



School performance reporting – Bulletin 4

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Background

The Welsh Government updates Local Authorities and Consortia on school performance reporting issues via this bulletin. Through this channel we will be keeping you informed on decisions impacting on performance reporting policies and providing clarification on any complex issues. Please share this information with your schools as relevant.

Early Entry changes affecting school performance reporting at Key Stage 4

On 16 October the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced [changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures](#) as a consequence of notable increases in GCSE early entry by schools in Wales.

In the current Key Stage 4 performance measures, the best results from any attempt for a qualification counts. The Cabinet Secretary's announcement ([link to Record of Proceedings](#)) explains that in 2019 this will change. **From summer 2019, only the results of the first awarding of a complete qualification will count** towards performance measures.

Qualifications Wales will also be removing restrictions on resit only entry from the November series from 2018. This will allow schools the option to enter any learner for English and Welsh Language GCSEs. This option is currently only available for GCSEs in Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy.

This change will encourage schools to enter learners when schools are confident they are ready to gain their best possible result. It does not prevent a learner resitting should a school or learner wish to attempt to improve their results, but the resit result would not count towards school performance measures, even when the outcome is higher. **The learner will still be able to use their best result to access further learning and employment.**

This change applies to all qualifications (including vocational qualifications) awarded to a learner regardless of when they were taken. For example, if a year 10 learner first sits GCSE Mathematics in November 2017, their result will be counted towards that school's performance in summer 2019, because the November 2017 sitting would be that learner's result from their first entry for maths. No subsequent entries in the same subject will be counted towards the performance measures, even where these entries result in a higher grade. For clarification, this change will not apply retrospectively to pupils in the current year 9 and below who have already taken qualifications prior to the announcement of this policy in October 2017. However, for future years, all early entries will count for all year groups.

Making these changes to how school performance measures are calculated should not discourage schools from using early entry for those learners where it is in their best interest. That is why schools will have greater flexibility to enter learners for English and Welsh Language in November 2018.

Capped points score – science

For 2018, only science GCSEs can count in the science component of the Capped 9 score. The list of approved qualifications can be found on [QiW](#) by using the advanced filter and making sure that the box for 'counts towards CSI' is checked.

9–1 GCSEs in Wales

In 2017 in England, the Department for Education introduced numeric grading for GCSEs, rather than the A*-G grading structure seen in Wales. These qualifications are graded 9-1, with 9 being the highest attainment score. In Wales, the 9-1 GCSEs count in performance information when designated for delivery. This only affects Wales in low cohort subjects where there is no Wales only GCSE and independent schools that can choose which GCSE to provide.

9-1 GCSEs designated in Wales count towards a suite of school performance measures such as level thresholds, Capped 9 and the Welsh Baccalaureate. As such, this means that the first entry counts rule applies.

For further information on how these qualifications count in terms of performance measures, please see [QiW](#), the online database of approved qualifications in Wales.

Non-GCSE limit to 5A*-A threshold measure

It has been previously communicated that, from 2017, a maximum of 40% of non-GCSE qualifications count towards threshold measures. Please note that this cap on non-GCSEs also applies to the 5A*-A threshold measure. Please refer to the '*Subject to the 40% limit on non-GCSEs*' field on [QiW](#) to determine if a qualification is a non-GCSE.

The above also applies to the Skills Challenge Certificate.

Essential Skills Wales

We have previously communicated via this bulletin that Essential Skills Wales qualifications were no longer approved for pre-16 learners from 2017 and would therefore not attract any performance points. The regulatory body, Qualifications Wales, has deemed the qualifications as suitable for pre-16 learners and as such they are now approved. However, as per the recommendations arising from the Review of Qualifications, **these qualifications will still not count for performance measure purposes.**

Change to benchmark boundaries for Welsh First Language (WFL) – Key Stage 4 performance packs

Prior to 2016/17, benchmark boundaries were based on the performance of all schools with WFL results. From 2016/17 onwards, benchmark boundaries were based on the performance of schools that classified themselves as either Welsh medium or bilingual in their PLASC return.

This change was made to ensure that boundaries are calculated using schools that enter the vast majority of their pupils for WFL. In doing so, the more variable performances which are possible in schools that enter very small numbers for WFL, no longer affect boundary positions.

Please note that this makes the range between the lower and upper quartile much narrower than in previous years, with an increased lower quartile in particular. Therefore, data are not directly comparable with data prior to 2016/17.

A further bulletin regarding post-16 performance reporting will be issued in due course.