: Further Questions

### ***Why has the LSC chosen to use a subject-based methodology?***

11.1

Statistical analysis shows that the relationship between prior attainment of learners and their actual achievement is different for different subjects and different qualifications. In the post-16 sector, institutions offer a wide variety of subject and qualification mixes. The LSC believes that using a subject-based methodology and ensuring that for VA, the aggregated VA score reflects the different relationships between prior attainment and achievement, gives the fairest picture of provision across the sector. The subject-based approach also allows providers to look at the performance of their institution in a particular subject and qualification against the national average performance for that subject and qualification.

### ***What is included in the calculation of VA and DT for 16–19 learners?***

11.2

The calculation of VA and DT for 16–19 learners takes into account the learner's prior attainment and their actual outcome in the main qualification aim. No other information is used as an input or output of the measure.

### ***Why doesn't the calculation take into account other factors such as socio-economic grouping or gender?***

11.3

It is widely acknowledged that there are many other factors, besides prior success in qualifications, which will affect a learner's ability to succeed in a given subject and qualification. These factors will include gender and socio-economic grouping alongside a learner's personal motivation and drive. However, statistically speaking, prior attainment has been found to be a far better predictor of performance in the main qualification taken than any other factor, and for that reason, it is used as the input for the LSC model for VA and DT.

11.4

The lack of a robust indicator for socio-economic status and the lack of a consensus on definitions of ethnicity and learning difficulties also prevent us from building these factors into the model used. Omitting them

allows us to be sure that the outputs from the LAT are measuring like with like across the sector. Further work will be undertaken during the pilot year to investigate the possible inclusion of contextual variables.

11.5

Users of the LAT software to be released in January 2006 will not be able to look at the pattern of achievement for different groups of learners with different characteristics. The next release of the LAT, planned for spring 2006 will contain the facility to undertake ad-hoc reporting for VA for 16 – 19 learners. The ad-hoc reporting functionality will allow users to tailor the VA national comparison graph to include subsets of learners rather than a provider's whole cohort of learners. The user will be able to flag which learners, for example learners within a particular tutor group, they require to be included in the calculation of VA and compare these learners to the national average. Further developmental work is required to enable ad-hoc reporting functionality for the DT national comparison graph.

### ***What's the difference between VA and DT?***

11.6

The scope of the qualifications included in the VA measure is different to that in the DT measure. Both measures are calculated using the same underlying methodology, multi-level modelling (MLM). However, the different scope of the measures means that the methodology is slightly adapted for DT. More information about the coverage of VA and DT for 16–19 learners can be found in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*. Further information about MLM will be available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages in early 2006.

11.7

VA data can be used as a predictive tool for individual learners, that is, it gives historical data relating to the chances of a learner achieving a particular grade in the given qualification on the basis of their prior attainment. This information is reflected in the VA chances chart. Points which relate to individual learners are also illustrated on the VA National Comparison graphs. VA scores are presented in QCA points, which can be translated into grades. More information about QCA points can be found in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16–19 learners*.

## 11.8

The DT national comparison charts will not show individual learners, because the DT calculation relates to the difference in an achievement or success rate which takes into account prior attainment between the provider and a group of learners with similar prior attainment. The DT national comparison chart should **not** be used to attempt to predict the achievement of individual learners at a particular level of prior attainment, but can be used to predict the achievement of a group of learners. The DT chances chart gives an indication of the probability of outcome for a learner with a given level of prior attainment, but no further inferences can be made about the achievement of individual learners from the DT outputs. DT scores are expressed as the percentage difference in an achievement or a success rate which takes into account prior attainment from the national average achievement or success rate, which also takes into account prior attainment.

## 11.9

It follows that the difference between VA and DT for 16–19 learners also relates to use of the outputs. The outputs for VA can be used to:

- compare a provider's performance with the national average performance of institutions
- look at performance in different areas within a provider, including at subject grouping, subject, subject by qualification
- set motivational grades for individual learners.

## 11.10

The outputs for DT can be used to:

- compare a provider's performance with national average performance
- look at performance across the provider by subject area
- make judgements and, together with other evidence, provide advice to learners on the most appropriate level of qualification to pursue given their prior attainment.

***How does the LAT compare to other, proprietary systems for VA?***

## 11.11

During the development of the methodology used in the VA and DT for 16–19 learners, account was taken of existing systems which cover VA for learners on graded qualifications. The most well-known of these systems are the A Level Information System (ALIS) and the A Level Performance System (ALPS). The VA and DT for 16–19 learners measures use a different methodology

from these systems, called multi-level modelling (MLM). The use of MLM provides the following advantages:

- it is robust in terms of dealing with providers with small cohorts of learners, so that more institutions can be included in the national measure
- there is clear information about how providers are performing with learners at different levels of prior attainment.

## 11.12

The LAT will also:

- be provided free of charge to all LSC-funded providers and Local Authorities.
- cover a wider range of learners, including vocational qualifications, and compare providers' performance with the national sample of all learners taking that particular subject or qualification
- produce an accurate calculation of an institution's overall VA score, based on an aggregation of scores for different qualifications and subjects which reflect national variations in performance for those qualifications and subjects
- be used by the four partners and other stakeholders in making judgements about provider performance.

***How large does a group/class have to be to generate a reliable VA or DT score?***

## 11.13

Group or class sizes need to consist of more than four learners for a VA or DT score to be calculated and for a judgement to be made about the providers' performance in that subject and qualification. The LAT outputs will always show the number of learners included in the national and institutional sample. Once a number of years' worth of data is available, the LAT will also allow trend analysis to be carried out on multiple years' data sets.

***Why would the number of learners shown in the LAT outputs not correspond to my group size?***

## 11.14

Learners need to meet a number of criteria for inclusion of the LAT dataset, for instance have prior attainment that was obtained in England. If learners within your cohort do not meet these criteria they will be excluded. Further details of the criteria used will be available on the LSC website's new measures of success pages in early 2006.

### **How is the qualification success rate used in the DT for 16–19 learners calculation?**

11.15

The outcome measures for DT will be based on achievement rate for some qualifications and success rate for other qualifications for the piloting phase. The DT measure for WBL-funded provision will be based wholly on the qualification success rate measure.

11.16

However, the DT measure for FE-funded provision will be based on qualification success rate for NVQs and achievement rate for all other qualifications in the scope of the FE DT measure. Analysis on the use of the qualification success rate for these other qualifications currently using achievement rate will be undertaken during the pilot phase once suitable data becomes available.

11.17

During the piloting phase, as part of the evaluation of the measures, there will be consultation with the sector to ensure the suitability of the success rate as the basis of the DT measure across all qualifications in the scope of the measure.

### **Why are different outcome DT measures used for FE and WBL funded provision?**

11.18

The DT output measure for WBL provision needed to be based on the qualification success rate because no agreed definition of achievement rate exists in the WBL sector. In order for the DT measure to be consistent, it is proposed to use the qualification success rate measure for the DT output for FE provision as well. This is being taken forward during the piloting phase in relation to NVQs, but further work is needed to obtain the required data for the other qualifications, which we will be undertaking as a matter of priority.

11.19

Modelling work will be carried out when this data becomes available to ensure that the qualification success rate is the most robust output measure. The analysis on NVQs identified a stronger correlation using qualification success rate than achievement rate.

### **What are 95 per cent confidence intervals?**

11.20

The VA or DT score is the best estimate of the provider's effect on the performance of its learners for the given qualification or subject/qualification, but how good is our estimate of the VA or DT score? The 95 per cent confidence intervals help us to answer this question by telling us about the accuracy of this best estimate (i.e. the VA or DT score). The confidence intervals do this by giving us the range between which can expect the actual provider's effect to lie. The wider

the range (i.e. the wider the confidence intervals) the less accurate the estimate is, and this is why we need to consider the confidence intervals when interpreting the LAT outputs.

11.21

Confidence intervals can be set at different levels of statistical confidence, for example, 90 per cent or 95 per cent. A 95 per cent confidence interval tells us that 19 out of 20 times, the provider's VA or DT score will be somewhere within the range specified.

11.22

For example, Provider A's VA score for A-Level maths is +15 and the 95 per cent confidence intervals are -1 and 31. This means that 19 out of 20 times, the provider's VA score for A Level maths will be somewhere between -1 and +31 QCA points, but on average it will be +15 QCA points. Since the VA score will sometimes be -1 (that is, below zero which represents the national average), we cannot be statistically confident that the provider's effect on the performance of its learners in A Level Maths is different from the national average, even though the VA score is positive.

11.23

Provider A's DT score for all NVQs is -4 per cent and the 95 per cent confidence intervals are -6 and -2 per cent. This means that 19 out of 20 times, the provider's DT score for all NVQs will be somewhere between -6 and -2 per cent, but on average it will be -4 per cent. The confidence intervals tell us that the DT score is not expected to be above zero and therefore we can be statistically confident that the provider's effect on the performance of its learners in NVQs is lower than the national average.

11.24

There are a number of reasons why a VA or DT score might have wide confidence intervals:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but is still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the provider's cohort may be skewed.

### **Why don't the measures use the Universal Marking Scheme (UMS)?**

11.25

UMS data is not currently available for us to use in the measures and to use it would involve imposing an additional data collection burden on providers. As there is a commitment to introduce the new measures of success without increasing the burden on providers, we need to wait until we can access this information centrally, from the awarding bodies, before it can be used. Once the data becomes available we will be able to model the use of UMS in the calculation of the measures.

## 12 Further issues to be explored in the pilot

### 12.1

A number of technical issues have arisen during the development of the LAT and in response to feedback from stakeholders. These issues will be explored further during the piloting phase (January 2006 to summer 2006).

#### ***Learners with no prior attainment and learners who attain their prior attainment outside of England***

### 12.2

A number of providers have indicated that a significant proportion of their learners enter provision with no prior attainment, or with qualifications obtained from outside England. The LAT dataset is derived from awarding body data for awards made in England only. Therefore, the LAT dataset does not include records for learners who achieve their pre-16 qualification outside England. The LAT dataset does not distinguish between learners who enter provision with no prior attainment and those with qualifications obtained outside England and so both groups of learners are currently excluded from the LAT dataset as we do not have a starting point from which to measure VA or DT for these learners. During the piloting phase, the LSC will investigate the likely effect on VA and DT scores of the exclusion of these learners and undertake modelling work to establish how this issue might be addressed.

#### ***Customising the LAT for use as a progress and tracking tool***

### 12.3

Providers would like to use the LAT as a tool for tracking progress of their current learners. A significant limitation of the current LAT is that it works with historic data for learners completing in the previous academic year. In the pilot year, we will be looking at the ways in which providers have built customised systems which enable tracking of progress and progressive target setting for the current cohort of learners and exploring the feasibility of using the LAT for this purpose.

#### ***Including fails in the VA measure***

### 12.4

Learners who fail their qualifications are not currently included in the calculation of VA. This is because the difference in QCA points between a fail grade and the lowest possible pass grade is very high, and including fails would thus skew the VA result. For example, the distance between A Level grades is 30 QCA points (A = 270, B = 240 etc.), but the gap between an E (150 points) and a fail (0 points) is 150 points. As a result of this, aggregated VA scores are skewed by the inclusion of fails. This issue will be investigated during the pilot

year. The LSC will be considering how best to report on fails to ensure that VA scores are fair and equitable and fit for the purposes of stimulating reflection on performance and quality improvement.

#### ***Extending the DT methodology to include learners achieving at an age beyond the scope of the current measures***

### 12.5

We are aware that in some Apprenticeship frameworks, learners are most likely to achieve their full frameworks at an age which puts them beyond the scope of the current statistical measure. We may be able to include data for some learners who are aged 20 when they complete their programme of study, depending on the availability of the data and the accuracy of the matching of these learners to their prior attainment. During the piloting phase, we will be exploring further how to access data for all these learners so that they can be included in the measure.

#### ***Contextual variables***

### 12.6

There are currently no contextual variables, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status and gender, included in the LAT. As part of the development during the piloting phase, the partners will be undertaking work to model the impact of the inclusion of contextual variables in the calculation of VA and DT. However, this is dependent on the availability of data across the post-16 sector collected under consistent definitions.

#### ***Expanding the scope of qualifications covered by the measures***

### 12.7

The LAT currently includes a wide range of approved qualifications, but we will continue to attempt to extend this scope to include the largest possible number of learners.

#### ***Representing collaborative and merged provision in the LAT***

### 12.8

The LAT will need to be adapted to ensure that where the delivery of provision is shared between two or more institutions or where institutions have merged, this is reflected in the VA and DT scores for those institutions. This is another issue on which we will undertake further modelling work to ensure that the system developed is valid and fit for purpose.

### ***The LAT's compatibility with other data and management information (MI) systems***

12.9

Providers have given feedback that they would find it valuable if the data in the LAT could be easily exported into their own MI systems. The LSC will explore this possibility and pilot with a limited number of providers in the coming year.

### **Are there any plans to re-examine the criterion for inclusion of AS Levels in the calculation of the VA measure?**

12.10

Feedback from users on the LAT outputs released during the summer suggested that it would be extremely useful to have VA scores based on all AS Levels taken within the year being reported irrespective of whether these AS Levels formed part of an A2 Level.

12.11

Initial consultation following the release of the LAT outputs in the summer indicated that a 'within year' VA scores for all AS Levels irrespective of whether the AS Levels formed part of an A2 Level, would be useful for reflection and quality improvement purposes only and not for accountability purposes. Further information about the criteria for inclusion of AS Levels in the VA measures and discounting rules can be found in Section 3: *Scope of the VA and DT measures for 16 – 19 learners*.

## Contents – Section 2

- 1 Introduction to Qualification Success Rates
- 2 New Qualification Success Rates in Work Based Learning, including worked examples
- 3 Interpretation of Qualification Success Rates in Work Based Learning
- 4 Timetable for Implementation of Qualification Success Rates in Work Based Learning
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- 6 Interpretation of Qualification Success Rates in Further Education
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- 8 Qualification Success Rates: Frequently Asked Questions



# 1 Qualification Success Rates

## Introduction to Qualification Success Rates

### 1.1

Success rates are numerical indicators of a provider's performance across its provision. They are a high profile measure that have been used by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and inspectorate bodies for many years. Success rates are basically the number of qualifications achieved as a proportion of the total number of qualifications.

### Why are the changes happening?

### 1.2

The methodologies currently used to calculate success rates in Further Education (FE) and completion rates in Work-Based Learning (WBL) are fundamentally different. As a consequence it is not possible to make fair and realistic comparisons of effectiveness between FE and WBL provision. Therefore the new measures work has sought to devise a set of measures that will allow comparable analysis of success rates to be undertaken across different types of provision. Work is also underway to produce comparable success rate indicators for school sixth forms. However, these will not be available until the appropriate data collection systems are in place.

### 1.3

There are known issues with the WBL success rate methodologies currently used by LSC and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). These are due to the amount of data that had previously been available. The current WBL measure used by the LSC is based on actual end dates and requires a steady intake of learners for it to be a fully accurate reflection of provider performance. The measure used by the ALI uses start dates which give more stable results, but requires that all programmes are completed before a cohort can be reported on.

### 1.4

Furthermore, neither of these methodologies matches the FE success rate methodology (based on planned end date) which has been used for many years and is widely accepted. Therefore in WBL, new measures have been developed that make use of data collected by the LSC since 2001/02, which will allow a more consistent and powerful view of success rates.

### 1.5

The changes to FE success rate calculations are much smaller, and less fundamental. They will make the measures even more effective at creating a level playing field across institutions with different mixes of provision.

### 1.6

The new success rate measures have been produced under regular discussion with members of an advisory group that includes members of the Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of Learning Providers (ALP), providers and other stakeholders in order that the measures are as suitable as possible for all concerned.

### What has changed?

#### Further education

### 1.7

Although there have been no significant changes to the methodology, some new approaches have been developed to present Qualification Success Rates in an effective manner.

#### Short Courses

### 1.8

Analysis shows that while short courses (less than 24 weeks duration) have a success rate 20 percentage points higher than long courses, there is a significant variation within this grouping with the success rates of very short courses being even higher. Therefore short qualifications will now be sub-divided into two categories, those under five weeks in length and those over five weeks in length.

#### Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks

### 1.9

A Length and Level Adjusted success rate measure was developed for use as part of the implementation of performance-related funding in FE. In the light of feedback and the additional data we now have available, this measure is being developed into a method of producing Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks, which can potentially be applied to work based learning and other strands of provision as well as FE institutions.

## 1.10

In summary, the process calculates the overall success rate an institution would have achieved if it had achieved the national average success rate in each of these broad qualification groups:

- long courses Level 1
- long courses Level 2
- long courses Level 3 (excluding A Level)
- long courses Level 3 (A/AS/A2)
- higher level long courses
- unknown level long courses
- short courses under five weeks
- short courses over five weeks

However, transfers to another provider will now be counted as a withdrawal.

### Work based learning

#### *Two new success measures*

## 1.11

The previous WBL success rates used a cohort methodology based around the **actual** end date of programmes, while FE success rates used a cohort methodology based around the **planned end** date of programmes. To bring these two measures into line, new WBL success rate measures based on the planned end dates of programmes have been produced. Not only will this increase consistency in the success measures used by the LSC, but it will also provide WBL with a more robust measure.

## 1.12

Two success rate measures will be introduced:

- **Overall success rate** – this will measure the proportion of programmes that are achieved at any time.
- **Timely success rate** – this will measure the proportion of programmes that are achieved by their planned end date (or shortly after).

#### *Other changes*

## 1.13

The introduction of a six-week 'period of grace' to bring the measures into line with FE success measures

## 1.14

The way transfers are dealt with has changed. Transfers onto another programme within the same provider are still excluded from the success rate calculations.

## 2 New Qualification Success Rates in Work-Based Learning, including worked examples

### Introduction

#### What is the new measurement?

##### 2.1

At the moment, different methods are used to calculate success rates in FE and completion rates in WBL provision. This means that it is not possible to make a fair or realistic comparison of the effectiveness of further education with that of work based learning provision.

##### 2.2

The new measure does not simply replicate the FE methodology as this would do very little to establish a fair and comparable set of measures. The aim of the measure is to create equivalence of outcome between FE and WBL by taking due account of the differing nature of these two types of provision. The measure will apply to Apprenticeships and NVQ learning. Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes are not covered by the qualification success rates work as the programme does not always involve accredited qualifications.

##### 2.3

The current method of calculating completion rates in WBL is based on programmes that have ended. The new method will categorise programmes based on 'planned end date'. This change brings this part of the WBL calculation into line with methods used by the FE sector. This will not only increase consistency but will also provide a more reliable way to measure the success of WBL provision.

##### 2.4

Success rates for the new measures will be calculated as the number of achievements as a proportion of the total number of programmes (not including programmes where the learner transferred to a different programme at the same provider).

##### 2.5

We are introducing two new measures of WBL success rates, one based on achievement at any time, the second indicating achievement within a planned time frame. These are:

- a) **Overall success rate** – this will measure the proportion of programmes that are achieved at any time. This includes all programmes whose

planned end date is during the year being calculated and which were achieved on or before that planned end date, and any programmes that went beyond their planned date and which have been achieved during the year being calculated.

- b) **Timely success rate** – this will measure the proportion of programmes that are achieved by their planned end date (or shortly after). This includes all programmes whose planned end date is during the year being calculated which were achieved on, or before that planned end date.

##### 2.6

There will be a 'period of grace' at the start of WBL programmes of six weeks during which time a learner can leave the programme without counting as a withdrawal.

##### 2.7

Transfers within a provider will cause that programme to be excluded from any success rate calculations for the original course. Transfers between providers will not be excluded from the success rate calculation (that is, they will count as a withdrawal for the provider they have left). Numbers of such withdrawals will be monitored, and may be reviewed.

#### Why are there two measures – overall success and timely success?

##### 2.8

Applying measures based on cohorts defined solely by planned end date in WBL, in isolation, would cause problems since a large proportion of WBL achievements occur after the planned end date recorded on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). This is in part due to the historic use of standard lengths of stay and also to the fact that the planned end date field in the ILR has not been used for quality improvement purposes before. Late achievers would be treated as withdrawals, even if they achieved at some later date. It was recognised a slightly different approach was needed that dealt appropriately with historically recorded end dates.

2.9

The two-measure approach moves the WBL methodology much closer to the FE method while still counting for late achievers. The timely success rate is based on cohorts solely defined by planned end date and therefore provides a broadly equivalent approach to the FE methodology. The overall success rate is also based on cohorts defined by planned end date; however, where a programme goes beyond its planned end date the actual end date will be used. This hybrid approach allows all achievements to be counted without compromising the stability of the measure or the ability to report on cohorts in a structured manner. In the short term, the overall success rate will have greater prominence, as it will capture all achievements. However providers will also be judged on their timely success rates and this will take increasing prominence in future years.

2.10

The new success measures introduce an incentive to set planned end dates that can be met. The wider application of the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) approach to accredited learning should enable providers to use this as a tool to assist in setting realistic and challenging goals for learners that can be monitored. Over time, the aim is that the two measures will converge as more accurate end dates are estimated, and at that point the need for two measures will be re-assessed.

2.11

The new measures will also allow ALI and local LSC contract managers to detect slow learner progress and work with providers to improve this aspect of performance. Evidence from the RARPA approach and examples of effective practise should assist in this process of continuous improvement. Further information on this can be found in the RARPA section of the Quality Improvement Pack.

## Specifics

### Period of grace

2.12

The FE success rate calculation excludes withdrawals from qualifications that occur before 1 November. No such period of grace has previously existed for WBL. As part of the new measures, a comparative period of grace has been built into the measure of success for WBL.

2.13

Since most WBL programmes are roll-on, roll-off with starts spread fairly evenly across the year, using a particular date in the year, as in FE, is inappropriate. Instead, a fixed time period of six weeks after starting the course will be used, during which any WBL learners would be excluded from the success rate calculation.

2.14

A period of six weeks was chosen because that is the average amount of period of grace FE courses have from their start date (on average about half way through September) to the 1 November each year. An analysis of WBL data also shows that the rate of withdrawals remains constant from approximately six weeks into a programme through until the planned end date.

2.15

The introduction of a period of grace will increase success rates by about one to two per cent.

## Transfers

2.16

Transfers were treated differently within FE and WBL using the old measures of success. In the new measures, any transfer to a different course within the same provider will still be excluded from the success rate calculation for the original course entirely; however, any transfer to a course with a different provider will count as a withdrawal in the success rate calculation. The number of transfers will be shown within the success rate reports to allow this to be used as contextual information when assessing a provider's performance. This will now mean there is consistent treatment of transfers in FE and WBL. Where bulk transfers occur due to rescheduling of provision by the LSC, the possible exclusion of these will be considered where appropriate.

## Timely success

2.17

Any achievement that occurs in one calendar month following the planned end date or at any time before the planned end date will be counted towards the timely success rate. For example, if the planned end date is 15 May 2005, achievement on or before 15 June 2005 is timely. Any achievement after then will count as an achievement on the overall success rate, but will be marked as a non-achievement for the timely success rate.

## Points to note

2.18

It is recognised that the proposed period of grace introduces a significant variation to the definitions used for funding. Attempts in the past to ensure equality between analysis and funding definitions have often resulted in more distortions than benefits.

2.19

There is no intention to change funding policy to adopt a period of grace in 2005/06. This means that the LSC will fund programmes that pass a funding census date (last day of calendar month) but leave within six weeks of starting.

#### 2.20

It is important to note that the volume of leavers within the period of grace will be monitored at a provider level on a monthly basis.

#### 2.21

There will be breakdowns of the success rates by various areas of interest, including by sector subject area (previously area of learning), and demographic data, for example, gender, ethnicity and disability. While, in the future, as relevant data becomes available, there will be separate success rates for Technical Certificates and Key Skills.

#### **Further developments**

#### 2.22

We are also looking to extend the use of national data for work-based learning and are looking at the possibility of extending the FE Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks approach into WBL.

#### 2.23

Over time we would expect the overall and timely success rates to converge. At the stage when the two measures are giving similar figures we will consider the need to continue reporting both measures.

#### **Example of WBL success rate cohorts**

#### 2.24

Tables 1 (page 53) and 2 (page 54) illustrate which years a programme would be counted in for success rate purposes under the two new measures

Table 1: Overall success rate method (later of planned or actual end date)

	2002/03				2003/04				2004/05				
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Programme 1		Exp End			Withdraw								
Programme 2		Exp End			Withdraw								
Programme 3		Exp End											Achieve
Programme 4		Withdraw											Exp End
Programme 5					Exp End		Achieve						
Programme 6					Exp End		Achieve						
Programme 7				Achieve									
Programme 8				Exp End									
Programme 9						Achieve							Exp End
Programme 10						Withdraw							Exp End
	2002/03				2003/04				2004/05				
Total programmes	1				6				3				
Total achievements	0				3				2				
Success rate	0%				50%				67%				
Programmes included:	Number 4				Number 1,2,5,6,7,8				Number 3,9,10				

Table 2: Timely success rate method (planned end date)

	2002/03				2003/04				2004/05			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Programme 1		Exp End			Withdraw							
Programme 2			Exp End		Withdraw							
Programme 3			Exp End								Achieve	
Programme 4		Withdraw		Exp End								
Programme 5					Exp End		Achieve					
Programme 6					Exp End		Achieve					
Programme 7			Achieve							Exp End		
Programme 8							Withdraw			Exp End		
Programme 9						Achieve				Exp End		
Programme 10						Withdraw					Exp End	
	2002/03				2003/04				2004/05			
Total leavers	4				4				2			
Total achievements	0				1				1			
Success rate	0%				25%				50%			
Programmes included:	Number 1,2,3,4				Number 5,6,7,8				Number 9,10			

## Contents – Section 3

- 1 Introduction to Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement
- 2 Introduction to the RARPA Extension Project (REX)



## 3 Interpretation of Qualification Success Rates in Work-based Learning

### The Summary of Success

#### What does the Summary of Success show?

#### 3.1

The Summary of Success gives an overview of how well a provider is performing. It shows:

- how much a provider has improved or declined since the last year
- a comparison between overall and timely success – how accurately a provider plans realistic end dates and delivers to them. (For an explanation of overall and timely success see New Qualification Success Rates in WBL, including worked examples)
- a brief breakdown of provision.

#### 3.2

It does this by showing a breakdown of success for both 2003/04 and 2004/05 so a comparison can be made between the two years; and a breakdown of success rates is shown for both overall and timely success so a comparison can be made between the two success rates.

#### 3.3

Success is measured as the number programmes achieved as a proportion of the total number of programmes (not including programmes that were transferred out of by a learner staying with the same provider). Success rates are shown for different programmes:

- The success rates for Apprenticeships where full framework completion is counted as success
- The success rates for Apprenticeships where either full framework completion or NVQ only completion is counted as success
- The success rates for both Apprenticeships (completion of NVQ only is treated as a success) and NVQ only programmes.

#### 3.4

For more detailed analysis the Success Rate Breakdown (shown later) can be used. For the success rates defined in 3.3b and 3.3c, where the NVQ has been achieved by the planned end date of the Apprenticeship and the learner is still working towards the full framework after the planned end date, then the NVQ will be recorded as a timely achievement.

### Interpreting the Summary of Success: The table and the chart

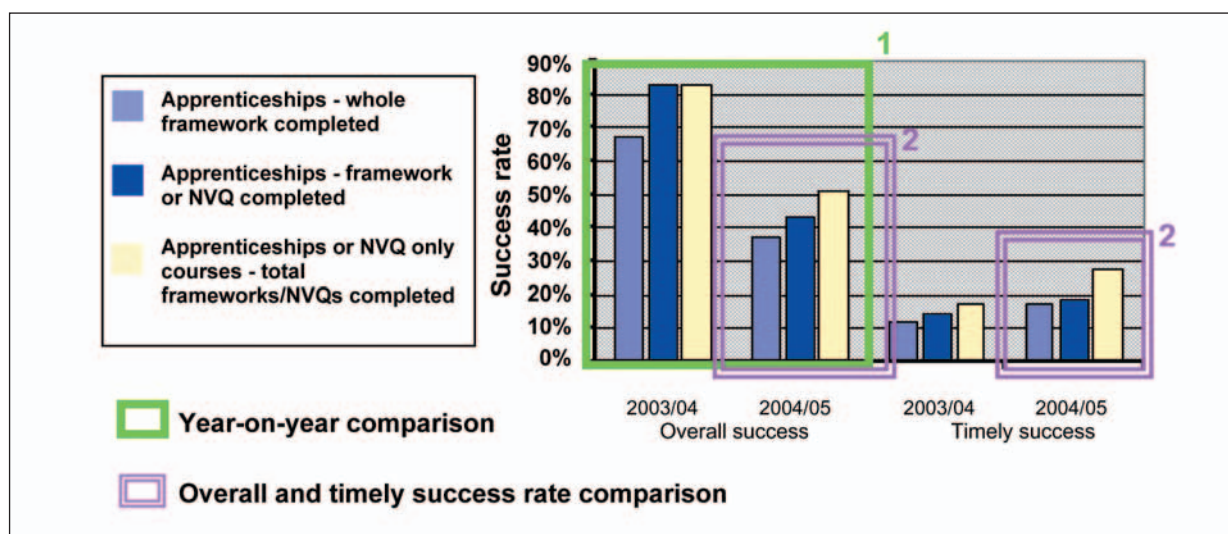
Table 3 and Chart 1 show the same figures, with the chart being a graphical representation of the figures laid out in the table.

Table 3

		Overall Success		Timely Success	
		2003/04	2004/05	2003/04	2004/05
Apprenticeships	Framework only	68%	37%	12%	17%
	<i>No. achieved</i>	148	19	23	11
	Framework or NVQ	83%	43%	14%	19%
	<i>No. achieved</i>	180	22	27	12
	<b>No. of leavers</b>	217	51	193	64
Apprenticeships and NVQ only courses	Framework or NVQ	83%	51%	18%	27%
	<b>No. of leavers</b>	259	63	234	77

In the table above, the **columns** show the overall success rates and the timely success rates for both 2003/04 and 2004/05. The **rows** show a breakdown of the success rates for Apprenticeships and NVQs (see What does the Summary of Success show? for a description of the different categories paragraph 3.3).

Chart 1



On the chart, **the horizontal axis** shows the same as the columns in Table 3 - the overall success rates and the timely success rates for both 2003/04 and 2003/04, so that the first column shows the overall success rates in 2003/04 and the last column shows the timely success rates in 2004/05. The **vertical axis** shows the percentage success rates. The three colour coded **bars** show the same as the rows in the table - a breakdown of the success rates for Apprenticeships and NVQs. The light blue (medium grey) bar shows the success rates for Apprenticeships where the whole framework has been completed.

#### Using the Summary of Success to compare years

##### 3.5

The differences between the years can most easily be seen in the chart, which can then be cross-referenced to the table to see the actual success rate figures. Comparisons can be made between 2003/04 and 2004/05 data for both overall success and timely success. To evaluate year on year changes in success rates, compare the first two, or the last two sets of bars (See 1 on the chart). In this example, the success rates have fallen from 68 per cent, 83 per cent and 83 per cent to 37 per cent, 43 per cent and 51 per cent.

##### 3.6

By contrast, the timely success rates have improved, and, as indicated, the success rates have risen from 12 per cent, 14 per cent and 18 per cent to 17 per cent, 19 per cent and 27 per cent.

##### 3.7

These figures can also be compared against national averages published by the LSC. When doing this the types of programme being taken by the provider should be considered as success rates can vary between programmes.

#### Using the Summary of Success to compare overall and timely success

##### 3.8

The differences are seen most easily on the chart. To compare overall and timely success for 2004/05 the second and last sets of bars provide the required information.

##### 3.9

It is important to note that where programmes are completed after their planned end year the overall and timely success rates deal with different cohorts. So in these cases a direct comparison between the two figures can be misleading. To get a more detailed comparison see Tables 4 and 5, Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates.

### Using the Summary of Success to see how the relationship between overall and timely success rates changes from year to year

#### 3.10

In addition to looking at how success rates vary from year to year, and how overall and timely success vary within years, it is also possible to look at how the relationship between overall and timely success changes between years. For instance, are timely success rates now closer to, or further away from, overall success rates? In this example we have established that overall success is declining, while timely success is improving. This means that the gap between the overall success rates and timely success rates is smaller. Furthermore, even if both success rates improve or decline, the gap between them may change.

#### 3.11

We expect the overall and timely success rates to converge over a period of time as providers and learners agree more accurate planned end dates. Greater accuracy benefits learners and providers as they lead to smoother, more predictable payment of funds to providers, and enable improved forecasting provision.

### The Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates table

#### 3.12

The Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates Tables shows the actual end year for all programmes and their planned end year.

#### 3.13

There are two tables. The first – 'Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates (all leavers)' – includes all programmes. The actual end year is the year in which the programme was either achieved, or withdrawn from while the "continuing" column shows the number of programmes that are still continuing after the end of January 2005 and as such have gone beyond their planned end date. The "Total programmes" gives the total number of programmes within that particular planned end year and it equals the sum of all the columns to the left of it. The "Transfers to other providers" column shows the number of learners who left during the programme to transfer to another provider. These transferred learners are also counted within the "Actual end year" of the year they transferred. They will appear as withdrawals in the success rates analysis.

Table 4

Cohort identification		Actual end year (achieved and withdrawn)				Continuing (as at 31/01/05)	Overall cohort	Timely cohort	Transfers to other providers
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05				
Planned end year	2001/02 >=	75	29	23	1	0	75	128	0
	2002/03	31	101	53	4	1	161	190	0
	2003/04	6	41	136	21	30	259	234	0
	2004/05*	2	5	15	15	40	63	77	2

Note: To ensure the Tables are consistent with the rest of the report the figures for 2001/02 will include previous years such as 2000/01. For the July 2005 data release, the 2004/05 data will only be for the first six months of the year so programmes that were planned to end later in the year, for example in March 2005, will not be included.

## 3.14

The second table – ‘Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates (achievers only)’ shows the actual and planned end years of those who achieved the programme. It also includes a column showing the total

timely achievers for each planned end year, and the total number of achievers, which will include all those who had a successful outcome for the planned end year, but were not necessarily timely achievers.

Table 5

Apprenticeships and NVQ only achievements		Actual end year				Total overall achievers	Total timely achievers**	Timely & in-year achievers
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05			
Planned end year	2001/02 >=	73	41	20	1	73	41	73
	2002/03	16	71	49	3	128	45	87
	2003/04	3	13	130	5	215	73	146
	2004/05*	1	4	8	13	35	22	26

Within these tables, the **rows** show the planned end year of a programme. The **columns** show what actually happened to the programme – when learners actually left or achieved, or whether they are continuing or have transferred. The **green (dark grey in black and white)** boxes running diagonally through the table show those programmes whose actual end year is the same as their planned end year. It is important to note that even if a programme finished during its planned end year this does not necessarily mean they finished on time. This is because the planned end date is a specific date, so any programme that is completed more than one month after this date is counted as completing late. The **red (light grey in black and white)** boxes above and to the right of the green boxes show all those programmes that ended after their planned end year. The **white** boxes below and to the left of the green boxes show all those programmes that ended before their planned end date.

## 3.15

For example, of those programmes that ended which had a planned end year of 2002/03, 101 programmes actually ended in that year (see 3 on Table 4), of which 71 achieved the programme (see 4 on Table 5).

#### Using the Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates tables to analyse years of achievements

## 3.16

There are several possible analyses that can be carried out, including:

- comparing the number of leavers in a year to the number of achievers
- identification of which programmes are included in success rate calculation cohorts
- analysing exactly when people are achieving compared to their planned end dates.

*Comparing the numbers of leavers in a year with the number of achievers*

## 3.17

Compare equivalent cells in the two tables to identify the number of achievers within each group of programmes. Take for example the 2002/03 planned end year, 2002/03 actual end year cells in both tables - of the cohort of leavers (101) there were 71 achievers.

*Identifying learners counting towards each success rate and whether they have achieved*

## 3.18

The ‘Comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates (all leavers)’ table can be used to identify which programmes are included in the two success rate calculations, as indicated in the following sections.

*Overall success cohort*

## 3.19

For a given year, the overall success cohort includes all programmes whose planned end date is during the year being calculated and which were achieved on or before that planned end date, and any programmes that went beyond the planned date and were achieved or withdrawn from during the year being calculated.

Table 6

Cohort identification		Actual end year (achieved and withdrawn)				Continuing (as at 31/01/05)	Overall cohort	Timely cohort	Transfers to other providers
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05				
Planned end year	2001/02 >=	75	29	23	1	0	75	128	0
	2002/03	31	101	53	4	1	161	190	0
	2003/04	6	41	136	21	30	259	234	0
	2004/05*	2	5	15	15	40	63	77	2

 Overall success cohort for 2003/04

## 3.20

For example, to identify the overall success cohort for 2003/04 look at both the planned end year 2003/04, and the actual end year column 2003/04. For this provider, six of the programmes contributing to the 2003/04 overall success rate cohort ended two years early, in 2001/02, 41 programmes ended one year early in 2002/03, and 212 (136+53+23) ended in 2003/04, either before or after their planned end date, making a total of 259 programmes in the cohort. All those programmes from the cohort who have a successful outcome will count positively towards the overall success rate.

*Timely success cohort*

## 3.21

For a given year, the timely success cohort includes all programmes with that year as a planned end year, whether or not they have been achieved before their planned end date. If programmes are achieved before their planned end date then they count as a success towards the timely success rate.

Table 7

Cohort identification		Actual end year (achieved and withdrawn)				Continuing (as at 31/01/05)	Overall cohort	Timely cohort	Transfers to other providers
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05				
Planned end year	2001/02 >=	75	29	23	1	0	75	128	0
	2002/03	31	101	53	4	1	161	190	0
	2003/04	6	41	136	21	30	259	234	0
	2004/05*	2	5	15	15	40	63	77	2

 Timely success cohort for 2003/04

## 3.22

For example, to identify the timely cohort for 2003/04, look at the planned end year row 2003/04. For this provider, six of the programmes contributing to the 2003/04 timely success rate cohort ended two years before their planned end year, in 2001/02, 41 ended one year early in 2002/03 while 136 were completed within their planned end year.

*Analysing when people achieve compared to their planned end date.*

## 3.23

By focusing on the “achievers only” (table 5), four different patterns of achievement may be observed:

Table 8

Pattern	Example distribution of achievers				Key questions/implications
1) There is a broad spread of years in which programmes are achieved. Most are still achieved in their planned end year, however a large number are achieved in both the years before and after their planned end date.	100	75	40	10	Planned end date is specific to a programme, so why are the planned end dates so inaccurate?
	70	100	80	30	
	30	75	100	70	
	3	35	65	100	
2) Very few programmes are achieved before the planned end year, however quite a lot are achieved after their planned end year.	100	90	40	5	Why are programmes continuing beyond their planned end dates? Slow learner progress? Unrealistic end dates?
	10	100	95	35	
	0	15	100	85	
	0	0	10	100	
3) Almost all the programmes are achieved within their planned end year. Very few are achieved either in the year before or the year after their planned end date.	100	15	5	0	Planned end dates are accurate. - Any difference between overall and timely success rates are due to leavers achieving close to their planned end date, less than a year late.
	10	100	10	5	
	3	15	100	15	
	0	3	10	100	
4) Very few programmes are achieved after the planned end year, however quite a lot are achieved before their planned end year.	100	10	0	0	Why are programmes being achieved early? Are their planned end dates set too distant?
	90	100	15	0	
	35	95	100	10	
	5	50	85	100	

## 3.24

By comparing the two tables, a picture can be created of what year programmes that were not achieved ended. This is especially useful if a provider has low success rates. Firstly, it can be seen if the lack of success is due to a large number of programmes still continuing or transferring to another provider, and secondly whether withdrawals occur very early or closer to their planned end date.

## 3.25

Finally, when comparing the tables it may be that in one year there are high levels of programme withdrawals. This would affect the success rates in later

years but may have been a few years ago. There are two possible reasons for this: either, during that year something happened which affected the provision which caused a high level of withdrawals or there may have been data quality issues which have affected the matching of ILR data across years. Learners are matched by provider number, individual learner reference number and programme type. If any of these have changed from one year to the next then it is very difficult to match the learner across the two years. This may mean that learners may appear to have withdrawn when in fact they have not. Where providers have queries about the treatment of their data they should contact their local LSC.

## Breakdown of Success

3.26

The breakdown of success shows the success rates of different types of programmes for different age groups for the last two years. It fills in some of the detail from the summary shown earlier. There is a table for both overall and timely success, so comparisons can be made to see in which programmes types continue beyond their planned end date. It can be used to see exactly which programme types and age groups are most, or least, successful.

Table 9

### Overall Success Rates

Programme Type	Age at start of learning	Success Rates in 2003/04			Success Rates in 2004/05 in year data		
		Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers	Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers
		Nos.			Nos.		
Advanced Apprenticeship	16-18	86%	93%	42	70%	80%	10
	19+	67%	84%	55	36%	45%	22
	<b>All</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>32</b>
Apprenticeship	16-18	66%	78%	100	24%	24%	17
	19+	40%	85%	20	0%	0%	2
	<b>All</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>19</b>
All Apprenticeships	16-18	72%	82%	142	41%	44%	27
	19+	60%	84%	75	33%	42%	24
	<b>All</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>51</b>
NVQ only programmes	16-18	-	79%	24	-	83%	6
	19+	-	89%	18	-	83%	6
	<b>All</b>		<b>83%</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>83%</b>	<b>12</b>
All frameworks or NVQs	16-18	-	82%	166	-	52%	33
	19+	-	85%	93	-	50%	30
	<b>All</b>		<b>83%</b>	<b>259</b>		<b>51%</b>	<b>63</b>

Table 10

## Timely Success Rates

Programme Type	Age at start of learning	Success Rates in 2003/04			Success Rates in 2004/05 in year data		
		Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers	Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers
		Nos.			Nos.		
Advanced Apprenticeship	16-18	24%	24%	42	36%	36%	11
	19+	21%	26%	53	25%	29%	24
	All	22%	25%	95	29%	31%	35
Apprenticeship	16-18	2%	2%	87	4%	4%	25
	19+	9%	9%	11	0%	0%	4
	All	3%	3%	98	3%	3%	29
All Apprenticeships	16-18	9%	9%	129	14%	14%	36
	19+	19%	23%	64	21%	25%	28
	All	12%	14%	193	17%	19%	64
NVQ only programmes	16-18	•	43%	23	•	57%	7
	19+	•	22%	18	•	83%	6
	All	•	34%	41	•	69%	13
All frameworks or NVQs	16-18	•	14%	152	•	21%	43
	19+	•	23%	82	•	35%	34
	All	•	18%	234	•	27%	77

In these tables, the **columns** show the success rates where the whole of the framework has been completed, when either the whole framework or only the NVQ have been completed, and also shows the total number of leavers for that year. The **rows** show a breakdown of the success rates for different types of Apprenticeships and NVQs and also break down the success rates for different age groups of programmes.

### Using the Breakdown of Success to analyse distribution of success rates

#### 3.27

By comparing the different success rates the most and least effective provision can be pinpointed. The number of leavers then shows how significant this is to the provider

#### 3.28

The information shown in these tables can also be considered along with more detailed breakdowns provided to present an even clearer view of which sector subject areas (previously known as areas of learning), and framework sectors, have the highest or lowest success rates. We are also aiming to provide breakdowns looking at demographic data about the learner, for example, gender and ethnicity to further increase the detail.



## 4 Timetable for Implementation of Qualification Success Rates in Work-based Learning

### 4.1

The timetable for implementation of Qualification Success Rates in WBL is:

- Learner outcomes Statistical First Release published – June 2005.
- The first set of provider level data on the new WBL success measures will be made available in July alongside the Quality Improvement Pack and the first release of the VA/DT data. This will be full year 2003/04 data and in year 2004/05 data.
- Full national and provider level 2004/05 data will be released in November or December 2005, depending on when the data set is finalised.
- Provisional national and provider level success rate data for 2005/06 will be released on a quarterly basis throughout the year.
- Full 2005/06 data will be released in November or December 2006 depending on when the data set is finalised.
- All inspectors will begin using the data based on the new WBL Qualification Success Rates on inspections from October 2005, alongside their existing data. Data based on the new WBL qualification success rates will be published in inspection reports from April 2006.

# 5 Application of Qualification Success Rates in Further Education, including worked examples

## Introduction

### 5.1

This section details the application of the changes being proposed for the FE success rates. There are no significant changes to the FE success rate methodology but this section introduces ways of identifying the impact that key issues will have on overall success rates

## Short Courses

### 5.2

Analysis shows that while short courses (less than 24 weeks duration) have a success rate 20 percentage points higher than long courses, there is significant variation in the success rates of very short courses. The impact of short courses has been recognised by the LSC and DfES to the extent that there are separate floor targets in FE for long and short courses.

### 5.3

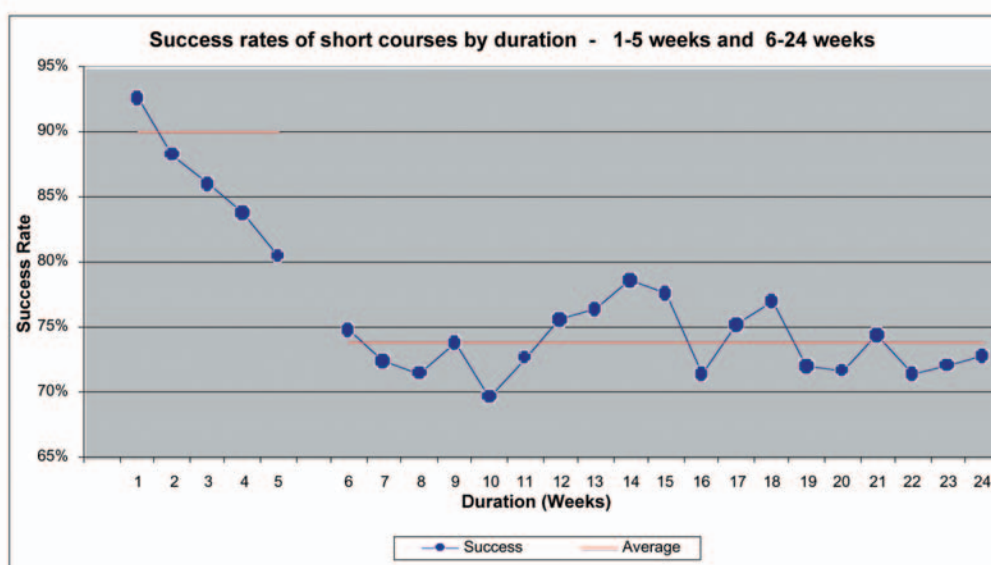
It is now clear that the success rates in short courses are being heavily influenced by very short courses. Courses less than five weeks duration account for just under half of all short courses and a break at this point generates a reasonably homogeneous group at six to 24 weeks where success rates do not seem to be linked to duration. For courses under five weeks in length there is a correlation between success rates and

duration however the variation in success rates is far lower than the previous grouping of all courses under 24 weeks in length.

### 5.4

Short courses will now be split into two groups: short courses under five weeks (less than 35 days expected duration) and short courses 5-24 weeks (35-167 days expected duration).

Chart 1



### Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks

#### 5.5

The concept of adjusting benchmarking data for provision mix was first introduced in the autumn of 2003 as one of the chosen means for identifying institutions with excellent performance and therefore qualifying for premium funding payments. We have now developed this concept to allow the production of institution specific benchmarks.

#### 5.6

In summary, the process calculates a notional success rate based on the assumption that an institution had achieved the national average success rate in each of these broad qualification areas: long courses Level 1, 2, 3 (excluding A level), higher, unknown, A/AS/A2, short courses under five weeks and short courses of five to 24 weeks. The process also calculates equivalent figures for the 10th, 25th, 75th and 90th percentiles. (*Note that the examples in this release of the Quality Improvement Pack show all short qualifications as a single figure*). This process uses FE benchmarking data figures published annually by the LSC and can be adapted by institutions to benchmark their performance against other groups of qualifications where national data is available.

#### 5.7

To resolve technical issues, the average success rates in the calculations relate to three institution types; general FE and specialist colleges, sixth form colleges and external institutions. The process will treat short qualifications above and below five weeks in length as separate groups. An example of how the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks are calculated can be seen on page 68. Where averages are quoted we have used medians rather than means for better comparability with the percentile figures. In most cases there is little or no difference between the mean and the median.

### Widening Participation

#### 5.8

It has been recognised that the method of identifying institutions with a high proportion of learners from a disadvantaged background needs updating. This is to make sure the method is statistically valid and to demonstrate that for these high widening participation (WP) institutions it is still fair and appropriate to calculate (and publish) separate benchmarking data. In the past we have used funding uplift factors to calculate those institutions that should be seen as high WP. This was last calculated in 2001/02, and an attempt to recalculate the benchmark on 2003/04 data did not give strong, statistically reliable results.

#### 5.9

Further analyses were undertaken with other sources of socio-economic data; however, these have shown the same problem as we have experienced with WP factors; namely, there is an effect on success rates but it does not impact equally on all institutions with similar proportions of disadvantaged learners. Even with further analysis, using simpler divisions between learners, and only looking at institutions with similar provision, the effect on success rate was no greater. This means that it cannot lead to a useful, practical solution.

#### 5.10

Therefore we have decided to use the same categorisation of high WP colleges as has been used for the last two years. Although this approach suffers from being dated, experience suggests that the impact will be very small. If the VA/DT pilot is successful, then the use of success measures that have a prior attainment at their heart is likely to be a far more powerful tool for judging the characteristics of learner cohorts for success rate purposes than widening participation factors.

### Example of how comparative benchmarking data taking into account mix of provision might be used

**Table 1**

Institution	Type	Actual success rate	Benchmarking data for institution type
College A	General FE	66%	68%
College B	General FE	67%	68%
College C	Sixth form college	74%	76%

In each case the actual success rates are very close to the institution type benchmarking data and the inference to be drawn is that each of these institutions is performing close to 'average' for its type.

An additional piece of benchmarking data taking into account the mix of provision casts a different light on the performance of these institutions. The calculation of this additional figure takes into account the average success rate for different types of learning aim - a more detailed explanation of the technique is shown on pages 68.

**Table 2**

Institution	Type	Actual success rate	Benchmarking data for institution type	Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark (average)
College A	General FE	66%	68%	61%
College B	General FE	67%	68%	71%
College C	Sixth form college	74%	76%	77%

Taking account of the provision within College A shows that their actual success rate is five percentage points above the level of the average performing general FE college. By contrast, College B is four percentage points below the average level and College C is three percentage points below an average level of performance.

A further question of interest to those assessing institution performance is how significant is a difference between actual success rate and the benchmarking data adjusted for the mix of provision. We can address this by using the methodology to reflect performance at the level 25th and 75th percentiles (see pages 68 for details).

Table 3

Institution	Type	Actual success rate	Benchmarking data or institution type	Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark (25th percentile)	Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark (average)	Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark (75th percentile)
College A	General FE	<b>66%</b>	68%	52%	61%	66%
College B	General FE	<b>67%</b>	68%	64%	71%	77%
College C	SFC	<b>74%</b>	76%	67%	77%	83%

Table 3 shows that College A is performing at the 75th percentile level having taken into account the mix of provision. Colleges B and C fall somewhere between the 25th and 50th percentile, which clearly has implications for quality improvement.

## Example to show the calculation methodology for the comparative benchmarking data taking into account mix of provision

The example shown in this annex is based on College A identified in Annex 1.

Table 4

### College A - actual performance

Broad qualification group	Starts	Achieved
Long level 1	1,716	975
Long level 2	1,422	590
Long level 3 (excluding A/AS/A2)	631	429
A/AS/A2	3,566	2,799
Higher level - long	32	17
Unknown level - long	209	202
Short	1,198	807
Total	8,774	5,819

Overall success rate is 5,819 divided by 8,774, which equals 66%

Table 5

### National Benchmarking data - success rates for general FE colleges - median and percentiles

Broad qualification group	25th percentile	Average	75th percentile
Long level 1	48.0%	54.9%	62.9%
Long level 2	46.0%	50.1%	55.6%
Long level 3 (excluding A/AS/A2)	46.4%	50.4%	56.9%
A/AS/A2	51.6%	64.9%	65.6%
Higher level - long	31.6%	40.9%	53.6%
Unknown level - long	50.4%	65.9%	72.6%
Short	72.5%	79.0%	85.0%

Table 6

### College A - success rate adjusted for provision mix

Broad qualification group	Starts	Projected achieved
Long Level 1	1,716	942
Long Level 2	1,422	712
Long Level 3 (excluding A/AS/A2)	631	318
A/AS/A2	3,566	2,314
Higher level - long	32	13
Unknown level - long	209	138
Short	1,198	946
Total	8,774	5,383

**Benchmarking data adjusted for provision mix is 5,383/8,774; that is, 61%**

**Note:** In future, short courses will be split into two groups: short courses under five weeks and short courses over five weeks.

'Projected achieved' represents the number of achievements the institution would have obtained if they had performed at the national average level for general FE colleges. In the case of Long Level 1, this would be calculated as  $1,716 \times 54.9\%$ ; that is 942 achievements. Similarly, projected achievements can be calculated for all broad qualification groups and summed to give an overall projected achievement. This total is then divided by the number of starts to give the benchmarking data adjusted for provision mix.

Following the same process but using the 75th percentile figures instead of the national averages, provides an indication of the 75th percentile adjusted for provision mix.

## 6 Interpretation of Qualification Success Rates in Further Education

### 6.1

These pages provide explanations to the four areas of the one-page success rate report for an FE institution. The one-page report is designed to give providers an assessment of their performance using a combination of tabular and pictorial representations. In addition to presenting headline success rates, the contributing effects of different elements of provision will also be explored. For each institution the report shows:

- headline success rates compared with the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks at the levels of national average, 10th, 25th, 75th and 90th percentiles

- success rates for broad qualification groups (by length and notional level) and the equivalent benchmarking data
- the extent to which a particular broad qualification group impacts on an institution's overall performance.

*(Note: The broad qualification groups are compared against national benchmarking data that are applicable for differing types of institution (general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges, sixth form colleges and external institutions).*

### 6.2

#### Area One: Provider Information

Chart 2: Area One of the success rate report: Provider Information

Select institution from drop down list:	<input type="text" value="Kipling College"/>	999
<b>Institution Name:</b>	Kipling College	
<b>UPIN:</b>	999999	<b>Instcode:</b> KipCo
<b>Institution Grouping:</b>	SFC	<b>LLSC:</b> Local LSC

For this document, we will be examining the performance of Kipling College (fictional). For reference, the full Kipling College one-page sample report is shown in Chart 5 on page 74. Data for other institutions can be found from the drop down arrow in the Excel tables to be distributed in support of the Quality Improvement Pack.

## Area Two: The Success Rate Display Table

### 6.3

This section provides the numeric information on the provider's Headline Success Rate and their respective performance in the various subject areas.

### 6.4

From Table 7, the row labelled "Success rates" (shaded in light blue) displays the provider's headline success rate and success rates for each broad qualification group (by length and notional level). Below the success rates row, counts of the associated numbers of learner starts and the number of achievements are provided.

### 6.5

*Example: Kipling College has a headline success rate of 76 per cent. It achieves a success rate of 73 per cent in the 'A, AS, A2 (long nl 3)' group and 89 per cent in Long nl 1 (red boxes) - but how does Kipling College compare against the national benchmarking data for its institution type?*

### 6.6

The column labelled "Headline" also displays a set of Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks. Calculated using national benchmarking data for each broad qualification type, Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks are customised indicators that show the success rate an institution would achieve, had it delivered success rates at the national average for each broad qualification type.

### 6.7

*Example: The "Headline" column indicates that Kipling College's headline success rate of 76 per cent is two per cent higher than the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark Average of 74 per cent (green box).*

### 6.8

Colleges whose headline success rate is above their Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark at the national average level will want to compare their performance against the 75th and 90th percentile levels.

### 6.9

*Example: Kipling College needs to increase its headline success rate by 7 per cent to 83 per cent if it is to surpass the 75th percentile level. Also the success rate for 'Long nl 1' is above the 90th percentile, whereas for 'A, AS, A2 (long nl 3)' it is at the 25th percentile see green boxes.*

**Table 7: The Success Rate Display Table**

Broad qualification group (by length and notional level)								
	Headline	Long nl 1	Long nl 2	Long nl 3 (excl A, AS, A2)	A, AS, A2 (long nl 3)	Long nl H	Long nl X	Short
<b>Success Rate</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>73%</b>		<b>93%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Starts</b>	5799	742	447	152	2868	0	653	937
<b>Achieved</b>	4401	657	265	17	2085	0	609	768
<b>Percentiles</b>	<b>Length &amp; level adjusted benchmarks</b>	<b>National benchmarking data</b>						
<b>90th Percentile</b>	88%	83%	83%	76%	88%		96%	94%
<b>75th</b>	83%	75%	74%	69%	84%		88%	89%
<b>Average</b>	74%	58%	68%	61%	79%		75%	78%
<b>25th</b>	62%	46%	61%	53%	73%		41%	58%
<b>10th</b>	50%	33%	56%	44%	70%		2%	37%

(Note: example calculations are based on 2002/03 national benchmarking data)



**Area Three: The Success Rate Visual Display Chart**

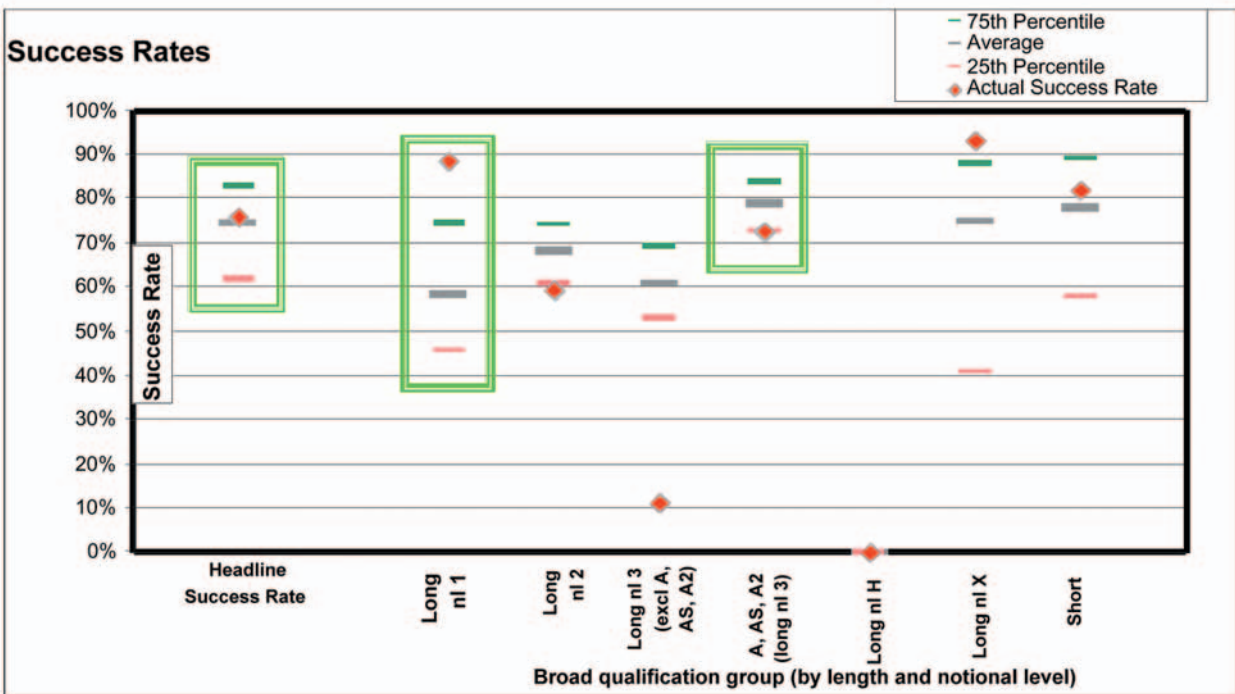
6.10

This section provides a visual depiction of the data shown in Table 7. The provider's headline success rate is denoted by a red diamond, and the length and level benchmarks are displayed using coloured lines.

6.11

*Example: The green boxes convey the same information as the red and green boxes in Table 7.*

**Chart 3: The Success Rate Visual Display Chart**



#### Area Four: effects on the Headline Success Rate

6.12

The headline success indicator is the difference between an institution's headline success rate and the length and level adjusted benchmark (at the average level). From Table 7, the headline success indicator for Kipling College is +2 per cent (76 per cent minus 74 per cent). The headline success indicator will be negative in cases where an institution's headline success rate is less than the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmark.

6.13

The values displayed in Chart 4, are weighted calculations (combining learner numbers and success rates in each broad qualification group) that show the impact the performance each broad qualification group is having on the headline success indicator.

6.14

*Example: For Kipling College, their headline success rate of 76 per cent is 14 per cent above the 25th Percentile Length and Level Adjustment (62 per cent), 2 per cent above the Average Length and Level Adjustment (74 per cent), but 7 per cent below the 75th Percentile Length and Level Adjustment (83 per cent) - see red box.*

6.15

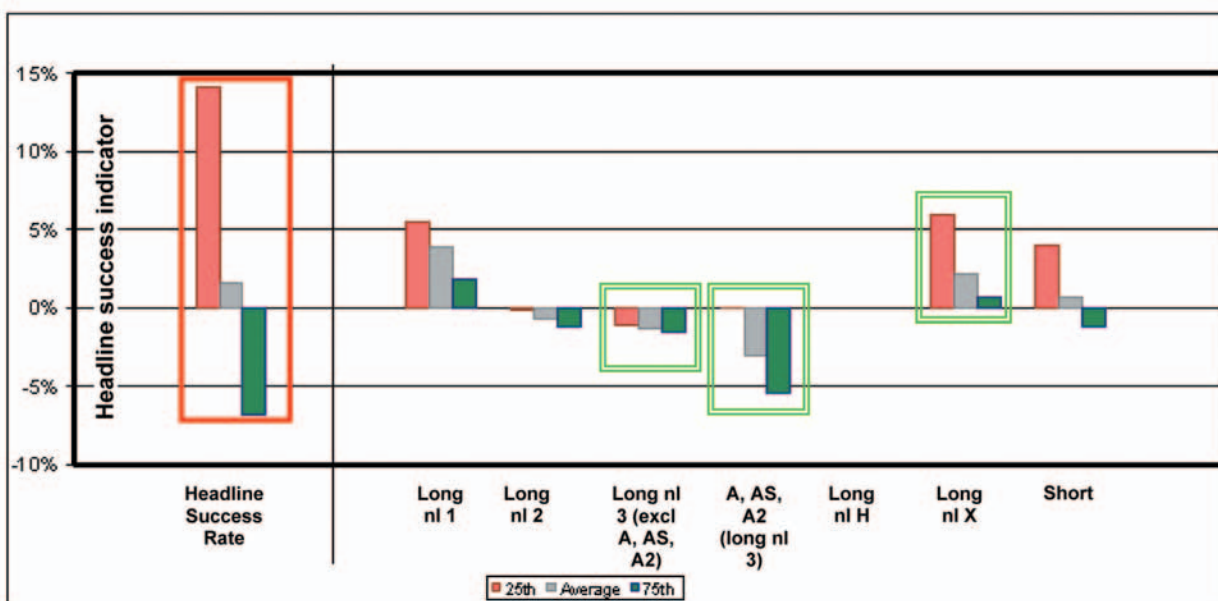
*Example: The performance in the 'A, AS, A2 (long nl 3)' group is having a strong overall effect on headline success rates because about half the institution's provision is in this group. By achieving the national average success in 'A, AS,*

*A2 (long nl 3)' the headline success rate will increase by three per cent - see green box.*

6.16

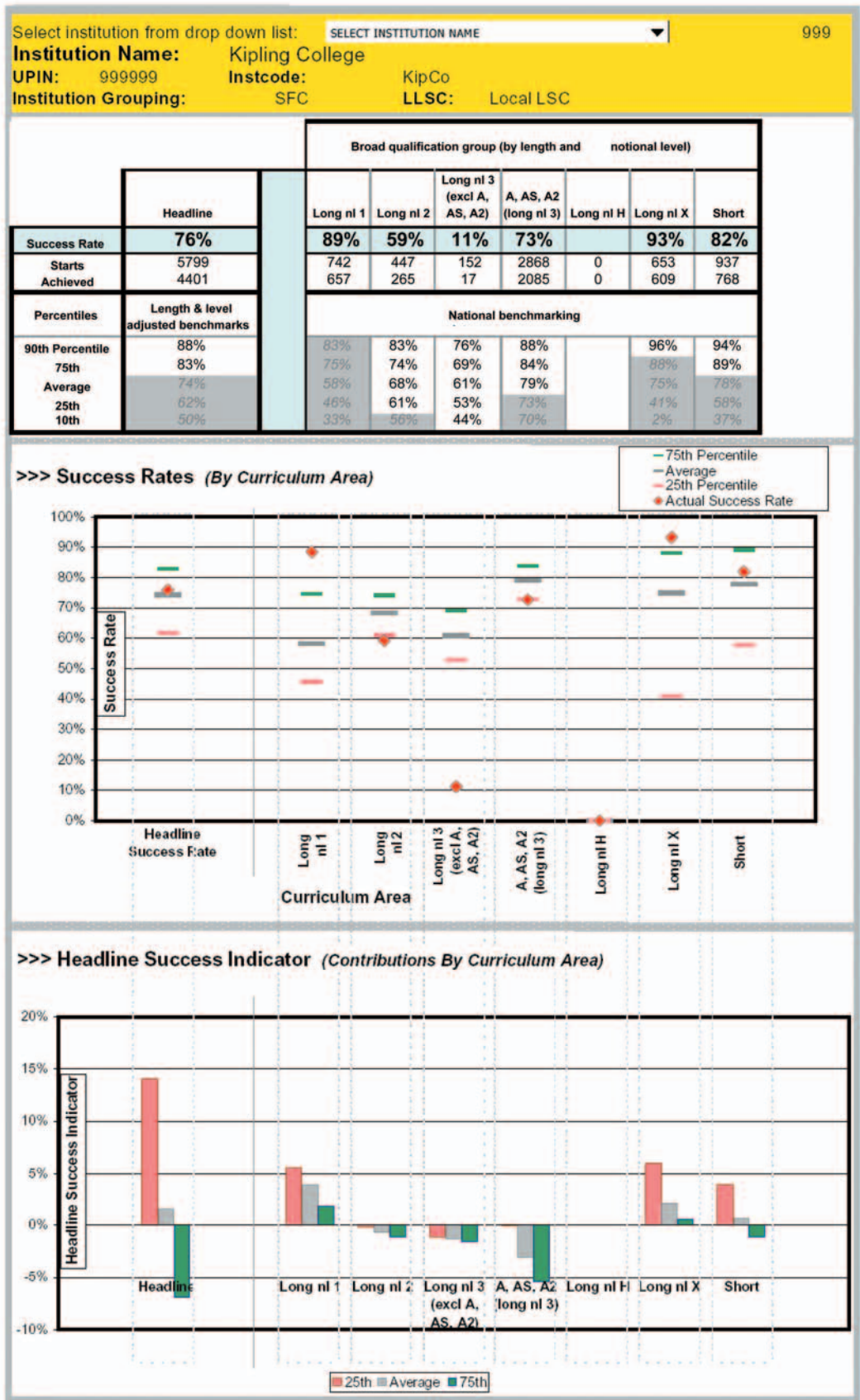
*Example: Kipling College's high success rates in the Long nl 1 and Long nl X areas has a very positive impact on the headline success rate as they account for 24 per cent of learner starts (as shown in Table 7). By contrast, Long nl 3 (excl A, AS, A2) will only have a +1 per cent effect on the headline success indicator since there are the fewest number of learner starts in this group - see green box.*

Chart 4: Headline Success Indicator



Note that the sums of the headline success rates in each broad qualification group equals the headline level for the chosen percentile group.

Chart 5: Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks



## Further reporting

### 6.17

In addition to this one page report, detailed breakdowns of FE success rate data will be made available. This will allow providers to relate the results from the eight broad qualification groups to specific qualifications and sector subject areas. The LSC will continue to publish national success rate data down to qualification level to allow providers to make highly targeted comparisons of their data for quality improvement purposes.

### 6.18

Conclusions drawn from comparisons against the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks can be contextualised by looking at the Value Added and Distance Travelled data. Further information can be found in Section 4 *'Using Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners, Qualification Success Rates and RARPA: Case Studies'*.

## 7 Timetable for Implementation of Qualification Success Rates in Further Education

### 7.1

The timetable for the implementation of Qualification Success Rates in FE is:

- Learner outcomes SFR published – June 2005
- LSC re-run provider reports to show sector subject areas – summer 2005
- Data on split short courses published – summer 2005
- National Success Rate Benchmarking Data Published – summer 2005
- Ofsted distribute College Performance Reports – summer 2005
- Provider reports for 2004/05 data – November 2005 onwards.

## 8 Qualification Success Rates: Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will all providers be affected by changes to the way success rates are calculated?**

8.1

These changes will affect all FE and WBL providers for whom the LSC currently produces success rate data. However, the impact of these changes in the FE sector will be small.

### **Will the same method be used for calculating success rate information in school sixth forms?**

8.2

Work is underway to produce success rate information for school sixth forms which can be compared with other providers in the learning and skills sector. DfES and others are working towards appropriate data being collected in the January 2007 PLASC for analysis in autumn 2007 following exam results in summer 2007.

### **Will the old WBL success rates still be published?**

8.3

The LSC will continue to publish WBL success rates based on the current methodology in 2005/06 to allow judgements on progress towards floor targets or three year development plans to be made on a consistent basis. However the new measures will be used as the primary indicators of success rates in 2005/06. We will review whether the current success rates will be published in 2006/07 at a later date.

### **Success rate targets are currently set until end 2005/06. Will a new system mean new targets being imposed?**

8.4

The New Measure of Success rates should be used for the first time in the January/February 2006 LSC reviews of provider three-year development plans. For WBL, the success rates produced on the old methodology will be available to judge progress against existing targets.

### **How will specialist colleges be measured since they do not submit data to the ILR? For example, will they be given success rate benchmarks?**

8.5

At first, it will not be possible to use the new measures for those specialist colleges which do not submit ILR returns. Work on developing success measures for these providers will fall within the work of the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) in non-accredited learning project.

### **What are the specific proposals for recognising partial achievement?**

8.6

At the moment, it is not possible to recognise partial achievement by learners. We expect that the implementation of a framework for achievement will enable us to recognise partial achievement and will ensure that the new measures are flexible enough to accommodate a credit framework.

### **Completion should not just be the achievement of the full qualification – providers also want to be recognised for different types of progress and achievement. How will this system take account of learners who leave early for higher education or for employment?**

8.7

Learner destination will be measured by a separate measure. The general position of the LSC is that the learner success measure is associated with gaining qualifications. Please note that Qualification Success Rates are one type of evaluator in a group of measures designed to assess performance using various criteria.

### **Does the exclusion of outcomes other than qualifications from success rates run counter to the policy priority of engaging priority groups of learners, such as 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment and training?**

8.8

The majority of such learners will be engaged in programmes leading to qualifications, for which the qualification success measure is appropriate. If they are on non-accredited programmes, the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) process will apply. For further information please see the RARPA section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

### **How is qualification success rate used in the Distance Travelled measure?**

8.9

The outcome measures for the Distance Travelled for 16– 19 learners will be based on achievement rates and overall success rates depending on whether the provision is with the FE or WBL funding stream. For further information please see Section 11 of the Value Added and Distance Travelled Section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

### **Why is Entry to Employment not included in the Qualification Success Rates?**

8.10

Entry to Employment is a work-based learning programme whose aims are tailored to individual learners. As such, the programme often does not involve accredited qualifications and therefore cannot be treated in the same way as Apprenticeships or NVQ only study. The extension of RARPA can be applied to Entry To Employment.

### **Why aren't the Qualification Success Rates being piloted for a year like the Value Added and Distance Travelled measures?**

8.11

Since the new Qualification Success Rate measures are developments of existing measures based on data sets that have been used for a number of years it was felt that they should be adopted without a piloting year. In FE there has been no significant change to the methodology so previous figures are still valid. In WBL success rates based on the current methodology will be made available in 2005/06 for comparison purpose. Hence, it is the implementation and reporting of these measures that is being piloted.

### **Can the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks methods be applied to different groups of qualifications?**

8.12

Yes, the method can be applied to any group of qualifications where national benchmarks are published. However, the eight groups that are used in the measure as it is set out are the standard way of calculating Length and level Adjusted Benchmarks.

## Contents – Section 3

- 1 Introduction to Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement
- 2 Introduction to the RARPA Extension Project (REX)



# 3 Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement

## Introduction

### What is RARPA?

1.1 RARPA stands for Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement. The term describes an approach to the quality assurance of provision in the learning and skills sector that focuses on learner achievement. The RARPA approach gives providers a framework for supporting the progress and achievement of learners, through consistent and effective methods of recognising and recording.

1.2 The RARPA approach was developed explicitly to support the recognition and recording of progress and achievement in circumstances where no external qualification or certification is offered to learners. As the majority of such 'non-accredited' programmes in the learning and skills sector are offered to adult learners, the RARPA approach was originally developed to meet the needs of these learners.

1.3 The RARPA approach has been particularly appropriate to the curriculum offered by adult and community learning (ACL) providers, where a majority of learners are studying non-accredited programmes. However, the RARPA approach is relevant to all non-accredited provision and has also been demonstrated to be appropriate in the following contexts:

- Entry to Employment (E2E) centres
- **learnirect** and UK Online centres
- specialist colleges
- neighbourhood renewal provision
- provision offered by voluntary organisations.

1.4 The RARPA approach has also been tested in sixth form colleges. However, there is currently no requirement for the approach to be applied to non-accredited activities within the full-time 16–19 entitlement curriculum within the context of the *Success for All* strategy.

### How has the RARPA approach been developed?

1.5 The RARPA approach originated through work commissioned by the LSC from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA). The RARPA approach was devised primarily so that providers offering non-accredited provision funded by the LSC would be able to provide evidence to both the LSC and the Inspectorates that such provision was supported by appropriate quality assurance procedures. Since 2003 the LSC's work on RARPA has been taken forward within the context of the *Success for All* strategy as part of the New Measures of Success.

1.6 The RARPA approach was developed from examples of demonstrated effective practice in non-accredited provision, and is directly mapped to the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework (CIF). NIACE and LSDA worked together with the LSC during 2001–02 to develop, test and refine the model, and towards the end of 2002 the LSC formally endorsed the RARPA approach as its preferred model for recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning.

1.7 During 2003–04 the RARPA approach was tested out through a range of pilot projects involving many different types of provider and provision. LSDA and NIACE together produced an evaluation of the pilots in November 2004 that confirmed that the RARPA approach could be applied to all areas of non-accredited provision in the learning and skills sector. A link to the report is included in paragraph 1.15 below.

1.8 From 2004–05, the work of LSDA, NIACE and the LSC on RARPA has shifted to preparing the ground for implementation of the approach across all relevant LSC-funded provision, and to supporting organisations to build their capacity to fulfil the requirement to implement RARPA from September 2005 onwards.

### What is the RARPA 'staged process'?

1.9

The RARPA approach is based around the application of a simple five-stage process to all programmes of learning. Each of the five stages can be mapped to a key question in the CIF, and follows a logical sequence familiar to many people working in the sector. At its heart, the RARPA approach embodies effective practice in teaching and learning developed over many years with adult learners.

1.10

The five stages of the RARPA process are outlined in Table 1 below. The table includes some suggestions as to how each stage (or element) of the process might be evidenced, although it should be noted that a key criterion in implementing RARPA is that the activities designed to generate such evidence are fit for purpose. This means that the evidence generated may not necessarily be paper-based but should be appropriate. Table 2 maps elements of the staged process to the revised CIF.

**Table 1: The RARPA staged process**

Element	Evidence
1 <b>Aim(s)</b> appropriate to an individual learner or group of learners	Clearly stated aim(s) for all programmes
2 <b>Initial assessment</b> to establish the learner's starting point	Record of outcomes of process of establishing learners' starting points
3 <b>Identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives</b> (initial, renegotiated and revised)	Clearly stated and suitably challenging objectives for all programmes and, wherever feasible, individually for each learner
4 <b>Recognition and recording of progress and achievement during programme (formative assessment)</b> , including tutor feedback to learners, learner reflection, progress reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Examples of appropriate evidence include:</li> <li>● records of learner self-assessment, group and peer assessment</li> <li>● tutor records of assessment activities and individual or group progress and achievement</li> <li>● learners' files, journals, diaries, portfolios, artwork, videos, audiotapes, performances, exhibitions and displays, individual or group learner testimony, artefacts, photographs and other forms of evidence</li> </ul>
5 <b>End-of-programme learner self-assessment, tutor summative assessment, review of overall progress and achievement</b> in relation to appropriately challenging learning objectives identified at the beginning or during the programme. It may include recognition of learning outcomes not specified during the programme	

Table 2: RARPA and the Common Inspection Framework

Element of staged process	Mapping to new CIF questions
1 Aims appropriate to an individual learner or groups of learners (clearly stated learning aims)	3 How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
2 Initial assessment to establish the learner's starting point	1 How well do learners achieve? 2 How effective are teaching, training and learning? 4 How well are learners guided and supported?
3 Identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives: initial, renegotiated and revised	1 How well do learners achieve? 2 How effective are teaching, training and learning? 3 How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?
4 Recognition and recording of progress and achievement during programme (formative assessment): tutor feedback to learners, learner reflection, progress reviews	1 How well do learners achieve? 2 How effective are teaching, training and learning?
5 End-of-programme learner self-assessment; tutor summative assessment; review of overall progress and achievement	1 How well do learners achieve? 2 How effective are teaching, training and learning? 4 How well are learners guided and supported?

## 1.11

The staged process has been developed for and by practitioners. Each element can easily be translated into a language which is meaningful in terms of illustrating a quality learning process for learners on their learning journey. We might translate the staged process into the following questions relating to each element:

- 1 What does the learner want to learn about?
- 2 What experiences does the learner have which are relevant to the learning they want to do? Where are they starting from in terms of skills and knowledge? What might inhibit their learning?
- 3 What specific learner goals need to be provided for to facilitate successful learning? Are these included in the programme content, or do they need to be added?
- 4 How is the learner progressing? What does the learner want following feedback from the tutor? What further instruction and support do they need? Are the learner's aims still relevant or do they need to be modified?

5 How are the learner's progress and achievement going to be recognised? Will it be through tutor-led review, peer review, group review, another form of review and recording which is appropriate to the context and type of programme? What has the learner achieved at the end of the programme? How can these achievements be recorded in a meaningful way for the learner? Are there achievements which were not anticipated to recognise and record? What is the next step for this learner?

## 1.12

It is important to emphasise the inter-relationship of the five stages. For example, the identification of appropriately challenging learning objectives will inform the basis of both formative and summative assessment. Feedback from formative assessment may lead to a re-negotiation of learning objectives and so on.

## 1.13

It is also possible that, in some instances, elements of the process may be combined, or that the order of application of the process might be changed. For example, in very short programmes, the distinction between formative and summative assessment may not be meaningful or possible. Where the aims of a programme are negotiated with a group of learners, stage two may influence stage one.

1.14

At each stage of the process, providers will be expected to ensure that learners are involved in the process, and that evidence of this involvement is recorded and presented to demonstrate that the RARPA approach is being consistently and effectively applied across all relevant provision. The evaluation of the pilots noted that, where learners are involved and engaged with this process and it is built into the learning experience so that it enhances rather than intrudes on the delivery of the programme, benefits for learners, practitioners and the institution itself are maximised. The stages of the staged process should be evident in the provider's processes though they may not be identified or badged as RARPA. Many providers already have effective learning and quality assurance processes so that applying RARPA may require minimal changes.

### Examples of effective practice

1.15

The publication: Evaluation report on the RARPA pilot projects refers to a number of examples of the effective application of the RARPA approach across the learning and skills sector. Copies of the report are available on both the NIACE and LSDA websites ([www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)) and ([www.llda.org.uk](http://www.llda.org.uk)) and paper copies of the report may be ordered from both organisations, or from the LSC itself.

1.16

LSDA, NIACE and the LSC have established an Effective Practice Web Resource (EPWR) for providers to support the implementation of the RARPA approach. The resource was launched at the beginning of October 2005 and will be updated regularly as more examples of practice are identified. The resource can be accessed on the LSC website ([www.lsc.gov.uk/RARPA](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/RARPA)). Requests for specific information related to the implementation of RARPA can be sent to [rarpa@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:rarpa@lsc.gov.uk)

### When will the staged process be introduced?

1.17

The RARPA approach was introduced across LSC-funded non-accredited provision from September 2005. The year 2005-06 is an embedding year for RARPA with full implementation demonstrated in the self-assessment report (SAR) for 2005-06. Providers are expected to commit to effective quality assurance of learning and quality improvement led by self-assessment, as summarised in a statement about the application of RARPA in providers' development plans.

1.18

From September 2006, all providers in receipt of LSC funding will be expected to apply the RARPA approach to all non-accredited provision.

1.19

The For action document: *Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-accredited Learning* (LSC, July 2005) can be accessed from the RARPA web pages ([www.lsc.gov.uk/rarpa](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/rarpa)) or by clicking on the link: **RARPA for action document**.

# Introduction to the RARPA Extension Project (REX)

## What is REX and what are its implications for 'accredited learning'?

### 2.1

As stated in paragraph 1.5 the RARPA approach is one of the New Measures of Success.

### 2.2

As the RARPA approach is mapped to the CIF, and as the CIF is applied to all provision across the sector, the partners involved in the Measures of Success Steering Group (MSSG) agreed in March 2005 that the RARPA approach should be extended in future to 'accredited' as well as 'non-accredited' provision in the sector. At the same time, ALI and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority reached a similar agreement in principle that in future the RARPA approach should be applied to provision leading to qualifications.

### 2.3

These agreements provide the basis for moving forward in 2005-06 on the extension of RARPA beyond the boundaries of 'non-accredited' provision. The RARPA Extension (REX) Project is being taken forward by NIACE for the LSC in response to these initiatives.

### 2.4

Feedback from the evaluation of the RARPA pilots in non-accredited provision demonstrates clearly that the staged process is most effective when it is embedded within the day-to-day quality systems of the provider. The REX project seeks to ensure that this principle can be effectively extended to programmes leading to accredited awards.

### 2.5

From September 2006 RARPA will be systematically extended to all provision across the Learning and Skills sector (ie to both non-accredited and accredited provision).

### 2.6

The REX project has two strands. The main strand of work seeks to embed the RARPA approach in a new set of arrangements for awarding body centre recognition and monitoring currently being developed within the new Framework for Achievement (FfA). In this strand of the project the LSC is working closely with both QCA and with awarding bodies through the QCA's Centre Recognition Project.

### 2.7

The second strand of work will ensure that the RARPA Effective Practice Web Resource is gradually extended to include examples of practice from programmes leading to awards within the FfA. The expectation of the REX initiative is that, over time, the application of the RARPA approach to such provision will maximise learner achievement in the new framework and lead to increased levels of success. We anticipate that the first examples of practice from the REX project will begin to appear on the Web Resource in 2006.

### 2.8

The extension of RARPA to accredited provision is closely linked into the VA and DT for 16-19 learners measure and the Qualification Success Rate measure. The application of RARPA gives a framework for mapping progress and achievement which can be used in conjunction with the outputs from the LAT and detailed information about success rates which will help to focus and drive quality improvement strategies.

## What is the timescale for the REX project?

### 2.9

The REX project began formally in March 2005 and aims to prepare the ground for the introduction of the RARPA approach to provision leading to awards within the FfA from September 2006. Following trials with selected awarding bodies and centres in early 2006, the project will establish agreed criteria and processes for embedding the RARPA approach within centre recognition arrangements in the FfA from April 2006 onwards.

### 2.10

The full extension of RARPA to all provision across the sector will take place alongside the transition from National Qualification Framework (NQF) provision to FfA provision planned for 2006 to 2010. During this time all awarding body centres will be approved to apply the approach within an increasing proportion of the awards they offer.

## The relationship of RARPA to planning and inspection

### 2.11

The RARPA staged process has been developed in consultation with inspectorates and is mapped against the requirements of the CIF. Evidence of the effective application of the staged process will therefore also be useful in meeting the requirements of the CIF.

2.12

In conjunction with the other measures of success, RARPA will be a key tool for addressing quality assurance and quality improvement issues identified as part of the new arranging for aligning planning and resources outlined in Planning for Success.

### **The role of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority**

2.13

In taking forward the RARPA approach into accredited provision, the *Success for All* partners have taken into account the regulatory framework within which awards are offered to learners on LSC-funded provision. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) thus becomes an important partner in taking forward the REX project.

2.14

QCA is formally committed to supporting the work of the REX project. In particular QCA seeks to ensure that the development of regulatory criteria for the new Framework for Achievement (FfA) takes account of the needs of providers to produce evidence of the application of the RARPA process as part of their responsibilities to both LSC and the Inspectorates.

2.15

The REX project is therefore closely connected with two key initiatives being taken forward by QCA. One is the Centre Recognition Project, which aims to establish a shared approach to centre recognition by awarding bodies, and to facilitate the mutual recognition of centres by different awarding bodies. The second is the broader development of the FfA, which will create a new system of credit-based qualifications, and within which the need to ensure that learners are being effectively supported towards their individual learning aims will become increasingly important.

### **Streamlining evidence requirements**

2.16

In working to align the different requirements and processes of awarding bodies, LSC and the Inspectorates, the REX project aims to implement the LSC's Bureaucracy Task Force principle that evidence should be produced once, used many times and used by all.

2.17

The project aims to establish mutually agreed criteria and procedures that will enable providers to produce evidence that establishes and maintains their status as a recognised awarding body centre, and which will also be useful to LSC in its business planning arrangements, and to the Inspectorates.

2.18

The REX project does not assume that the responsibilities of awarding bodies, LSC and the Inspectorates are identical. It does rest on the premise that it will be feasible to identify requirements and procedures for providers that will result in some of the evidence they produce about the effectiveness of their quality systems for recognising and recording progress and achievement of learners being used for multiple purposes.

### **Progress to date**

2.19

The focus of work on the REX project to date has been to secure the support of key stakeholders (regulatory authorities, awarding bodies, providers, inspectorates) for the general principles and more detailed proposals which are being developed. The project has also been keen to ensure that it operates in tandem with the Centre Recognition Project.

2.20

From early 2006, the project will work within the initial phase of development of the FfA to test and trial:

- appropriate criteria that awarding bodies might apply to the recognition and monitoring of centres within the FfA
- the procedures through which evidence is generated about the application of the RARPA process that may be used by all interested parties.

### **Frequently asked questions about RARPA and REX**

#### ***Will the introduction of RARPA generate unnecessary bureaucracy?***

2.21

The New Measures of Success are being developed with a commitment to ensure that no additional data collection burdens are imposed on providers. The evaluation of the pilot projects indicated that the RARPA approach when applied in a fit for purpose manner, does not lead to an increase in unnecessary bureaucracy. In some cases, record keeping is most appropriately carried out using non-paper based methods. Examples of effective practice in recording methods will be included in the RARPA Effective Practice Web Resource.

#### ***How can RARPA be applied to short episodes of learning?***

2.22

Again, the evaluation of the pilot projects showed that the RARPA process can be applied in a fit for purpose

manner to very short episodes of learning. Examples of how to do this will be included in the RARPA Effective Practice Web Resource.

***How does RARPA stimulate quality improvement at institutional level?***

2.23

The principle focus of the RARPA approach is to improve the learning experience for individual learners. However, the evaluation of the pilot projects found that embedding the RARPA approach into the quality assurance processes of an organisation had considerable benefits, including ensuring that the focus of quality improvement activities was directly related to improving teaching and learning within the organisation. Support from senior management was a crucial factor in ensuring that RARPA was applied successfully.

2.24

During inspection, RARPA will make a positive contribution to the overall judgement of provision and the capacity of the provider to make further improvements.

***Who will use the evidence generated from the RARPA process?***

2.25

It is anticipated that evidence of achievement related to individual learners will be in a format which meets the needs of those learners. This evidence, together with course or programme level data, will also be used during inspections and in discussions with the local LSC about quality improvement and three-year development plans. The REX project is also likely to involve awarding bodies in the collection of RARPA-generated evidence.

***Are we transferring responsibility for quality assurance/quality improvement to Awarding Bodies?***

2.26

No. Awarding bodies, LSC and Inspectorates will maintain separate responsibilities for different aspects of the quality assurance/quality improvement processes operated by providers. The RARPA approach relates to one area of a wider set of responsibilities for all these bodies. The REX project seeks to ensure that, where all parties share a common interest (ie in learner achievements) it will be possible to generate a single body of evidence that can serve each of their separate responsibilities.

***Awarding bodies have different quality assurance processes, how can we ensure consistency?***

2.27

In taking forward the work of the REX project we will be focusing on shared criteria against which evidence might be generated, rather than the development of a common process. We anticipate that awarding bodies will continue to develop different procedures for centre recognition and monitoring based on these shared criteria. It should also be noted that centre recognition is only one aspect of the quality assurance procedures of awarding bodies. In addition to centre recognition there will continue to be additional quality assurance requirements for individual qualifications or groups of qualifications within the FfA, and these may well differ between awarding bodies.

***Does this mean there will be minimum requirements for Awarding Body processes?***

2.28

The development of the FfA will enable QCA (and its regulatory partners) to establish new criteria for the recognition and monitoring of awarding bodies and their centres within the new Framework. These criteria will (in part) reflect the RARPA approach and will form the basis of mutual recognition of centres by awarding bodies. But it will still be possible for different awarding bodies to fulfil these criteria through different processes.

***Won't our centres find this process increases bureaucracy rather than decrease it?***

2.29

If the principle of mutual centre recognition can be combined with a shared approach to the generation and transmission of evidence to LSC, Inspectorates and awarding bodies, then there could be significant gains to be made by individual providers within the proposed new arrangements. The FfA will also devolve to awarding bodies and their centres greater responsibilities for the conduct and delivery of assessments to learners, and again this should lead to an overall reduction in the bureaucracy associated with the current NQF.

## Contents – Section 4

- 1 Introduction to case studies of Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners, Qualification Success Rate and Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement
- 2 Case studies: School A
- 3 Case studies: Work-Based Learning Provider B
- 4 Case studies: Further education College C



# 4 Using Value Added and Distance Travelled for 16–19 learners, Qualification Success Rates and RARPA: Case Studies

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1

This section includes three case studies for:

- Value Added (VA) for 16–19 learners
- Distance Travelled (DT) for 16–19 learners
- Qualification Success Rates (QSR) and
- Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA)
- local authorities' (LAs') work on quality improvement with school sixth forms
- awarding bodies' centre recognition and monitoring processes
- the Inspectorates':
  - college or provider performance reports and school PANDA reports
  - post-inspection action plans.

They demonstrate how the measures can be used to complement each other in identifying areas to target for quality improvement or for the dissemination of effective practice.

We have attempted to demonstrate how data and evidence from these measures can contribute to the following documents and processes:

- college, school or work-based learning providers':
  - quality assurance policies and procedures, including the operation of RARPA or RARPA-type processes
  - Self-Assessment Reports, quality improvement plans and internal quality reviews
  - development plans and school self-evaluation.
- local LSCs':
  - strategic analysis
  - annual planning review
  - development plans and discussions.

These examples are provided for the benefit of providers, LAs, local LSCs and key partners, but the actual use of data from the New Measures of Success may well differ from that suggested below. This section includes suggestions on how each piece of information might inform the quality assurance processes within a college, school or work-based learning provider, or the business processes operated by local LSCs. Please note that these examples are not intended to be definitive.

### Interaction between the measures

#### 1.2

There are clear links between all the New Measures of Success – indeed they are intended to be seen as a 'basket' of measures which, taken together, provide a contextualised picture of the performance of a provider. These case studies emphasise the interaction between the three measures described in detail in this release of the Quality Improvement Pack.

#### 1.3

As schools can only access the sixth form VA data at present, they may wish to move straight to the schools' case study (Case Study A) to understand how they can use the LAT data available to them at present.

#### 1.4

VA and DT summary charts are intended to provide an initial overview of the provision offered by the provider compared to the national average. In the case of VA, they include an overall VA score.

## 1.5

Providers, LAs and local LSCs might first consider whether the overall score reflects their own judgements about the quality of provision within the provider. Remember that the VA and DT measures are unique in taking account of the prior attainment of learners (in other words, what the cohort of learners entering that provider had attained at Key Stage 4) and comparing this to the actual achievement of all other learners who had a similar starting point, and who took that qualification within England in the last academic year.

## 1.6

On summary charts, the areas where performance is higher or lower than national average performance are represented by shaded columns.

## 1.7

The summary charts should flag up to users which areas of provision might be regarded as strengths or weaknesses. Users could then decide which of these areas they would like to investigate further.

## 1.8

There may also be areas of provision which are not shaded, suggesting that the performance in these areas is similar to the national average. However, providers, LAs or local LSCs might want to investigate these areas further, for instance, if the provision in that area had previously given concern or been regarded as particularly good.

## 1.9

There are a number of reasons why some bars on the chart may not be shaded:

- the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners, but still relatively small
- the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
- the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

## 1.10

It may be useful to look at the provider's overall Qualification Success Rate data at this point and at the breakdown of success rates by programme type to see how closely, if at all, this correlates with VA or DT scores. This could be used to give context to any particularly high or low VA or DT results.

## 1.11

The Qualification Success Rate measure will also give an indication of retention levels that the VA and DT measures do not take into account. Success rates can

thus indicate where good VA or DT scores are achieved but retention is poor. Similarly, the VA score does not take into account those who do not gain a qualification, while the Qualification Success Rate provides an indication of where pass rates are high or low.

## 1.12

Please note that the VA and DT scores represented in the summary charts reflect achievement or success rates that take into account the learners' prior attainment. Nationally, average performance in each subject is represented by zero per cent in VA and DT summary charts, so these charts and graphs do not tell us anything about the actual level of national success or achievement rate or about where the provider performs in relation to it.

## 1.13

The VA national comparison graph will provide information about the actual national achievement rate in a given subject/qualification. In contrast, in the DT national comparison graph, the national average performance is represented by zero per cent, as in the summary charts.

## 1.14

For work-based learning providers, there is also the opportunity to:

- compare the DT scores for particular programme types with both the overall success rate and the timely success rate
- compare actual and planned end dates for Apprenticeships to get an indication of how accurately planned end dates are set for learners
- flag up the need to re-assess mechanisms for initial support, guidance and assessment and thus how well the provider operates RARPA-type processes if timely success rates are low.

## 1.15

Having looked at the summary outputs, users can then generate VA and DT national comparison graphs for the subjects or qualification areas which they want to investigate further. In the case studies, we have made a selection for you, to illustrate how you might wish to follow through particular areas of success or concern. In practice, you would be able to use the LAT to drill down into any subject or qualification area represented on the summary chart, to get a more detailed picture of performance in that area.

## 1.16

The national comparison graphs enable a direct comparison between a provider's performance in a given subject in a given qualification (subject/qualification)

compared to the national performance across the full range of prior attainment.

#### 1.17

These graphs are represented differently for VA and DT because their use for target-setting purposes in VA cannot be replicated for DT. Providers might wish to predict a given grade in a Level 3 qualification based on the information within the VA national comparison graph for that subject/qualification and the performance of their previous groups of learners.

#### 1.18

The mapping of progress and target-setting processes are again related to the effective use of RARPA. The same prediction in terms of how likely a learner is to achieve a given non-graded qualification cannot be deduced from a DT national comparison graph – this information can only be obtained from a DT chances chart (see below). Again, it is important to remember that all the VA and DT outputs relate to the performance of learners who completed in the last academic year. No outputs are related to the current cohort of learners.

#### 1.19

The national comparison graphs will give an instant indication of where performance is above, similar to, or below national average performance.

#### 1.20

They will also show the pattern of performance across the range of prior attainment, that is, whether the provider's performance is different for some learners depending on their prior attainment. This should help to inform providers where they could focus on learners with a particular range of prior attainment in order to drive up achievement. The LSC and Inspectorates are likely to be keen to discuss how this information is being used to develop quality improvement strategies within the provider and how this has raised standards. For instance, the information could be used for:

- targeting additional support to those learners who are vulnerable to achieving low grades or not achieving their qualification
- triggering review of the effectiveness of admissions criteria and all learner support functions
- setting targets in provider development plans
- quality improvement plans within Self-Assessment Reports and development plans
- contributing to post-inspection action plans.

#### 1.21

Care should be taken when using the information within a VA and/or DT national comparison graph where national success rates are particularly low or high. Again, it is necessary to use success rate data to help put performance in context, in order to set realistic targets for quality improvement. As highlighted in paragraph 1.12, it is important to note that DT national comparison graphs do not show national average performance, as this is normalised to zero for all subject areas. This is why it is vital to use success rate data to contextualise performance where it is available. Additionally, the VA measure currently does not include fails (see the VADT section 12: *Further issues to be explored during the piloting year*, paragraph 12.4 for further information) and hence, success rates are particularly important for contextualising the VA score.

#### 1.22

The final outputs produced by the LAT are national chances charts. Again, some chances charts have been selected in the case studies for you to consider.

#### 1.23

Chances charts provide learner-level information, so we would suggest that their use is predominantly for the provider rather than for the LSC or Inspectorates. It is important to remember that the charts are based on national data – they reflect chances of achieving a given grade or passing a given qualification in a 'nationally average provider.' Their value for the provider is that they provide an indication of the chances of passing or achieving a certain grade for learners within a given band of prior attainment.

#### 1.24

They can thus be used to help determine, in combination with many other factors, the correct level of course for learners and may influence the provider's overall enrolment policy. There are a number of caveats about the use of chances charts with individual learners, set out in the VA and DT sections of this Quality Improvement Pack, and it is important to bear these in mind. Further information about the use of these outputs for target setting in graded qualifications is included in the LSDA effective practice guide to target setting, the details of which can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

#### 1.25

We have not provided information about how the providers in the case studies monitor and support learners through their programmes. Providers will undoubtedly have different ways of ensuring that effective support for learners is available. The extension of the RARPA process standards to all learning (REX) will lead to a greater emphasis on ensuring that providers are able to provide evidence that they

implement support and feedback processes for all learners. Implementing REX will also give assurance that providers help learners to make the right choices about their course, recognise prior achievements and particular learning needs and give regular and accurate feedback to learners about their progress throughout the course and their achievements at the end of it. The impact of these processes on Qualification Success Rates and on VA and DT scores will also be a major consideration when assessing a provider's self-assessment report or post-inspection action plan.

#### 1.26

Evidence that the RARPA process takes place for each learner will not need to be continuously monitored by local LSCs. However, where particular qualification or subject areas are giving cause for concern or are highlighted as areas of effective practice in VA and DT outputs or success rate data, an investigation of what happens to learners themselves during the programme might be useful both to the provider and to the local LSC. This is precisely the sort of focused intervention that the VA and DT materials, combined with success rates calculations and the RARPA process, are designed to stimulate.

#### 1.27

For learners outside the scope of the statistical VA and DT measures, that is, those starting or completing their programmes outside the 16 –19 age bracket, those on entry level programmes and those not in accredited provision, RARPA will be particularly important as a means of judging whether learners make the progress expected of them. Again, the use of RARPA needs to be looked at where there are particular concerns or areas of outstanding practice highlighted by success rate data. With the extension of RARPA through the Framework for Achievement, awarding bodies and Inspectorates will also be interested in monitoring the application of RARPA as a provider-wide quality assurance process.

#### 1.28

We would suggest that the effective use of the RARPA staged process could be particularly important in driving up success rates where these are particularly low. For instance, in work-based learning, where the provider is performing below national average performance or where national success rates are low, we would suggest that there is some focus on ensuring that the first three stages of the RARPA process are carried out during the period of grace. The three stages should help to inform the setting of expected end dates which will be crucial to how the provider's realistic performance is reported using the new timely success rate for work-based learning.

### Future developments

#### 1.29

Further updates to the Quality Improvement Pack will include similar examples and suggestions for the use of the other measures as they come on stream or are piloted. The Quality Improvement Pack should thus become an increasingly important resource for guidance on how to ensure that data generated from all of the New Measures of Success is used consistently and in a coherent manner.

#### 1.30

Some of the measures considered here are current requirements; others are to be piloted; and some like RARPA are currently applicable only to non-accredited learning. Further information about these three measures can be found within this Quality Improvement Pack

## 2 Case Studies: School A

### Schools and measuring success

#### 2.1

The LSC does not yet collect sufficient data at present to offer the full range of DT and success rate data for schools. As a result the current impact of the New Measures of Success on school sixth forms is limited to the LAT and VA data.

#### 2.2

At present, schools can examine LAT outputs for their sixth form for:

- school and subject self-evaluation of performance
- learner tracking and monitoring.

#### 2.3

Success rates will be calculated for school sixth forms when the relevant data (that is, learner aims at the start of the year) is collected by the LSC. It is anticipated that this data will be available from 2008.

#### 2.4

This also means that VA outputs cannot be contextualised against success rates for schools until 2008.

### Uses of the LAT

#### 2.5

The LAT can be used in schools in various ways to assess:

- overall school performance, using the VA Summary Chart by qualification type (Figure 1)
- A Level subject performance using the VA Summary Chart of qualification type by subject (Figure 2)
- individual pupil achievement in a subject using the national comparison chart for subjects (Figures 3, 5 and 7)
- individual pupil performance across subject areas
- individual pupil prospects using the national chances chart (Figures 4, 6 and 8).

### VA summary chart by qualification type (Figure 1)

#### 2.6

The VA summary chart by qualification type gives a quick indication of the main areas of strength and weakness in the school.

#### 2.7

The VA Summary Chart by qualification type for School A (Figure 1) shows a varied pattern of scores across the mixture of AS Levels, A Levels and VCEs taken at the school, indicating:

- A Levels perform below national average performance
- VCE (6 unit) performs above national average performance
- in VCE (12 unit), AS Level and VCE AS (3 unit), it is not possible to make a judgement about the provision as the columns are unshaded. This may be because:
  - the national sample size or the provider sample size may be greater than five learners but still relatively small
  - the distribution of results for the cohort may be skewed
  - the performance of the provider may be very similar to national average performance.

#### 2.8

In practice, we would suggest drilling down into the A Level summary chart to investigate the underlying pattern of performance for each qualification area. In this example, we will follow up A Level provision to investigate why performance is below the national average performance when the prior attainment of learners is taken into account.

### A Level summary chart (Figure 2)

#### 2.9

The A Level summary chart for School A (Figure 2) gives further information about performance in each of the subjects offered by the provider.

2.10

The VA score for A Levels on the first summary chart can also be found in the top right hand corner of this chart. This overall score is an average of performance across the different A Level subjects represented here, compared to the national average.

2.11

The chart shows variable performance in A Levels, but the overall performance is slightly below national average performance because:

- Design and Technology Product Design, Geography and Information Technology are underperforming
- this is balanced by good performance in Psychology and Sociology.

2.12

Some subjects are labelled but have no VA score. They are marked with an asterisk indicating that there is data for fewer than five learners in this particular year in School A, so no robust VA score can be calculated.

### **The national comparison charts for A Level subjects (Figures 3, 5 and 7)**

2.13

We have chosen to give you further information about:

- an area which is underperforming – Design and Technology Product Design (Figure 3)
- an area in which performance is significantly higher than national average performance – Psychology (Figure 5) and
- one in which performance is so close to national average performance that a judgement cannot be made – Mathematics (Figure 7).

2.15

In practice, you would be able to use the LAT to generate national comparison charts for each of the A Level subjects shown on the summary chart in turn, in order to highlight areas of strength and weakness.

#### *Design and Technology*

2.16

The national comparison chart for A Level Design and Technology Product Design (Figure 3) shows the performance of School A compared to national average performance across the full range of prior attainment.

2.17

We can see instantly that performance at School A is below national average performance. The shaded area around School A's best fit line is also below the national line for all learners except for those with exceptionally high prior attainment.

2.18

The squares and triangles represent the performance of individual learners in this school. Learners with relatively high prior attainment compared to the rest of the cohort performed closer to learners at a nationally average provider than those with lower prior attainment, who performed poorly.

2.19

This might suggest that quality improvement initiatives could be targeted in the first instance at learners starting this subject with prior attainment which is between 40 and 46 QCA points (in other words, an average of between C and B at GCSE or GCSE equivalent) who, with only one exception, achieved a grade E in the year in question.

2.20

The school might consider looking at the support which is given to learners who choose this subject but have relatively low prior attainment. For instance:

- are learners on the correct programme and are there appropriate mechanisms for identifying these learners and for supporting and monitoring their progress throughout the course?
- how rigorous are initial assessment procedures in identifying the skills learners bring to this subject area and in focussing additional learner support where it is required?
- what is tutorial attendance like?
- are learners encouraged to set their own targets for coursework completion and performance in assessments?
- are there regular checks on learner progress, and how is this information fed back to learners in order to motivate them?
- what mechanisms for initial assessment, tracking, monitoring and providing feedback to learners are already in operation at the school?

2.21

The LSC has developed the RARPA staged process to address these issues. Further details about RARPA are included in this Quality Improvement Pack.

2.22

The VA data may also be useful in identifying requirements for professional development for individual members of staff or departments.

### **VA national chances charts (Figures 4, 6 and 8)**

2.23

Figure 6 is the national chances chart for learners taking Psychology A Level with prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points.

2.24

National chances charts can be used to focus target-setting strategies for a subject. There are numerous examples of the use of target-setting to motivate learners and improve the performance of the organisation in the LSDA guide to effective practice in target-setting and monitoring learner progress. Details of this resource can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

### **Individual pupil performance across subject areas**

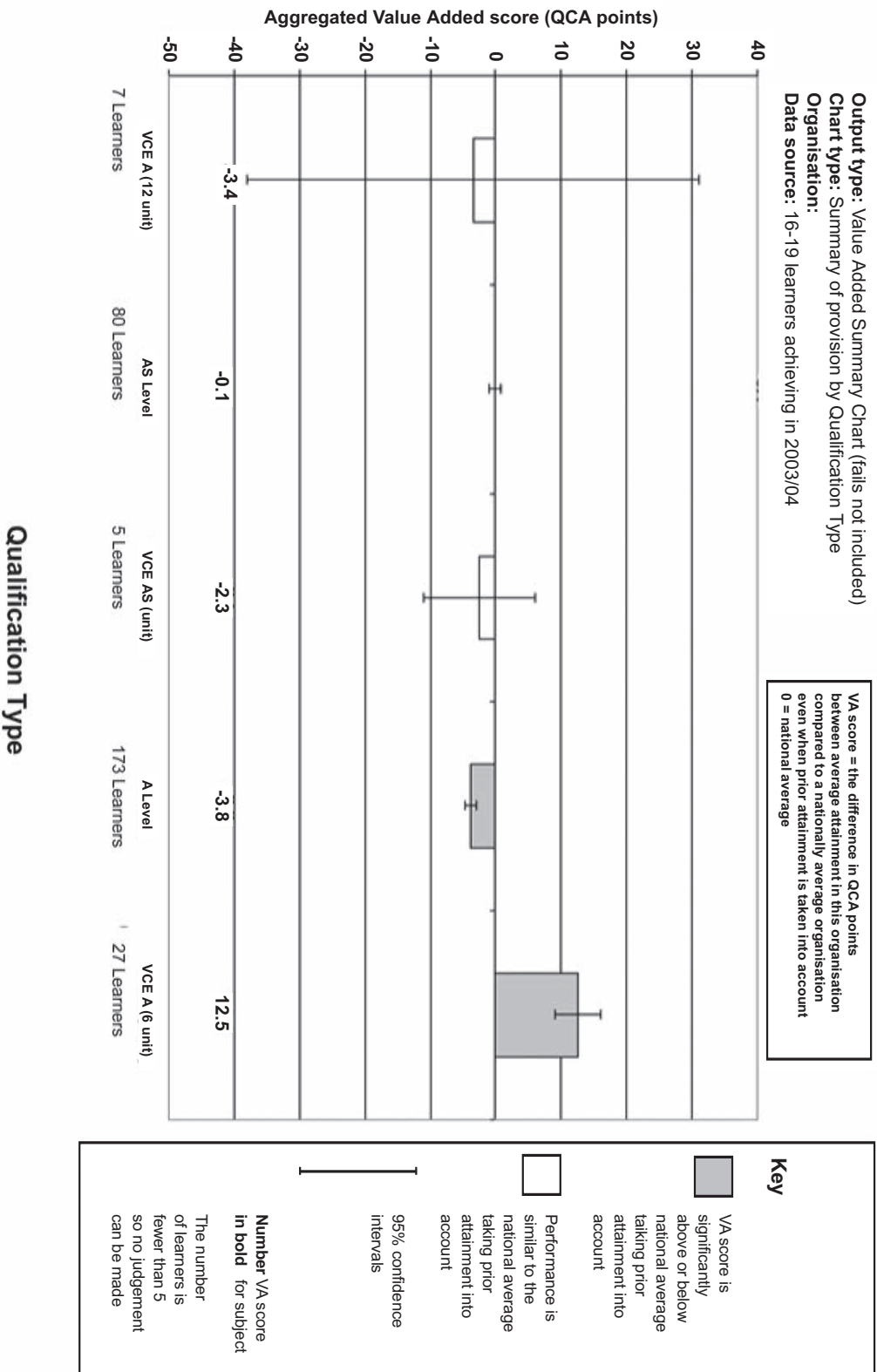
2.25

The data for each learner in each subject area will be available in the LAT in January 2006, so the progress of the same learners in other subjects or qualifications could be put together to build a picture of the performance of individuals across subjects.

2.26

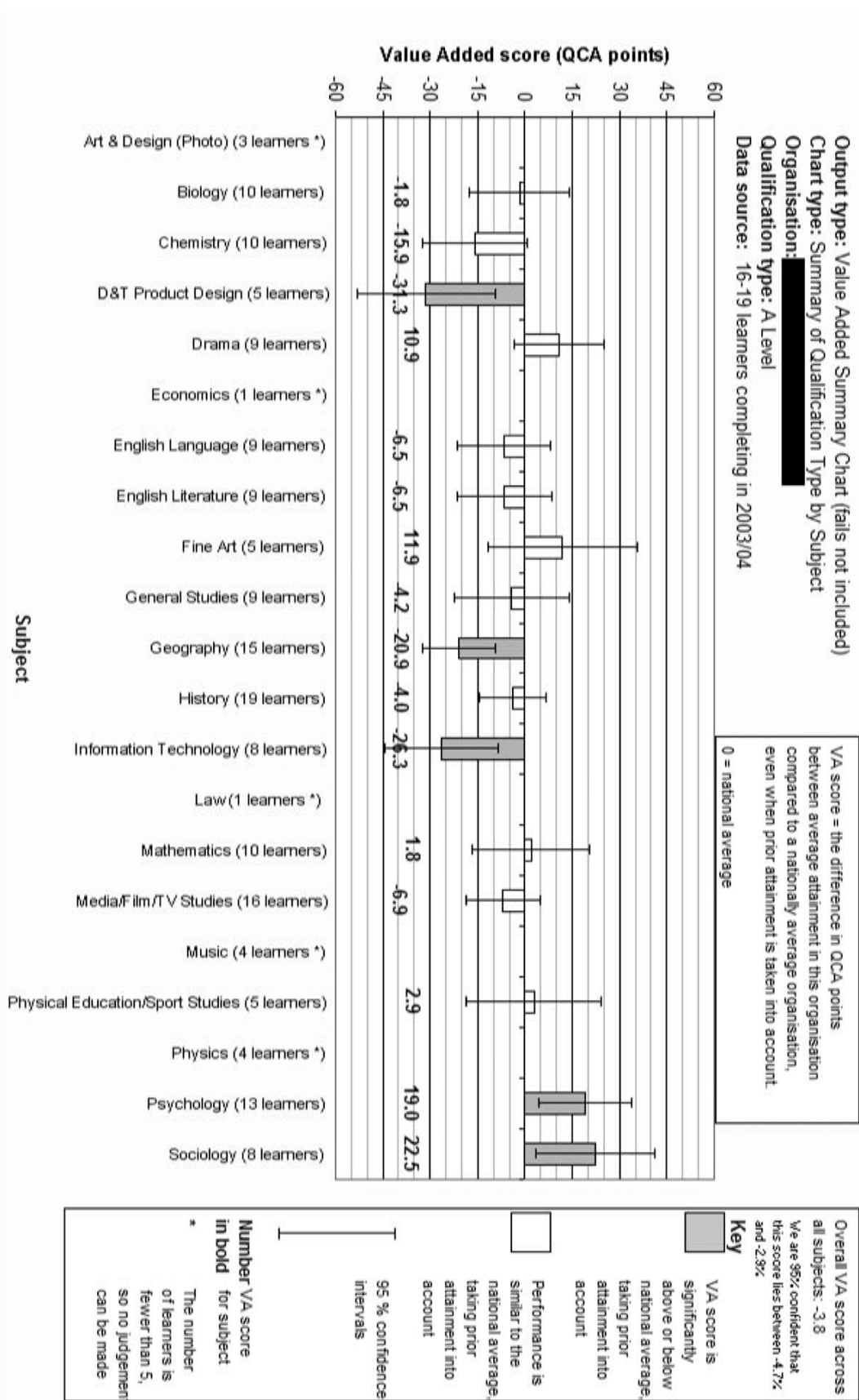
Questions could then be asked about any differential performance in learners with similar prior attainment studying different subjects. Within the school, this may help to identify issues with varying levels of support and guidance given to different class or subject groups.

**Figure 1: Value Added Summary Chart for School A showing an overview of performance in all qualifications compared to the national average performance**

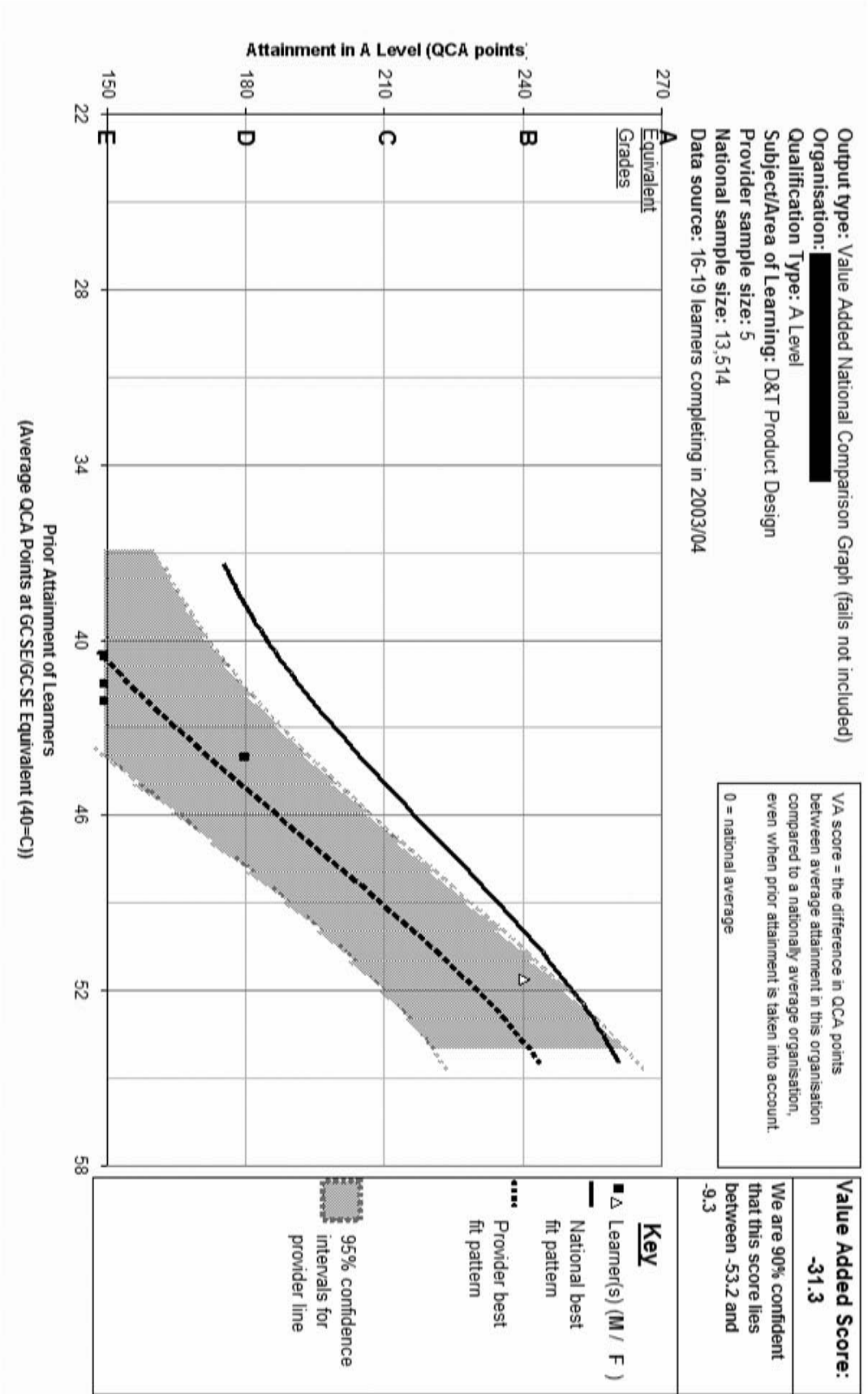




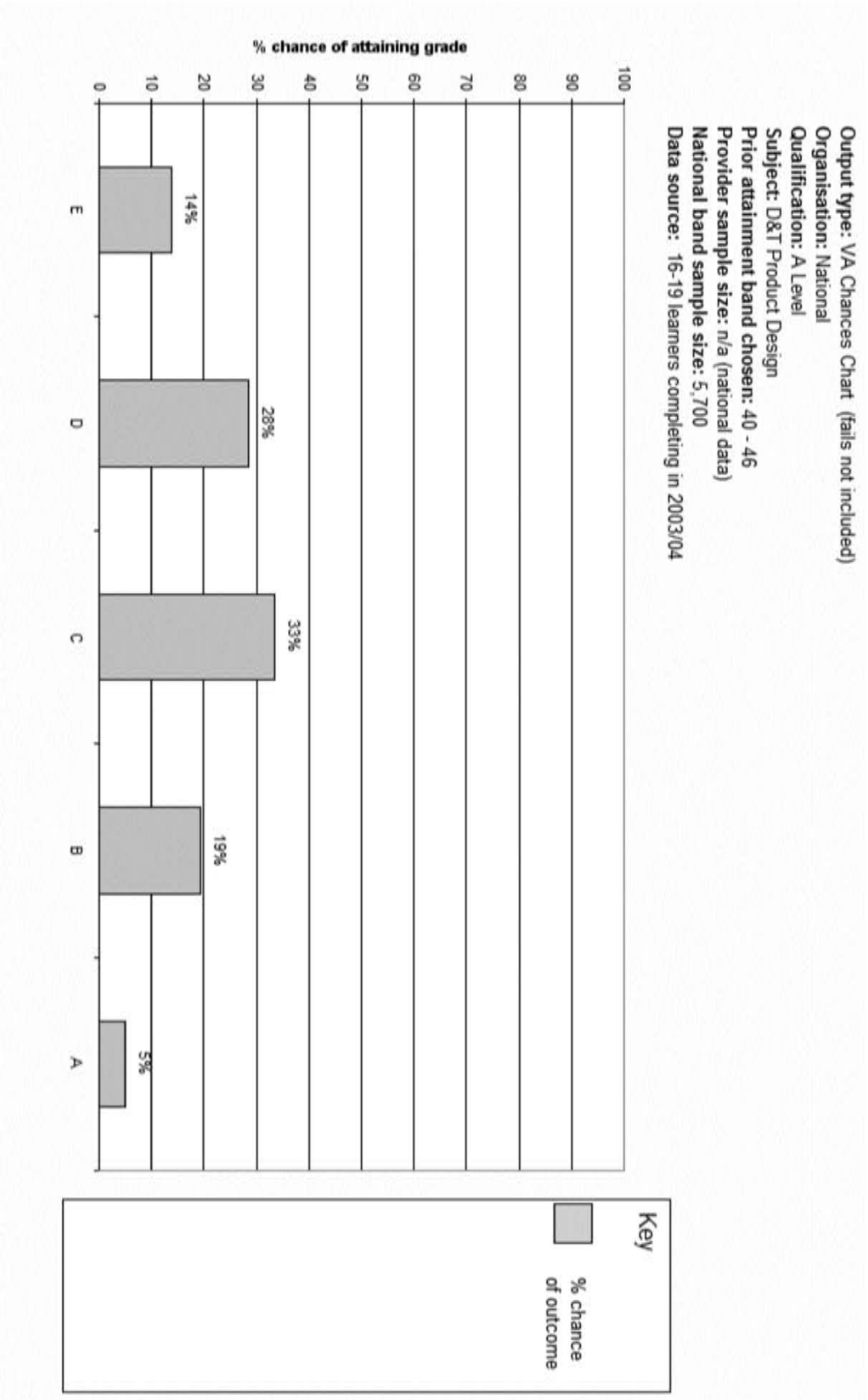
**Figure 2: Value Added Summary Chart for School A showing an overview of performance in all A Level subjects compared to the national average performance**



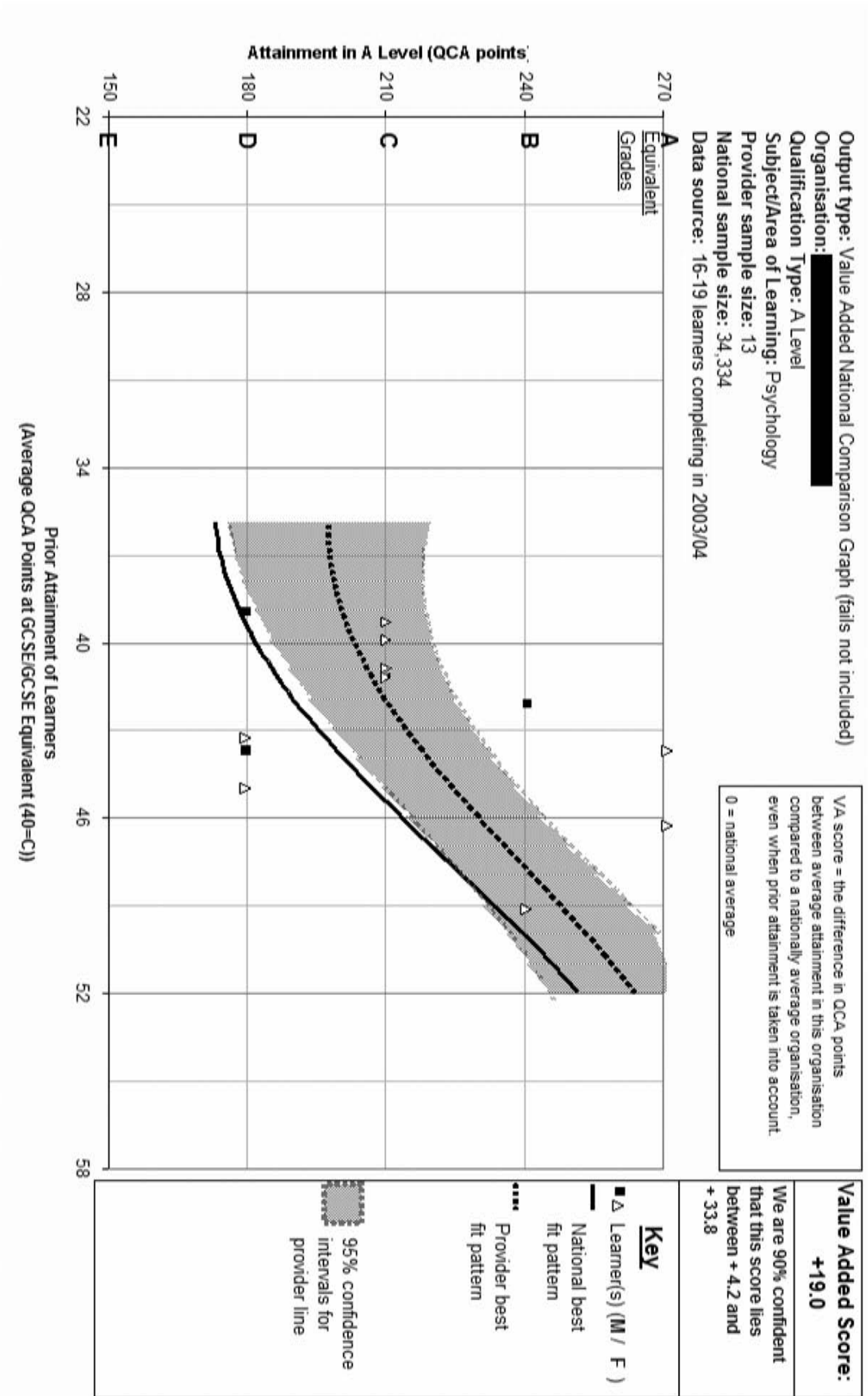
**Figure 3: Value Added National Comparison Graph showing School A's performance in A Level D&T Product Design, compared to the national average performance across the full range of prior attainment**



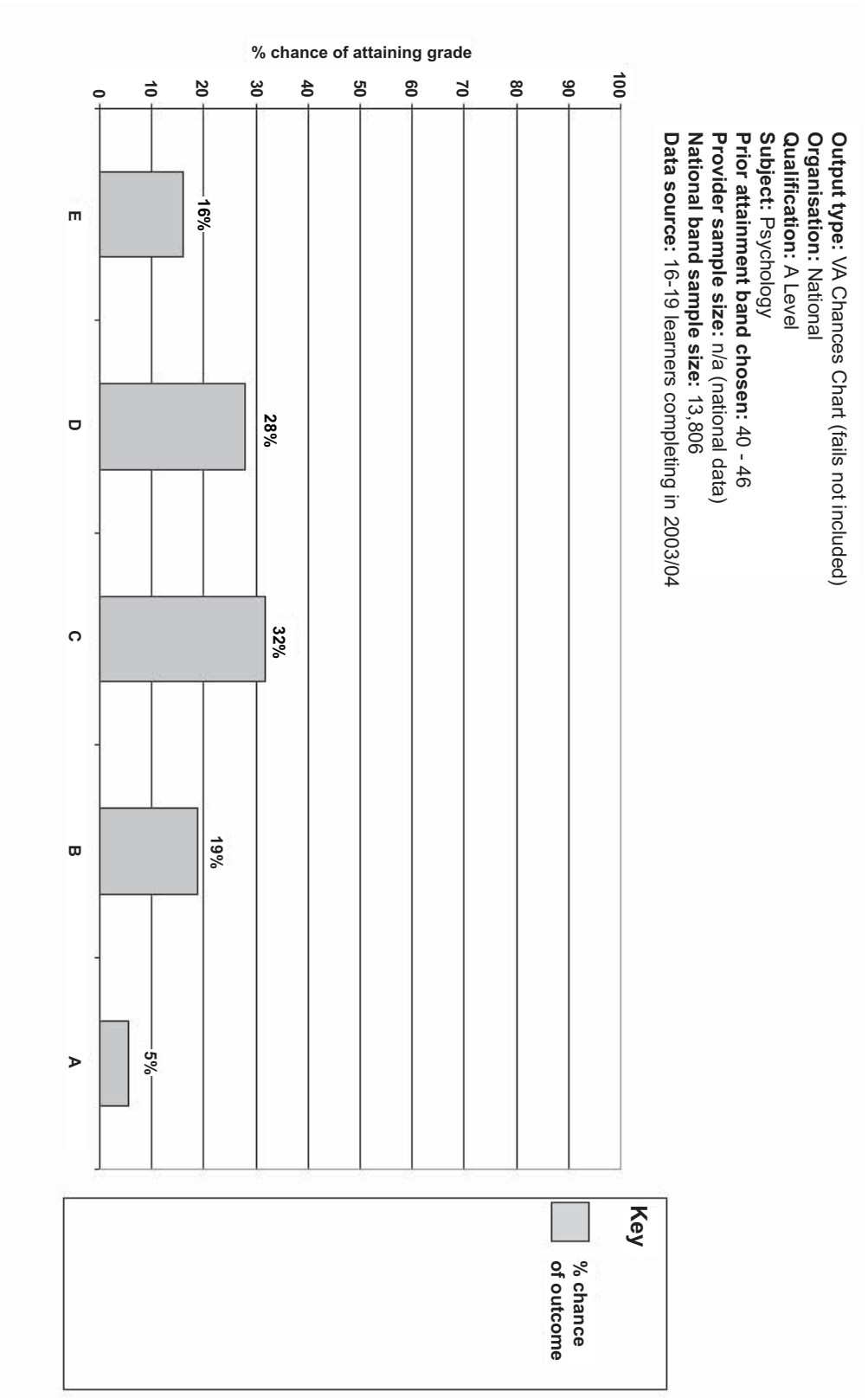
**Figure 4: Value Added National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points attaining each of the possible grade in A Level D&T Product Design**



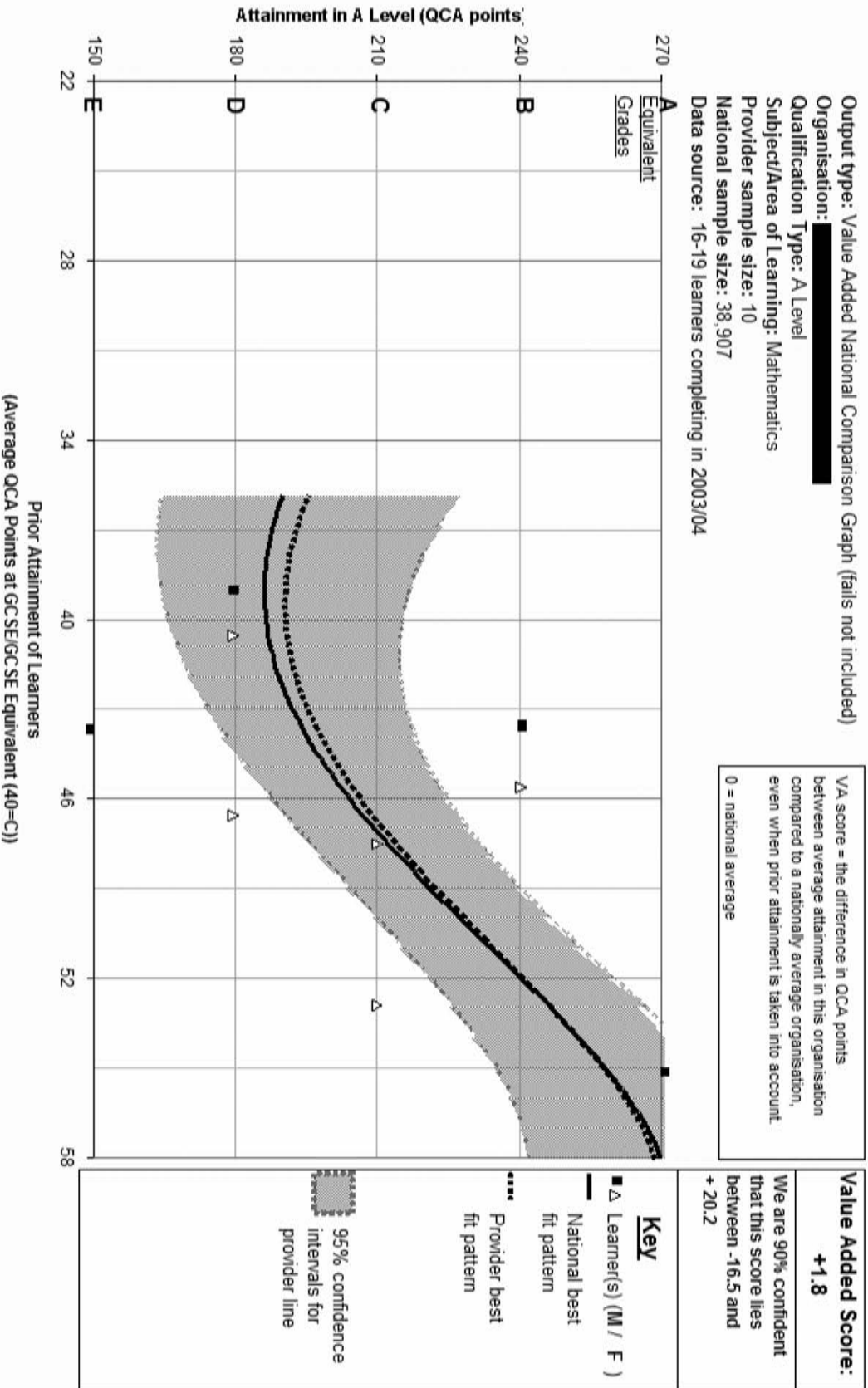
**Figure 5: Value Added National Comparison Graph showing School A's performance in A Level Psychology, compared to the national average performance across the full range of prior attainment**



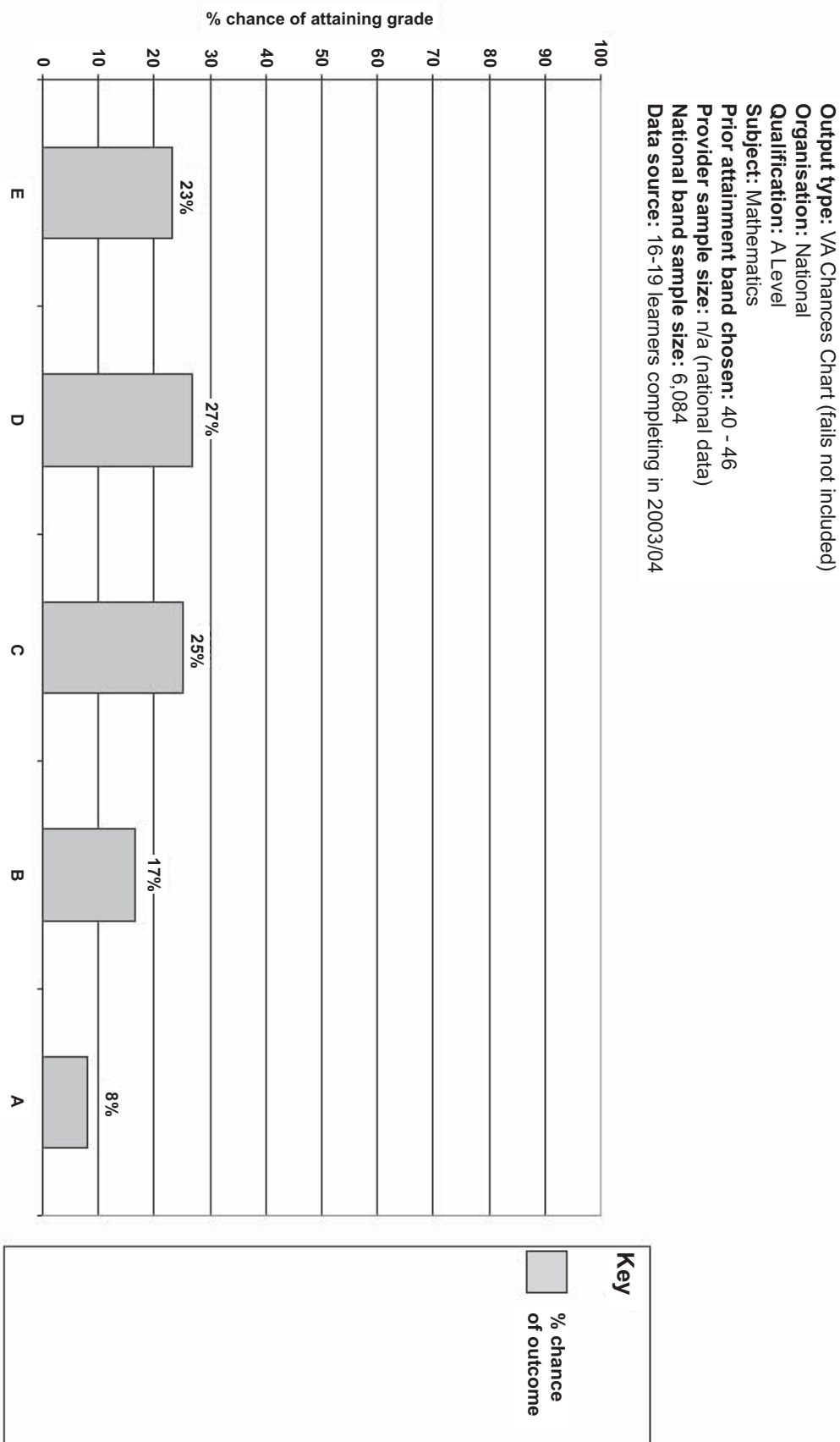
**Figure 6: Value Added National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points attaining each of the possible grades in A Level Psychology**



**Figure 7: Value Added National Comparison Graph showing School A's performance in A Level Mathematics, compared to the national average performance across the full range of prior attainment**



**Figure 8: Value Added National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points attaining each of the possible grades in A Level Mathematics**



## 3 Case studies: Work-based learning Provider B

### 3.1

The example given here relates to a small work-based learning provider delivering Apprenticeships and a limited number of NVQs. The relationship between DT outputs and the new calculations of success rates in work-based learning provides a good example of how the new measures can be integrated and used in a complementary fashion for the purposes of quality improvement. This example concentrates on the relationship between the DT outputs and success rates for Apprenticeships, where there is a direct correlation. In practice, both providers and the local LSC would be able to use the wider DT outputs and more information from the success rate calculation, in order to put performance into context.

### 3.2

The DT Summary Chart across qualification types for WBL provider B (Figure 9) shows that Apprenticeship provision in this organisation is significantly above national average performance when the prior attainment of learners is taken into account. The WBL Success Rate Report at lead level (Figure 10) also shows an overall success rate for this provider for apprenticeships of 75 per cent which is significantly above the national benchmark.

### 3.3

However, on timely success rates for 2003/04 (Figure 12) the provider does not perform as well, achieving only 41 per cent. The comparison of Actual and Planned End Dates for Apprenticeships (Figure 11) confirms that only seven out of seventeen possible learners achieved in their planned end year within one month of the expected end date. This information can also be used to identify areas where performance is above the national average, to identify effective practice and explore whether this can be disseminated more widely across the organisation.

### 3.4

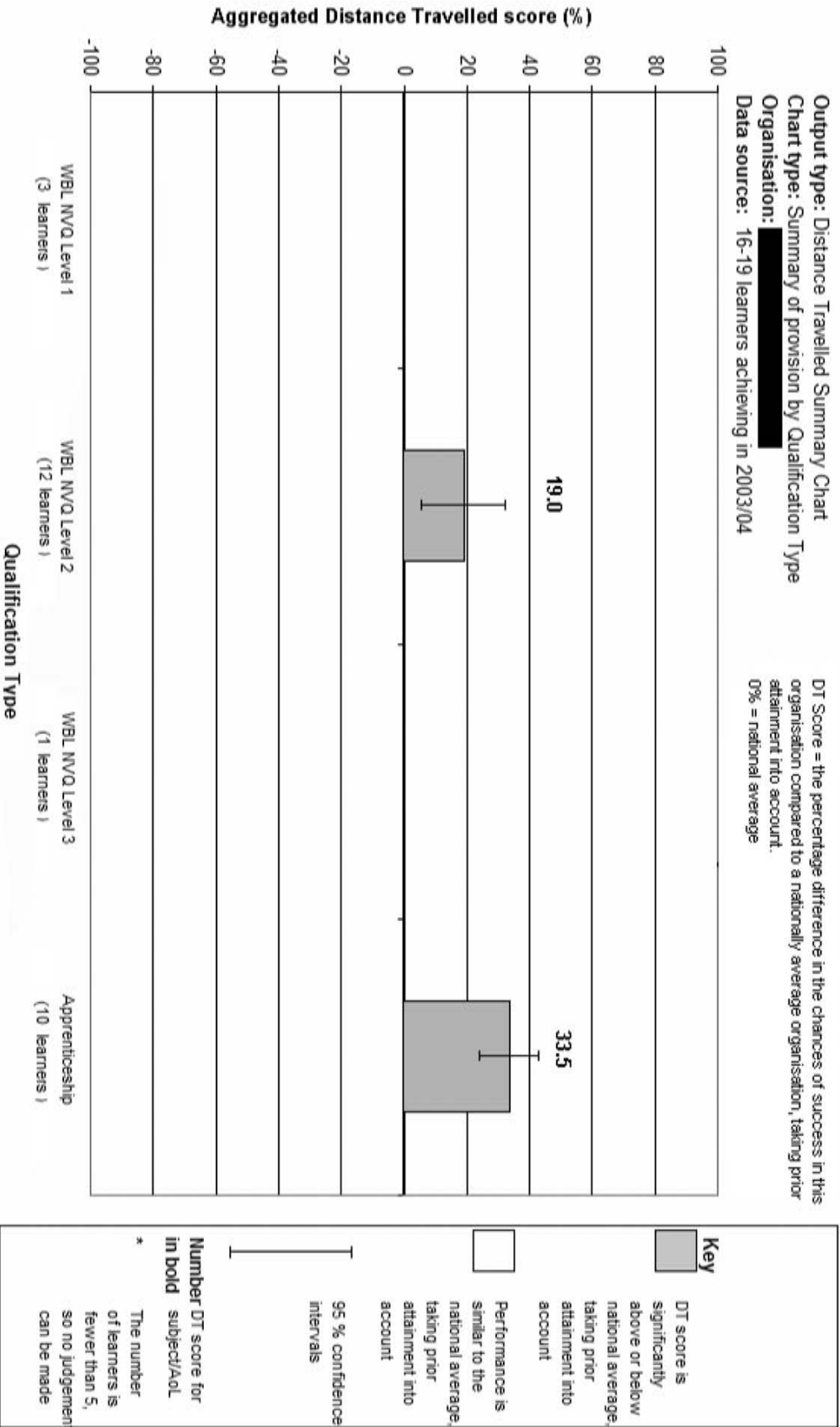
The Success Rate Report at lead level (Figure 10) shows that, for Apprenticeships, the trend in 2004/05 for this organisation is for more learners to achieve in a timely fashion than in 2003/04. However, we would suggest that the provider considers its application of the RARPA process, in particular implementation of stages 1–3 of the process (that is, identification of learning aims, initial assessment and setting learning objectives) within the induction period. This will help to establish realistic and achievable planned end dates for the individual learners involved.

### 3.5

There are numerous examples of the use of target setting to motivate learners and improve the performance of organisations in the LSDA guide to effective practice in target setting and monitoring learner progress. The details of this resource can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section of this Quality Improvement Pack.



**Figure 9: Distance Travelled Summary Chart for Work-Based Learning provider B showing an overview of performance in all qualifications compared to the national average performance**

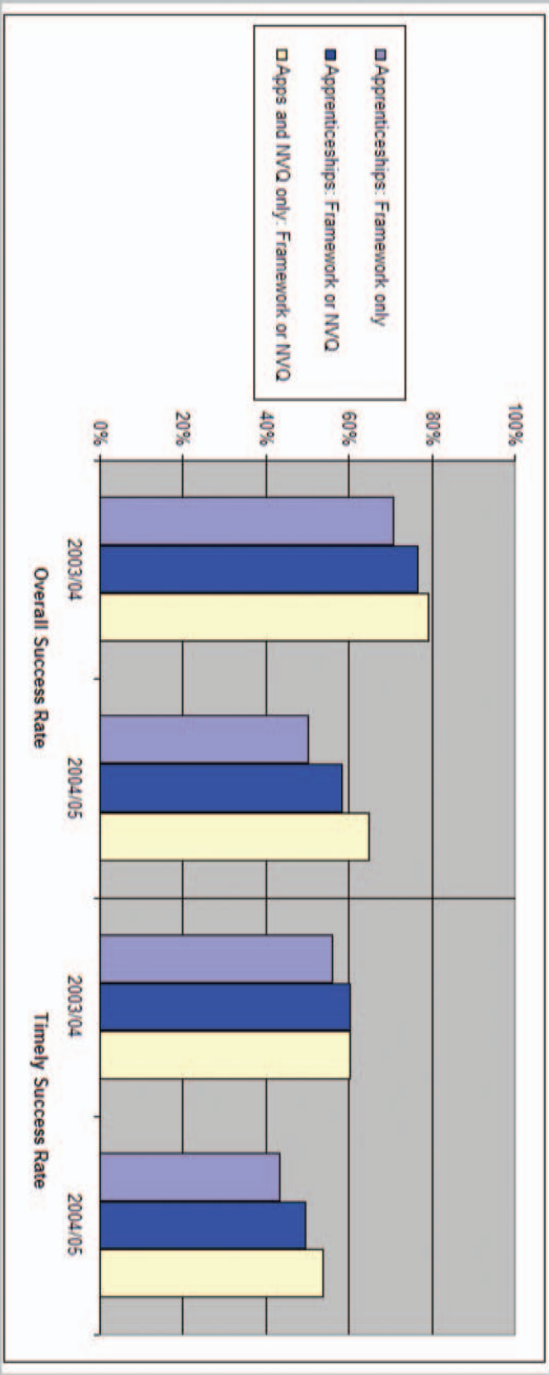


**Figure 10: Success rates report: Lead level for Work-Based Learning provider B**

**WBL success rates report: Lead level**  
 Select institution from drop down list  
**Institution Name:**  
**UPIN:**  
**Institution Grouping:**  
**Lead LLC:**  
**Region:**

**Summary of Success**

	Overall Success		Timely Success	
	2003/04	2004/05	2003/04	2004/05
Framework only	71%	50%	56%	43%
No. achieved	148	82	114	77
Framework or NVQ	77%	58%	60%	49%
No. achieved	160	95	122	88
No. of leavers	209	163	203	178
Framework or NVQ courses	79%	65%	60%	54%
No. of leavers	292	225	303	245



**Figure 11: Timely and Overall Success rates report for Work-Based Learning provider B showing a comparison of actual and planned end dates for apprenticeships**

Cohort identification		Actual end year (achieved and withdrawn)					Continuing (as at 31/01/05)	Overall cohort	Timely cohort	Transfers to other providers
		2001/02 >=	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05*					
<b>Planned end year</b>	2001/02 >=	11	0	2	0	0	11	13	0	
	2002/03	13	11	20	0	1	24	45	0	
	2003/04	2	58	127	12	4	209	203	0	
	2004/05*	0	15	115	21	27	163	178	2	
<b>Framework achievements</b>		<b>Actual end year</b>					<b>Total overall achievers</b>	<b>Total timely achievers**</b>	<b>Timely &amp; in-year achievers</b>	
<b>Planned end year</b>	2001/02 >=	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	
	2002/03	1	4	12	0	5	4	5		
	2003/04	0	31	104	4	148	114	135		
	2004/05*	0	2	65	11	82	77	78		
<b>Framework or NVQ achievements</b>		<b>Actual end year</b>					<b>Total overall achievers</b>	<b>Total timely achievers</b>	<b>Timely &amp; in-year achievers</b>	
<b>Planned end year</b>	2001/02 >=	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	
	2002/03	1	4	16	0	5	4	5		
	2003/04	0	34	109	4	160	122	143		
	2004/05*	0	2	70	19	95	88	91		

\*2004/05 data is in year so only programmes with planned end dates before 1/02/05 and events before this date are shown

\*\*Timely achievements are based on planned end date: 114 out of the 135 achievements completed within or before the planned end year of 2003/04 were timely

Figure 12: Success Rate Breakdown for Work-Based Learning Provider B

**Success Rate Breakdown****Overall Success Rates**

Programme Type	Age at start of learning	Success Rates in 2003/04			Success Rates in 2004/05 in year data		
		Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers	Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers
Apprenticeship	16-18	100%	100%	4	58%	58%	12
	19+	84%	89%	19	33%	52%	27
	All	87%	91%	23	41%	54%	39
Advanced Apprenticeship	16-18	72%	78%	64	59%	59%	51
	19+	67%	73%	122	49%	60%	73
	All	69%	75%	186	53%	60%	124
All Apprenticeships	16-18	74%	79%	68	59%	59%	63
	19+	70%	75%	141	45%	58%	100
	All	71%	77%	209	50%	58%	163
NVQ only courses	16-18		86%	7		57%	7
	19+		86%	76		85%	55
	All		86%	83		82%	62
All frameworks or NVQs	16-18		80%	75		59%	70
	19+		79%	217		68%	155
	All		79%	292		65%	225

**Timely Success Rates**

Programme Type	Age at start of learning	Success Rates in 2003/04			Success Rates in 2004/05 in year data		
		Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers	Framework	Framework or NVQ	Total Leavers
Apprenticeship	16-18	60%	60%	5	46%	46%	13
	19+	48%	60%	25	28%	38%	29
	All	50%	60%	30	33%	40%	42
Advanced Apprenticeship	16-18	60%	63%	60	54%	54%	54
	19+	56%	58%	113	41%	51%	82
	All	57%	60%	173	46%	52%	136
All Apprenticeships	16-18	60%	63%	65	52%	52%	67
	19+	54%	59%	138	38%	48%	111
	All	56%	60%	203	43%	49%	178
NVQ only courses	16-18		71%	7		57%	7
	19+		60%	93		67%	60
	All		61%	100		66%	67
All frameworks or NVQs	16-18		64%	72		53%	74
	19+		59%	231		54%	171
	All		60%	303		54%	245

## 4 Case studies: Further education College C

### 4.1

The VA summary chart for College C (Figure 13) shows that:

- provision is above national average performance in A and AS Levels,
- performance is below that of a nationally average organisation in six- and twelve-unit VCEs
- provision is not significantly different from national average performance in BTEC National Diplomas and BTEC National Awards and
- there are fewer than five learners in BTEC National Certificate and CACHE Diploma in Child Care, so no judgement can be made.

Before drilling down to investigate performance in some of these areas, we can quickly look to see if this picture is reflected in the Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks (Figures 14, 15 and 16).

### 4.2

For A and AS Levels, we can see that the college performs well compared to national success rates. Indeed, for this area of provision, the organisation performs just above the 75th percentile. There is a further correlation in that for other long qualifications at Level 3 (Long notional Level 3 excluding A, AS, A2) the college performs only slightly above average (Figure 14).

### 4.3

This example shows clearly that the dataset on which the VA calculations are based differs from that used for success rate calculations. This is because various triggers for inclusion have to be met for learners to be included in the VA and DT dataset. Further information about learners included in the dataset will be available on the LSC website's New Measures of Success pages in early 2006.

### 4.4

Examples of further drilling down to individual qualification level are given (Figures 17–21). For instance, the summary chart for A Levels (Figure 17) shows which subjects perform particularly well and contribute to the overall positive VA score for A Levels. The college may wish to focus on areas where provision was significantly above national average performance, such as Art and Design, English Language, Fine Art and

Media Studies. This might indicate that there is particularly good practice in this area of the college and it may be possible to disseminate RARPA-type techniques used to motivate and track learner progress more widely across the organisation.

### 4.5

There is, however, one area in which learners are not making comparable progress when compared to others entering their course with similar levels of prior attainment. This is in Drama (Figure 18). The college may wish to focus on this and other areas in which A Level provision is not significantly above national average performance in order to improve their overall performance in VA. Targeting these areas may include, as for the other types of providers, looking at the application of processes for initial assessment, feedback and monitoring which are all represented in the application of the RARPA process.

### 4.6

An example of one of the areas where performance is significantly higher than national average performance has been chosen to illustrate that even where this is the case, information is available in the national comparison charts which might help in quality improvement. In the example given, A Level Fine Art, the national comparisons graph (Figure 20) shows that at the higher end of prior attainment, learners do only slightly better at this organisation than they would be expected to at a nationally average organisation. In contrast, learners entering this course with low prior attainment can be expected to achieve a grade higher than national average performance and there are some learners within the cohort identified who came in with prior attainment of 40 or below in QCA points and achieved very high grades.

### 4.7

The organisation may wish to use this information to focus on learners entering this course with average or higher levels of prior attainment and consider how they might be set more ambitious targets. Again, the LSDA guide to effective practice in target setting and monitoring learner progress contains useful examples of strategies to stretch learners and encourage them to realise their potential. The details of this resource can be found in the *Further Information and Glossary* section of this Quality Improvement Pack.

Figure 13: Value Added Summary Chart for College C showing an overview of performance in all qualifications compared to the national average performance

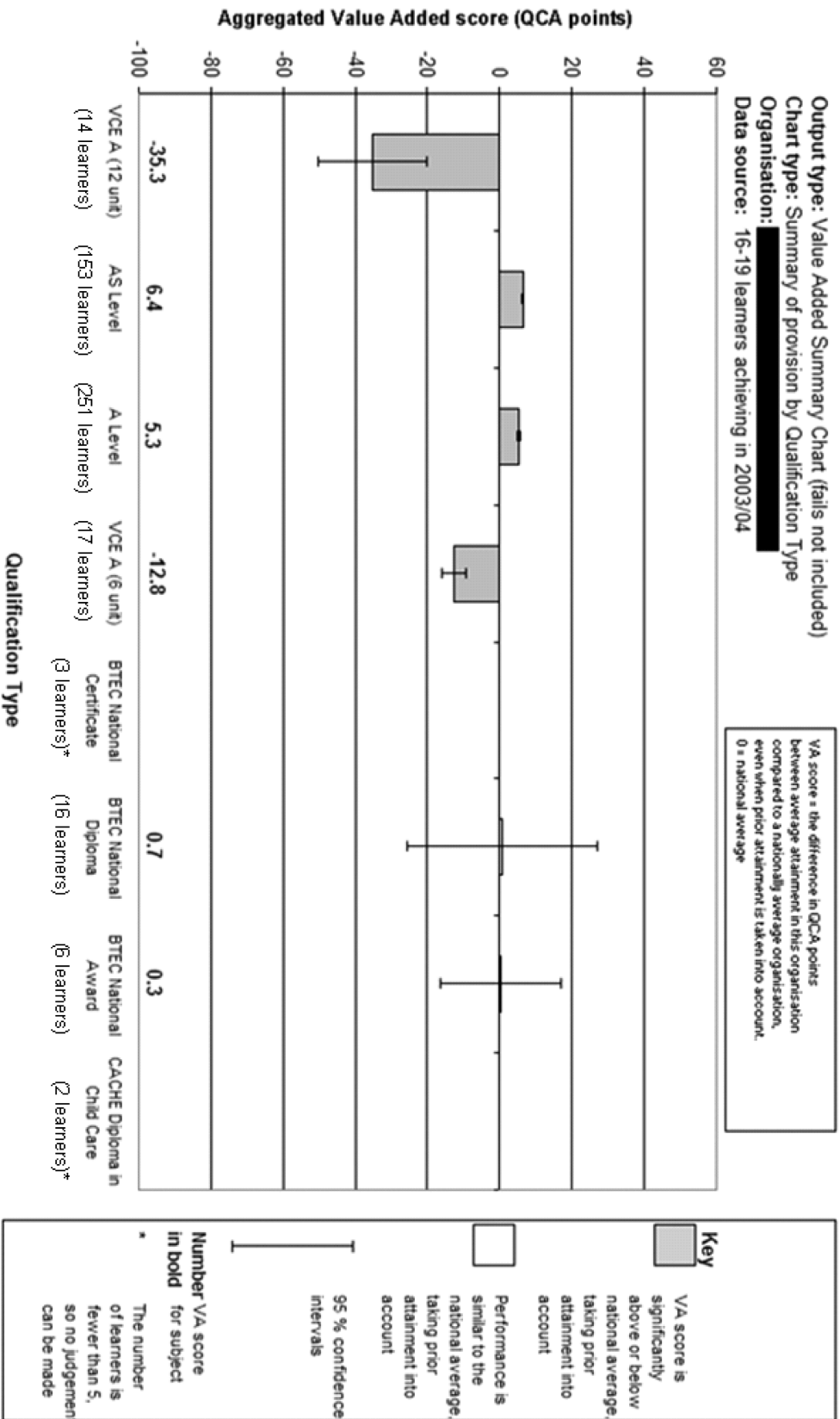


Figure 14: Length and Level Adjusted Bench Marks for College C

Length and Level Adjusted Benchmarks		2003/2004		All ages					
Select institution from drop down list:									
Institution Name:					<input type="text"/>				
UPIN:					Instcode:				
Institution Grouping:					LLSC:				
GFEC/TC									
Broad qualification group (by length and notional level)									
	Headline	Long nl 1	Long nl 2	Long nl 3 (excl A, AS, A2)	A, AS, A2 (long nl 3)	Long nl H	Long nl X	Short (5 to 24 weeks)	Short (under 5 weeks)
Success Rate	71%	67%	55%	55%	71%	39%	43%	82%	97%
Starts Achieved	18549 13137	5422 3648	3082 1683	1394 765	1429 1012	72 28	223 97	5502 4524	1425 1380
National benchmarking data									
Percentiles		Length and Level Adjusted							
90th	76%	73%	65%	64%	74%	65%	84%	84%	97%
75th	71%	67%	60%	59%	69%	55%	76%	79%	96%
Average	65%	60%	55%	54%	62%	47%	65%	73%	93%
25th	59%	52%	51%	49%	54%	37%	46%	65%	90%
10th	52%	45%	45%	44%	46%	26%	32%	59%	81%

Figure 15: Success Rates, by length and notional level for College C

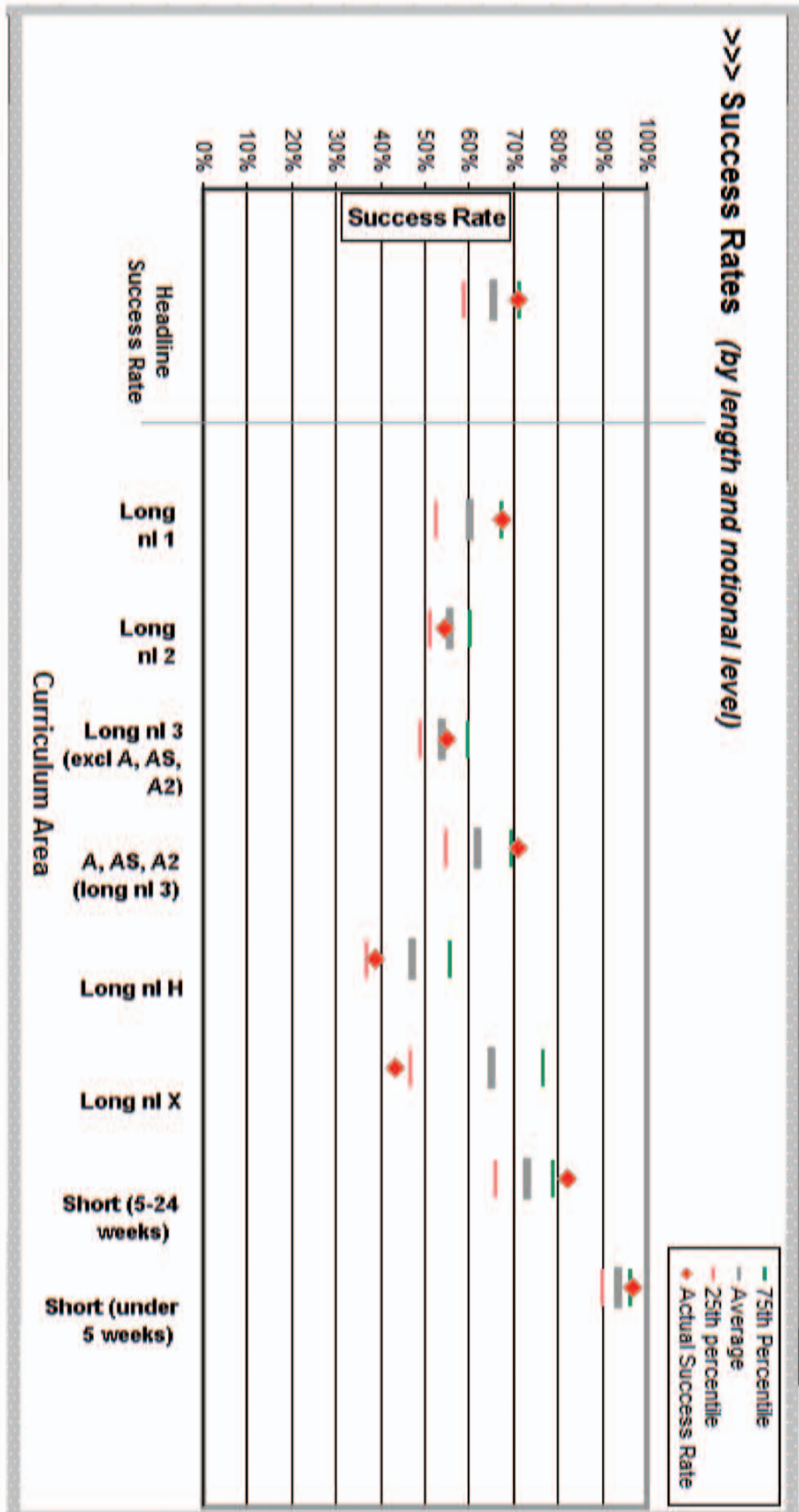
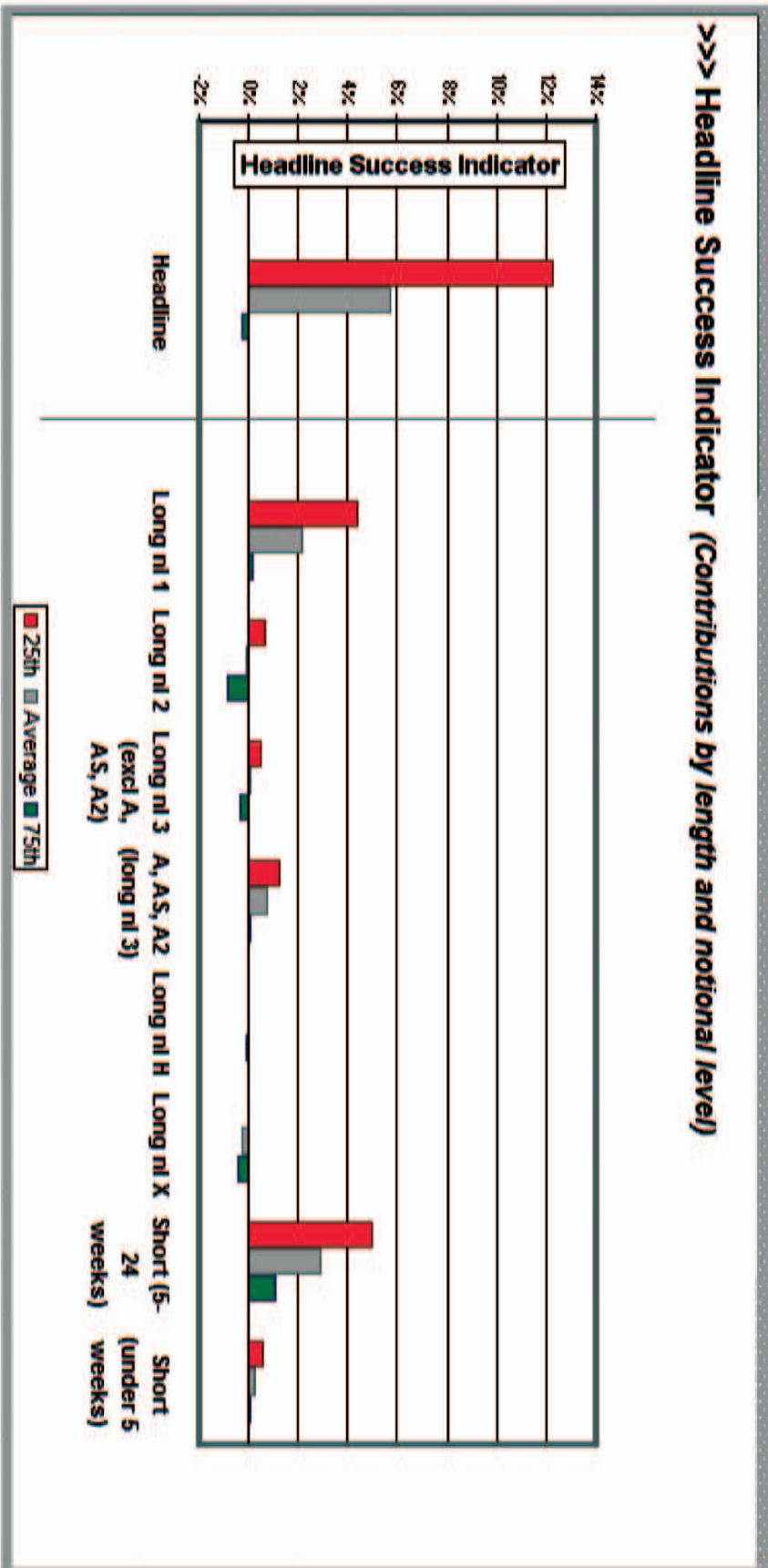
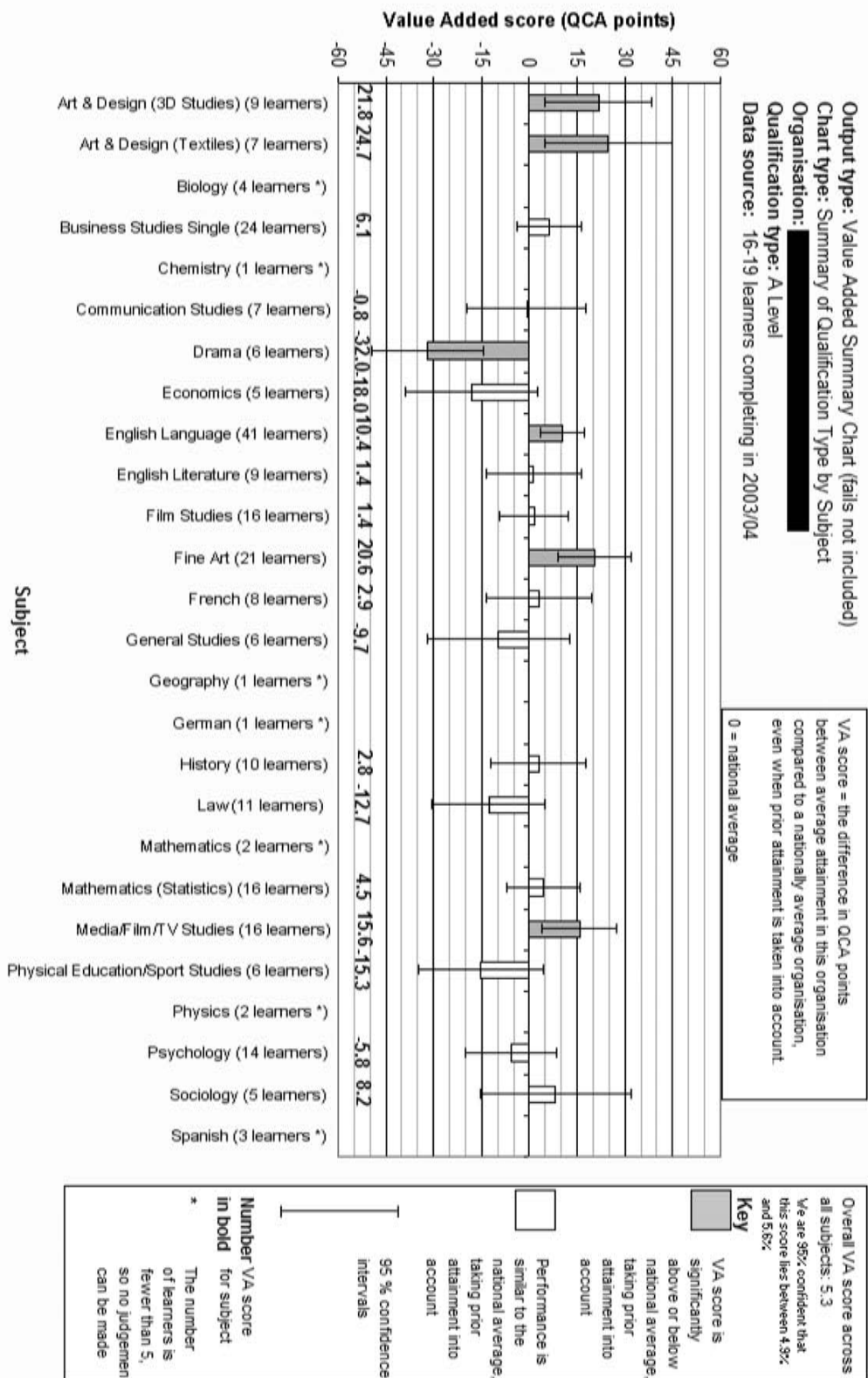




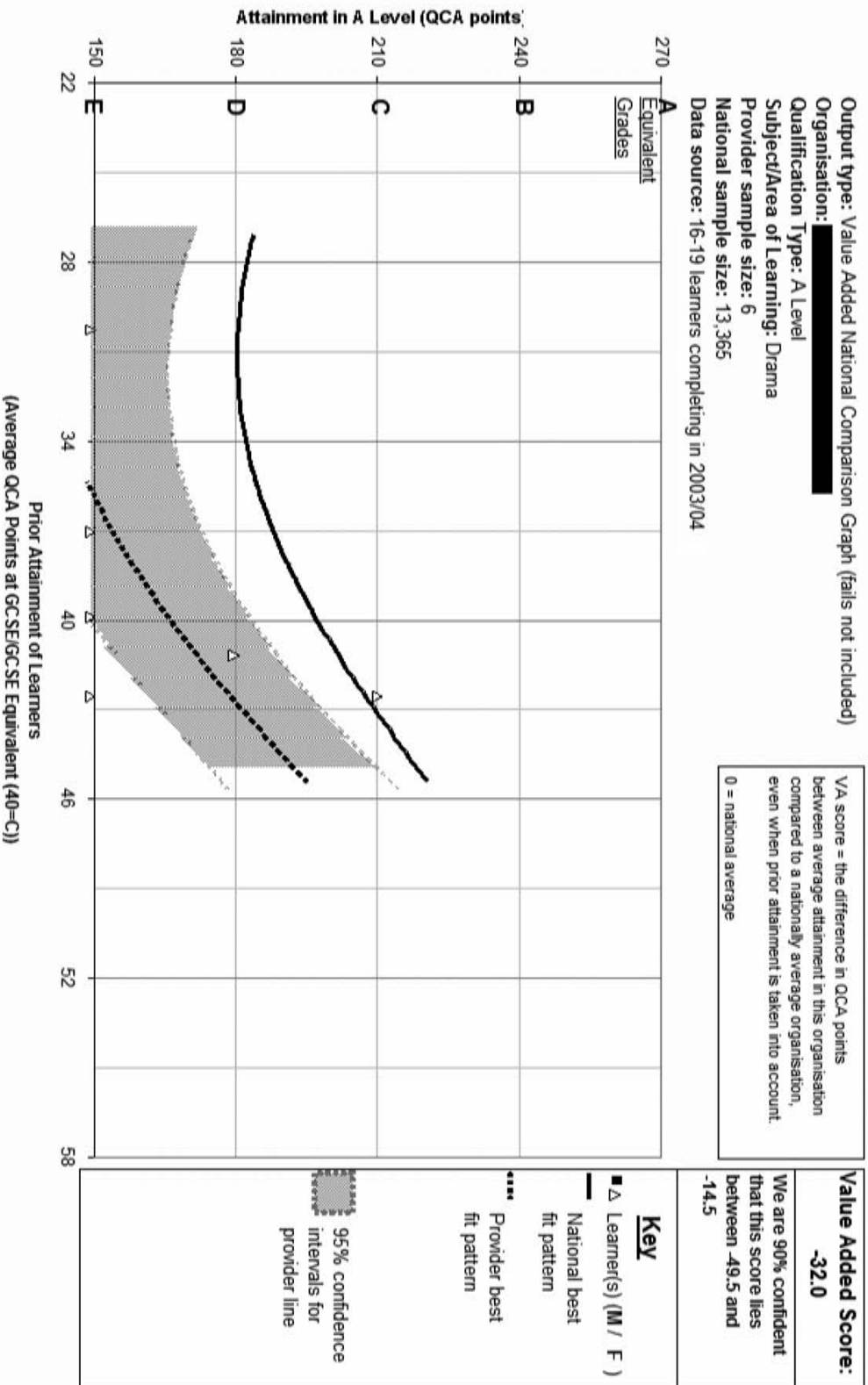
Figure 16: Headline Success Indicator for College C



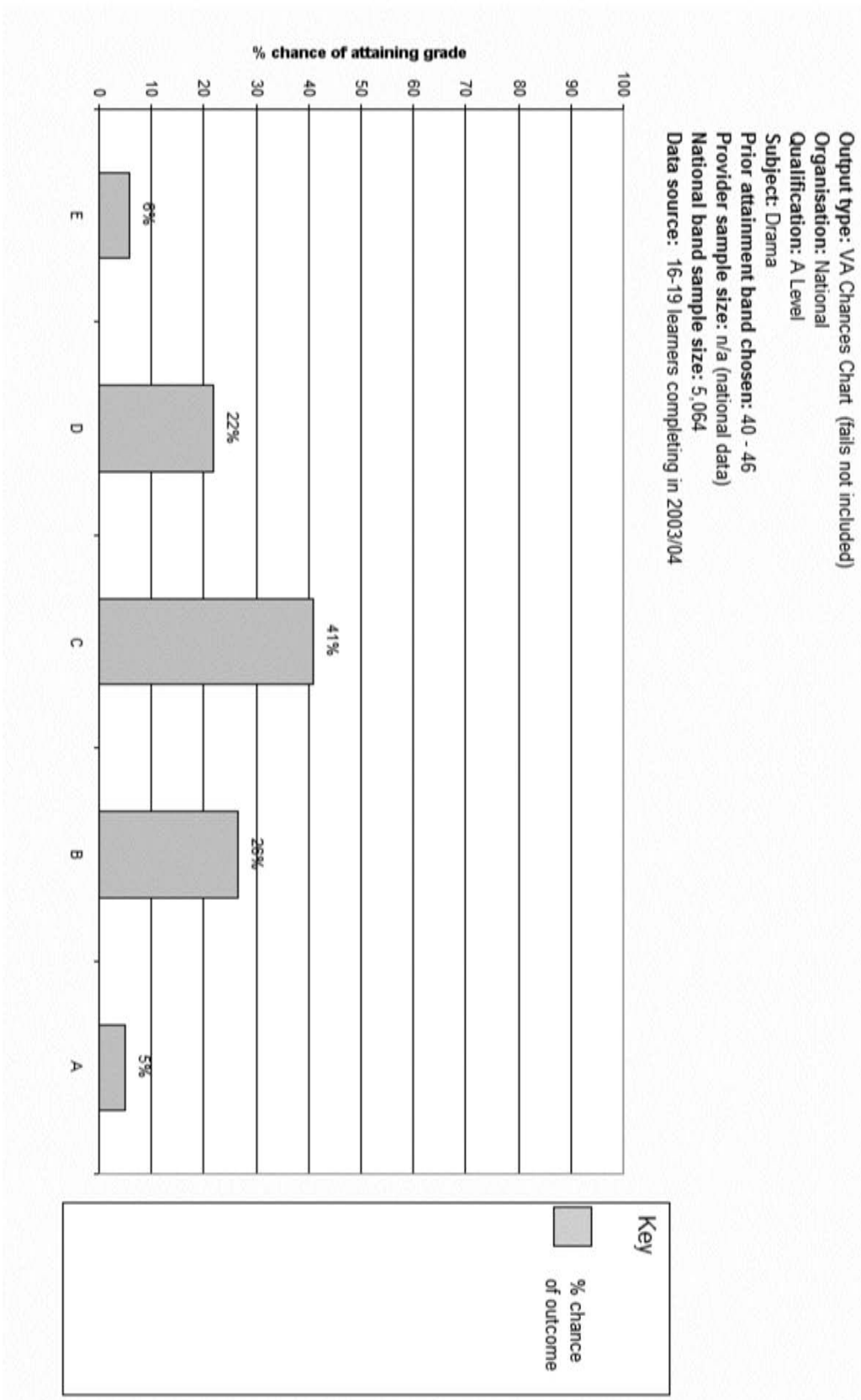
**Figure 17: Value Added Summary Chart for College C showing an overview of performance in all A Level subjects compared to the national average performance**



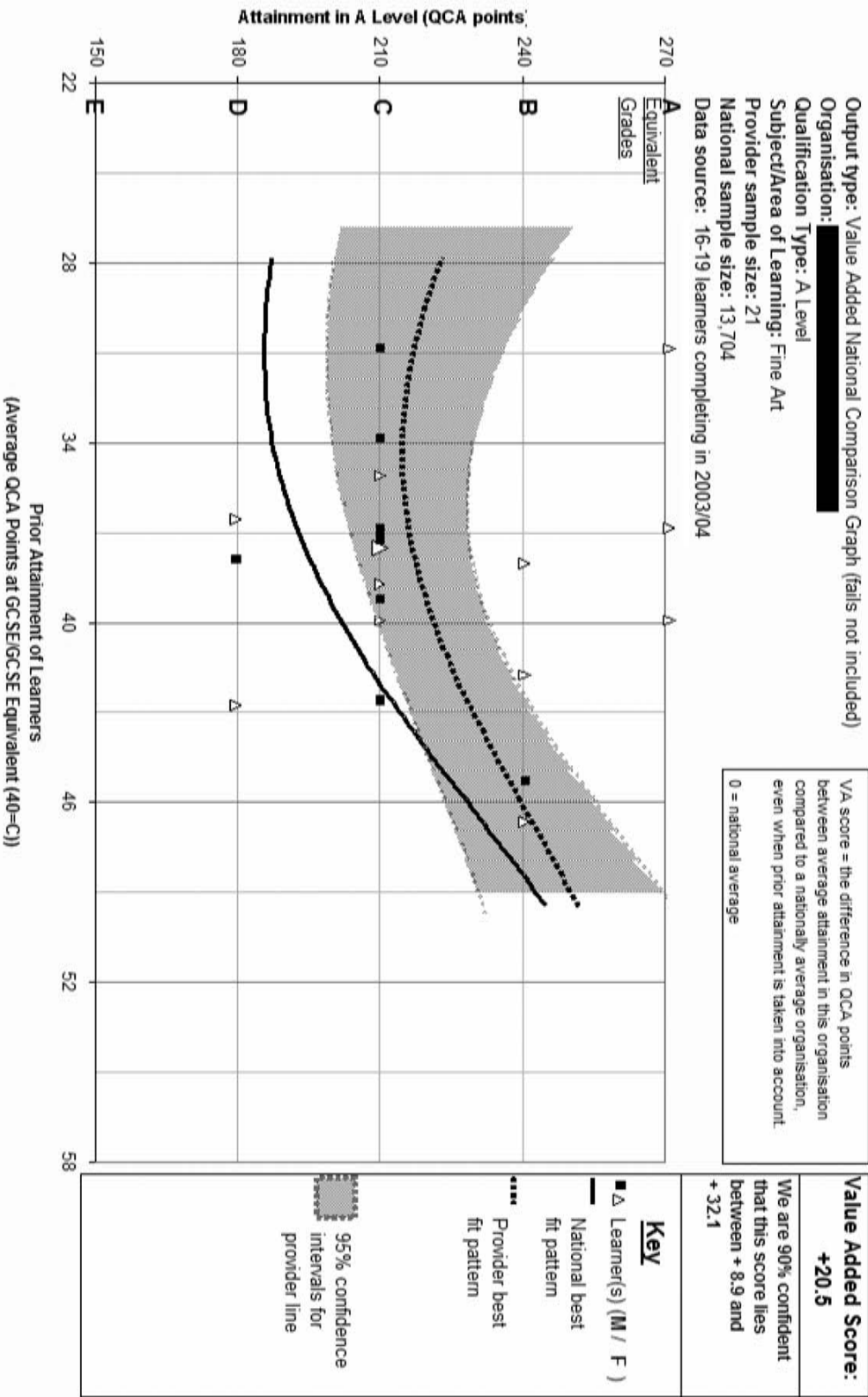
**Figure 18: Value Added National Comparison Graph showing College C's performance in A Level Drama, compared to the national average performance across the full range of prior attainment**



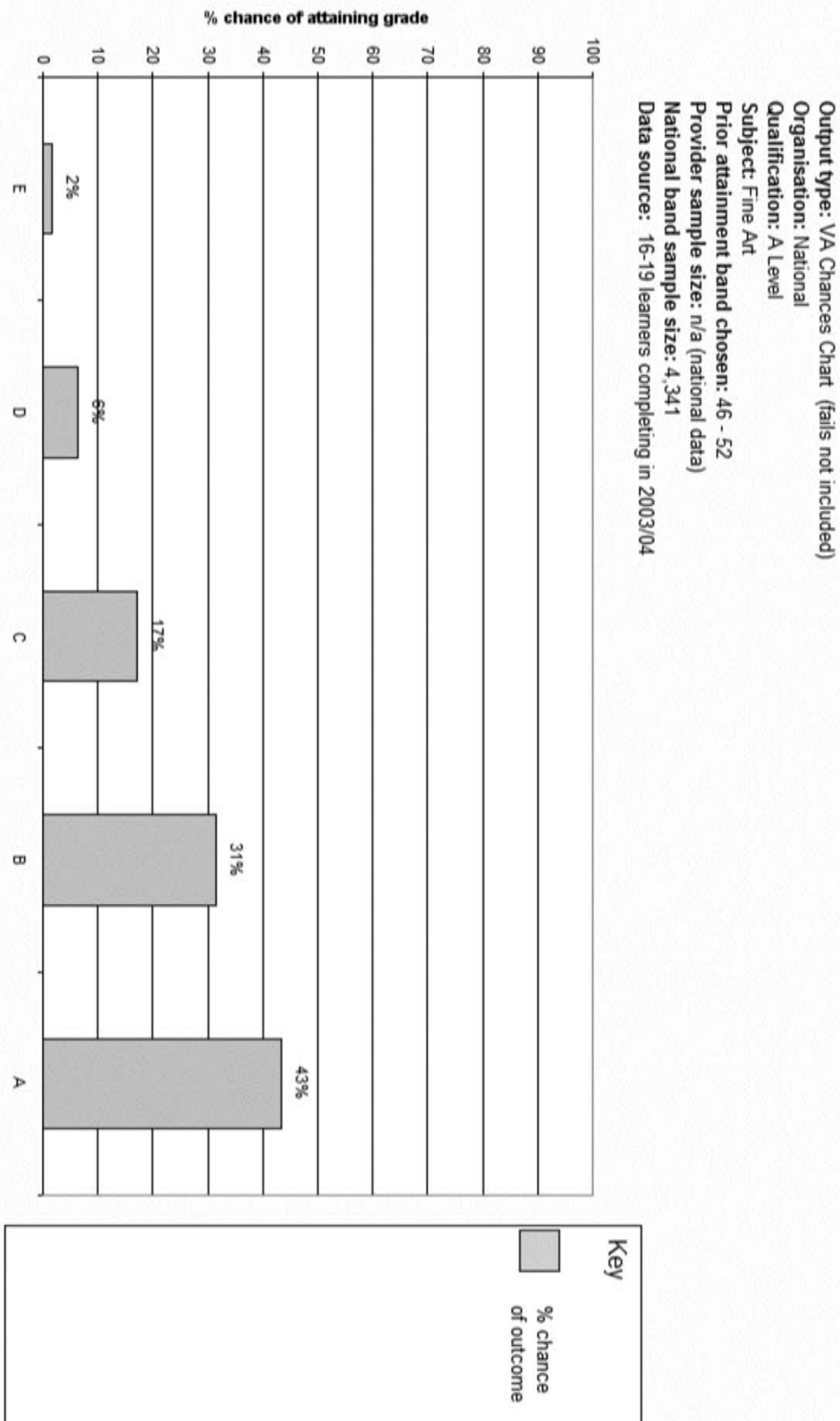
**Figure 19: Value Added National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 40 and 46 QCA points attaining each of the possible grade in A Level Drama**



**Figure 20: Value Added National Comparison Graph showing College C's performance in A Level Fine Art, compared to the national average performance across the full range of prior attainment**



**Figure 21: Value Added National Chances Chart, showing the chances of a learner with an average prior attainment of between 46 and 52 QCA points attaining each of the possible grade in A Level Fine Art**



## 5 Learner Satisfaction

### The National Learner Satisfaction Survey and the Learner Satisfaction measure

#### 5.1

The National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS) is the national measure for Learner Satisfaction and constitutes one of the New Measures of Success. The NLSS is the largest survey of the views of post-16 learners ever undertaken in England. It provides an invaluable insight into learners' perceptions of what is already working well in post-16 education and training and what might be improved. The survey has now been completed for three years and in 2003/04 a total of over 43,000 learners were surveyed.

#### 5.2

The new measures' partners are keen to ensure that all providers gather feedback from their learners and that the results are used to drive quality improvement. The LSC encourages all providers to adopt the core questions and methodology of the NLSS survey as a principle measure of learner satisfaction. This will enable providers to benchmark their own learner satisfaction levels against the national picture.

#### 5.3

In order to help providers adopt the core questions and methodology used within the NLSS to measure learner satisfaction within their own provision, the LSC has produced the following support materials for providers and local LSCs:

- *NLSS: Guidance on the core methodology and core questionnaire.* This document contains the NLSS questionnaire and guidance for providers when conducting local level surveys
- An interactive website containing the 2003/04 NLSS dataset and all the NLSS published reports. This is available at <http://researchtools.lsc.gov.uk> and allows providers to benchmark institutional level results against NLSS results.

### The importance of the new measure for local LSCs and learning providers

#### 5.4

Providers have the opportunity to use a nationally recognised methodology and questionnaire to conduct their learner feedback surveys. The benefits of this for providers include:

- the ability to benchmark their own results against NLSS results
- the ability to present results from a robust local level survey, and benchmarked results (from the NLSS), for use in inspection
- robust local level results to highlight areas of concern and areas of effective practice to help focus quality improvement strategies.

#### 5.5

The benefits for local LSCs include:

- national and regional results used as a benchmark for local LSC performance
- a comparison of learner experiences across the different programme areas
- encouraging providers to adopt the methodology to enable, local, sectoral, regional and national benchmarking
- institutional data collected by providers – can be used by local LSCs in discussions of three-year development plans with providers.

### Further developments

#### 5.6

The LSC are consulting with partners, providers from across the sector and local LSCs in order to further develop the methodology and questions for the NLSS to meet specific needs. This development work will ensure that the methodology and questions for the 2006/07 NLSS are fit for purpose of providing a measure of learner satisfaction at both a local and national level which can be used to stimulate quality improvement strategies.

#### 5.7

In addition to the consultation work, in February 2006, the LSC will also conduct provider workshops to develop and promote learner feedback within the context of New Measures of Success. Details of these events will be published in the new measures' newsletter.

#### 5.8

The LSC is investigating the possibility of including school sixth forms in the NLSS.

## 6 The New Measures of Success and the LSC's Business Cycle

### 1.1

The LSC's new framework for planning, resourcing and assuring the quality of provision will involve the use of data from the New Measures of Success programme as an integral part of the assessment of providers' performance and planning for quality improvement. Further details of the new framework, which will go live in 2006/07, will be available from the LSC website. The paragraphs below briefly summarise how the new measures data is likely to contribute to the development of local LSC annual plans and provider development plans and the role of providers' self-assessment processes. Further information about how the LSC will use new measures data during 2006/07 will be available on the LSC New Measures of Success web pages in early 2006.

#### Local LSC annual plans

### 1.2

From 2006/07, local LSCs will be required to produce a local LSC annual plan. This will involve looking at data on achievements, learner success and other performance data and assessing how far providers are effective in planning for quality improvement. The new measures are likely to make a key contribution to this assessment, which will be used to determine the risks presented by individual providers to the achievement of the local LSC plan. Qualification success rates will be a key source of evidence for the provider assessment.

### 1.3

The annual planning process will also lead to the agreement of a development plan for each provider, which will include a section on key areas for improvement. Again, the new measures will be vital in identifying these improvement areas, which are likely to be the same as those highlighted in the provider's self-assessment report (SAR). The development plan will include improvement indicators which are specific to each provider and may in time include targets informed by some of the new measures, for instance, Value Added (VA) and Distance Travelled (DT) for 16–19 learners in the post-piloting phase.

#### Provider self-assessment

### 1.4

The key role of providers' SARs in measuring the effectiveness of their development and action plans was set out in the LSC's For Action document: *Quality Improvement and Self-Assessment*, issued in May 2005.

The aim of self-assessment is to support the provider's own work on quality improvement and to measure progress against its own mission and goals. The new measures will be vital to making these judgements and LSC-funded providers will be expected to use this information as it becomes available. Once the new measures are established, providers will also be able to view trend data in order to assess their performance over time and how effectively they have improved their performance in line with action planning.

### 1.5

Some of the current minimum requirements for inclusion in SARs are likely to be informed by data from the new measures. For instance, the requirement to make judgements on all areas of provision, including non-accredited learning, should include reference to the use of the RARPA process standards, which currently apply to all LSC-funded non-accredited learning. As the RARPA approach is extended to accredited programmes, evidence of how effectively the approach is applied to all learning will inform these judgements (see the RARPA and REX sections of this Quality Improvement Pack for further information). Similarly, the requirement to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to indicate how the views of learners and other stakeholders have been obtained and taken into account are likely to be informed by data from the VA and DT for 16–19 learners and the Learner Satisfaction measures respectively.

### 1.6

Integral to self-assessment is the development of a quality improvement plan which makes provision to sustain strengths and address key areas for improvement. Here, the new measures will be vital in identifying areas of particularly good and poor practice compared to national benchmarks. Local LSCs will be looking for evidence that areas of provision which the new measures highlight as below national average performance are addressed in the quality improvement plan. In the 2006/07 planning cycle, providers will be expected to use Qualification Success Rates and VA and DT for 16–19 learners alongside other information to determine the focus of their quality improvement plan.



## Further Information and Glossary

### The New Measures of Success

Information about the New Measures of Success programme and each of the new measures can be found on:

- The New Measures of Success area on the LSC website at: [www.LSC.gov.uk/nms](http://www.LSC.gov.uk/nms)
- The *Success for All* website at: [www.successforall.gov.uk](http://www.successforall.gov.uk)

Success rate data are published on the LSC's website at: [www.LSC.gov.uk/national/partners/data/statistics/learnerstatistics/learningaimoutcomes/default](http://www.LSC.gov.uk/national/partners/data/statistics/learnerstatistics/learningaimoutcomes/default)

Information on RARPA can be found at: [www.LSC.gov.uk/rarpa](http://www.LSC.gov.uk/rarpa).

An interactive website containing the 2003/04 National Learner Satisfaction Survey dataset and all the NLSS published reports is available at <http://researchtools.lsc.gov.uk>

This Quality Improvement Pack and other staff development materials for use by provider and LSC staff can be found on the New Measures of Success area on the LSC website at: [www.LSC.gov.uk/nms](http://www.LSC.gov.uk/nms)

In the first instance, providers with queries not answered in this Quality Improvement Pack or on the relevant web pages should contact their local LSC office.

### The LSC Business Cycle

Information about the LSC's new framework for planning, resourcing and assuring the quality of provision can be found on the LSC website ([www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)) and in the For action document: *Planning for Success – a framework for planning and quality* (LSC, December 2005). This is available at: [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/Series/Circulars/planning-for-Success\\_a-framework.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/Series/Circulars/planning-for-Success_a-framework.htm)

### QCA points

Further information about QCA points can be found on the QCA website at: [www.qca.org.uk/14-19/developemnts/index\\_including-all-approved.htm](http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/developemnts/index_including-all-approved.htm)

### The use of Value Added and Distance Travelled in setting targets and monitoring learner progress

The LSDA research report *Securing Success: setting targets and monitoring supporting learner progress in post-16 education and training* (Davis P, Maynard J and Webster W; LSDA, 2005) contains effective practice case studies from across the sector. The report together with accompanying guidance material will be available at the end of January 2006 on the LSDA's website at: [www.lsda.org.uk](http://www.lsda.org.uk). Information about the publication will also be available on the New Measures of Success area on the LSC website.

# Glossary

<b>AB</b>	Awarding Body	<b>MLM</b>	Multi-Level Modelling
<b>ACL</b>	Adult and Community Learning	<b>MSSG</b>	Measures of Success Steering Group
<b>ALI</b>	Adult Learning Inspectorate	<b>NIACE</b>	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
<b>ALIS</b>	A Level Information System (proprietary Value Added system)	<b>NLSS</b>	National Learner Satisfaction Survey
<b>ALP</b>	Association of Learning Providers	<b>NMoS</b>	New Measures of Success
<b>ALPS</b>	A Level Performance System (proprietary Value Added system)	<b>NQF</b>	National Qualification Framework
<b>AoC</b>	Association of Colleges	<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>AS</b>	Advanced Subsidiary	<b>OCR</b>	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (Royal Society of encouragement of Arts)
<b>AVCE</b>	Advanced Vocational Certificate Education	<b>Ofsted</b>	Office for Standards in Education
<b>BTEC</b>	Business and Technology Education Council	<b>PANDA</b>	Performance and Assessment Report
<b>CACHE</b>	Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education	<b>PLASC</b>	Pupil Level Annual Schools Census
<b>CIF</b>	Common Inspection Framework	<b>PPR</b>	Provider Performance Report
<b>CPR</b>	College Performance Reports	<b>QCA</b>	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills	<b>QSR</b>	Qualification Success Rates
<b>DT</b>	Distance Travelled	<b>RARPA</b>	Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement
<b>EZE</b>	Entry to Employment	<b>REX</b>	RARPA Extension programme
<b>FE</b>	Further Education	<b>SAR</b>	Self Assessment Reports
<b>FfA</b>	Framework for Achievement	<b>SCAAT</b>	School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables
<b>GNVQ</b>	General National Vocational Qualification	<b>SFR</b>	Statistical First Release
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education	<b>SIR</b>	Staff Individualised Record
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education	<b>SMT</b>	Senior Management Team
<b>ILR</b>	Individual Learner Record	<b>SSC</b>	Sector Subject Category
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority	<b>Ufi</b>	University for Industry
<b>LAT</b>	Learner Achievement Tracker	<b>UMS</b>	Universal Marking System
<b>LLDD</b>	Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities	<b>VA</b>	Value Added
<b>LSC</b>	Learning and Skills Council	<b>VADT</b>	Value Added and Distance Travelled
<b>LSDA</b>	Learning and Skills Development Agency	<b>VCE</b>	Vocational Certificate of Education
<b>MI</b>	Management Information	<b>WBL</b>	Work-Based Learning

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