

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2014

## 2016 Performance tables: Inclusion of 16-19 Vocational Qualifications

### Qu 1: What are 'Tech Level' and 'Applied General' qualifications?

In July 2013 the Government published their response to the earlier consultation issued on 16-19 Vocational Qualifications reform. In it they confirmed that going forward, high quality Vocational qualifications would be classified into 2 categories:

**Tech Level qualifications:** Tech Levels are level 3 (advanced) qualifications for students wishing to specialise in a technical occupation or occupational group. They lead to recognised occupations, for example in engineering, IT, accounting or professional cookery. They are recognised by a relevant trade or professional body or at least five employers registered with Companies House that are representative of the industry sector or occupation to which the qualification relates. Many Higher Education Institutions have also pledged support for Tech Levels.

**Applied General qualifications:** Applied General qualifications are level 3 (advanced) qualifications that provide broad study of a vocational area. They are recognised by at least three Higher Education Institutions as fulfilling entry requirements to a range of HE courses, either in their own right or alongside other Level 3 qualifications. Some employers and professional/trade bodies have also pledged support for Applied General qualifications

### Qu 2: What does it mean if a qualification is on one of these Lists?

These Lists relate to future reporting of level 3 qualifications in the 2016 performance tables in England. This means they will apply to learners starting a 2-year course in September 2014. Only qualifications on one or other of these Lists, or academic qualifications such as A Levels, will be recognised in 2016 performance tables. All of the qualifications on these lists have been approved as meeting the following interim criteria:

Criteria	Summary of requirement (see DfE Technical Guidance for full details)
<b>Declared purpose</b>	The purpose of a qualification should be articulated by Awarding Organisations (AOs) in a way that is meaningful and relevant. It should also be made clear whether the qualification is primarily <b>Technical Level</b> or <b>Applied General</b> in nature.
<b>Size</b>	<b>Technical Level</b> – at least 300 GLH <b>Applied General</b> – at least 150 GLH
<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Technical Level</b> must be recognised by Employers (and HEIs where appropriate). AOs must provide 1 letter of endorsement from a Trade Body and 5 from employers per qualification. <b>Applied General</b> must be recognised by HEIs as fulfilling entry requirements to higher education courses. AOs must provide 3 letters of support from HEIs per qualification.

These interim criteria have been set to allow Awarding Organisations a 2 year ‘grace period’ to redevelop any new qualifications in order to meet the full criteria. As well as the interim criteria above, from first teaching in 2016 qualifications will also have to meet the following additional criteria in order to attract performance table recognition:

<b>Synoptic Assessment</b>	Required for both <b>Technical Level</b> and <b>Applied General</b> qualifications.
<b>External Assessment</b>	Required for both <b>Technical Level</b> and <b>Applied General</b> qualifications. Amount not specified in percentages and we are seeking further clarification.
<b>Grading</b>	Grading is required for both <b>Technical Level</b> and <b>Applied General</b> qualifications. Pass/Fail not enough, but Pass, Merit Distinction is OK.
<b>Employer Involvement</b>	Stipulated for <b>Technical Level</b> qualifications only.
<b>Progression</b>	Evidence of progression required for both <b>Technical Level</b> and <b>Applied General</b> qualifications within the first 2 years of a qualification being awarded.

### Qu 3: What does it mean if a qualification isn’t on one of these Lists?

If a qualification doesn’t appear on one of the Lists it could mean two things:

- 1) The Awarding Organisation has submitted the qualification, believing it to meet the required interim criteria, but it has been rejected by the DfE.
- 2) The Awarding Organisation has chosen not to submit the qualification for consideration as in their opinion it isn’t currently a good match for the new criteria. In this case, they may be working on developing a new, replacement qualification for consideration against the full criteria, and in readiness for the 2018 performance tables.

If a qualification isn’t on one of these Lists, it is still possible for learners to take it – particularly if it represents the best choice in terms of progression and opportunity for that learner. It just means that the learner’s achievement in that qualification won’t be recognised in performance tables. In their statement on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013, the DfE said:

*“Schools and colleges may offer qualifications that are not included in the performance tables, if approved for teaching to 16-19 year olds, and in all cases should act as they judge to be in the best interests of their students.”*

The rules for funding qualifications for learners aged 16-19 are not affected by these lists, which are for accountability purposes. The Section 96 lists will continue to be separate from these accountability lists, although a qualification must be on S96 to be considered for accountability measures.

### Qu 5: Why are there no Level 2 (or below) qualifications listed?

The DfE has been clear from the outset that these 16-19 2016 Lists will cover Level 3 vocational qualifications only. In September 2013 they launched a consultation covering 16-19 accountability

[16-19 Performance Tables 2016: Tech Level and Applied General qualifications \(April 2014\)](#)

arrangements, and this included proposals for reporting achievement and progression at Level 2 and below in performance tables for 16-19 year olds. This consultation closed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and we are expecting the DfE to report their response in Spring 2014

**Qu 6: Why are there no Early Years Educator qualifications listed?**

Following the publication of new criteria for the role of Early Years Educator, all qualifications in the Childcare and Early Years sector are being reviewed against the new criteria and, if appropriate, reaccredited as 'Early Years Educator, qualifications. Awarding Organisations have until Spring 2014 to decide which qualifications to submit for Early Years Educator status. Until that time no qualifications in this sector are appearing on the lists. Please note that not all childcare qualifications will become 'Early Years Educator' qualifications. All qualifications in the childcare sector will be added to the list by May 2014.

**Qu 7: How many qualifications does Pearson have on the Lists?**

Overview	Applied General	Technical Level
133 have been approved for a list	55 have been approved for the AG list	88 have been approved for the Tech Level list