



Department  
for Education

# **Key stage 4 and 16 to 18 destination measures (revised)**

**Guidance and technical note for 2017  
performance tables**

**January 2018**

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# Summary

## About this guidance

This is to assist in understanding the key stage 4 and 16 to 18 destination measures data published in the 2017 school and college performance tables.

## Expiry date

This guidance will be updated in October 2018 when the provisional 2018 performance tables are published.

## Main points

This guidance explains

- the purpose of destination measures
- where data is sourced
- how the measures are calculated
- which schools and colleges have destinations reported
- the categories of destinations reported
- additional technical details

## Background information

### What are destination measures?

Destination measures are a headline accountability measure and show the percentage of pupils continuing to a sustained education, employment or training destination in the year after completing key stage 4 (after year 11) or 16 to 18 study (after completing A levels or other level 3 qualifications).

Additional data shows whether students were in education or employment, did not stay in education or employment for at least two terms, or whether activity was not captured in the data. At key stage 4, education destinations include further education (FE) colleges and other FE providers, sixth form colleges, school sixth forms and a collection of other education destinations. Education destinations shown after 16 to 18 study include higher education institutions (universities), further education (FE) colleges and a collection of other education destinations.

### Why we publish destination measures

The destination measures provide clear and comparable information on the success of schools and colleges in helping all their pupils take qualifications that offer them the best opportunity to progress. They will also encourage institutions to make sure their pupils receive the support needed to prepare for and complete the transition on to education, training or employment that offers good long term prospects.

### Changes to destination measures

Destination measures became a headline accountability measure in 2016. We have since made some improvements to increase coverage by incorporating data on alternative higher education providers from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) as well as self-assessment tax records from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The addition of this data has had a relatively small effect on the proportion of pupils whose activity we are capturing.

It is now possible to download information on the destinations of disadvantaged students for individual schools and colleges via the school pages or for all of England or for a local authority via the [Compare School Performance home page](#).

At key stage 4, a new school type has been added to the state-funded mainstream cohort. We have added further education colleges that have 14-16 provision with all other state-funded mainstream institutions.

In August 2016, we published detailed information on how [employment and benefits data](#) has been included in the measures in two statistical working papers on [improvements to destination measures](#).

# Understanding destination measures

## Publication

The key stage 4 pupil destination measures for pupils who were at the end of key stage 4 in 2014-15 were published on the [school and college performance tables](#) website on 25 January 2018 as revised data. These replaced the provisional data published in October 2017. Destinations are also published as part of a [statistical first release](#) on the gov.uk website.

The 16 to 18 student destination measures were published on the [performance tables website](#) on 25 January 2018 as revised data. Provisional 16 to 18 data was not previously published on the school and college performance tables. Provisional data was published in October 2017 in our statistical first release on the [gov.uk website](#).

## Data sources

Data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) are used to calculate education destinations. The National Pupil Database links pupil and student characteristics (e.g. age, gender, and ethnicity) to school and college learning aims and attainment information for children in schools in England. Five administrative data sources used in compiling the national pupil database have been used to determine pupils' education destinations:

- Individualised Learner Record (ILR) covering English further education providers and specialist post-16 institutions
- school census covering English schools
- awarding body data
- alternative provision census
- Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) data covering UK universities and other higher education institutions (including alternative providers)

Employment data and out-of-work benefit data have been linked to the National Pupil Database to form the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset. Along with local authority data (key stage 4 only), LEO data is used to calculate employment destinations. Three administrative datasets are used as follows

- employment data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- out-of-work benefit data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- local authority data from the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS)

## Cohort

The key stage 4 cohort consists of pupils completing key stage 4 (finishing year 11) in the 2014-15 academic year and identifies their destinations in the 2015-16 academic year.

The 16 to 18 cohort consists of students who were aged 16, 17 or 18 and had entered A levels or other level 3 qualifications and were considered to have completed 16 to 18 study in the 2014-15 academic year. The 16 to 18 cohort includes young people taking academic, applied general and tech level qualifications or their approved precursors in previous academic years.

The 2014-15 cohort reported for a school or college in the destinations measures in 2017 generally includes the same pupils who were reported against that school or college for attainment and progress measures in the published 2015 key stage 4 or 16 to 18 performance tables.

## Institution types

The key stage 4 cohort is from state-funded mainstream schools and maintained and non-maintained special schools. The national and local authority totals on the performance tables website include both state-funded mainstream and special schools. Destinations are not reported for independent schools (including independent special schools).

Destinations are reported for students completing 16 to 18 study at state-funded mainstream schools and colleges. The national and local authority totals in the performance tables website include state-funded mainstream schools and colleges only. Destinations are not reported at 16 to 18 for independent schools or special schools (including maintained, non-maintained and independent special schools).

## Schools and colleges with destinations reported

The 2017 performance tables include information on schools and colleges which were open during the 2016-17 academic year and which had pupils at the end of key stage 4 and 16 to 18 study in this academic year.

Because destinations measures are calculated for pupils who completed key stage 4 or 16 to 18 study at the school two years previously (in 2014-15) not all providers with attainment results have destination measures reported.

The reference date for open schools is at the start of each academic year, so changes to school and college types, openings and closures between 13 September 2014 and 12 September 2016 affect reporting.



## Schools and colleges which have both 2017 attainment results and destinations

- providers which have **remained open** throughout the period and have not undergone any changes to school type
- providers which have become a **converter** academy
- providers which have undergone a **merger** (one continuing school 'absorbs' another)

## Schools and colleges which have 2017 attainment results but no destinations reported

- providers which have **opened** (as entirely new schools or colleges)
- providers which have become a **sponsored** academy
- providers which have formed from an **amalgamation** (two or more schools or colleges come together to form a 'new' school or college)
- providers which **did not have pupils at the end of key stage 4** in 2014-15 (this may include schools which were new in 2014-15)
- providers which **did not have students completing 16 to 18 (level 3) study** in 2014 -15 (this may include schools or colleges which were new in 2014-15)

## **Information included in the tables**

### **Destination categories reported after key stage 4**

#### **Pupils staying in education or employment for at least two terms after key stage 4**

Any sustained education or employment destination.

#### **Total number of pupils included in destination measures (cohort)**

This is the total number of pupils in the 2014-15 cohort, using the criteria outlined under 'cohort' at the start of the technical note, and is used to create the denominator for the measure.

#### **Pupils staying in education for at least two terms after key stage 4**

Students finishing key stage 4 who stayed in education from October to March the following year, including at school sixth forms, sixth-form colleges, further education colleges and other settings in England.

More detailed breakdowns of education participation are provided. These lines may not add up to the education total as there are a small number of pupils who were identified as sustaining more than one education destination.

#### **Further education college or other further education provider**

Sustained participation in one or more FE institutions is identified from the ILR. General and specialist FE colleges (other than sixth-form colleges) are reported here as well as other FE providers.

Any provider in the ILR not identified as a sixth form college or FE college is designated as an 'other FE provider'. It also includes pupils on work-based learning or studying further education in a higher education institution. A number of pupils were identified within the higher education statistics agency (HESA) data as being registered for FE level study at an HE institution.

#### **School sixth form**

State-funded mainstream school sixth forms are identified from the school census data. The measure reports the proportion of the cohort participating at these institutions.

#### **Sixth-form college**

Sixth-form colleges are identified separately from the ILR data. The measure reports the proportion of the cohort participating at these institutions.

## Other education

All remaining education destinations are grouped under this heading and include:

- ***independent schools:*** These destinations were identified from awarding body data that has been used to provide an indication of participation. For example if a student sat an A level exam in Summer 2017, it has been assumed the student completed a two-year course of study and fulfilled the full six months participation from October 2015 to March 2016.
- ***alternative provision:*** Data on pupils in alternative provision (AP) includes those who have their primary registration at a Pupil Referral Unit, an AP academy, an AP free school or a hospital school. These destinations include other alternative provision of education funded by the local authority outside of state place funded schools, including independent schools, non-maintained special schools, and providers who do not meet the criteria for registration as a school.

Attendance via alternative provision for a period of time in the first five months of the academic year is used as a proxy for sustained participation.

- ***special schools:*** Pupils recorded on the school census as attending maintained or non-maintained special schools.
- ***specialist post-16 institutions:*** This includes data on pupils attending specialist post-16 institutions, obtained from the ILR data.
- ***UK higher education institutions:*** Pupils who have gone to any HE institution in the UK, for higher level study, as recorded in HESA data.
- ***education combinations:*** A number of students were identified as attending more than one type of institution over the 6 months. For example, a student may have attended an FE college for 3 months followed by a school sixth form for 3 months. Providing they fulfilled the sustained participation criteria across the institution types, they were counted in the measure.

## Pupils staying in employment for at least two terms after key stage 4

Students finishing key stage 4 who were in employment in the UK from October to March the following year.

Employment destinations are calculated from HMRC data in the LEO dataset and NCCIS data recorded by local authorities. To count as a sustained destination a pupil must be recorded as in employment in 5 out of the 6 months between October and March. A one month pause is permitted to allow for those pupils taking separate periods of temporary

employment. Should the one month pause occur in March then the student is required to be in employment in April for the destination to be counted as sustained.

Pupils with training participation recorded in NCCIS are also included in this category as are those completing the required 6 months participation through a combination of employment and education.

This category also includes pupils who have been identified as being self-employed because they completed a self-assessed tax return in the destination year (covering the financial year from April 2015 to April 2016). This is provided that they did not claim benefits for more than one month in the period from October to March.

Pupils who have sustained participation in education throughout the period are reported as being in a sustained education destination and not in employment, even if they were in employment alongside their study.

### **Pupils not staying in education or employment for at least two terms after key stage 4**

Students finishing key stage 4 study who did not stay in education or employment for at least two terms. They may have been enrolled on a course or in employment for part of this time, but not sustained this activity, or have been recorded by their local authority as 'NEET' or claimed out-of-work benefits in the year.

### **Destination unknown**

Students finishing key stage 4 who had no participation in education or employment found from October to March the following year and were also not recorded by their local authority as NEET, nor recorded as receiving out-of-work benefits at any point in the year. Possible reasons for this could be that the young person was:

- not in education, employment or training
- living, working or studying overseas
- attending a Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish school or college
- undertaking activity other than paid employment or study in the UK
- not successfully matched to a record in our data sources

### **Apprenticeships**

Pupils are reported as an apprenticeship destination if they sustained education or employment for two terms and had a record of taking a funded apprenticeship at any time between August 2015 and July 2016. All apprentices also appear under either employment or education destinations.

## **Destination categories reported after 16 to 18 study**

### **Total number of students included in destination measures (cohort)**

This is the total number of students in the 2014-15 cohort, using the criteria outlined under 'cohort' at the start of the technical note, and is used to create the denominator for the measure.

### **Students staying in education or employment for at least two terms after 16 to 18 study**

Any sustained education or employment destination.

### **Students staying in employment for at least two terms after 16 to 18 study**

Students finishing 16 to 18 study who were in employment in the UK from October to March the following year.

To count as a sustained destination a student must be recorded as in employment in 5 out of the 6 months between October and March. A one month pause is permitted to allow for those students taking separate periods of temporary employment. Should the one month pause occur in March then the student is required to be in employment in April for the destination to be counted as sustained.

Students who have sustained participation in education throughout the period are reported as being in a sustained education destination and not in employment, even if they were in employment alongside their study.

This category also includes pupils who have been identified as being self-employed because they completed a self-assessed tax return in the destination year (covering the financial year from April 2015 to April 2016). This is provided that they did not claim benefits for more than one month in the period from October to March.

### **Students staying in education for at least two terms after 16 to 18 study**

Students finishing 16 to 18 study who stayed in education from October to March the following year, including at UK universities, and further education colleges and other settings in England.

More detailed breakdowns of education participation are provided. These may not add up to the education total as there are a small number of students who were identified as sustaining more than one education destination.

## Higher education institution or other higher education provider

Sustained participation in a UK university or other higher education institution (HEI) or provider (including higher education aims studied at a further education college and alternative providers).

### Top third of HEIs

This group is defined as the top third of higher education institutions (HEIs) when grouped by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrants. The latest list is based on entrants in 2014-15.

Subgroups of the top third of HEIs are also shown:

- Oxford and Cambridge universities
- Russell Group institutions (including Oxford and Cambridge)

### All other HEIs and other HE providers (ie excluding top third institutions)

## Further education college or other further education provider

Sustained participation in one or more FE institutions identified from the ILR, general and specialist FE colleges (other than sixth-form colleges) are reported here as well as other FE providers.

Any provider in the ILR not identified as a sixth form college or FE college is designated as an 'other FE provider'. It also includes students on work-based learning or studying further education in a higher education institution. A number of students were identified within the higher education statistics agency (HESA) data as being registered for FE level study at an HE institution.

## Other education

All remaining education destinations are grouped under this heading and include:

- **sixth-form colleges and specialist post-16 institutions:** Sixth-form colleges and specialist post-16 institutions are identified from the ILR data.
- **school sixth forms and special schools:** State-funded mainstream school sixth forms, maintained and non-maintained special schools are identified from the school census data.
- **independent schools:** These destinations were identified from awarding body data which has been used to provide an indication of participation. For example if a student sat an A level exam in Summer 2017, it has been assumed the student completed a two-year course of study and fulfilled the full six months participation from October 2015 to March 2016.

- **education combinations:** A number of students were identified as attending more than one type of institution over the 6 months. For example a student may have attended an FE college for 3 months followed by a university for 3 months. Providing they fulfilled the sustained participation criteria across the institution types they were counted in the measure.

## **Students not staying in education or employment for at least two terms after 16 to 18 study**

Students may have been enrolled on a course or in employment for part of this time, but not sustained this activity, or have claimed out-of-work benefits in the year.

## **No activity captured in data**

Students finishing 16 to 18 study who had no participation in education or employment found from October to March the following year. Possible reasons for this could be that the young person was:

- not in education, employment or training
- living, working or studying overseas
- attending a Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish school or further education provider
- undertaking activity other than paid employment or study in the UK
- not successfully matched to a record in our data sources

## **Apprenticeships**

Students are reported as an apprenticeship destination if they sustained education or employment for two terms and had a record of taking a funded apprenticeship at any time between August and July. All apprentices also appear under either employment or education destinations.

## **Deferred entry to higher education**

All students having an accepted deferred offer for 2016-17 are shown alongside their recorded activity in 2015-16 to provide additional context. This data comes from the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

## Suppression of destination data

Suppression is applied to the destination data to ensure that individual pupils cannot be identified. Suppression is carried out slightly differently from other performance tables measures due to the inclusion of employment data.

- any institution with fewer than 11 pupils in their 2014-15 cohort has had all of their data suppressed
- figures referring to outcomes for 1 or 2 individuals have been suppressed. Zeros remain zeros unless they reveal information about employment destinations
- secondary and tertiary suppression has been applied to preserve confidentiality and prevent disclosure by disaggregating published figures

At national, LA and regional:

- all numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5

These rules are also applied to percentages relating to small numbers, so that numerators of less than 3 are suppressed. Percentages are calculated using unrounded data.

More information about suppression applied is provided in annex 4 of our [technical note](#).



## Feedback and further information

Questions, feedback and comments on the destination measures can be sent to [destination.measures@education.gov.uk](mailto:destination.measures@education.gov.uk)

## Destination measures publications

Destination measures are published as a statistical first release and include additional data including destinations by pupil characteristics (gender, free school meals eligibility, special educational needs and ethnicity)

- [Destination measures](#)

A series of statistical working papers are also available providing information on the inclusion of employment and benefit data.

- [Improvements to destination measures](#)

Experimental tables that aim to help users understand the bigger picture of destinations for all students. They show destinations of pupils at age 16 and age 18 and destinations for 16 to 18 students studying different types of qualification.

- [Experimental statistics](#)



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