The Technical Baccalaureate Performance Table Measure

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Introduction

The further education (FE) system, colleges and training providers that teach vocational qualifications and skills need to guarantee students high quality teaching and courses that will help them into jobs or university and create the skilled workforce employers need. The Government has introduced far-reaching reforms in support of this aim. Further information is available in the [further education and skills](#)[1] section of gov.uk.

The reforms include the introduction of the Technical Baccalaureate (TechBacc) – a new performance tables measure that allows young people aspiring to a technical career a high-quality alternative to the A level route. Establishing a measure of excellence in technical provision will end the perception that vocational education in the UK is a poor second to academic study. By recognising excellence, the measure will incentivise high-quality provision and encourage talented students to study demanding technical programmes.

The TechBacc measure recognises the achievement of students taking advanced (level 3) programmes which include a DfE approved Tech Level, level 3 maths and extended project qualifications. It was introduced for courses starting in September 2014, for reporting in the 16-19 performance tables from 2016.

It forms part of a set of broader reforms to 16-19 vocational education. In summer 2013, DfE completed a consultation on proposals to establish rigorous standards for level 3 vocational qualifications taken in schools and colleges. In December 2013, the first list of DfE approved Tech Level qualifications was published and all these qualifications count towards the TechBacc measure.

Students who achieve the three component qualifications included in the TechBacc measure will be equipped with specialist knowledge and skills, enabling entry to an Apprenticeship or other employment, or progression to a related higher education course. In some cases, Tech Level qualifications provide a 'licence to practise' or exemption from professional exams.

From 2016/17, TechBacc programmes that are equivalent to or larger than four A levels in size will be eligible for a 10% uplift in funding. TechBacc programmes that are equivalent to or larger than the full level 3 International Baccalaureate will be eligible for a 20% uplift in funding.

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[1] [Improving the quality of further education and skills training](#)

Who is it aimed at?

The TechBacc measure is aimed at ambitious, talented students that want to pursue a technical career. It gives young people the opportunity to be stretched through high-quality, rigorous qualifications, and to demonstrate their personal best. The TechBacc provides bright young people with a first-class alternative to the more traditional A level route, ensuring they have the technical ability employers want, and giving Britain the skilled workforce it needs to compete in the global race.

The group most likely to opt for courses to be included in the measure is the circa 25% of students that study advanced (level 3) vocational qualifications, having already achieved grades A*-C in GCSE maths and English before entering post-16 education.

New Core Maths qualifications have been developed to suit students who have achieved at least a grade C in GCSE maths, studying a range of post-16 courses including academic, Tech Level and Applied General qualifications. Over time, we expect the study of Core Maths to become the norm for students with a GCSE who do not take A level or AS level maths.

The qualifications included in the TechBacc measure are most suited to young people interested in occupations that require significant theory and technical knowledge acquisition, such as:

- STEM technicians (e.g. IT technicians, various engineering and transportation technical roles, land-based technicians, construction professionals);
- Service technicians (e.g. hospitality, personal services, accountancy, business and law positions);
- Creative technicians (e.g. media, creative industries, craft and design).

What does the TechBacc performance table measure include?

The TechBacc measure has three components.

1. Tech Levels

The key component is at least one DfE approved Tech Level qualification. **Tech Levels** are rigorous advanced (level 3) technical qualifications, on a par with A levels and recognised by employers. They equip students with specialist knowledge and skills, enabling entry to an Apprenticeship, other skilled employment or a technical degree. Backed by employers, they will equip young people with the specialist knowledge they need for a job in occupations ranging from engineering to computing, hospitality to accountancy. In some cases they provide a 'licence to practise' or exemption from professional exams.

These qualifications are, therefore, aimed at students with a clear idea of the occupation they wish to pursue.

Details of the 230 **Tech Level qualifications** which count towards the TechBacc measure in reformed performance tables in 2016 can be found here.

2. Level 3 maths qualifications

Many aspects of technical education require the understanding of and ability to apply maths, and there is evidence that those with **level 3 maths** benefit from improved employment prospects and higher wages.

For the TechBacc measure, students need to complete a level 3 maths qualification.

For programmes taught from September 2014 (i.e. reported in performance tables in 2016), the TechBacc measure includes the following maths qualifications:

- AS/A levels in Mathematics;
- International Baccalaureate Certificates in Mathematical Studies and Mathematics;
- AS level in Quantitative Methods (OCR);
- AS/A levels in Use of Mathematics (AQA);
- Core Maths (for schools and colleges that are part of the early adopter teaching projects).

For programmes taught from 2015 (reported from 2017), the following maths qualifications will be included in the TechBacc measure:

- AS/A levels in Mathematics;
- International Baccalaureate Certificates in Mathematical Studies and Mathematics;
- Core Maths.

The new Core Maths qualifications will suit students who achieve a B or C in GCSE maths, the vast majority of whom currently then drop the subject. They are also be valuable to those with A* and A grades, who are not taking A/AS level maths – in total around 40% of students every year.

Core Maths qualifications are being piloted from autumn 2014. Students successfully completing Core Maths qualifications as part of a DfE 'early adopters' project, along with at least one Tech Level qualification and the extended project, will also be recognised as having achieved the TechBacc measure.

The government announced a £20 million programme during 2014-16 to support piloting. This funding is focusing on building capacity to teach new level 3 Core Maths qualifications in schools, sixth form colleges and further education colleges. The Department for Education has made a total of £15 million available for early adopter projects in schools and colleges from September 2014 and a Core Maths support programme has also been established. Seven TechBacc Trailblazers, schools and colleges with excellent track records of delivering blended academic and vocational programmes, have received additional funding to trial ways of delivering Core Maths qualifications as a part of the TechBacc.

3. Extended project qualification

The final component is the **extended project qualification**, which develops and tests students' skills in writing, communication, research, self-discipline and self-motivation. Such skills are in high demand by industry and academia. The extended project component also gives students the opportunity to undertake research projects with an industry-focus, relevant to their vocational programme. It encourages students to explore further aspects of the occupational area and equip them with a breadth of knowledge and understanding to strengthen their employability.

Funding large TechBacc programmes

When current funding protection for large programmes comes to an end in 2016/17, a funding uplift will be paid for students who are studying four or more A levels or the International Baccalaureate and who achieve at least a grade B in each subject (or equivalent), as well as for students that pass all the qualifications within a TechBacc programme that is of an equivalent size.

In 2016/17 and 2017/18, there will be a 10% uplift for TechBacc programmes that are the equivalent of four A levels in size, and 20% for those that are the size of the full level 3 International Baccalaureate or larger. When the new Tech Level and Core Maths grading requirements come into effect, for qualifications first awarded in 2017/18, grade conditions will also be applied. Further details are expected to be published alongside details of the Tech Levels that will be taught from September 2016.

The uplift is calculated on the size of the **whole TechBacc programme**, and will depend on the number of guided learning hours (GLH) of the Tech Level qualification(s) and the chosen level 3 maths qualification.

A **10% uplift** will be paid for successful completion of TechBacc programmes that include the extended project qualification and either:

    a) A level Maths and a Tech Level that is a minimum of 900 GLH or
    b) AS/Core Maths and a Tech Level that is a minimum of 1050 GLH.

A **20% uplift** will be paid for successful completion of TechBacc programmes that include the extended project qualification and either:

    a) A level Maths and a Tech Level that is a minimum of 1020 GLH or
    b) AS/Core Maths and a Tech Level that is a minimum of 1170 GLH.