

Defining 'entry' for GCSE examinations and BTECs for schools in England

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1. What is the 'first entry' ruling and when does it come into effect?

On 29th September the Department for Education (DfE) announced that only the grade from a student's first entry to a GCSE examination will count in their school's performance tables.

This new ruling comes into effect straightaway and only applies to schools in England.

Whilst the initial announcement only talked of this being applicable to GCSEs, a subsequent update on 4th October confirmed that BTECs are also scope. You can find the full details of the announcement here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-early-entry-at-gcse>

We have repeated the relevant section below:

"These changes apply to GCSEs, level 1/level 2 certificates (sometimes referred to as IGCSEs), BTECs and other qualifications, where those would 'discount' against GCSEs in performance tables. The first entry across the subject, regardless of qualification type, will be the one that counts"

(Taken from DfE announcement "Changes of early entry to GCSE", September 29 2013, updated October 4th 2013)

2. What are the implications for BTEC Firsts?

In order to understand how this applies to BTEC Firsts, we have sought clarification from the DfE on what is meant by an 'entry' for vocational qualifications for which learners register at the start of the course, and that have a combination of internally and externally assessed units. It has been agreed that, for BTEC Firsts, we will set a date each year (for 2014 this is July 5th) which will be the **BTEC Entry Date** for that year. Any certification claim made during the academic year will – for the purposes of performance tables reporting – be deemed to have been made on that date.

This means that where a learner achieves a BTEC and a GCSE result in the same subject in the same year, the GCSE result will always be taken as the result that counts for performance tables in that subject, since the BTEC Entry Date will always be later in the year than the GCSE exam. Both results will continue to count for the learner, as they do now.

For GCSEs 'entry' refers to the date of the exam taken by the student.

3. What is meant by 'first entry'?

For GCSEs, the 'entry' date is the date on which the first exam paper is sat. For subjects where there are both BTEC and GCSE qualifications available, this is typically in late May or early June.

For BTEC Firsts, the 'entry' date is the new **BTEC Entry Date** that will be set each year, (for 2014 this date is confirmed as 5th July) to enable the maximum amount of time for completion and assessment of all the elements of the course. Any certification claim made during the academic year will – for the purposes of performance tables reporting – be deemed to have been made on that date.

The BTEC 'entry' date will therefore always fall **after** the GCSE 'entry' date. This means that going forward, where a learner takes a BTEC and a GCSE in the same subject, the GCSE result will always be taken as the 'first entry' and will therefore be the result that counts in performance tables for that subject.

Of course, the learner themselves will take forward recognition in both qualifications. This ruling just affects what is reported in performance tables.

4. How does the 'discounting' rule affect the performance tables reporting for learners who may study for both BTECs and GCSEs in the same subject area?

The DfE has stated:

"The first entry across the subject, regardless of qualification type, will be the one that counts"

This means that wherever a learner achieves a BTEC and a GCSE in the same subject in the same year, the GCSE result will always take precedence over the BTEC result, and is the one that will be reported in performance tables, since the GCSE exam will always come before the BTEC Entry Date.

The rule will be applied differently for those students who have been awarded a qualification before September 2013, and those who first achieve a qualification after September 29th 2013. Please see the answers to specific questions below.

A full list of the current BTECs that discount against GCSEs is available at Appendix 1 for your reference.

5. Does this affect all BTEC Firsts?

No. The DfE is proposing phasing in this new requirement over the next two years. The new ruling applies only to the EBacc subjects for the 2014 performance tables, and will be extended to cover all remaining GCSE subjects from the 2015 performance tables onwards. The table below illustrates, for each of the current year 11, year 10 and year 9 cohorts, which BTECs are in scope.

Current Year Group	Performance tables	Subjects in scope	BTEC Firsts affected by new 'first entry' rule
Year 11	2014 performance tables, reported in January 2015	All EBacc subjects	Next generation BTEC Firsts in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied Science: Principles of Science
Year 10	2015 performance tables, reported in January 2016	All remaining GCSE subjects. BTEC subjects on the 2015 list of high quality non-GCSE qualifications which discount against a GCSE.	BTEC Firsts in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art & Design Applied Science: Principles of Science Applied Science: Application of Science Business Construction Creative Media & Production Engineering Health & Social Care Hospitality Information & Creative Technology Music Performing Arts Sport Travel & Tourism
Year 9	2016 performance tables, reported in January 2017		

6. What are the implications for my current Year 11s?

This new ruling only affects results for EBacc subjects for the current Year 11s. In the case of BTEC this is just Principles of Applied Science. Year 11s currently studying the following BTEC First in Applied Science will be affected:

Qualification Accreditation No.	Qualification Name & Size
600/4787/2	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Principles of Applied Science (120 GLH)

To clarify, BTEC in Applied Science doesn't count for the EBacc, however the DfE has taken the approach that it makes sense to consider all Science qualifications together, hence this qualification being in scope in this first phase of the roll out of this ruling.

For Year 11s taking the above qualification:

- If the learner has already been awarded a grade for either this BTEC or for the GCSE in Science, then they can take either of these qualifications again, and the grade that will be reported in performance tables will be the best of the grade(s), whether their previous achievement or their next attempt.
- If the learner has not yet been awarded a grade for this BTEC or the GCSE in Science, the result for the first one of these qualifications entered will be the one that is counted in the 2014 performance tables. Please refer to the first answer above for the definitions of 'entry dates' that apply to BTECs and GCSEs
- For the BTEC First Award in Principles of Applied Science, learners who sat the external assessment in June 2013 can either register this grade as part of the claim, or decide to resit if they believe they can improve on their unit grade.
- For learners who may be taking the above BTEC qualification and a GCSE in Science this new ruling means that unless they have already been awarded a grade for the BTEC, their GCSE exam sitting in June 2014 will be the result that is counted in performance tables.

Please note: The BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Applied Science (QCF), the BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Applied Science (QCF) and the BTEC First Award in Application of Science (NQF) are not in the scope of this ruling for current Year 11s as the DfE has advised that they are not directly linked to an EBacc GCSE. They discount against GCSE Applied Science which is not an EBacc GCSE. The BTEC First Award in Application of Science does come into scope for current Year 10s however.

7. What are the implications for my current Year 9s and 10s?

The results for current Year 9s and 10s will be reported in the 2015 and 2016 performance tables respectively. This means that the ruling on 'first entry' will be applied to the full list of BTEC qualifications in the appendix for these years.

Please note that the 'first entry' rule applies within a BTEC subject as well as between different qualifications in the same subject. For example in future, if a learner claims an Award at the end of Year 10, and then goes on to achieve a Certificate in the same subject at the end of Year 11, it will be the Award result that is reported as the 'first entry' in performance tables.

8. Does this mean that my learners can't re-sit their BTEC external assessments?

No.

We would always recommend that you wait until learners are ready before entering them for their external assessment(s). The DfE has recognised that, as there are no specific 'entry' dates for external assessments for BTECs, it is not possible to identify the 'first' entry across more than one BTEC external assessment in the same subject without excessive bureaucracy. In these circumstances, learners who have taken more than one external assessment ahead of claiming can select the best result to go forward as part of their claim.

9. I have learners entered for the November test series for the BTEC First Award in Principles of Applied Science. How does this affect those entries?

We would always advocate that learners should only sit their external assessments when they are ready. If you believe that your learners are well placed to achieve to their potential in this series, there is no need to make any changes to your entries.

If your learners previously attempted the external assessment for Principles of Science in June 2013, but have yet to complete or claim their full results for the qualification, then they will be able to register the best result from the two sittings (or any subsequent sitting) when making their final claim.

APPENDIX 1: Performance table discounting

Discounted BTECs to which the 'first entry' rule will be applied in 2014 Performance Tables

Qualification Number	Qualification Title	2015 KS4 Discount Code
60047872	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Principles of Applied Science	RA1B

Discounted BTECs to which the 'first entry' rule will be applied in 2015 Performance Tables

Qualification Number	Qualification Title	2015 KS4 Discount Code
50049914	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Business Administration (QCF)	AA3
50065361	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Business Administration (QCF)	AA3
60047860	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Business	AA3
60068152	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Business	AA3
60068164	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Business	AA3
50065683	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate for IT Users (ITQ) (QCF)	CN1
50065695	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma for IT Users (ITQ) (QCF)	CN1
50066067	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Performing Arts (QCF)	LC11
50066699	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Performing Arts (QCF)	LC11
60047859	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Performing Arts	LC11
60068693	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Performing Arts	LC11
6006870X	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Performing Arts	LC11
60068188	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Music	LF1
50049896	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Sport and Active Leisure (QCF)	MA1
50064952	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Sport and Active Leisure (QCF)	MA1
60047793	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Sport	MA1
6006819X	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Sport	MA1
60068206	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Sport	MA1
50075214	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Introduction to the Hospitality Industry (QCF)	NA1
60070444	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Hospitality	NA1
6007047X	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Hospitality	NA1
60012316	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Introduction to the Travel and Tourism Industry (QCF)	NK1
60012389	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Introduction to the Travel and Tourism Industry (QCF)	NK1
60065126	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Travel and Tourism	NK1
60070468	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Travel and Tourism	NK1
50054582	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Health and Social Care (QCF)	PA1
50066420	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Health and Social Care (QCF)	PA1
60047823	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Health and Social Care	PA1
60063117	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Health and Social Care	PA1
60063129	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care	PA1
50100737	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Applied Science (QCF)	RA14

50100750	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Applied Science (QCF)	RA14
60047963	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Application of Science	RA14
6006318X	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Applied Science	RA14
60047872	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Principles of Applied Science	RA1B
50065919	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Construction (QCF)	TA
50066687	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Construction (QCF)	TA
60068176	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Construction and the Built Environment	TA
60070481	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Construction and the Built Environment	TA
50098597	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Engineering (QCF)	XA1
50103052	Pearson BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Engineering (QCF)	XA1
60047884	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Engineering	XA1
60066283	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Engineering	XA1
60066301	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Engineering	XA1