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Education
Funding
Agency

1. New 16 to 18 minimum standards

This document describes how the Department for Education (DfE) is applying 16 to 18 minimum standards to the performance of schools and colleges in the 2015 to 2016 academic year. By establishing separate measures for performance in level 3 academic, applied general and tech level qualifications we can compare like with like to give a clear picture of how institutions are performing in different areas of their level 3 provision.

The [16 to 19 accountability headline measures: technical guide](#) sets out changes in the school and college accountability system describing how from 2016, 16 to 18 minimum standards will be based on progress where possible.

1.1 Coverage

The 16 to 18 minimum standards apply to all schools and colleges with 16 to 18 year-olds studying level 3 qualifications.

All state-funded mainstream providers of further education included in the 16 to 18 performance tables are in scope for these standards. That includes local authority maintained school sixth-forms, academy school

sixth-forms, 16 to 19 academies, university technology colleges, studio schools, sixth-form colleges and general further education colleges. However, there are a couple of exceptions:

1. Any provider with fewer than 11 students taking level 3 academic, applied general or tech level qualifications will be excluded from the corresponding minimum standard.
2. Closed, independent and special schools will also be excluded from minimum standards.

2. Key changes between the old and new 16 to 18 minimum standards

There are several key changes in the new minimum standards compared to the old minimum standards. The following table highlights them and the impact they may have on your school and college:

New 16 to 18 minimum standards	Old 16 to 18 minimum standards
Uses progress based measure for level 3 academic and applied general qualifications, for example, school and college level value added scores will be used to set minimum standards.	Uses attainment based measure. See Interim KS5 minimum standards guidance for more information and its detailed methodology.
Uses a completion/attainment based measure for level 3 tech levels. Refer How the tech levels minimum standard will work section in this document for more information.	Shows separately as 2 cohorts only: level 3 academic and vocational qualifications.
Shows three separate cohorts: level 3 academic, applied general and tech level qualifications.	Single publication of details about how institutions perform against the attainment based standards.
Details published initially(1) about how providers perform against the progress-based standards. This is followed by the publication at a later date (2) of details about how providers perform against a completion and attainment based measure.	

1. This will be included in the 16 to 18 performance tables which are due to be published in January 2017.
2. This will be included in the 16 to 18 performance tables which are due to be published in March 2017.

3. How the academic and applied general minimum standards will work

A provider will be seen as underperforming if:

1. Its academic or applied general value added score is below the threshold set by the department; and
2. Its value added score is statistically significantly below the national average, for example, both its upper and lower confidence intervals are below zero.

In the 2015 to 2016 academic year, the thresholds – the value added scores in grades set by the Department for academic and applied general qualifications – are minus 0.50 and minus 0.75 respectively.

For academic qualifications, we expect that over 90% of eligible providers will score between minus 0.50 and plus 0.30; and for applied general qualifications, over 90% of eligible providers are expected to score between minus 0.70 and plus 0.90.

4. How the tech levels minimum standard will work

The new Tech Level measure was published on 16 March 2017. It compares the attainment of an individual student taking a specific Tech Level subject with all other students taking the same subject and then further compares with students taking that same Tech Level nationally. It determines if the student achieved better or worse than the national average for the subject. It treats non-completion of the course as a 'fail'. To find out how many students started a Tech Level course, but failed to complete it, we are using a new data source derived from the school census and college Individualised Learning Record (ILR). This is completed by the school or college and lists every qualification an individual student is studying. This is called 'aims' data.

The threshold for the Tech Level minimum standard in 2016 has been set at minus 0.9 of a grade. It is expected that approximately 4 per cent of eligible providers will fall below this threshold. We are excluding providers who have 10 students or fewer with Tech Levels as their main aim of study.

A list is available of [Tech Level qualifications](#) eligible for inclusion in the 2016 performance tables is on GOV.UK.

5. Examples for academic and applied general minimum standards only

School or College	Cohort	Lower confidence interval	Value added score	Upper confidence interval	Underperformance
A	academic	-0.76	-0.53	-0.30	Yes
	applied general	-0.85	-0.80	-0.75	Yes
B	academic	-2.13	-0.91	0.31	No
C	applied general	-0.47	-0.38	-0.30	No
D	academic	0.02	0.15	0.28	No
E	academic	-0.04	0.11	0.26	No
	applied general	-1.00	-0.76	-0.70	Yes

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