



Post-16 consistent performance measures

Guidance on interpretation and use | December 2019

Background

In 2014/15, the Welsh Government introduced a new planning and funding framework for post-16 learning, based on learning programmes. We made a commitment to develop new performance measures that would enable us to measure learner outcomes on a programme basis too, and to do so consistently across sixth forms and colleges for the first time.

This programme of work aims to respond to a series of external reviews, including:

- The Structure of Education Services in Wales (Vivian Thomas, 2011)
- The Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds in Wales (2012)
- The Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales (Robert Hill, 2013)
- Towards 2030: A framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for Wales (Professor Ellen Hazelkorn, 2016)

In the post-16 sector the accountability position is unnecessarily confused because there are different accountability arrangements for school sixth forms and FE colleges... Common measures for assessing and reporting performance across the board in post-16 settings should be introduced.

The Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales, 2013

All of these identified issues around the clarity of progression pathways for learners; lack of comparability and consistency in how learner outcomes are measured across different types of learning provider; and the availability of high-quality, objective advice and guidance for learners on their post-16 options. The consistent measures are not, on their own, a solution to these problems, but are intended to give a clear and robust evidence base to help us understand and improve the outcomes of post-16 learning in Wales.

We consulted¹ on the measures in early 2017, and have worked with the sector and Estyn to develop our approach.

The three measures are:

Achievement

Value added

Destinations

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-01/170126-consultation-doc-en.pdf>

A suite of measures

The new performance measures are intended to be used together to give a rounded picture of sixth forms' and colleges' outcomes, with no one measure being more important than the others. They are not used to derive an overall 'score' or rating for each provider.

Inevitably, all measures have their limitations and need to be understood in context in order to get a proper understanding of where performance is good and where improvement is needed. The table below gives an overview of why we have selected each of the three measures, and the limitations which need to be taken into account in interpreting the data.

	Achievement	Value added	Destinations
Why is this included in the measures?	To give a rounded picture of learners' achievement of qualifications. Including retention rates rather than just those who attempt examinations is intended to help ensure that learners have the right advice and guidance to enrol on courses that are appropriate for them.	To 'balance out' the achievement measure by taking account of learners' starting points, where possible, in order to recognise the progress they have made. This aims to control for the effects of different ability cohorts.	To recognise providers' responsibility for preparing their learners to progress on to further learning, higher education and/or meaningful employment.
What <u>doesn't</u> it do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Explain why learners may have dropped out or not achieved; the data can't distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' reasons for not achieving▪ Reflect learners' different abilities and starting points; setting achievement data alongside value added can help give a more complete picture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Give comprehensive coverage of qualifications, particularly for colleges; only learners aged 16-21 that undertook graded Level 3 qualifications are currently included▪ Include learners who haven't completed their qualifications or their whole programme of study▪ Give a precise indication of the provider's contribution to learner outcomes; learner progress is also affected by personal circumstances such as motivation and parental support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Give nuanced information on the sector or nature of employment destinations▪ Reflect the longer-term trajectories of learners, such as returns to learning or employment after a gap year

About this guidance

This is not a technical document, but is intended as a straightforward guide to help schools and colleges to interpret their reports on the consistent measures. Information on where to find technical guidance, and how to access the reports, appears at the end of the document.

The consistent measures apply to sixth forms and further education colleges. To help ensure that this guidance can be used by both, we have used generic terminology throughout (for example, 'learners' rather than 'pupils'). One exception is where we talk about A levels, and use the widely understood terms 'Year 12' and 'Year 13' for clarity, although these are not typically used in colleges.

Reports have been issued to schools and colleges for all three measures, and this document includes examples of these with prompts to aid interpretation. For each measure, we have suggested some key areas which schools and colleges should consider when evaluating their performance and planning improvement. The box below suggests some headline questions which are relevant to consideration of the full suite of consistent measures.

Key questions for senior leaders and governors to consider

- Do we understand where our learner outcomes are strongest and weakest – including which groups of learners, subject areas, learning programmes and courses? What are the overall patterns and trends?
- Do we know the reasons why?
- What are our main priorities for improvement?
- Where we are taking action to improve, how and when will we know if it's working?
- How does our performance compare to national benchmarks?
- Are we recording our data correctly, including at learning programme level – or do the figures reflect issues with data accuracy rather than performance? If our data is wrong, do we know what our “real” performance is? How are we going to improve our data?
- What do our learner retention and destination rates tell us about the quality of advice, guidance, teaching and support our learners are getting?
- Do teaching staff have access to useful and accurate information on learner outcomes?
- How well are we using learner tracking systems to identify patterns in retention and drop-out, and to monitor “at-risk” learners?
- Are we using interim management information to monitor progress during each year, and at the end of Year 12 for two-year programmes?
- What other information do we need to set alongside the performance measures to give us a full picture?

Achievement

Overview

The achievement measure comprises three sub-measures:

1. **General education achievement** (learners studying A level and mixed A level/vocational programmes): the proportion of learners who, over two years of study, achieve three A levels and/or equivalent qualifications at grades A*-A, A*-C or A*-E
2. **Vocational achievement** (learners studying 'pure' vocational programmes in a specific sector/subject area): the proportion of main qualifications that were attained on learning programmes at each level
3. **Welsh Baccalaureate achievement**: the proportion of learners enrolled on Welsh Baccalaureate programmes who complete and achieve the overall Welsh Baccalaureate qualification; grades achieved for the Skills Challenge Certificate

All of the sub-measures are based on **learning programmes**: a coherent 'package' of qualifications and other learning activities, which is also the basis for FE and sixth form funding allocations. For funding purposes, AS levels and A2 levels are treated as separate programmes; for the general education achievement measure, we put the two together to look at learners' outcomes over two years of study (Years 12 and 13).

What to look for

- In evaluating your achievement rates, consider:
 - Where the 'attrition points' are: are learners dropping out during the year? Not returning for their second year of study? Entering fewer exams than they originally aspired to? Entering exams and not getting good grades? Why?
 - Whether learners are receiving appropriate information, advice and guidance to help them choose the right programme and subjects.
 - Whether studying A levels is an active and suitable choice for learners, or seen as a 'default' option without learners considering (or even knowing about) other alternatives.
 - How well collaboration arrangements are being used to ensure suitable post-16 options and progression routes for learners.
 - The school or college's entry policy for post-16 programmes and whether this is being applied consistently (not rigidly).
 - Whether enough support is available to help learners handle the challenges they face; this could include the 'step up' to Level 3 study, learning new subjects and/or the more independent models of learning which may now be expected of them.
 - The extra support needed by learners who may be at higher risk of dropping out. Research² by Cardiff University shows that gender, free school meal eligibility, special educational needs, attending a school with no post-16 provision, and above all GCSE attainment are all predictors of withdrawal from sixth form.

² <https://gov.wales/learners-leaving-sixth-form-year-13-0>

General education achievement report

Age group - age as at start of AS year	Table 1a: 2016/17 AS level & equivalents					Table 1b: 2017/18 A2 level & equivalents							Table 1c: Two year measure A level & equivalents			
	Learners starting - enrolled on 3+AS level or equivalent [a]	Learners at 8 week point [b]	Early drop-out rate [c] [a-b]/ax100	Learners completing year [d]	Learner completion rate (from 8 week point) [e] [d/b]x100	Learners continuing to A2 [f] [cohort matched with d]	Retention rate from AS [g] [f/d]x100	Learners completing year [h] [cohort f]	Learner completion rate [i] [h/f]x100	% Learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A- A [j] [cohort h]	% Learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*C [k] [cohort h]	% Learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*- E [l] [cohort h]	Two-year Completion Rate [m] [h/b]x100	% Learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A- A [n] [cohort b]	% Learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*C [o] [cohort b]	% Learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*- E [p] [cohort b]
16	459	457	0%	428	94%	301	70%	292	97%	10%	65%	92%	64%	6%	41%	59%
National average	16,105	15,794	2%	14,582	92%	11,626	80%	11,212	96%	13%	64%	91%	71%	9%	46%	65%
17+	106	106	0%	85	80%	52	61%	45	87%	9%	62%	87%	42%	4%	26%	37%
National average	1,867	1,764	6%	1,498	85%	1,001	67%	927	93%	12%	51%	87%	53%	8%	34%	58%
All	565	563	0%	513	91%	353	69%	337	95%	10%	64%	92%	60%	6%	39%	55%
National average	17,972	17,558	2%	16,080	92%	12,627	79%	12,139	96%	13%	58%	89%	69%	9%	40%	62%

All of the achievement measures are based on learning programmes as recorded at the '**eight week point**'. If a learner drops out or transfers in the first eight weeks of their programme, they are not included in the subsequent calculations, but the early drop-out rates are shown in the reports and should be monitored. A high early drop-out rate could indicate that learners are not getting the right advice, guidance or support to enrol on an appropriate programme of study.

Retention measures learners' progression into their second year of A level study. Learners who drop one AS level subject during, or at the end of, Year 12 are not treated as 'non continuers'. The achievement measure looks at the learner's whole programme, so as long as the learner returns for Year 13 and is enrolled on at least three A levels and equivalent qualifications, they can still be counted into the achievement measure.

Completion is an indicator of whether the learner has reached the end of their programme of study. A learner can complete their programme without necessarily achieving qualifications.

The two-year measures not only include learners who are entered for exams, but the whole cohort of learners who were enrolled at the eight week point in the AS year. Low achievement rates could, therefore, mean that learners are dropping out before their exams or are not attaining good grades if they do attempt assessment.

The measures include qualifications that are equivalent in volume and level to A levels, including the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate and BTECs which are taken as part of an 'A level and equivalents' learning programme (typically BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas).

Vocational achievement report

2017/18								
Age group - age as at start of year	Learners starting [A]	Learners at 8 week point [B]	Early drop-out rate [C] [A-B]/Ax100	Learners completing year [D]	Learner completion rate (from census point)	Number of terminated learning activities	Number of successful learning activities	% Success rate (main quals) [H] [G/F]x100
16	312	274	12%	230	84%	263	214	81%
17+	1,020	939	8%	841	90%	1,260	1,008	80%
All	1,332	1,213	9%	1,071	88%	1,523	1,222	80%

Successful learning activities are those that have been both completed and achieved.

The measure is based on learners studying **vocational programmes**: programmes with a specific vocational focus and main qualification(s) rather than a mixture of different A level equivalents.

Unlike general education, vocational programme outcomes are measured on a one-year basis, reflecting the more diverse nature of programmes, qualifications and progression routes.

Schools and colleges should still be monitoring progression from Year 1 to Year 2 where learners have enrolled with the intention of completing two years of study; this will be the case, for example, for most Level 3 Diplomas/Extended Diplomas.

Terminated learning activities are those that have ended for any reason, whether because they have been completed or because the learner has dropped out, transferred, failed or dropped a qualification. The term is used as a way of defining the inputs for the measure rather than a value judgement on outcomes in itself.

Welsh Baccalaureate achievement report

2017/18																
Welsh Baccalaureate	Level	Learners starting [a]	Learners at 8 week point [b]	Early drop-out rate [c] [a-b]/ax100	Welsh Baccalaureate			Learners completing [g]	Completion rate [h] [g/b]x100	Skills Challenge Certificate						% Passed SCC
					Learners completing [d]	Completion rate [e] [d/b]x100	% Pass Welsh Bacc [f] [cohort b]			Grade analysis [i] [cohort b]						
										% A*	% A	% B	% C	% D	% E	
Advanced	3	158	148	6%	2	1%	1%	96	65%	3%	14%	17%	13%	5%	3%	55%
National average		20,254	19,508	4%	12,184	62%	47%	12,516	64%	2%	10%	14%	14%	10%	4%	55%

The cohort for the measure is those learners who are recorded by the school or college as enrolled on the Welsh Baccalaureate. It is **not** a measure of Welsh Baccalaureate take-up.

The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate measure works similarly to the general education achievement measure, looking at learners' outcomes over two years of study (with drop-outs in the first eight weeks taken out of the equation).

The report shows achievement of both the Skills Challenge Certificate (graded) and the overall Welsh Baccalaureate 'wrapper' (pass/fail).
A learner could achieve the Skills Challenge Certificate, but not the whole Welsh Baccalaureate if they don't achieve the GCSE or main qualification requirements.
The Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate also counts as an A level equivalent in the general education measure.

Course level reports

Table 4.1a: A level Learning Activity Outcomes by Course

Course	[2016/17] AS level						[2017/18] A2 level						A level grades <small>(as a cumulative percentage / number of cohort f – learners continuing to A2 level)</small>											
	Learners enrolled at AS level [a]	Learners at 8 week point [b]	Early drop out rate [c] [a-b]/[a]x100	Learners completing year [d]	Learner completion rate (from 8 week point) [e] [d/b]x100	National AS completion rate	Learners continuing to A2 [f] [cohort matched with d]	Retention rate from AS [g] [f/d]x100	National retention rate	Learners completing year [h] [cohort f]	Learner completion rate [i] [h/f]x100	National A2 completion rate	% of learners achieving Grade A*	% of learners achieving Grade A	% of learners achieving Grade B	% of learners achieving Grade C	% of learners achieving Grade A*-D	% of learners achieving Grade A*-E	Number of learners achieving Grade A*	Number of learners achieving Grade A-A	Number of learners achieving Grade A*-B	Number of learners achieving Grade A*-C	Number of learners achieving Grade A*-D	Number of learners achieving Grade A*-E
GCE Art and Design	106	94	11%	82	87%	87%	45	55%	50%	42	93%	91%	4%	13%	31%	53%	76%	89%	2	6	14	24	34	40
GCE Biology	53	55	7%	52	95%	91%	37	71%	67%	34	92%	96%	0%	27%	43%	54%	76%	81%	-	10	18	20	28	30
GCE Business Studies	65	57	12%	55	96%	91%	39	71%	69%	35	90%	93%	5%	8%	36%	69%	82%	90%	2	3	14	27	32	35
GCE Chemistry	64	60	6%	54	90%	91%	31	57%	61%	29	94%	96%	10%	29%	52%	61%	77%	87%	3	9	16	19	24	27

The A level reports include **all** AS level starts (apart from resits), including part-time learners and those studying AS levels as additionality alongside vocational qualifications. This means that they cover a different cohort to the programme measure, which only includes learners recorded on AS and equivalent programme codes.

Grade information is based on the cohort of learners who return to study A2 levels; so the measures are for one year only, unlike the programme measure which is for a two-year cohort.

The percentages and numbers are shown cumulatively for each grade category, so that the A*-E columns show the total learners achieving pass grades for each subject.

Table 4.2a: Level 3 - Single Award - Learning Activity Outcomes

Course	Sector Subject Area (SSA01)	Sub-Sector Subject Area (SSA02)	A-Level equivalent size	Number of learning activities started [a]	Learners at 8 week point [b]	Early drop out rate [c] [a-b]/[a]x100	Number of learning activities completed [d]	% of learning activities completed [e] [d/b]x10	National % completed activities	Number of successful learning activities [f]	% success rate [g] [f/b]x100	National % success rate	% of learners achieving Grade D*-D*	% of learners achieving Grade D*-D	% of learners achieving Grade D*-M	% of learners achieving Grade D*-P	Number of learners achieving Grade D*-D*	Number of learners achieving Grade D*-D	Number of learners achieving Grade D*-M	Number of learners achieving Grade D*-P

The reports group vocational courses by level and by grading structure.

Success means that the activity has been both completed and achieved (at any grade).

As with A levels, percentages and numbers are shown cumulatively for each grade category.

Table 4.4c: Level 1 - Other Learning Activity Outcomes

Course	Sector Subject Area (SSA01)	Sub-Sector Subject Area (SSA02)	Number of learning activities started [a]	Learners at 8 week point [b]	Early drop out rate [c] [a-b]/[a]x100	Number of learning activities completed [d]	% of learning activities completed [e] [d/b]x10	National % completed activities	Number of successful learning activities [f]	% success rate [g] [f/b]x100	National % success rate

For ungraded (pass/fail) vocational qualifications, which are mainly at Entry Level and Level 1, the reports focus on completion and success rates.

Value added

Overview

Value added is a measure of the extent to which a learner's qualification outcome differs from that of other similar learners, based on their prior attainment and gender. Positive value added scores indicate that learners achieved a higher than other similar learners (expressed in qualification points), and negative scores indicate that they achieved a lower than other similar learners.

In 2016, following procurement, we appointed FFT Ltd as our contractor to develop the value added measure and produce reports for schools and colleges. The measure comprises three sub-measures:

- **Average grade per entry:** the average grades attained for the qualifications entered by learners
- **Total volume of entries:** a measure of the average number of qualifications entered per learner
- **Total points per learner:** a measure of the average total number of qualification points attained by each learner.

Learners who are aged 16-21 and are at the end of two years' Level 3 study are currently included in the value added model. This means that its scope is not as comprehensive as the other measures, but it does give a 'richer' picture than achievement, by helping to mitigate for the differences in learner characteristics which are associated statistically with outcomes. Older learners are not included because the relationship between post-16 outcomes and prior attainment becomes progressively weaker, meaning that value added is a less meaningful measure for those aged over 21.

It is important to note that unlike the other measures we combine Welsh and English data so as to have enough results to calculate meaningful 'expected' outcomes. This means that learner progress is relative to that of other similar learners in Wales and England.

What to look for

- In evaluating your value added scores, consider:
 - All three indicators to arrive at a fuller picture of performance.
 - The variations in value added scores across different qualifications and different groups of learners. Particular attention should be paid to qualifications where the positive or negative value added is statistically significant (highlighted in blue and yellow respectively on the qualification tables and charts). This means that the value added results at qualification level are unlikely to be down to chance alone.
 - Trends over time. A one year dip or spike in value added might not necessarily indicate under- or over-performance. It could be down to chance variation or measurement error, therefore it is better to consider performance over a number of years.
 - How big the value added positive or negative scores are. Thirty points is equivalent to one A level grade, so it may be helpful to focus on bigger variations in learner group and qualification outcomes.
 - The expected grades for individual learners, shown in the 'Individual Qualifications' tab of the value added report. If a high proportion of learners have an expected outcome of grade D or below, are they getting the right advice on which qualifications and subjects to study?
 - The limitations of the measure and what it doesn't cover. The measure only includes learners who are entered for exams/assessments, so it is important to set value added alongside achievement in order to get a fuller picture that includes learner retention and completion.

Value added reports

Overall Provider Performance Summary, 2018

Indicator	Actual	Expected	Value Added
Average Grade per Entry	469.1	491.7	-22.5
Total Volume of Entries	3.3	3.1	0.3
Total Points per Learner	605.9	633.6	-27.7

The **Total Volume of Entries** (TVE) and **Total Points per Learner** (TPL) scores need to be interpreted together, as the volume of entries will influence the TPL outcome. Where more entries are recorded, the possible range of total points will be greater and subject to more variation.

A low TVE score may mean that learners are not being stretched enough; looking at the three measures together can help to identify the overall picture.

The colours denote **statistical significance**: blue for positive value added scores, yellow for negative. They don't reflect the size of the value added positive or negative score itself, but how likely the result is to be attributable to chance.

Average Grade per Entry (AGE) is expressed on the A level qualification points scale, irrespective of qualification size. An AGE score of + or – 30 points would represent the difference of one A level grade, on average, across the range of qualification entries. In this example, the provider has a negative AGE score of just over two-thirds of an A level grade.

A score of 0 would mean that learners at that provider, on average, achieve exactly in line with what would be expected based on all Welsh and English learners with the same prior attainment and gender.

Average grade per entry - by qualification type breakdown, 2018

Indicator	Actual	Expected	Value Added
Average Grade per Entry: A-Level	221.3	224.3	-3.0
Average Grade per Entry: Vocational	541.7	555.7	-14.0

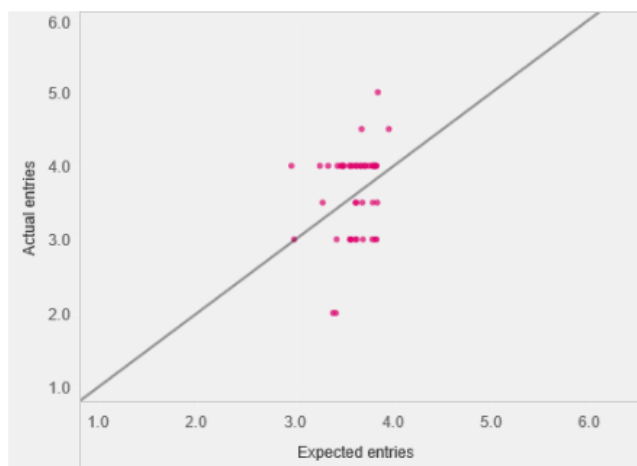
This table splits qualifications into academic (A levels) and vocational (predominantly BTECs). The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate is not included in the breakdown, so the figures won't reconcile to the overall scores for the school or college.

In general, A level outcomes tend to have stronger associations to prior attainment than vocational qualifications.

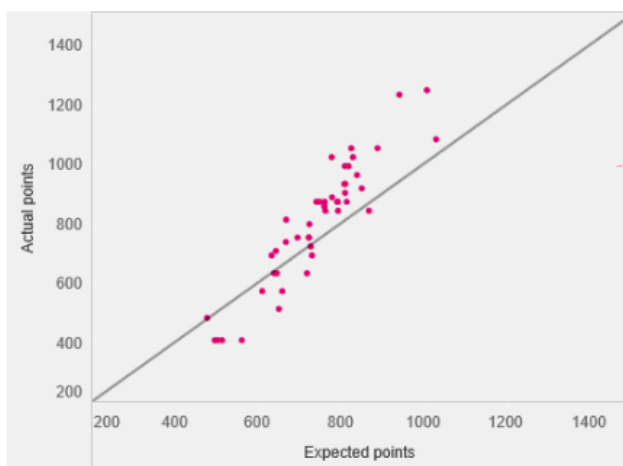
'Expected' in this context is not a reflection of expectations or targets for an individual learner, but on how that providers' learners have performed compared to all similar learners in Wales and England.

In this example the A level row is coloured grey, meaning that the value added score is not statistically significant. It's therefore less likely to be a meaningful indicator of learner progress than the yellow row below.

Total Volume of Entries, 2018



Total Points per Learner, 2018



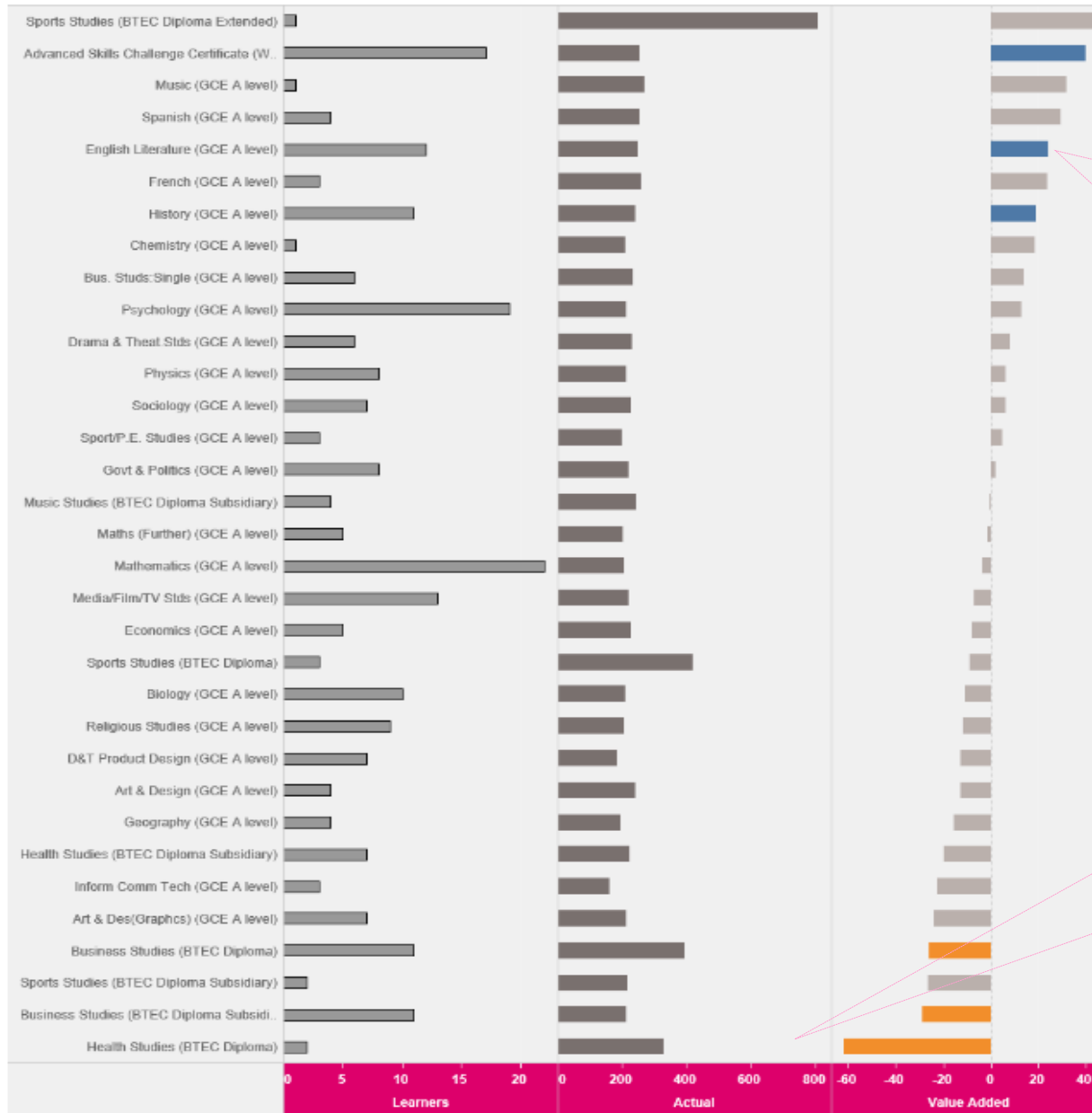
Each dot in these charts represents one learner. Learners above the line have positive value added (ie have made more progress than similar learners) and those below the line have negative value added.

Learner groups: Average Grade per Entry, 2018

		Learners	Actual	Expected	Value Added
All Learners	All Learners	415	336.7	345.9	-9.2
Gender	Female	213	321.4	332.2	-10.7
	Male	202	353.8	361.2	-7.5
Ever FSM	FSM Ever	108	335.1	347.7	-12.6
	Not FSM ever	307	337.3	345.3	-8.1

The figures in the 'Learner groups' table and chart are not benchmarked against national figures for learners from these groups, but are a straightforward breakdown of the individual school or college's learners into sub-groups within each category. They can show where under-performance may be 'masked' by looking only at overall figures, and where particular groups of learners may need additional support.

Level 3 qualifications: Average Grade per Entry, 2018



As in the overall provider performance summary, statistical significance is shown using blue (positive) or yellow (negative) shading, to denote which of the value added scores is most likely to be meaningful at qualification level. This will reflect both the size of the cohort and the amount of variation from the norm.

Although the qualifications with grey bars are not statistically significant, value added can still be useful to understand where outcomes are higher or lower than those achieved by similar learners.

Actual qualification points (the middle column) are shown based on the 'real' points for a qualification; so, for example, the potential points for a BTEC Extended Diploma are three times those for an A level because the qualification is three times the size.

However, the value added scores in the right-hand column are calculated based on the size of an A level equivalent, so that the AGE scores are comparable for all the qualifications in the chart.

Individual qualifications report

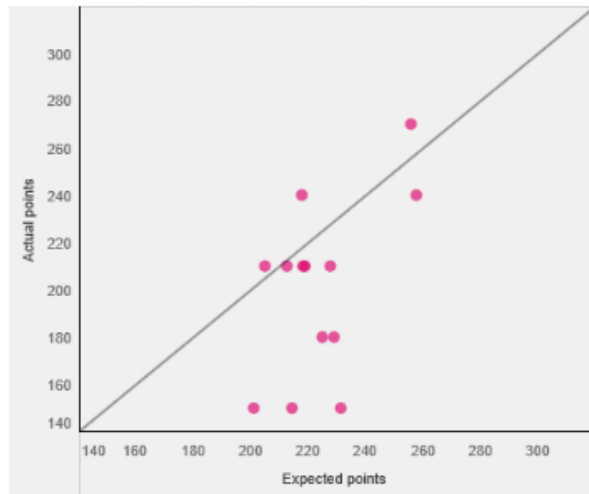
Geography (GCE A level) 2018

Subject Analysis: Average Grade per Entry

Qualification	Learners	Actual	Expected	Value Added
Geography (GCE A level)	14	186.4	212.6	-26.1

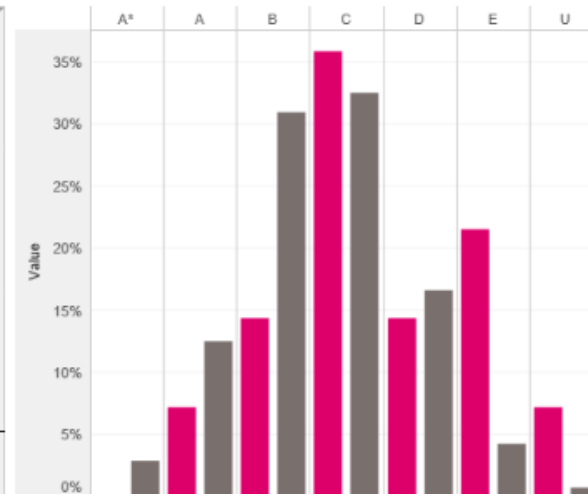
The individual qualifications report shows actual and expected grades achieved for a selected qualification, at individual learner level.

Learner level expected vs actual outcomes, 2018



Subject Grade Distribution, 2018

Actual Expected

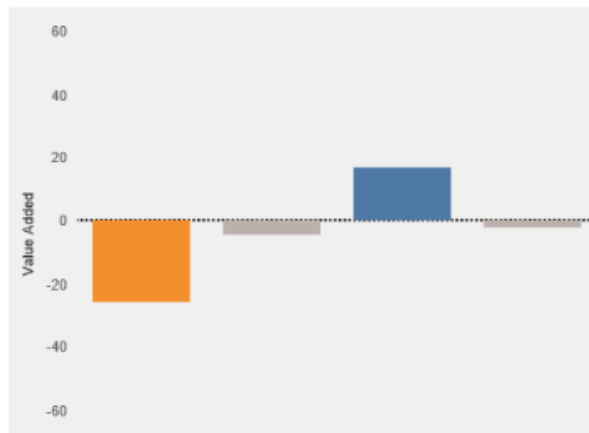


In this example, the value added score of -26.1 shows that, on average, each learner achieved almost one grade lower than similar learners.

Grades are expressed in qualification points for individual learners, adjusted so that the value added score is shown in A level equivalent points. As the 'expected' values are averages across a whole cohort of learners, they do not represent exact points scores for A level grades, whereas the 'actual' values do.

This example is anonymised, but the reports provided to schools and colleges include learner names.

Average Grade per Entry: three-year trends



Learner outcomes, 2018

mpupilid	Actual	Expected	Value Added
15930229	210	227.4	-17.4
15931593	240	217.5	22.5
15993021	210	212.3	-2.3
15993041	180	224.7	-44.7
15993838	240	257.3	-17.3
15993854	150	231.1	-81.1
15994772	210	204.7	5.3
15995486	210	217.9	-7.9
15995493	150	200.8	-50.8
15995533	180	228.7	-48.7
15995666	150	214.1	-64.1
15995886	210	218.6	-8.6
17541118	270	255.5	14.5
1000152356	0	65.2	-65.2

Destinations

Overview

Destinations measures the proportion of learners who progress into further learning (including higher education) and/or employment. The model uses matched education and employment records, through participation in the UK Government's Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) study. By matching learner records from schools, further education, work-based learning and higher education, we can identify educational destinations; and by matching these learner records to UK Government data on earnings and benefits, we can identify employment destinations.

The measure is based on learners who have progressed to employment or to further learning at the same or a higher level, sustained over the autumn and spring terms of the academic year following the end of their learning programme. The time taken for the learner to have a sustained progression, data to be collected, matched and analysed, means that there will always be a time lag in issuing destination data; the coverage is much more comprehensive than other methods such as surveys, but it is less timely and less detailed.

The measure is still at a relatively early stage of development, and has some important limitations:

- Employment data is not yet granular enough to show whether individuals are employed full-time or part-time, or whether their employment is related to what they studied. Information on employer sector is being introduced, and data on earnings will also be available to enrich the analysis we can provide.
- The data does not currently recognise learners who take a break after finishing FE/sixth form study, such as a gap year, and subsequently enter HE or employment. Fuller analysis will become possible once more years of data have been built up.

What to look for

- In evaluating your destination rates, consider:
 - What the sustained destination rate tells you about:
 - The quality of information, advice and guidance learners receive about where to go after they have completed their studies; and
 - Whether learners are being supported to develop the skills, knowledge and resilience to succeed in their next destination after completing their studies.
 - How well your learner progression routes are planned, in partnership with employers, universities and other learning providers.
 - Progression by different groups of learners such as those from protected groups, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the more able and talented/Seren cohort.
 - What other information you may need to enrich your understanding of learners' progression (including follow-up surveys, UCAS data on university offers, information on learners who are taking gap years or doing voluntary work).

- The extent to which your approaches to self-evaluation recognise the organisation’s responsibility for preparing learners for “what happens next” after they leave you.

Destinations reports

2015/16			2016/17							
Learners terminating (excluding early drop-out)	Sustained employment only	National average	Sustained employment & sustained learning		National average	Sustained learning only		National average	Sustained positive destination	National average
181	17.7%	25.1%	30.9%		25.1%	32.6%		32.3%	81.2%	82.6%
			Sustained employment & sustained higher level	Sustained employment & sustained same level		Sustained higher level learning only	Sustained same level learning only			
			10.5%	20.4%		11.6%	21.0%			

Sustained employment: learners must be in paid employment as recorded in Pay-As-You-Earn records for at least one day per month, in five out of the six months between October and March in the academic year after ending their learning programme; or have returned a self-assessment form stating that they have received income from self-employment during that financial year.

This group includes apprentices, students who have part-time/evening jobs, and employees who study part-time.

Sustained learning: learners must be learning at an equal or higher level to the programme they terminated for at least one day per month, in all six months between October and March in the academic year after ending their learning programme.

Programme**	2015/16		2016/17							
	Learners terminating (excluding early drop-out)	Sustained employment only	Sustained employment & sustained higher level learning	Sustained employment & sustained same level learning	Sustained employment & sustained learning (same & higher level)	Sustained higher level learning only	Sustained same level learning only	Sustained learning only (same & higher level)	Sustained positive destination	Sustained lower level learning only*
Health, Public Services and Care	1,197	38.6%	13.3%	11.1%	24.4%	11.9%	7.2%	19.0%	82.0%	1.9%

The ‘sector’ table only shows programmes which can be assigned to a specific sector/subject area; this means that the breakdown is for vocational programmes and A levels are not included in this table.

The data tables on gender, age, level and sector include an additional column showing learners who have been matched, and who have gone into lower level learning. These are not counted in the destination measure, but are included for information.

Future development of consistent measures

This guidance will be updated to reflect planned further developments of the consistent measures, including:

- More detailed reporting of achievement at qualification/course level, for A levels and vocational courses;
- Development of contextual benchmarks which reflect factors like learners' prior attainment, deprivation and other characteristics which impact on outcomes. This will support the use of the data to measure and compare performance in ways that better reflect the differences in providers' learner intakes; and
- Work to mitigate the potential unintended consequences of the measures, as set out in the table below. Once the measures are more established, we will commission independent research to evaluate their impact.

Intended consequences

1. Learners have high quality information, advice and guidance to help them choose the programme of learning that best suits their abilities and aspirations.
2. Recruitment onto learning programmes is driven by what is best for the learner, not institutional interest.
3. Learners are motivated and challenged to achieve the best possible outcomes on their chosen programme, reflecting their abilities and aspirations.
4. Monitoring of learner outcomes reflects a rounded picture of performance and progression.
5. Performance measures are used in context alongside information on learner cohort and curriculum mix.
6. Sixth forms and colleges use meaningful and accurate data to evaluate their own performance and to plan for improvement.
7. Where learners are studying comparable programmes in different settings, their outcomes are measured and evaluated consistently.
8. Over time, sustainable improvements to learner outcomes are achieved.

Unintended consequences

1. Data is used inappropriately to make judgements on provider performance, without taking account of contextual factors such as cohort size, curriculum mix and learner attributes.
2. Increasing the focus on retention leads to pressure being put on learners to stay on their programme, even when a managed transfer would be in their best interests.
3. The curriculum offer is narrowed to focus on qualifications that contribute more towards measures, not those that benefit the learner.
4. Learners are encouraged to do 'easier' qualifications that may not be right for them, to minimise risks to institutional performance.
5. Bureaucracy related to monitoring and accountability takes time away from teaching and learning.
6. Rather than improving collaboration in learners' interests, the measures lead to providers competing to recruit the most able learners in order to maximise performance.
7. There may be conflicts between institutional and national goals; for example, improvements in retention may result in lower A level grades as more learners are retained to sit exams.

Find out more

Measure	How to access your data	Where to find technical information and guidance	Where to find national statistics
Achievement	Schools - All Wales Core Dataset System (AWCDS) Colleges - DEWi	Explanatory notes for colleges Explanatory notes for schools Information on learning programmes	https://gov.wales/consistent-performance-measures-post-16-learning-achievement-and-value-added
Value added	Via Aspire Analytics: https://analytics.fftaspire.org/ Email post16va@fft.org.uk if you have forgotten your username or password	Guidance on using the reports is available on Aspire Analytics	n/a
Destinations	Schools - All Wales Core Dataset System (AWCDS) Colleges - DEWi	Explanatory notes and FAQs	https://gov.wales/consistent-performance-measures-post-16-learning-learner-destinations

For further information

Our summary [leaflet](#) includes information on the data sources for each of the consistent measures.

Any questions or comments about the consistent measures should be sent to post16quality@gov.wales.

You can subscribe to our consistent measures newsletter [here](#).