



Department for Education Performance Tables: a guide

The Department for Education has recently issued the Performance Tables for the 2015 results. The tables can be quite hard to interpret in that they use a large number of different measures.

The A level progress scores in the main local providers of A level courses were as follows in 2015:

Wales	0.13
Aston & TRC	0.06
Brinsworth	0.01
Maltby	-0.01
Wath	-0.08
Barnsley College	-0.11
Swinton	-0.12
Wickersley	-0.17
Dinnington	-0.20

The measures that provide the most level playing field and best comparison between institutions' performance are the academic and vocational progress measures which show how students have performed on average compared to their starting points at the beginning of the course.

This way of measuring performance takes students' GCSE results and compares their actual performance at 18 against what would have been statistically expected from their GCSE grades.

The average progress in a school or college is expressed as a proportion of a full grade, either positive or negative (e.g. 0.50 or -0.50), or as 0.00 if students have on average performed exactly as expected.

If the average progress score was 0.50 then students in that institution have on average achieved half a grade higher per subject than would have been expected given the GCSE results they started with; if the score was -0.50 then they have on average achieved half a grade lower per subject than expected.

Not all these Sixth Forms have significant numbers of students taking vocational courses. In places where there were 50 or more entries, the vocational progress scores were as follows in 2015:

Dinnington	0.72
TRC	0.50
Barnsley College	0.16
Wales	0.12
Wath	0.10
Wickersley	-0.01

Some of the other measures in the tables (such as the attainment measures of average points scored per entry and per candidate and the percentage of students achieving AAB in traditional academic subjects) can be strongly influenced by the qualifications of the student intake that a school or college has – i.e. some Sixth Forms set higher entry requirements to take A level or vocational courses than others do.

The measures showing separately the percentage of students achieving 2 or 3 A levels and the percentage of students achieving 2 or 3 substantial vocational qualifications are affected by the growing number of students at many institutions taking mixed programmes of A levels and vocational courses such as BTECs – many students have achieved 3 qualifications from a mixed programme, but this is not credited in these separate measures. For these reasons it is the progress measures that we have highlighted above.