Department for Education

Discounting and Early Entry Guidance

Guide for local authorities, maintained and independent secondary schools, academies, free schools and FE colleges with 14 to 16 provision

September 2016

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Summary

Discounting ensures that, where a pupil has taken two or more qualifications with an overlap in curriculum, the performance tables only give credit once for teaching a single course of study. The early entry policy (which came into effect on 29 September 2013) means credit is given to the first qualification taken where a pupil has more than one qualification in the same subject.

Discounting is an important part of the Department for Education's secondary school performance measures, defining when the performance points of a qualification are discounted against another so that only one qualification counts.

The discounting system affects the calculation of performance measures for a school in the performance tables and on RAISEonline. It does not alter the awards an individual pupil has achieved or limit the qualifications they can take.

Discounting may be required in a number of situations, for example:

- a pupil resits a qualification before the end of key stage 4, possibly with a different awarding organisation. Discounting then ensures that only one result is counted in the secondary school performance tables calculations and measures

- the school provides a single course of study but then enters the pupil for two or more very similar qualifications. Discounting ensures that the achievement from this single set of teaching hours is counted only once

Discounting is governed by the allocation of discount codes to qualifications with similar curriculum content. Two qualifications will discount if they have the same discount code. Codes may be updated at any time during the year to improve the accuracy of discounting. This can affect the current cycle without prior notice.

Discounting is only applied to qualifications which count in the performance tables. There is a restricted list of qualifications which count in secondary performance tables, and each qualification counts for no more than one. The number of non-GCSEs that can count in the tables is restricted to three.

Expiry or review date

This advice will next be reviewed before September 2017.

Who is this advice for?

This guidance is for:

- local authorities
- school leaders, school staff and governing bodies in all maintained and independent schools, academies, free schools and FE colleges with 14 to 16 provision

Principles of discounting

Once two or more qualifications are known to have the same discount code the following principles are applied to determine which one is discounted:

- if a level 3 qualification is taken in the same subject with the same discount code as a level 1 or level 2 qualification, the lower level qualifications is discounted. For example an AS discounts a GCSE[1]

- where a pupil has more than one qualification in the same subject with the same discount code, only the first one counts (this even applies where the first qualification is level 1 and the second qualification is level 2)

- for qualifications which discount and are taken on the same day, the best result counts. However, schools should not vary the published starting time for an examination if there is a clash between papers of different awarding bodies or specifications in the same subject. For more information please see JCQ instructions here

- where a pupil moves schools in year 9, 10 or 11 and has previously certificated a qualification whilst enrolled at another school this grade is not counted in performance measures *unless* the school chooses not to re-enter the pupil. If the school re-entered the pupil, the grade from that attempt is counted, regardless of whether it is higher or lower than the previous attempt

- where a pupil has certificated a qualification more than three years before the end of key stage 4, the first entry rule does not apply. In most cases this will apply to pupils in years 8 and below. In these cases performance measures count the best grade achieved, either from before the three year cut-off point or the first entry after the cut-off point

Discount codes

A qualification is assigned a discount code on the basis of the subject area it covers. The purpose of a discount code is to group qualifications with similar content together and compare them to the other qualifications with that code.

A list of qualifications that count in the 2016 secondary school performance tables, together with discount codes, can be found here.

Using this, schools can see where two qualifications discount. The list provides descriptions of the discount codes and also covers 2017 and 2018.

[1] See section on AS level exception discounting for further information

Can a pupil take multiple qualifications which discount?

Discounting only applies to the results of a school in the performance tables, not to the qualifications awarded to pupils. There are a number of educational reasons why a pupil might undertake qualifications which discount each other. A common one would be to recognise their progression through a course of study, for example, by taking a GCSE qualification before progressing to an AS level qualification.

In this scenario the AS level would discount the GCSE in the performance tables but the pupil would still get recognition for both.

How is the first entry date defined?

The date of the first (or only) examination for a qualification is taken as the entry date. These dates are used to decide which qualification counts as the first entry. Examination dates are available from the respective exam boards. In cases where exams in the same subject are scheduled for different days in the same series, only the qualification with the earlier exam counts in performance measures.

In cases where qualifications have no formal examination date, the certification date or coursework deadline date is used as the examination date. Further information on these dates can be obtained from the respective exam boards.

Exception discounting

There are occasional situations where discount codes alone are not sufficient to achieve accurate discounting. In these circumstances rules about specific qualifications are applied.

Exception discounting applies in the following circumstances:

- use of mathematics and free standing mathematics qualifications
- mathematics and mathematics linked pair
- English and English language/English literature
- science

Qualifications which count as English, mathematics and science in performance measures are detailed on the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) list which is available here.

The information below provides an overview of the exception discounting process. Examples have been provided to explain how exception discounting is applied.

Timetabling of exams means some of these examples may not occur in practice, but are for illustrative purposes. Qualifications in bold in the tables are ones that count in the performance tables.

Use of mathematics and free standing mathematics qualifications

The AS level use of mathematics is made up of a combination of core units that are not qualifications in their own right and level 3 free standing mathematics qualifications (FSMQs). The FSMQs only count in the performance tables if the AS level use of mathematics qualification result is unclassified.

Please note that the level 1/level 2 free standing mathematics qualifications that contribute to the level 1/level 2 use of mathematics certificate are not on the 2016 list of qualifications that count in the secondary school performance tables. If the level 1/level 2 use of mathematics result is unclassified, these FSMQs do not count in their own right.

Mathematics and mathematics linked pair

Pupils can either take mathematics or the linked pair in methods in mathematics and applications of mathematics. These two 'pathways' discount against each other, and the first qualification that is entered in the mathematics suite of qualifications determines the pathway a pupil is following.

If a pupil's first entry is in mathematics, they would be on the mathematics pathway, and subsequent qualifications taken in methods in mathematics and/or applications of mathematics would be discounted, and would not count in performance tables. If a pupil takes one of the linked pair qualifications first, a later qualification in mathematics would be discounted.

To meet the criteria for the mathematics element in headline Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures in the performance tables, a pupil has to have taken a mathematics qualification listed on the EBacc list. The grade achieved is double weighted in the mathematics slot. If the linked pair is taken, the two results are added together.

To meet the mathematics element of the EBacc and English and mathematics measure a C grade or above needs to be achieved. If the linked pair is taken, the higher grade counts towards these measures. A C grade or above needs to be achieved in at least one of the linked pair. If a pupil only enters for one of the linked pair, no grade is entered for the mathematics element of these measures.

A pupil takes the following:

June 2015 (04/06/2015)	**June 2015 (06/06/2015)**	**June 2016**
Mathematics (D)	Methods in mathematics (B)	Applications of mathematics (A)

Table 1: Mathematics example 1

The first mathematics qualification taken in June 2015 counts in the performance tables as the pupil is on the mathematics pathway, and subsequent qualifications in the linked pairs pathway do not count. Therefore, the pupil does not meet the mathematics element

of the EBacc or the English and mathematics measure as they failed to achieve a C grade. However the qualification will count in other performance measures such as Progress 8 and Attainment 8 (and will be double weighted).

A pupil takes the following:

November 2015	January 2016	June 2016
-	**Methods in mathematics (C)**	Mathematics (A*)

Table 2: Mathematics example 2

The methods in mathematics qualification taken in January 2016 counts in the performance tables as the pupil is on the linked pairs pathway, and subsequent qualifications in mathematics do not count. As the pupil has only taken one of the linked pair, the pupil does not meet the criteria for the mathematics element of the EBacc or the English and mathematics measure. However the qualification will count in other performance measures such as Progress 8 and Attainment 8.

English and English language/English literature

Pupils can either take English or two qualifications in English language and English literature. The discounting principles work in the same way as mathematics and the linked pair, ie if a pupil's first entry is in English, they would be on the English pathway, and subsequent qualifications taken in English language/English literature would be discounted, and would not count in the performance tables. If a pupil takes English language/English literature first, a later qualification in English would be discounted.

To meet the criteria for the English element in headline Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures in the performance tables, a pupil has to have taken an English qualification listed on the EBacc list.The grade achieved is double weighted in the English slot. If English language and English literature are taken, the highest grade is double weighted in the English slot and the other grade can count in one of the open slots.

To meet the English element of the EBacc a C grade or above needs to be achieved. If English language and English literature are taken, a C grade or above needs to be achieved in at least one. If a pupil only enters for one of English language/English literature, no grade is entered for the English element of this measures.

To meet the English element of the English and mathematics measure a C grade or above needs to be achieved. Unlike the EBacc criteria there is no requirement to take both English language and English literature.

A pupil takes the following:

June 2015	January 2016	June 2016
English (C)	English language (A)	English literature (A)

Table 3: English example 1

The English qualification taken in June 2015 counts in the performance tables as the pupil is on the English pathway, and subsequent qualifications in the English language/English literature pathway do not count. The pupil will meet the criteria for the English element of the EBacc and English and mathematics measure, and the grade will be double weighted in the English slot of Progress 8/Attainment 8.

A pupil takes the following:

June 2015	May 2016	June 2016
-	**English literature (B)**	English (A)

Table 4: English example 2

The English literature qualification taken in May 2016 counts in the performance tables as the pupil is on the English language/English literature pathway, and subsequent qualifications in English do not count. As the pupil has not taken English language the pupil does not meet the criteria for the English element of the EBacc. However the English literature grade will count in the English and mathematics measure. It will also count in the English slot of Progress 8/Attainment 8 (but will not be double weighted).

Science

There are three science pathways (shown in Annex A):

- core science, additional science, further additional science
- individual sciences (biology, chemistry, physics[2])
- double/combined science

To meet the criteria for the science element of the EBacc, a pupil must either take:

- core and additional science, and A* to C grades achieved in both
- three individual sciences, and A* to C grades achieved in two
- double science, and A*A* to CC grades achieved

[2] Since 2014 computer science has counted as an individual science in the performance tables. However it can also count alongside core/additional science and double science so it is not involved in science pathway discounting.

The first qualification a pupil enters determines the pathway they are on, and subsequent entries to qualifications from a different pathway do not count in performance tables. For example, if a pupil takes core science, the only science qualifications that can count alongside in performance tables are additional science and/or further additional science. Therefore if a pupil takes core science and then biology subsequently, the biology grade would not count in the performance tables.

A single science qualification can count towards Progress 8/Attainment 8 eg core science can take up one slot and a pupil does not have to take additional science for it to count.

A pupil takes the following:

November 2015	January 2016	June 2016
Biology (C)	Core science (A)	Double science (AA)

Table 5: Science example 1

Only the biology qualification taken in November 2015 counts in the performance tables as the pupil is on the individual sciences pathway, and subsequent qualifications in the core science/additional science pathway or the double science pathway do not count. As this pupil has not taken any other individual sciences, they do not meet the science element of the EBacc. However the biology grade can count towards Progress 8/Attainment 8.

A pupil takes the following:

June 2015	January 2016	June 2016
Core science (A)	Double science (AA)	**Additional science (C)**

Table 6: Science example 2

The core science qualification taken in June 2015 determines that the pupil is on the core science/additional science pathway. Therefore the additional science taken in June 2016 also counts, but the double science taken in January 2016 is discounted. As this pupil has achieved at least a C in both core science and additional science they meet the criteria for science in the EBacc. Both grades can also count towards Progress 8/Attainment 8.

The Pearson BTEC Principles of Applied Science, OCR Cambridge National Certificate in Science and WJEC Level 1/2 Award in Applied Science have the same discount code as core science. If one of these qualifications is taken first, subsequent qualifications in <u>any of the other pathways</u> do not count in the performance tables, and a pupil does not meet the EBacc criteria. However the qualification would be eligible to count in Progress 8/Attainment 8.

A pupil takes the following:

July 2015	January 2016	June 2016
BTEC Principles of Applied Science (Pass)	Core science (A)	Additional science (A)

Table 7: Science example 3

The BTEC qualification taken in July 2015 discounts against all of the science pathways, therefore only the BTEC counts, and the pupil does not meet the science element of the EBacc. The BTEC is eligible to count in Progress 8/Attainment 8.

Some science qualifications, such as computer science and applied science GCSEs are not included in the pathways. These are detailed in the last column in Annex A. This means that while they discount against other qualifications with the same discount code they still count in the performance tables even if taken subsequently to other science qualifications in other pathways.

A pupil takes the following:

November 2015	January 2016	June 2016
Biology (A)	**Chemistry (A)**	**Environmental science (A)**

Table 8: Science example 4

The biology qualification taken in November 2015 determines that the pupil is on the individual sciences pathway, therefore the chemistry also counts. As environmental science is not in a science pathway, it counts alongside the individual sciences as an extra qualification. This pupil does not meet the science element of the EBacc as three individual sciences haven't been taken.

Since 2014, computer science has counted as an individual science in the EBacc. Computer science can also count alongside the core/additional and double science pathways. Therefore if computer science is a pupil's first science qualification it does not determine a pathway, and all three science pathways are still open.

A pupil takes the following:

May 2015	January 2016	May 2016	June 2016
Computer science (A)	**Core science (B)**	Double Science (AA)	**Additional Science (C)**

Table 9: Science example 5

The computer science qualification taken in May 2015 does not determine the science pathway and all pathways are still open. Therefore the science pathway is determined by the next qualification taken, ie the core science in January 2016. Double science is

discounted. The pupil meets the criteria for the science element of the EBacc with the core and additional science results, and computer science also counts.

Moving schools

The early entry policy states that if a pupil previously certificated a qualification whilst enrolled at another school, the grade does not count in performance measures unless the new school chooses not to re-enter the pupil. If the school decides to re-enter the pupil, the grade from that attempt counts, regardless of whether it is higher or lower than the previous attempt.

For exception discounting purposes, this means that if a pupil starts a new pathway at a new school, the previous qualifications are discounted. However, if a pathway is continued, the whole pathway counts.

A pupil takes the following:

Old School	New School
Biology (A)	**Core science (C)**

Table 10: Moving school example 1

As a new pathway has been started at the new school, the biology qualification is discounted.

A pupil takes the following:

Old School	New School
Biology (A)	**Chemistry (C)**

Table 11: Moving school example 2

As the same pathway has been continued at the new school, both qualifications count.

AS level exception discounting in English and mathematics

After early entry discounting has been carried out, exception discounting is carried out across levels for English and mathematics qualifications, ie between AS levels and level 1/level 2 qualifications. The AS level(s) always discount the lower level qualifications as per the first discounting principle. For example, an AS mathematics discounts the GCSE linked pairs in mathematics, and an AS English language and literature discounts GCSE English language and/or GCSE English literature. If a pupil has an AS in English language or English literature and a GCSE English, the AS will count for Progress 8 and Attainment 8 but the pupil will still meet any English specific measures already met by the GCSE ie English component of the EBacc.

AS level exception discounting is not applied to science qualifications. For example, a pupil could have GCSEs in core and additional science and an AS level in an individual science.

If you require more detailed information for a specific situation, please contact the department at Contact us.

Annex A – Science pathway discounting

	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3	Other qualifications discounting all pathways	All other science qualifications
Pathway Name	Individual sciences	Core, additional and further additional	Double/ combined science	Applied science qualifications with the same discount code as core science	
Qualification discount code(s)	RC1 RH3 RD1	RA1B RA1C RA1D	RA1E	RA1B - that are not core science	RA14 CK1* QA3
Qualifications included	Physics (RC1) Biology (RH3) Chemistry (RD1)	Core (RA1B) Additional (RA1C) Further additional (RA1D)	Edexcel L1/2 Certificate (RA1E) AQA Level 1/2 Certificate (RA1E)	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Principles of Applied Science (RA1B) OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Science (RA1B) WJEC Level 1/2 Award in Applied Science (RA1B)	BTECs, for example Pearson BTEC Level 1 Diploma/First Extended Certificate in Applied Science (RA14) OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Science in the Workplace (RA14) Applied science GCSEs (RA14) Computer science or computing GCSEs (CK1*) Any other science qualifications, such as a GCSE in environmental science (QA3)
Pathways discounted	2 and 3	1 and 3	1 and 2	1, 2 and 3	None

* Since 2014 computer science and computing have been included in the science element of the EBacc, and count in addition to the other separate sciences. If computer science is a pupil's first science qualification all available science pathways are still open. For example, a pupil may take the computer science GCSE and then go down the 'core' pathway and take all three 'core' qualifications – in which case all four science qualifications count.

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