



Education  
Funding  
Agency

# **16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding**

**For academic years 2014 to 2015  
and 2015 to 2016**

**July 2014**

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## Introduction

Achieving a good GCSE grade in both maths and English helps students to progress to further study, training and skilled employment.

Young people and adults should be entitled to study for well-recognised and credible national qualifications in maths and English that open up opportunities and provide them with a solid foundation for further study, training or skilled work. GCSEs are widely valued by employers. The goal is to give as many young people and adults as possible who lack good qualifications in maths and English the chance to take GCSEs in these subjects.

In August 2013, the government introduced 16 to 19 study programmes following [Professor Alison Wolf's review of vocational education](#). A core principle of study programmes is that any student who has not achieved grade A\* to C in maths and/or English GCSE, by age 16, must continue to work towards achieving these qualifications. This will become a condition of funding from August 2014.

This means that all students on study programmes, including 19 to 25 year olds with a statement of Special Educational Need (SEN), a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) when available, who do not have a GCSE grade A\* to C in maths and English, are required to continue to work towards achieving these qualifications by studying for a GCSE or approved 'stepping stone' qualification as part of their study programme.

Where a student without a grade C GCSE is not studying GCSE or an approved 'stepping stone' qualification, then that student is removed from future funding allocations. There will be very few students that are exempt from this requirement, but those that may be include students holding an equivalent qualification from overseas, and some students with a learning disability that prevents them from studying for any of the 'stepping stone' qualifications.

Those students who have attained a grade D GCSE in maths and/or English should retake the GCSE, and from August 2015, this requirement will become part of the condition of funding for full time students. This will mean that to qualify for funding, all full time students with GCSE grade D must be enrolled for a GCSE maths or English qualification.

## Purpose of this note

This note provides information to institutions on the maths and English condition of funding from the 2014 to 2015 academic year. It covers:

- application in 2014 to 15 academic year
- changes for 2015 to 2016 academic year
- equivalences and exemptions

The note applies to all institutions delivering 16 to 19 study programmes, including 16 to 25 year olds with a statement of SEN, an LDA or a EHCP.

# The Condition of Funding

## Academic year 2014 to 2015 condition of funding

For the 2014 to 2015 academic year all students, full and part-time, on 16 to 19 study programmes who do not have a grade C or above in maths and/or English and are not studying on either a GCSE or an approved alternative qualification (detailed below), which is a 'stepping stone' towards a GCSE, will be removed from lagged student numbers and will therefore not generate any funding in future academic years (initially in 2016 to 2017). The condition applies even when a student has withdrawn before completing a study programme.

There will be a very small number of students who are not able to take a GCSE or a 'stepping stone' qualification, for example those with multiple and complex needs. However there is no blanket exemption for high needs students or students with learning difficulties or disabilities. These students should, if they can, take a GCSE or a 'stepping stone' qualification. If this is not possible the institution should deliver appropriate maths and English.

We would expect any exemptions from the requirement to study GCSE or 'stepping stone' qualifications in maths and English to be the exception. To make a decision not to offer maths and English, in addition to a statement of SEN, a LDA or EHCP, an evidenced assessment (that the high needs student cannot benefit from studying an approved maths and English qualification) by a professional in the education institution would be acceptable if and only if the student has a statement of SEN, LDA or EHCP. This will be required for 2014 to 2015 and for 2015 to 2016. Institutions should be prepared to justify their decision to Education Funding Agency (EFA) auditors and Ofsted inspectors.

Where a student has studied in another country that does not provide GCSEs, there is a potential exemption from the requirement to study towards GCSEs in maths and English. The institution must be satisfied that the student has an equivalent qualification and the necessary ability in the subject.

## Academic year 2015 to 2016 condition of funding

For the 2015 to 2016 academic year the same conditions apply and in addition all full time students<sup>1</sup> (excluding those on a traineeship) enrolling on a 16 to 19 study programme in 2015 to 2016 and beyond with a grade D in maths and/or English GCSE who are not enrolled on GCSE courses in these subjects, will be removed from lagged

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<sup>1</sup> Students on programmes of 540 hours or more; or 450hrs or more for 18 year olds

student numbers and will therefore not generate any funding in future academic years (initially in 2017 to 2018).

The vast majority of students with prior attainment of grade D, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, should be capable of improving their grade with the right teaching and support. There may be a very small number of students with this prior attainment for whom studying a GCSE will not be appropriate. In this case the requirements to document an exemption will apply.

## **Condition of funding beyond 2016**

In July 2014 the government announced that reformed GCSEs in maths and English will become the national standard qualification at level 2 in 16 to 19 education from 2017 and the condition of funding will be revised to support this.

Maths and English GCSEs are being reformed with a focus on ensuring that every student masters the fundamentals that are required for further education and future careers, whilst at the same time providing greater challenge for the most able students.

## **GCSE grade A\* to C in maths and English: equivalences**

Students who have studied in other UK nations and have the following qualifications in maths and English are treated as having achieved GCSE grade A\* to C and will not be required to study them as part of the condition of funding:

- Ofqual approved GCSEs offered in England including Level 1/Level 2 certificates
- Unregulated IGCSEs
- GCSEs grade A\* to C obtained in Wales
- GCSEs grade A\* to C obtained in Northern Ireland
- Scottish Intermediate 2 certificates grade A to C
- Scottish Standard Grades (credit Level) grade 1 to 2
- Scottish National 5 certificates grade A to C

In the lead up to the introduction of the new GCSEs, unregulated IGCSEs will be treated as equivalent to the GCSE for the purpose of prior attainment to meet the funding condition. This means that young people who apply to further education (FE) colleges, schools with sixth-forms and sixth-form colleges with IGCSEs in maths and English at grades A\* to C will be exempt from having to study GCSE maths and English from 1 August 2014. This will apply for the 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016 academic years. We will review this position for students starting post-16 courses following the first awarding of the new GCSEs.

For the purpose of recording prior attainment in the Individual Learner Record (ILR), institutions should record the fact that the student does not have a maths or English GCSE grade A\* to C but is exempt from the maths or English condition of funding by using code NLM 19 or NLM 20 in the learner funding and monitoring fields. Recording in the school census is to be confirmed.

## Qualifications that meet the condition of funding

For some students, reaching GCSE level 2 standard will require progressive 'stepping stones', for example, through first achieving functional skills qualifications. We have ensured that such stepping stones are available to support students en route to GCSE and that these are fit for purpose.

The condition of funding will be met if students are enrolled to take one of the following qualifications, within the academic year, in the subjects they do not already hold at GCSE A\* to C level, provided it is valid for EFA funding:

- Maths and English GCSEs including level 1/level 2 certificates that count towards the [English Baccalaureate \(Ebacc\) measure](#) in Key Stage 4 performance tables
- functional skills (at the appropriate level) and free-standing maths qualifications (at level 2 only) accredited by Ofqual, as a stepping stone to GCSE study
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) qualifications accredited by Ofqual, as a stepping stone to GCSE study
- Prince's Trust TEAM programme

The following link provides a definitive list of qualifications that meet the condition of funding for students that do not hold GCSE A\* to C maths and English as of 11 July 2014 as a guide for institutions to use.

Between 11 July and the start of the 2014 to 2015 academic year, institutions need to be aware that awarding organisations may make changes to qualifications that may mean they no longer meet the condition of funding.

Condition of funding on maths and English: [qualifications list](#) can be found on Gov.UK.

A final copy will be published on 31 July 2014. Once the academic year threshold (1 August 2014) has passed, a qualification should not change such that it is no longer valid in 2014 to 2015. However, institutions should check the qualification validity with the relevant awarding organisation before enrolling a student on the qualification: awarding organisations may make changes to qualifications that could shorten their effective length, extend their effective length or mean they are no longer valid for delivery at all.

Any future change which renders a qualification no longer equivalent will not be applied to students who took that qualification in the years before the change.

The list of qualifications that meet the condition of funding will also be maintained on the [Learning Aim Reference Service \(LARS\)](#).

## Exemption conditions and evidence requirements

Where the exemption is on the grounds that a student's learning disability prevents them studying at this level, an evidenced assessment (that the high needs student cannot benefit from studying an approved maths and English qualification) by a professional in the education institution would be acceptable if and only if the student has a statement of SEN, a LDA or a EHCP. This will be required for 2014 to 2015 and for 2015 to 2016. Institutions should be prepared to justify their decision to EFA auditors and Ofsted inspectors.

Where the exemption is on the grounds that a student's overseas qualification is equivalent to a grade A\* to C GCSE<sup>2</sup>, institutions are required to establish that the qualification is a suitable equivalent and that the student possesses the necessary competency in the subject in question. Overseas qualification equivalents are to be determined by using the UK's national agency responsible for providing information and opinion on academic, vocational and professional qualifications from across the world, the National Academic Recognition Information Centre ([UK NARIC](#)).

## Recording and monitoring of exemptions

As institutions assess their students in line with the guidance above, the EFA is to be notified of exemptions through the ILR by entering code NLM 19 or NLM 20 in the Learner funding and monitoring fields. This applies for those institutions that complete the ILR, such as commercial and charitable providers, FE and sixth-form colleges.

For schools and academies, the same principles will apply but there is currently no way of collecting the data. We are working on how to collect this data and will notify schools and academies when the process has been finalised. Schools and academies must keep a record from the beginning of the academic year showing why each of the exemptions has been applied. As the ILR or census will only indicate that an exemption is in place, and not the reason, therefore evidence of the reason needs to be kept, for example that a student holds an overseas qualification.

Institutions will be subject to risk-based compliance audit, to ensure the evidence is sound. Ofsted will establish that students are on the most suitable study programme and that any exemptions from studying maths and English GCSE are appropriate.

The EFA will analyse the data on exemptions twice a year to monitor the use of exemptions.

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<sup>2</sup> For example a student may arrive at an FE college with the German Mittlerer Schulabschluss which is a middle school completion exam.

## Next steps and queries

In spring 2015 we will provide institutions with a third and final student level data report, showing any student that would not have met the condition of funding in 2013 to 2014 academic year if it had applied then. These new reports are in addition to the two reports we have already provided.

Queries or comments should be directed to your EFA territorial team in the usual way by contacting:

- [YPNorthern.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:YPNorthern.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk)
- [YPCentralSW.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:YPCentralSW.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk)
- [YPSouthern.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:YPSouthern.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Academies should contact academy enquiries at:

- [academy.questions@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:academy.questions@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## Other information

Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise Matthew Hancock's written ministerial statement on [improving post-16 numeracy and literacy](#) is available on GOV.UK.



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enquiries [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)  
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Reference: EFA-00507-2014



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