



Department  
for Education

# **Level 3 value added frequently asked questions**

**January 2015**

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## Introduction

This document sets out frequently asked questions relating to the publication of the level 3 value added measure based on 2014/15 data.

If you have any questions that are not covered by this document, you can email them to the level 3 value added mailbox:

[Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk)

We will endeavour to answer all queries within 15 days of receiving the query.

## Level 3 value added FAQs

### **What's the difference between the level 3 value added data released in July 2015 and the data released in January 2016?**

In July 2015, shadow value added figures calculated using 2013/14 data and using the new methodology which will go live for the 2015/16 year were shared with schools and colleges. The value added figures released on the checking website and published on performance tables in January 2016 is amended data for the 2014/15 year and uses the existing methodology. More information about the new methodology is available here: [16 to 19 accountability headline measures: technical guide](#).

Note that the shadow figures won't be updated for the 2014/15 year until late spring/summer 2016.

## Student FAQs

### **Will there be any changes to which students are included in level 3 value added in 2014/15?**

The student inclusion rules have not changed between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The level 3 value added cohort is based on the cohort of students included in 16-18 performance tables. Students must:

- be aged 16, 17, or 18 by 31 August 2014 (i.e. have dates of birth between 1 September 1995 and 31 August 1998 inclusive)
- be on roll at a school by 15th January 2015 for schools, or at the start of the spring term for a college
- have completed their advanced studies in the 2014/15 academic year
- Additionally, to be included in the calculation of a level 3 value added model, students must:
  - be taking a graded level 3 qualification included in level 3 value added
  - have attended a state-funded mainstream or independent school, or college

- have a record of prior attainment (at least one qualification counting towards key stage 4)

Qualifications included in level 3 value added must:

- have at least 80 entries across at least five different schools and colleges
- have at least four different graded outcomes
- have good enough correlation that the multi-level model converges

### **Why are my students' academic/vocational exams missing from level 3 value added?**

The following performance table rules apply to the level 3 value added cohort:

A student is in the academic cohort if they entered for an advanced academic qualification of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.

A student is in the vocational cohort if they entered for an advanced vocational qualification of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.

A student's academic qualifications will only count towards their school's academic level 3 value added score if that student is eligible for the academic cohort. Likewise, a student's vocational qualifications will only count towards a school's vocational level 3 value added score if that student is eligible for the vocational cohort.

The following examples illustrate how the academic and vocational cohort rules are applied to level 3 value added:

#### Example A

Student A sat 3 AS Levels in year 12 at his school sixth form. In year 13, he transferred to a local FE college where he sat a BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Performing Arts

Student A is:

- eligible for the vocational cohort, as he entered for an advanced vocational qualification of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.
- not eligible for the academic cohort, as he did not take any advanced academic qualifications of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.

Only the BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Performing Arts will count towards performance tables.

### Example B

Student B sat AS Level Mathematics in her final year, alongside a BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in I.T.

Student B is:

- eligible for the vocational cohort, as she entered for a KS5 vocational qualification of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.
- not eligible for the academic cohort, as she did not take any KS5 academic qualifications of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.

Only the BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in I.T. will count towards performance tables.

### Example C

In her final year, Student C takes an A Level in Dutch at a Further Education college alongside a BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Business

Student C is:

- eligible for the academic cohort, as the student entered for an advanced Academic qualification of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year
- eligible for the vocational cohort, as the student entered for an advanced vocational qualification of size greater than or equal to an A level in the 2014/15 reporting year.

Both of Student C's qualifications will count towards performance tables.

Please note that AS Levels taken before a student's final year of study will still appear in level 3 value added reports in the AS (All) model, even if a student has since switched to a vocational pathway. However these AS results will not count towards the aggregated academic level 3 value added score that appears in performance tables, and are provided for information only.

## **School/college FAQs**

### **Where can I find the level 3 value added information for my school, college, or academy?**

Detailed level 3 value added data is only available through the performance tables checking website. When you log in to your school or college's page on the website, please go to the 'Documents' page, then scroll down towards the bottom to the 'Level 3 VA' section. Here you will be able to find an Excel workbook which will include student, subject, qualification and academic / vocational qualification information for your school

or college. This is titled 'Level 3 VA Report' In addition there will be an anonymised level 3 value added summary PDF document, entitled 'Level 3 VA Summary Report', which contains no individual student data and is made available to Ofsted as well. Headline level 3 value added scores are published on the performance tables and qualification and subject scores are published in performance tables underlying data.

**Why is my overall academic / vocational score different to the score for the only academic / vocational qualification type in my data?**

The score for your only academic / vocational qualification type may be different to the overall academic / vocational score because of the aggregation methodology. When calculating overall academic / vocational scores, we make a small adjustment which means that the student average Value Added score is zero rather than the institution average. This adjustment means that, for example, an institution only offering A Levels could have different A Level and overall Academic Value Added scores, even though both are calculated from the same set of results. For further information on our aggregation methodology, please see the level 3 value added user guide, available on the checking website.

**My school/college has opened in the last 12 months but has a predecessor school/college; can I see the student level information for the predecessor school/college?**

From 2013/14, we will be able to provide predecessor school/college student level information to newly opened schools/colleges.

Aggregated value added information will also be published on performance tables though this will be posted against the predecessor school/college details in January 2016.

**My school is part of a consortium, can I access level 3 value added information for my individual school or will my data be grouped with other schools in the consortium?**

As a member of a consortium, you will receive two Excel reports; the first report shows data for your individual school; the second shows information for

all schools in the consortium to which you belong.

The report for your individual school will show sensitive information including the individual names of pupils. The report for the overall consortium will be anonymised.

Both reports can be accessed on the performance tables checking website with your individual school or college reports, and are clearly marked as consortia reports.

**I would like to access my data on the performance tables checking website; will the website be available outside of the usual data checking period?**

Yes, the performance tables checking website is available outside the usual data checking period. You can logon in the usual way to access the level 3 value added reports throughout the year.

**Given that the level 3 value added reports are being published on the performance tables checking website, does this mean that the information in the reports is also part of the checking exercise?**

No, the performance tables checking website is simply being used as a means to provide level 3 value added reports to schools, colleges and academies. However, please do feel free to check the reports. If you have a query about the information in your report please contact the level 3 value added mailbox:

[Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk)

**I would like to produce my own analysis, is there a level 3 value added ready reckoner that I can use?**

The 2015 level 3 value added ready reckoner based on unamended data can be found in the 'Documents' section of the performance tables checking website. An update based on amended data will be made available on the performance tables website following the publication of the 2015 performance tables. The webpage will also include a link to guidance on how to use the Ready Reckoner.

**If I have a query on the data used to calculate level 3 value added scores for my school/college/academy, who should I contact?**

For queries related to the underlying data used to calculate value added scores, please contact the level 3 value added mailbox using the email address below:

[Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## **General**

**I'm not from a school, college or an academy; what information can I access on level 3 value added?**

If you are not from a school, college or an academy you will not be able to access the Excel version of the level 3 value added report unless an institution provides this information to you.

Ofsted and Ofsted Inspectors, however, will be able to access the anonymised level 3 value added summary report.

Additionally, level 3 value added information will be published in 2015 performance tables. Academic, vocational and A-Level value added information will be in the main tables. Data for all individual qualification types will be published for all institutions as an annex to the performance tables.

**Is there any guidance on how to use and interpret the information in the level 3 value added Excel reports?**

There is a guide on how to use and interpret the information in the level 3 value added reports. This is located in the documents section of the performance tables checking website alongside these FAQs.

**Will the level 3 value added information be published on 2015 performance tables?**

Academic, vocational and A level Value Added data will be published in 2015 performance tables. Supplementary level 3 value added data will be published as an annex to the 2015 performance tables for post 16 institutions, showing qualification type value added scores for each institution.

**Will Ofsted use level 3 value added as part of their inspections?**

Level 3 value added is used as part of the evidence for inspections.

**Where is the best place to go to find the latest documentation on level 3 value added?**

The place to go for the latest documentation on level 3 value added is the Department for Education level 3 value added webpage, or the level 3 value added section of the Documents tab on the checking website.

If you require any historical documentation, or have another query please contact the level 3 value added mailbox using the email address below:

[Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Level3VA.HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education

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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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