

Prior attainment levels table

The information shown in the table below provides a guide to the overall attainment level of learners that have achieved various combinations of qualifications. The levels shown do not necessarily coincide with the level at which individual qualifications are set. For example, GCSEs are at level 1/2, but the level of attainment achieved by a learner is dependent on the grade they achieve. Where a learner attains a grade D-G or 1-3 this would be considered a level 1.

Whether a learner's prior attainment is a full level 2 or full level 3 will depend on whether the qualification was defined as a full level 2 or full level 3 when the learner started to study it. This is because the qualifications that have been defined as full level 2 and full level 3 have changed over time. The qualifications listed in the table below are examples of qualifications which may have been full in the past.

The guidance has been updated to reflect the introduction of the Regulated Qualification Framework RQF from the 1 October 2015 and the decoupling of AS Levels from A Levels from September 2015.

Prior attainment level descriptors	Qualification equivalent (incorporating NQF and QCF and RQF)
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Entry level	QCF qualifications at Entry level Certificate in Adult Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL at Entry level RQF qualifications at Entry Level English and Maths qualifications at Entry Level Key skills at entry level Functional Skills at entry level Essential Digital Skills qualification
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Level 1	GCSE/O Level (at grades D-G or fewer than 5 at grades A-C) CSE grade 2 and 3 1 AS Level (for AS qualifications regulated before 1 September 2015) QCF qualifications at Level 1 Foundation 14-19 Diploma Functional Skills Certificate in Adult Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL at Level 1 Level 1 Key Skills Level 1 Principal Learning Introductory Diploma Introductory Certificate GNVQ Foundation NVQ Level 1 RQF qualifications at Level 1
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Prior attainment level descriptors	Qualification equivalent (incorporating NQF and QCF and RQF)
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Technical Awards in the Key Stage 4 Performance Tables
Essential Digital Skills qualifications

Level 2	Vocational and technical qualifications at level 2 (not on the level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement list) Functional skills at level 2 ESOL (skills for life) Technical Awards in the Key Stage 4 Performance Tables Performing Arts Graded Examination qualifications
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Full level 2	GCSE/O Level (5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C) GCSE (9-1) (5 or more GCSEs grade 4 or above) 2 or 3 AS Levels (for AS qualifications regulated before 1 September 2015) CSE Grade 1 (5 or more) 1 A Level Higher 14-19 Diploma QCF Diploma level 2 QCF Certificate level 2 at 13 or 14 credits undertaken before 2014 to 2015 Level 2 Principal Learning NVQ level 2 GNVQ Intermediate Technical Certificates in the 16-19 Performance Tables QCF Certificate level 2 at 15 credits and above From 1 August 2015 vocational qualifications of 150 GLH or more that are on the level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement qualification list.
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Level 3	Vocational and technical qualifications at level 3 (not on the level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement list) Core maths Technical qualifications (part of T levels) Components of international baccalaureate Performing Arts Graded Examination qualifications Pre U qualifications
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Full level 3	A Levels (2 or more advanced level passes) 4 or more AS Levels (for AS qualifications regulated before 1 September 2015)
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Prior attainment level descriptors	Qualification equivalent (incorporating NQF and QCF and RQF)
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QCF Diploma Level 3
 QAA Access to HE
 Advanced 14-19 Diploma
 GNVQ Advanced
 NVQ level 3
 AVCE double award
 Tech Levels which are in the 16-19 Performance Tables
 Applied Generals which are in the 16-19 Performance Tables (from 1 August 2015)
 QCF Certificate at Level 3 which is 30 to 36 credits
 From 1 August 2015 vocational qualifications of 300 GLH or more that are on the level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement qualification list.

Prior attainment level descriptors	Current Ofqual Regulated Framework (RQF)	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
Level 4	QCF Award Level 4 QCF Certificate Level 4 QCF Diploma Level 4 HNC RQF qualifications Level 4	Certificates of higher education
Level 5	QCF Award Level 5 QCF Certificate Level 5 QCF Diploma Level 5 HND RQF qualifications Level 5	Foundation degrees
Level 6	QCF Award Level 6 QCF Certificate Level 6 QCF Diploma Level 6 RQF qualifications Level 6	Bachelor's degrees, graduate certificates and diplomas
Level 7+	QCF Award Level 7 QCF Certificate Level 7 QCF Diploma Level 7 RQF qualifications Level 7	Doctorates

**Prior attainment
level descriptors**

**Current Ofqual Regulated
Framework (RQF)**

**Framework for Higher
Education Qualifications**

QCF Award Level 8
QCF Certificate Level 8
QCF Diploma Level 8
RQF qualifications Level 8

Masters degrees,
postgraduate certificates and
diplomas

ESFA 21/22 ILR Specification (previously appendix G)