

Performance points

A practical guide to key stage 4 and 5 performance points

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Introduction

Performance points and GCSE/GCE size equivalence are used within the key stage 4 and 5 Performance Tables as they allow qualifications of different size and grade structures to be compared.

This document is a practical introduction to calculating points. It does not attempt to explain how they are used within the Performance Tables.

Using this document, you should be able to identify whether a qualification is eligible for points, find the necessary information about it on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications (hereafter referred to as the Register) and calculate the appropriate points for that qualification.

The Performance Tables are only used to compare centres in England and therefore points cannot be calculated for qualifications which are only relevant in other parts of the UK.

Intentions and limitations of the system

The system is designed to be used for reporting the performance of the institution and is intended only to be used in the production of the Performance Tables.

It cannot and should not be compared to systems designed to measure an individual's achievement – for example the UCAS tariff.

In order to maintain accuracy, the Department for Education (DfE) reserves the right to amend points without prior notice to improve the quality of the Performance Tables. This change could occur without prior notice and could affect the current year's processing.

Key Stage 4 Performance Tables: Inclusion of 14-16 qualifications from 2014

From 2014 the Key Stage 4 Performance Tables will be restricted to qualifications that are high quality, rigorous and enable progression to a range of study and employment opportunities. Qualifications will only be included if they are the same size as a GCSE or larger and each qualification will count for one in the Performance Tables irrespective of its size. This document and the performance points methodology will be updated in due course.

Eligibility

A qualification is eligible for points if it is regulated by Ofqual and approved under Section 96 for funding for the relevant age range in England.

If a qualification is regulated then it will have been given a qualification number (QN). (These are also known as qualification accreditation numbers (QANs).) It will also have a regulation start date. All qualifications on the Register are regulated.

In addition to a QN:

- Entry level, level 1 and level 2 qualifications need to be approved for age pre-16 learners.
- Level 3 qualifications need to be approved for age 16–18 learners.

You can check whether a qualification has been approved on the section 96 website: www.education.gov.uk/section96/.

Register of Regulated Qualifications

The Register (<http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>) displays points for qualifications that have been regulated and approved. This information can be found under the Performance Measures section of each qualification page. Points will not be displayed until a qualification has been approved for the appropriate age range. There will be a delay between approval being granted and the points being updated on the Register.

Basics of the system

The calculation of points is defined as 'size' times 'challenge'.

Size is a measure of the average length of time it takes to teach the qualification. Average time is taken from the guided learning hours (GLH) from the Register. If a simple GLH value is not available, a notional GLH is created. More information about notional GLH is in Appendix A.

Challenge reflects the level of the qualification and grade achieved.

How to calculate the points for a qualification

To calculate the points for a qualification, follow the rules below:

For Entry level, level 1 or level 2

- calculate the GCSE size equivalence from Table 1
- calculate the base points for each grade from the level and grade structure from Table 2

- for each grade, multiply the GCSE size equivalence and the base points together to determine the points for that grade.

For level 3

- calculate the GCE A level size equivalence from Table 1
- calculate the base points for each grade from the grade structure from Table 2
- multiply the GCE A level size equivalence and the base points together to determine the points for that grade.

There are a number of worked examples, presented after the points tables, which help to explain how the system works.

Size

The points system bands together qualifications of different sizes based on the following table.

Table 1 - Size

Size band	GLH		GCSE size equivalence	GCE A level size equivalence
	Minimum	Maximum	Entry level, level 1 or level 2	Level 3
A	1	44	0.25	0.1
B	45	89	0.5	0.2
C	90	144	1	0.3
D	145	234	2	0.5
E	235	324	3	0.75
F	325	414	4	1
G	415	504	5	1.25
H	505	594	6	1.5
I	595	684	7	1.75
J	685	774	8	2
K	775	864	9	2.25
L	865	954	10	2.5
M	955	1044	11	2.75
N	1045	1134	12	3
O	1135	1224	13	3.25
P	1225	-	N/A	3.5

The table shows that a qualification of 120 GLH at either, Entry level, level 1 or level 2 would have a size equivalence of one GCSE. A similarly sized

qualification of 120 GLH at level 3 would be equivalent to 0.3 of an A level. Please see the FAQ section for further details on the GCSE size equivalents for other level 3 qualifications which do not follow the banding above.

Not all qualifications have one number quoted for their guided learning hours – so please check Appendix A (GLH and notional GLH) on how to deal with this situation.

Some performance measures refer to the level of achievement. The following rules apply to achievement at different levels:

- an Entry level qualification will not count towards achieving any level 1, level 2 or level 3 requirements or targets
- a level 1 qualification will not count towards achieving any level 2 or level 3 requirements or targets
- a level 2 qualification will not count towards achieving any level 3 requirements or targets.

Challenge

The challenge tables below contain the 'base points' for a level and grade structure combination – the points a qualification would achieve if it was size 1 (one GCSE equivalent for Entry, level 1 and level 2 qualifications; one GCE A level equivalent for level 3 qualifications).

It is important to note that the key factor in the grade structure is the number of grades – not the names of the grades. A pass/merit/distinction/distinction* grade structure is the same as a C grade/B grade/A grade/A* grade structure, because there are four grades in both.

Grade points

Table 2a - Entry level qualifications

While Entry level qualifications can be split into different Entry levels, they normally have a very simple pass only grade structure. If you require more information on how to deal with Entry level qualifications that have multiple grades within a single Entry level please contact DfE on Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk

Entry level	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3
Pass	10	12	14

Table 2b – Level 1 and 2 qualifications

Level 1 grade structure	Example grade	Points	Level 2 grade structure	Example grade	Points
Pass only general	Pass	25	Pass only general	Pass	46
Pass only NVQ	Pass	28	Pass only NVQ	Pass	49
2 grade scheme	Pass	22	2 grade scheme	Pass	43
	Credit	31		Credit	52
3 grade scheme	Pass	19	3 grade scheme	Pass	40
	Merit	28		Merit	49
	Distinction	34		Distinction	55
4 grade scheme	G	16	4 grade scheme	C	40
	F	22		B	46
	E	28		A	52
	D	34		A*	58
5 grade scheme	E	16	5 grade scheme	E	40
	D	20.5		D	43
	C	25		C	46
	B	29.5		B	49
	A	34		A	52

Table 2c – Level 3 qualifications

Level 3 grade structure	Example grade	Points
Pass only General	Pass	210
Pass only NVQ	Pass	240
2 grade scheme	Pass	195
	Credit	240
3 grade scheme	Pass	165
	Merit	225
	Distinction	270
4 grade scheme	Pass	165
	Merit	195
	Distinction	225
	Distinction*	270
5 grade scheme	E	150
	D	180
	C	210
	B	240
	A	270

Level 3 grade structure	Example grade	Points
	E	150
	D	180
A* A level exception	C	210
	B	240
	A	270
	A*	300

A level A* exception

GCE A levels, Level 3 Diplomas and Cambridge Pre U qualifications have an A* grade, which earns extra points that are not available for other qualifications. Any other level 3 qualifications with a six grade structure will have different points from the A* A level exception points listed above.

Worked examples of how to use these tables

Example A

Calculating the points for a level 1 qualification, consisting of 120 GLH, with a pass/merit/distinction grade structure

120 GLH gives the qualification a size band of C and a GCSE size equivalence of 1 (from Table 1).

It has a 3 grade structure - level 1 pass/merit/distinction so the base points are between 19 and 34 (from Table 2b).

This means the points are as below:

Grade	Base points	GCSE equivalence	Points
Pass	19	1	19
Merit	28	1	28
Distinction	34	1	34

Example B

Calculating the points for a level 2 qualification consisting of 320 GLH with a pass/ merit/ distinction/ distinction* grade structure

320 GLH means the qualification is in size band E so has a GCSE size equivalence of 3 (from Table 1).

Pass/merit/distinction/distinction* is a 4 grade structure so the base points are between 40 and 58 (from Table 2b).

Multiplying the GCSE size equivalence by the base points gives between 120 and 174 points.

Grade	Base points	GCSE equivalence	Points
Pass	40	3	120
Merit	46	3	138
Distinction	52	3	156
Distinction*	58	3	174

Example C

Calculating the points for a level 3 qualification consisting of 34 GLH with a pass-only grade structure

34 GLH means the qualification is in size band A with a GCE A level size equivalence of 0.1 (from Table 1).

A pass only grade structure has base points of 210 (from Table 2c).

Multiplying the GCSE size equivalence by the base points gives 21 points.

Grade	Base points	GCE A level equivalence	Points
Pass	210	0.1	21

Example D

Calculating the points for a double-GCSE qualification consisting of 240 GLH

As this is a double GCSE it has a GCSE size equivalence of 2, despite falling into size band E (see appendix A).

GCSEs can be both level 1 and level 2 qualifications.

Grades D/E/F/G are at level 1, which makes for a 4 grade structure, and the left-hand side of Table 2b gives the base points of between 16 and 34.

Grades A*/A/B/C are at level 2, making another 4 grade structure, and the right-hand side of Table 2b gives the base points of between 40 and 58.

Multiplying the GCSE size equivalence by the base points gives A*/A/B/C/D/E/F/G points of between 32 and 116 (combining level 1 and level 2).

Grade	Base points	GCSE equivalence	Points
A*	58	2	116
A	52	2	104
B	46	2	92
C	40	2	80
D	34	2	68
E	28	2	56
F	22	2	44
G	16	2	32

Please note that due to the GCSE cross-level grade structure, the grades D to G (level 1 results) contribute towards level 1 targets and grades A* to C (level 2 results) contribute to level 2 targets. Level 2 results also contribute to Level 1 targets.

Exceptions and special cases

Graded exams

The standard rules do not apply to graded exams.

Graded exams, whether at Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3, only count toward the key stage 4 Performance Tables. Level 3 and Level 2 graded exams contribute to both Level 2 and Level 1 targets; Level 1 graded exams contribute to Level 1 targets only.

The listed GLH values for graded exams are not used for points calculation – instead the Level and Grade is compared to the table below to find the points and GCSE size equivalence.

Table 3 – Graded exams: size and points

Dance, music performance or vocational dance		Result	Points	GCSE size equivalence
Level 3	Grade 8	Pass	66	1.6
		Merit	90	
		Distinction	108	
	Grade 7	Pass	53	1.28
		Merit	72	
		Distinction	86	
Grade 6	Pass	43	1.04	
	Merit	59		
	Distinction	70		

Dance, music performance or vocational dance		Result	Points	GCSE size equivalence
Level 2	Grade 5	Pass	32	0.8
		Merit	39	
		Distinction	44	
	Grade 4	Pass	28	0.7
		Merit	34	
		Distinction	39	
Level 1	Grade 3	Pass	11	0.6
		Merit	17	
		Distinction	20	
	Grade 2	Pass	10	0.5
		Merit	14	
		Distinction	17	
	Grade 1	Pass	8	0.4
		Merit	11	
		Distinction	14	
Drama, music literacy, speech, or speech and drama		Result	Points	GCSE size equivalence
Level 3	Grade 8	Pass	53	1.28
		Merit	72	
		Distinction	86	
	Grade 7	Pass	43	1.04
		Merit	59	
		Distinction	70	
	Grade 6	Pass	33	0.8
		Merit	45	
		Distinction	54	
Level 2	Grade 5	Pass	26	0.65
		Merit	32	
		Distinction	36	
	Grade 4	Pass	22	0.55
		Merit	27	
		Distinction	30	
Level 1	Grade 3	Pass	10	0.5
		Merit	14	
		Distinction	17	
	Grade 2	Pass	8	0.4
		Merit	11	
		Distinction	14	
	Grade 1	Pass	6	0.3
		Merit	8	
		Distinction	10	

Frequently asked questions

Q What does threshold mean?

A Threshold is the percentage contribution a qualification makes to certain targets – such as five GCSEs at grade A* to C (the level 2 target). Entry level qualifications have a size but no threshold.

Q Doesn't discounting also affect points? How does it work?

A This document does not cover the discounting of qualifications, which prevents a centre from gaining points for two qualifications which are the same or very similar. For advice on how the discounting system works, please email Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk and your message will be forwarded to someone who can help.

Q How does the value added (VA) measure work?

A This document does not cover VA, which is a method for looking at the improvement a centre has achieved with its learners. For advice on how the value added measure works, please contact Mailbox.PerformanceDataTeam@education.gsi.gov.uk. Q Is the points information on the Register correct?

A Please contact Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk quoting the QN and outline your query. Note that DfE reserves the right to amend the points and threshold data in order to improve the quality of the reference data within the Performance Tables. This change could occur without prior notice and could affect the current year's processing.

Q Who do I contact if I think something is wrong on the Register?

A The Register is owned by Ofqual – please contact RITS@ofqual.gov.uk to raise the issue.

Q How do I find which performance measures a qualification will count towards?

A Please contact Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk quoting the QN.

Q How many points is a grade in the Foundation/Higher/Advanced Diploma worth?

A Due to the range of possible options that make up a Diploma it is not possible to provide a single answer to this question.

Q Do level 3 qualifications ever appear in the key stage 4 Performance Tables?

A There are a small number of exceptions where a level 3 qualification appears in the key stage 4 Performance Tables – these are AS levels, level 3 Asset Languages, Advanced Free Standing Maths Qualifications and level 3 graded exams. Please note that the standard banding size does not apply to a level 3 qualification in the key stage 4 Performance Tables. Please see Appendix B for details.

Q When are the centre's points for an individual student counted?

A An individual student contributes to their centre's performance twice: once at the end of key stage 4 (around age 15–16), and again at the end of key stage 5 (aged 17–18).

Q Could you tell me more about eligibility for funding and approval?

A For more information on eligibility for funding and approval, please refer to the Department for Education: <http://www.education.gov.uk/section96/>

Q What does this mean for my child?

A The points system described here has no impact on any child – it is about measuring school performance.

Appendix A: GLH and notional GLH

Notional GLH above stated GLH

There are a number of circumstances in which the GLH stated on the Register is not the GLH used as the basis for the size equivalence in the Performance Tables. In these situations a qualification is given a notional GLH irrespective of its stated GLH, as follows:

- A GCSE is always 120 GLH (a short course is 60 and a double is 240)
- A GCE A Level is always 360 GLH (an AS is 180 and a double is 720)
- A functional skills qualification is always 60 GLH
- A Basic Skills qualification is always 60 GLH
- A Free Standing Mathematics qualification is always 60 GLH.

A range of GLH

If a range of GLH is provided then the mid point of the range is taken. For example, if a qualification has 120–130 GLH then a value of 125 GLH is used.

No stated GLH

If there is no GLH value for a qualification, a number of proxy values can be used to create a notional GLH for the purpose of the Performance Tables. The following measures are used, in this order:

- Diploma GLH
- Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) qualification only: credit value * 6.8
- QCF qualification only: minimum credit value * 6.8

Appendix B: level 3 qualifications in key stage 4 Performance Tables

Only a few types of Level 3 qualification are eligible for inclusion in the key stage 4 Performance Tables: GCE AS Levels, Free Standing Mathematics Qualifications, Graded Exams and Asset Languages.

Points for these qualifications are calculated using the **GCE** size equivalence as a multiplier on the level 3 base points.

For progress towards key targets or inclusion in VA in key stage 4 Performance Tables, the GCSE size equivalence for these level 3 qualifications is shown in the following table.

Size band	GLH minimum	GLH maximum	GCSE equivalence	GCE A level equivalence
A	1	44	0.4	0.1
B	45	89	0.8	0.2
C	90	144	1.2	0.3
D	145	234	2	0.5
E	235	324	3	0.75
F	325	414	4	1
G	415	504	5	1.25
H	505	594	6	1.5
I	595	684	7	1.75
J	685	774	8	2
K	775	864	9	2.25
L	865	954	10	2.5
M	955	1044	11	2.75
N	1045	1134	12	3
O	1135	1224	13	3.25
P	1225	-	14	3.5

Bands A, B, C and P have a different value of GCSE size equivalence from those in the standard tables.