

Enhanced rules for performance table Technical Awards confirmed

Ofqual has today (18 February 2020) confirmed how it is enhancing its regulation of Level 1 and 2 Technical Awards that will in future be listed by the Department for Education (DfE) in Key Stage 4 performance tables. The [decisions](#) form part of a comprehensive programme of work designed to reinforce confidence in technical and vocational qualifications.

We are making these changes so that students who take vocational and technical qualifications that count in Key Stage 4 performance tables can be confident that their results provide a reliable reflection of their abilities and are valuable in progressing their education and career.

The changes being announced today will also enhance the validity of Technical Awards used for school and college accountability purposes and better align our regulation with the DfE's requirements for such qualifications.

The improvements include:

- requiring awarding organisations to develop an assessment strategy for each qualification that they intend to submit to DfE's Technical Awards approvals process, so that there is reliable evidence that students have attained the knowledge, skills and understanding expected through the qualification
- requiring at least 40% of the marks to be made available through assessment that must be set and marked by the awarding organisation, and that this be taken in the assessment series immediately prior to certificating for the qualification
- ensuring that the remaining marks that are made available through non-exam assessment are achieved under conditions set by awarding organisations that ensure authenticity and confidence in the results
- ensuring that the approaches awarding organisations use to set standards promote consistency over time, and with other qualifications in similar subject areas

We have taken these decisions to address weaknesses in existing vocational and technical qualifications that could undermine the maintenance of standards and confidence in these qualifications, which are under particular pressure because of their inclusion in performance tables. We received positive responses to many of our proposals from those who engaged with our consultation. Where support was not universal, we have listened and made changes that we feel do not undermine the important improvements that must be made.

We have today also published requirements and guidance to help awarding organisations meet our new Performance Table Qualification Qualification Level Conditions. We expect awarding organisations who want their Technical Awards to be delivered in schools and colleges from September 2021 to submit

assessment strategies over coming months. We will review these submissions and provide advice to the DfE. The DfE will also continue to conduct its own reviews. Decisions about inclusion on performance tables will continue to rest with the Secretary of State for Education. Only those qualifications that are approved for inclusion on performance tables will become subject to our Qualification Level Conditions, and will remain subject to them for as long as they are included on performance tables.

Sally Collier, Chief Regulator, said:

These qualifications play an important role in the education system. We have worked closely with the Department for Education, schools and awarding organisations to make these qualifications more robust while retaining an appropriate degree of flexibility. This will ensure that awarding organisations can design high-quality qualifications that are suitable and motivating for students that will best prepare them for their next stage of learning. In turn, users of these qualifications can be assured that standards are being maintained. We look forward to seeing submissions from awarding organisations over coming months that meet our high expectations and those of schools, colleges, students and others who rely on them.

Duncan Baldwin, Deputy Director of Policy, ASCL, said:

We're pleased that Ofqual recognises how important these qualifications are for many students alongside GCSEs. It's clear that they have listened to schools, particularly in relation to exams being more than just written tests. This new approach will give schools and parents confidence that these are high quality qualifications that will be available for the foreseeable future. We'll work closely with Ofqual and the awarding organisations to make sure schools understand the changes ahead of their introduction.

ENDS.