

Students outside the student number control in 2014-15

Exemptions list

The Government has requested that HEFCE no longer places controls on the recruitment to higher education of students with very high grades prior to entry. From 2014-15, this group of students is defined as those who achieved **grades of ABB, or above, at A-level, or certain equivalent qualifications to this. In addition, HEFCE will no longer place controls on students holding the most common combination of qualifications as equivalent to ABB at A-level; specific criteria were applied when determining whether a combination of qualifications should be listed on the exemptions list:**

- a. The combination of qualification types comprises A-level and one other qualification type which is present on the HEFCE exemptions list. We included the most favourable combination of one or two A-levels with one other qualification type, that amount to a total size equivalent of no more than three A-levels.
- b. The combination of qualifications is reported and present in the most recent data for setting student number controls.
- c. We are able to list them formally in terms of qualifications and grades exempted, to ensure the approach can be implemented by institutions and HEFCE. This means any qualification included in a combination must be one for which grades are awarded.
- d. Any combination of qualification types should reach a threshold of 100 students across the monitored population in the most recent available data.

Below is the complete list qualifications that are exempt from the student number control. All other qualifications and grades remain within the student number control. However institutions are provided with a student number control that reflects prior recruitment, which enables them to accommodate students entering with European qualification equivalences, and those qualifications not covered by the exemption list, and contextual admissions.

The most highly selective institutions will also continue to be provided with a fair-access protection allocation. This will provide additional places to ensure these institutions can continue to offer fair access to students with high entry qualifications who are not included on the exemptions list.

This exemptions list has been developed solely for the practical and limited purpose of implementing the Government's student number control policy, and is, in essence, a technical response to implementing Government policy in a manageable way. The exemptions list in no way provides an exhaustive assessment of students' prior attainment. We would not expect institutions to use this list to inform decisions about the quality of students' qualifications, the admission of individual applicants, or students' eligibility for institutions' own scholarship, bursary or fee waiver schemes. The list is not intended to influence the determination of individual applicants' suitability for admission, where the autonomy of institutions is always paramount.

| Single Qualifications | | |
|---|--|--|
| Qualification | Grades required | Explanatory note |
| A-level, International A-level and AS-level | <p>Best three grades, either:</p> <p>A* A* A*</p> <p>A* A* A</p> <p>A* A* B</p> <p>A* A* C</p> <p>A* A* D</p> <p>A* A* E</p> <p>A* A A</p> <p>A* A B</p> <p>A* A C</p> <p>A* A D</p> <p>A* B B</p> <p>A* B C</p> <p>A A A</p> <p>A A B</p> <p>A A C</p> <p>A B B</p> <p>A* A* + A at AS-level</p> <p>A* A* + B at AS-level</p> <p>A* A* + C at AS-level</p> <p>A* A + A at AS-level</p> | <p>This includes all A-levels awarded by an accredited UK awarding body including International A-levels and the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education</p> <p>A double-award A-level counts as two single awards at the grade awarded</p> <p>For the double-award AS-level the higher of the two single grades awarded will be counted.</p> |
| Access to Higher Education Diploma | <p>Overall Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – must include 45 credits at Level 3, of which 30 credits must be at Distinction and 15 credits at Merit or higher | |

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|---|--|--|---|--|
| BTEC National Qualification: One Diploma (NQF) | Distinction Distinction | Distinction Distinction | Distinction Merit | This requires the achievement of three grades under the suite of qualifications known as Nationals, which can include corresponding qualifications from both the NQF and QCF frameworks. This applies to sets of qualifications that produce only three grades (for example, an NQF Certificate and a QCF Subsidiary Diploma are eligible, however a NQF Certificate and a QCF Diploma are not eligible) |
| BTEC National Qualification: One Certificate (NQF) + One Award (NQF) | Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction Distinction Merit | + Distinction + Merit + Distinction | |
| BTEC National Qualification: Three Awards (NQF) | Distinction Distinction | Distinction Distinction | Distinction Merit | |
| BTEC National Qualification: One Extended Diploma (QCF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction | Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit | |
| BTEC National Qualification: One Diploma (QCF) + One Subsidiary Diploma (QCF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit Merit | + Distinction* + Distinction + Merit + Pass + Distinction* + Distinction + Merit + Distinction* + Distinction + Merit + Distinction* + Distinction | |
| BTEC National Qualification: Three Subsidiary Diplomas (QCF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction* Distinction Merit Pass Distinction Merit Distinction Merit | |

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|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| BTEC National Qualification: One Certificate (NQF) + One Subsidiary Diploma (QCF) | Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit Merit | + + + + + | Distinction* Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction | |
| BTEC National Qualification: One Diploma (QCF) + One Award (NQF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit | + + + + + + + + | Distinction Merit Pass Distinction Merit Distinction Merit Distinction | |
| BTEC National Qualification: Two Awards (NQF) + One Subsidiary Diploma (QCF) | Distinction Distinction, Distinction Distinction | Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit Merit | + + + + + | Distinction* Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction | |
| BTEC National Qualification: Two Subsidiary Diplomas (QCF) and One Award (NQF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction Distinction Merit | + + + + + + + + + | Distinction Merit Pass Distinction Merit Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction | |

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|--|---|---|
| BTEC National Qualification: Two 90 Credit Diplomas (QCF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction* Merit Merit Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction Merit Merit Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction Merit Distinction Merit | The achievement of four grades under the suite of qualifications known as Nationals from one of the following sets: Two 90 Credit Diplomas (QCF) One 90 Credit Diploma (QCF) and One Subsidiary Certificate (NQF) |
| BTEC National Qualification: One 90 Credit Diploma (QCF) and One Subsidiary Certificate (NQF) | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction* Merit Merit Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction Merit Merit Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction Merit Distinction Merit | |
| BTEC National Diploma in Early Years Education | Distinction Distinction Distinction | Inclusive of NQF and QCF versions |
| Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE) Level 3 diploma in Child Care and Education | Grade A | |
| CACHE Level 3 Extended Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce | Grade A* Grade A | QCF version |

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|--|---|--|
| <p>Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) National Extended Diploma</p> | <p>National Extended Diploma: Grade D1 Grade D2 Grade M1</p> <p>One National Diploma and One National Certificate: Grade D Grade D Grade D Grade M Grade M1 Grade D</p> <p>Three National Certificates: Grade D Grade D Grade D Grade D Grade D Grade M</p> | <p>The grade required in the National Diploma is listed first, then the grade required in the National Certificate</p> |
| <p>OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Qualification: One Extended Diploma</p> | <p>Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit</p> | <p>This requires the achievement of three grades under the suite of qualifications known as Cambridge Technical</p> |
| <p>OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Qualification: One Diploma + One Introductory Diploma</p> | <p>Distinction* Distinction* + Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* + Distinction Distinction* Distinction* + Merit Distinction* Distinction* + Pass Distinction* Distinction + Distinction* Distinction* Distinction + Distinction Distinction* Distinction + Merit Distinction Distinction + Distinction* Distinction Distinction + Distinction Distinction Distinction + Merit Distinction Merit + Distinction* Distinction Merit + Distinction</p> | |

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|---|---|--|
| OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Qualification: Three Introductory Diplomas | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Merit Distinction* Distinction* Pass Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction Merit Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit | |
| OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Qualification: Two Subsidiary Diplomas | Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction* Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction* Merit Merit Distinction* Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction* Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction* Distinction Merit Merit Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Distinction Merit Distinction Merit Distinction Merit | The achievement of four grades from two OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Subsidiary Diplomas. |
| National Proficiency Tests Council or City and Guilds Land Based Extended Diploma | Distinction * at Level 3 Distinction at Level 3 | |
| Progression Diploma | A* | |
| Advanced Diploma | A* | From the Principal and Generic Learning elements only |
| Scottish Advanced Highers: | Best three grades, either: A A A A A B A A C A A D A B B A B C | |

Scottish Highers:

Best **five** grades, either:

- A A A A A
- A A A A B
- A A A A C
- A A A A D
- A A A B B
- A A A B C
- A A A B D
- A A A C C
- A A A C D
- A A B B B
- A A B B C
- A A B B D
- A A B C C
- A B B B B
- A B B B C

International Baccalaureate

34 points or more

Irish Leaving Certificate

Best **four** grades, either:

- A1 A1 A1 A1
- A1 A1 A1 A2
- A1 A1 A1 B1
- A1 A1 A1 B2
- A1 A1 A1 B3
- A1 A1 A1 C1
- A1 A1 A2 B1
- A1 A1 A2 B2
- A1 A1 B1 B1
- A1 A2 A2 A2
- A1 A1 A2 A2

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|-----------------|--|--|
| Cambridge Pre-U | D1/D2 D1/D2 D1/D2 D1/D2 D1/D2 D3 D1/D2 D1/D2 M1 D1/D2 D1/D2 M2 D1/D2 D1/D2 M3 D1/D2 D1/D2 P1 D1/D2 D1/D2 P2 D1/D2 D1/D2 P3 D1/D2 D3 D3 D1/D2 D3 M1 D1/D2 D3 M2 D1/D2 D3 M3 D1/D2 D3 P1 D1/D2 D3 P2 D1/D2 D3 P3 D1/D2 M1 M1 D1/D2 M1 M2 D1/D2 M1 M3 D1/D2 M1 P1 D1/D2 M2 M2 D1/D2 M2 M3 D3 D3 D3 D3 D3 M1 D3 D3 M2 D3 D3 M3 D3 D3 P1 D3 M1 M1 D3 M1 M2 D3 M1 M3 D3 M2 M2 M1 M1 M1 M1 M1 M2 | From the Principal Subject or Global Perspectives and Research (GPR) elements only |
|-----------------|--|--|

Including the short course (SC)

| | | |
|-------|-------|----------|
| D1/D2 | D1/D2 | SC D1/D2 |
| D1/D2 | D1/D2 | SC D3 |
| D1/D2 | D1/D2 | SC M1 |
| D1/D2 | D1/D2 | SC M2 |
| D1/D2 | D1/D2 | SC M3 |
| D1/D2 | D1/D2 | SC P1 |
| D1/D2 | D3 | SC D1/D2 |
| D1/D2 | D3 | SC D3 |
| D1/D2 | D3 | SC M1 |
| D1/D2 | D3 | SC M2 |
| D3 | D3 | SC D1/D2 |
| D3 | D3 | SC D3 |

Qualifications in combination with A-level

In combination with BTEC National Subsidiary Diplomas (QCF) or Award (NQF)

Combination of two Advanced Levels (A-levels) and one BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (QCF) or Award (NQF)

| A-level grades | BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (QCF) or Award (NQF) grade |
|--|--|
| (A*, A*) | Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass |
| (A*, A), (A*, B) or (A, A) | Distinction*, Distinction, or Merit |
| (A*, C), (A*, D), (A, B), (A, C) or (B, B) | Distinction* or Distinction |
| (A*, E), (A, D), or (B, C) | Distinction* |

*Combination of one A-level and two BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas(QCF) or Awards (NQF) or one A-level and one Subsidiary Diploma(QCF) and One Award (NQF)**

| BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas (QCF)/Awards (NQF) grades | A-level grade |
|--|-------------------|
| (Distinction*, Pass) | A* grade only |
| (Distinction, Merit) | A grade or higher |
| (Distinction*, Merit) | B grade or higher |
| (Distinction, Distinction) | C grade or higher |
| (Distinction*, Distinction) | D grade or higher |
| (Distinction*, Distinction*) | E grade or higher |
| Note: The A-level grades considered are, from highest to lowest, A*, A, B, C, D, E | |
| *Makes allowance for the recent change in BTEC National frameworks | |

In combination with a single BTEC National Diploma (QCF) or Certificate (NQF)

Combination of one A-level and one BTEC Diploma (QCF) or Certificate (NQF)

| BTEC Diploma (QCF) or Award (NQF) grade | A-level grade |
|---|-------------------|
| Distinction Merit | A grade or higher |
| Distinction Distinction | C grade or higher |
| Distinction* Distinction | D grade or higher |
| Distinction* Distinction* | E grade or higher |

In combination with OCR National Certificates or OCR Cambridge Technical Level 3 Introductory Diplomas

Combination of two A-levels and one OCR National Certificate

A-level grades

OCR National Certificate grade

(A*, A*)
(A*, A), (A*, B) or (A, A)
(A*, C), (A*, D), (A, B), (A, C) or (B, B)

Distinction, Merit or Pass
Distinction or Merit
Distinction

Combination of two A-levels and one OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma

A-level grades

OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma grade

(A*, A*)
(A*, A), (A*, B) or (A, A)
(A*, C), (A*, D), (A, B), (A, C) or (B, B)
(A*, E), (A, D), or (B, C)

Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass
Distinction*, Distinction, or Merit
Distinction* or Distinction
Distinction*

Combination of one A-level and two OCR National Certificates

OCR National Certificate Grade

A-level Grade

(Distinction, Merit)
(Distinction, Distinction)

A grade or higher
C grade or higher

Note: The A-level grades considered are, from highest to lowest, A*, A, B, C,

Combination of one A-level and two OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diplomas

OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma grades

A-level grade

(Distinction*, Pass)
(Distinction, Merit)
(Distinction*, Merit)
(Distinction, Distinction)
(Distinction*, Distinction)
(Distinction*, Distinction*)

A* grade only
A grade or higher
B grade or higher
C grade or higher
D grade or higher
E grade or higher

In combination with a single OCR National Diploma or a single OCR Cambridge Level 3 Technical Diploma

Combination of one A-level and one OCR National Diploma

OCR National Diploma grade

A-level grade

Merit 1

A grade or higher

Distinction

C grade or higher

Note: The A-level grades considered are, from highest to lowest, A*, A, B, C, D, E

Combination of one A-level and one OCR Cambridge Technical Diploma

OCR Cambridge Technical Diploma grade

A-level grade

Distinction Merit

A grade or higher

Distinction Distinction

C grade or higher

Distinction* Distinction

D grade or higher

Distinction* Distinction*

E grade or higher

Note: The A-level grades considered are, from highest to lowest, A*, A, B, C, D, E

In combination with Cambridge Pre-U Certificates (from the Principal Subject or Global Perspectives and Research (GPR) elements only)

Combination of two A-levels and one Cambridge Pre-U Certificate

A-level grades

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate grade

(A*, A*)

Pass 3 or higher

(A*, A)

Pass 1 or higher

(A*, B) or (A, A)

Merit 3 or higher

(A*, C) or (A, B)

Merit 2 or higher

(A*, D), (A, C) or (B, B)

Distinction 3 or higher

(A*, E), (A, D) or (B, C)

Distinction 2 or higher

Note: The Pre-U grades considered are, from highest to lowest, Distinction 1, Distinction 2, Distinction 3, Merit 1, Merit 2, Merit 3, Pass 1, Pass 2, Pass 3

Combination of one A-level and two Cambridge Pre-U Certificates

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate grades

A-level grade

(Distinction 2, Pass 3), (Distinction 3, Pass 2), (Merit 1, Pass 1) or (Merit 2, Merit 3)

A*

(Distinction 2, Pass 1), (Distinction 2, Pass 2), (Distinction 3, Merit 3), (Distinction 3, Pass 1), (Merit 1, Merit 2), (Merit 1, Merit 3) or (Merit 2, Merit 2)

A grade or higher

(Distinction 2, Merit 3) or (Distinction 3, Merit 2) or (Merit 1, Merit 1)

(Distinction 2, Merit 2) or (Distinction 3, Merit 1)

(Distinction 2, Distinction 3), (Distinction 2, Merit 1) or (Distinction 3, Distinction 3)

(Distinction 2, Distinction 2)

B grade or higher

C grade or higher

D grade or higher

E grade or higher

Notes

1. Where Distinction 2 is referenced, Distinction 1 can also be substituted.

2. The A-level grades considered are, from highest to lowest, A*, A, B, C, D, E

Other students who sit outside of the student number control

Students holding a postgraduate research degree

Students holding a postgraduate taught degree

Students holding a first degree

Students, other than those on an integrated foundation year ('year 0') studying Medicine and Dentistry

Students topping up from a Foundation Degree (FD) or Higher National Diploma (HND) to an honours degree

This does not include Foundation Degrees.

Student number controls will not apply to medicine and dentistry students. The independent control administered by HEFCE on behalf of the Department of Health will continue to apply. However, students on an integrated foundation year ('year 0') of an undergraduate medical or dental course will still count against the student number control allocation unless they are covered by one of the other exemptions listed above, on the basis of their entry qualifications.

We have modified the student number control definition to exclude those students topping up from an FD or an HND to an honours degree programme not exceeding 1.3 years of further full-time study (the QAA foundation degree qualification benchmark), who have been full-time students (or part-time students in receipt of full-time student support) in either of the preceding two academic years, at any institution. Students with DipHE, Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), or Higher National Certificate (HNC) qualifications will still be part of the control. This is because these qualifications are not usually taken with the intention of being a progression route to topping up to a degree, and do not have to have a clear progression route as FDs do.