



Department
for Education

Destinations data

Good practice guide for schools

October 2018

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Summary

1. This guide is aimed at leaders who are responsible for planning, reviewing and improving careers provision and student progression in a school. This can be governors, senior managers, or career leaders within a school or multi academy trust.
2. The guide is intended as an aid to understanding what destinations data is, what Destination Measures are (that are included in performance tables), and how they can both be used to improve careers provision and outcomes for young people in a school. Destinations data and Destination Measures both record the destination of a student: Destination Measures are the official statistics on sustained destinations, published two years after a student completes their study at school or college; and destinations data is a much broader term, including any information on the intended or actual destination of the student, collected by the school, local authority or other bodies. Destinations data is internal to the school, and Destination Measures are published on performance tables, and so are external.
3. The guide refers to the destinations of students after completing key stage 4. This guide also applies to students completing their 16-18 study (for which there is a separate 16-18 accountability measure).

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- School leaders, school staff and governing bodies in all maintained schools, academies and free schools

Destinations data and Destination Measures

What is destinations data?

4. Destinations data is any information that is collected on students' destinations (where a student goes and what he/she does after leaving school), which can be a proposed or actual destination.

5. This may include institutions they later go on to attend, what courses and subjects they go on to study, and their subsequent employer. Schools, local authorities or other bodies may collect information through self-reporting by students, follow-up surveys, or by linking together administrative data on the same individuals at different points in time; this is not a legal obligation.

6. Schools collect information on intended destinations and pass it on to local authorities, so that the local authorities can fulfil their requirement to ensure students have an education or training placement for the September after they finish key stage 4. This is recorded on the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) for the Department for Education and for local authorities. Schools with sixth forms, colleges and training providers should then confirm actual destinations (i.e. enrolments) with local authorities for all 16 and 17 year olds, and local authorities should send this data to the Department.

7. The advantage of this information is that it is current; this is especially true if the information is not just on intended destinations (which the schools collect) but on actual destinations (which the local authority collects). There is no set process for how this data is collected and transferred, with many schools outsourcing this task. Schools should seek to establish a clear process with local authorities for the regular transfer of information between parties, with local authorities sharing the information on actual destinations back to the school in the autumn term.

8. The advantage of engaging with destinations data before a student leaves your school is that you can still provide guidance to students based on their choices and ensure that they are making informed decisions.

9. An example of the regular transfer of information has been piloted in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership region. This was through a piece of collaborative work involving Gatsby Foundation, Harton Academy, Castle View Enterprise Academy and their respective local authorities. Additional destinations follow-up work was completed for former students between October and March, immediately after they had left the schools. The follow-up targeted particular groups of students to confirm whether their destinations were being successfully sustained during the Destination Measures count period. The groups targeted included:

- students previously identified as being at greater risk of being NEET;
- students whose intended destinations differed from their actual destinations;
- those progressing onto provision other than college or sixth forms;
- a random 'control group' of students from a variety of provision.

10. This system successfully identified a number of students who had left their provision early, allowing the local authority to re-engage with them and support them to re-enter education, employment or training. This had positive consequences for the young people themselves, as well as the schools.

What are Destination Measures?

11. Destination Measures are the data that the Department for Education publishes in performance tables as an accountability tool. This information is taken from administrative datasets (for example, on school, college and university enrolments, and employment and benefits information) which the department holds and links together as part of the national pupil database (NPD) and Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) datasets.

12. Destination Measures record **the number of students who have been in a sustained destination for six months in the year after finishing key stage 4 or 16-18 study** (from October to March, or any six consecutive months for apprenticeships). The headline accountability measure at both key stage 4 and 16-18 study is the proportion of students staying in education or employment for at least two terms.

13. The data highlights to schools how many of its students take different options and sustain those options, as well as how many students do not have a sustained destination. The data also shows trends over time.

14. Destination Measures are published two years after a student has completed key stage 4 (or 16-18 study). They are published for each school on the performance tables website, alongside a statistical publication which sets out information about destinations of different groups of students (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations>). Schools can also access student-level data on sustained education and apprenticeship destinations for their institution through the performance tables checking website.

Why do the published Destination Measures differ from the destinations data schools collect and give to local authorities?

15. Although they refer to the destinations of the same students, we expect differences in what schools collect that is recorded on the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) and what the Department publishes as Destination Measures. This is because what schools collect is a snapshot at a point in time (either the intended destination of the student before they leave school, or the actual destination at the beginning of the next academic year). The Destination Measures included on Performance Tables are based on administrative data sources covering the full academic year.

16. Not all students included in a snapshot of participation meet the requirements for the Destination Measures. A school might think that a young person has gone to one destination, such as a sixth form college, but the Destination Measures will report whether that destination was sustained for two terms or not.

17. Destination Measures are accurate and can help long-term strategy planning, whereas destinations data is more timely and allows for quicker follow-up action.

Why is there a time lag in publishing Destination Measures?

18. Destination Measures look at sustained destinations for the period of October to March after key stage 4 and 16-18 study, matched using a number of administrative sources. This data cannot be collected until academic year after the young person completes key stage 4 or 16-18 study, and matching the final version of this data to the national pupil database can take until the end of the next financial year to do. The data is then quality-assured and shared with schools in the summer term. The employment and benefits data is then incorporated and data prepared for publication that autumn. Therefore the Destination Measures of students are published two full years after the student finishes key stage 4. The table below sets out the timetable. A more detailed timeline is included at Annex A.

Academic Year

Year 0	July	Student completes key stage 4 or 16-18 study
Year 1	October to March	Destination period for education and employment
	August to July	Destination period for apprenticeships
Year 2	Autumn	Data on previous academic year collected (e.g. colleges complete Individualised Learning Record)

		and collated centrally (e.g. by the Education and Skills Funding Agency)
	Winter / Spring	Records matched to national pupil database
	Early summer	Data processed into destination outcomes for key stage 4 and 16-18 students
	June/July	Education and apprenticeship destinations shared with schools at student level
	August	Employment and benefits data incorporated
Year 3	October	Destination measures published in key stage 4 performance tables and statistical publication
	Winter	Additional data incorporated
	January	Destination measures included in 16-18 performance tables

Using destinations data and Destination Measures to improve careers provision

How can schools make better use of destinations data?

19. There are a number of benefits to schools in increasing their use of destinations data. It can help to improve their management information as it is timely, so that they have a better understanding of where their students go and what they do after leaving school. This can help determine if the careers provision given to students was right for that student.

20. Schools can also collect more information than is available in published statistics (for example, what employment area an apprenticeship is in).

21. Schools can cross-refer the actual destination against the intended destination to review whether the student had changed their mind at the last minute, and, if so, why. This will help a school to evaluate the quality of its careers provision, including whether a student needed more or different support in making their decision.

22. Schools can also consider whether the student's intended destination is appropriate for them, or whether the intended destination raises a 'red flag' that requires intervention (perhaps with a careers adviser). An example of how Destination Measures have been used by schools to improve the action they take to support students is included at Annex B.

23. An example of how a school might use intended destinations and actual destinations to consider the effectiveness of careers provision is below.

Term	What schools could do
Autumn/Spring	School records the intended destinations of students
Spring	Schools consider whether the intended destinations are 'appropriate' for that student
Spring	Further careers advice for those students who have intended destinations considered 'not appropriate'
Summer	School submits the intended destinations of students to local authority
Autumn	Schools receive actual destinations data from local authority and cross-reference against intended destinations

24. Schools should be particularly mindful of those students who might be at greater risk at being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), for example, those with Special Educational Needs and Looked After Children.

25. Schools can also use destinations data to publicise what their students have gone on to do. For example, they can highlight the numbers that are doing apprenticeships, or advertise the numbers attending outstanding colleges in the local area on their website, or create case studies of students that have gone onto particular destinations.

26. Many schools and multi academy trusts use third party careers tools to help them to record the intended and actual destinations of their students. There are a number of tools available that can help schools to record this information.

27. An example of a school using destinations data to assess their careers provision is included in the box below.

An example of using destinations data

A school restructured their careers programme using the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The Benchmarks make it clear that it is important to:

- Monitor and evaluate your careers programme
- Collect and use the destination data of students
- Ensure advice and guidance is tailored to individuals
- Actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations

Following this approach, and drilling into the destinations data, the school found fewer girls taking up places at high-performing universities. The school planned some specific interventions that sought to raise the aspiration of their girls and encouraged them to consider applying to these universities. The school then planned specific interventions for girls, encouraging them to consider applying for places at high-performing universities.

What is an appropriate destination?

28. An appropriate destination will be different for every student and is determined by a range of factors, for example: attainment (or predicted attainment) and aptitudes; subject choices; hobbies and interests; career aspirations; skills and talents; and the labour market. This complexity means there will be several appropriate options for each student.

29. It is therefore important that the student has considered the range of options available to them, and has a clear rationale for the choices that takes into account these factors. An inappropriate destination could be one that matches poorly with a student's

interests, attainment and aptitudes. Good career guidance can therefore support young people in making informed decisions and choosing an appropriate destination.

How can schools make better use of Destinations Measures?

30. Schools can use Destination Measures to review how effective their careers provision has been to students after finishing key stage 4. Schools can access student-level data on sustained destinations as part of the process of checking performance tables' data. They can also compare their destinations to other schools in the locality.

31. Schools can also use Destination Measures to review the destinations of disadvantaged students compared to the cohort as a whole. This is available at the institution-level tables on the Destinations official statistics webpage (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2016>).

32. Destination Measures data is particularly useful for assessing if the school's curriculum, advice and guidance helps students to sustain their destinations.

Data collection and dissemination

Data consent and the duty under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

33. Local authorities have a statutory duty to record the destinations of 16 year olds and to track and support all young people in their area (16 and 17 year olds). This duty extends to young people with special educational needs and disabilities up to the age of 25. Local authorities can share this information with the school that the young person attended. Schools and post-16 educational institutions also have a statutory duty to provide data to local authorities to support these duties. As these are statutory duties, local authorities and schools / educational institutions do not need consent to collect this data. However, for a school to track a student's destinations after 16 years old, they will need the young person's consent (unless the student is at a school sixth form, in which case the school does not need consent). It is recommended that schools routinely seek consent from their students in Year 11 to collect and maintain information on them once they have left school. It is vital that this consent is obtained in order to collect information about past students. An example of a data consent form is attached at Annex C. This is for guidance only and should not be considered to be legal advice.

Publishing destinations data on a school's website

34. Schools publish a raft of information on their websites for the benefits of parents of students and prospective students. The Department encourages schools to publish information on their website on the destinations of all of their students, and provide a link to the relevant sections in the school's performance tables. This could be placed alongside the details of the school's career programme and access arrangements for providers on the school's website. An example of what information schools might publish on their website is at Annex D.

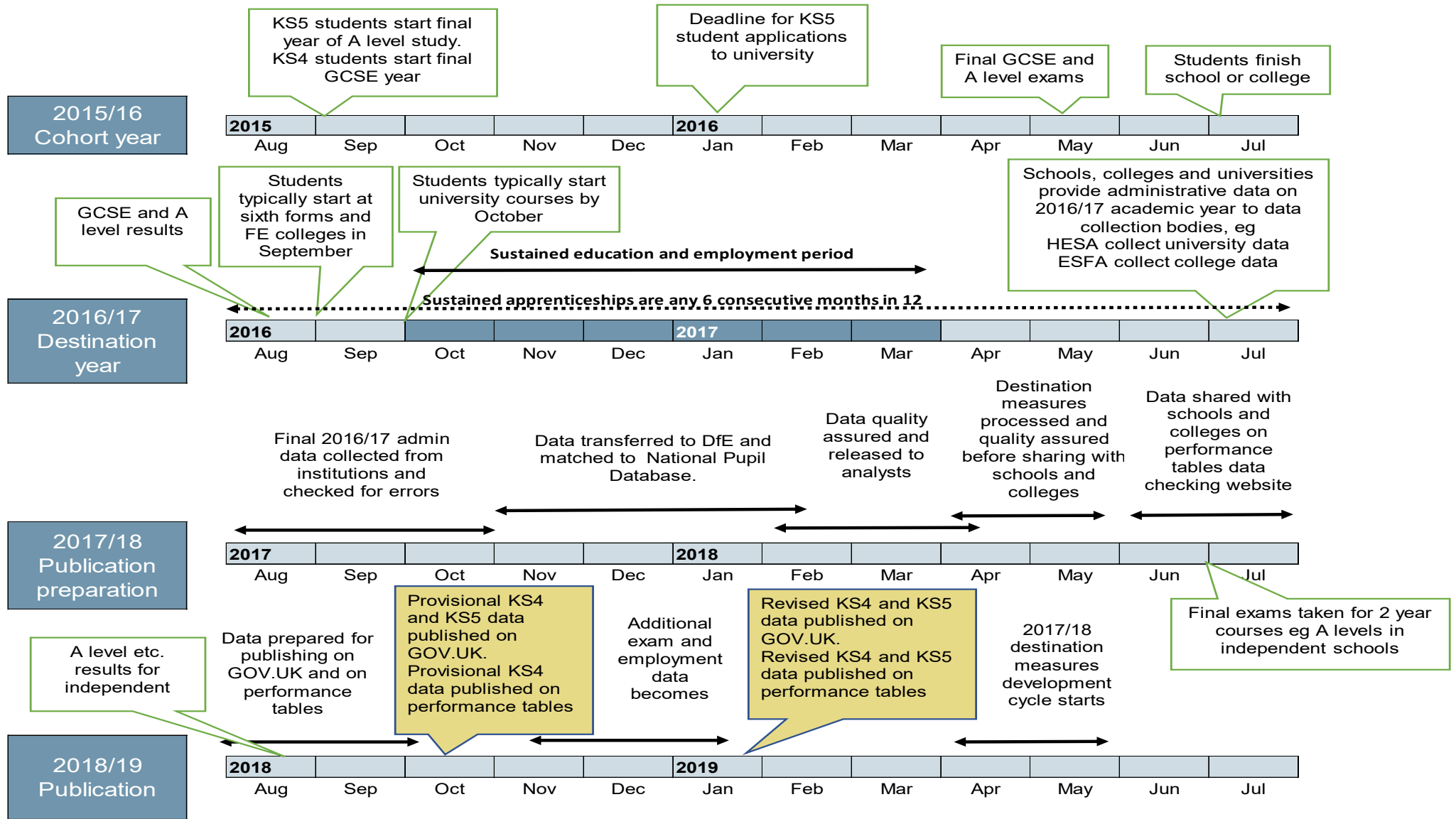
Longer-term outcomes of students

35. Collecting information on the longer-term outcomes of students is an indicator for Gatsby Benchmark 3, *Addressing the needs of each pupil*. There is benefit to schools in considering the longer-term outcomes of their students. Doing so can help schools to support their students in considering their future careers and preparing them for adult life. Schools can work with local authorities to ensure they have the latest data on their past students, and also make use of the increased range of Government published outcomes data that will be available in the future.

36. Collecting information on students can also help schools keep in contact with past students, thus building their alumni networks (which can be useful in supporting

future students and improving the school's knowledge and understanding of the labour market). An alumni network, and publishing information on students' destinations, can help inform students' thinking about the different pathways that are available.

Annex A – Destination Measures timeline



(apprenticeships are any 6 consecutive months in the year)

Annex B – Case study on using destinations data: Ark schools

Ark is an international education charity, with a network of 36 schools in the UK, educating more than 26,000 students. Ark's mission is to give every young person, regardless of their background, a great education and real choices in life – including the option of going on to university or the career of their choice. To accomplish and track the success of the organisation in achieving these goals, Ark relies heavily on destinations data.

Over the last two years, Ark has piloted a new approach, focusing on two areas:

1. Maximising the quality and choice of destination for students before they leave school
2. Engaging with longer-term destinations outcomes to understand how effective their guidance and support has been

Ark's enhanced data-capturing model is designed to track students' decision-making on their post-16 and post-18 education and training options. Schools record information about their students' intended destinations throughout the year with snapshots taken in February and May. Information collected includes the route, level of qualification and, where relevant, at least one subject that the student is intending to study.

All of this additional information is collected in a standardised format. Reports and dashboards are then automatically generated. For all students, regardless of whether they are choosing to go down the academic or technical pathway, data is shared on the quality of the education or training provider and the appropriateness of the pathway based on academic performance. Through encouraging their schools to collect more detailed information regarding their students' destinations, Ark has empowered leaders to conduct interim analysis of students' projected pathways and to schedule intervention to ensure that they are on the pathway best suited to their skills, interests and motivations.

Example interventions include:

- Supporting students who have not completed any applications to continue in post-16 or post-18 education, training or employment. There is also a chance to help students who have not made a second choice preference, should they fail to achieve their first choice destination
- Helping students who have applied to study or complete training at a post-16 institution or training facility which has been rated as Requires Improvement or Inadequate by Ofsted. This could also apply to a student who has applied for a post-18 education or training provider which is rated poorly in terms of student retention or educational outcomes.
- Students who might be at risk of pursuing an inappropriate pathway based upon prior attainment. For post-16 decision-making, this could include learners intending to study a Level 3 course but who are not on track to achieve the required Attainment 8 score. These learners are identified through linking destinations information to the attainment data held on other school systems.

Once intended destinations have been captured and follow-up support has been targeted

at those students most in need of further guidance, Ark then records final student destinations in September. At this point, school leaders are able to analyse the effectiveness of their interim interventions.

Ark has also invested in understanding what happens to their students longer term. As a network, they review their own destinations data against government-published information. They have also started to build an alumni community, which not only reports back on former students' longer-term success, but also supports those students when they are having issues or problems. Understanding when and why students may be struggling or dropping out of further education feeds directly back into the design of Ark's career support activities.

Quote from Carl Fazackerley, Careers Leader at Ark Walworth Academy:

“We want our students to progress on to the very best destination for them and their aspirations. The process and data dashboards Ark has created enables leaders, pastoral and teaching staff to have a clear destinations overview for a year group whilst drilling down to individuals and their needs. With a large Year 11 cohort, we have been able to identify and prioritise guidance for our students at a glance – vital when you are a large and busy secondary school!”

Annex C – Example of a data consent form

In order to check how you are getting on, we need your **agreement to share information** that identifies you and what you have gone on to do. We already do this as a requirement of the Education and Skills Act 2008, until you are aged 16. We need to check you are happy for us to continue.

You may also be contacted if we are unsure how you are doing in your education or employment. Each contact will take no more than 5 minutes.

Data collected by your school/college and the local authority will be stored by your school so that they can evaluate the careers support they provide. [include link to school's privacy notice]

The data we collect will be: Course/job title; institution/employer name; level of study; start date; duration of course/apprenticeship/placement.

Your data will be kept in strictest confidence. It will only be published in an anonymised format so your personal details will remain private.

Name _____
Date of Birth _____
Address _____

Email _____
Telephone number _____

Destination information:

What are you intending to do after leaving school / college? (*circle as appropriate*)

- Work
- Apprenticeship
- Further study
- Voluntary work
- Taking time out

Course(s)/job title: _____

Level of study/apprenticeship (if appropriate): _____

College/6th Form/University/employer name: _____

Start date: _____

Expected duration: _____

I consent to the data above being shared between the school/college and local authority in order to review my progress and improve careers guidance and support, and to being contacted by my school/college for the reasons set out above.

Signature _____

Date _____

Annex D – Example of Destination Measures on a school website

From 2015/16 Destination Measures

%	Sustained destination	Apprenticeships	FE College	School Sixth Form	Sixth Form College	Employment or Training	Other
All leavers in July 16	97	7	23	45	16	SUPPRESSED	SUPPRESSED
Girls	98	5	26	47	17	SUPPRESSED	SUPPRESSED
Boys	96	8	21	43	15	7	SUPPRESSED
All leavers in July 15	95	4	23	52	15	SUPPRESSED	5

[Link to the school's data on the performance tables website]



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Reference: DFE-00302-2018



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