



Department
for Education

16-18 Performance Tables Qualifications: amendments for 2028

Guidance

March 2026

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Summary

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help awarding organisations to amend and update 16-18 qualifications which currently count for the 2027 performance tables, prior to inclusion on the list of qualifications counting for 2028 performance tables.

Expiry date

This guidance expires on 30 June 2026

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- Awarding organisations

Background

Before we publish the 2028 list of qualifications that will count towards performance tables, we are opening our annual process for you to submit proposed **minor** amendments to your 16-18 Technical Certificates, Tech Levels and Applied General qualifications already on the [2027 list](#), for example where this is necessary to update content to reflect legislative change.

This year we will do this through a 2-step process:

- the deadline for receipt of **step 1 confirmations** is **Monday 20 March 2026 at 12:00pm**. We welcome early submission of step 1 confirmations.
- the deadline for receipt of **step 2 amendment submissions** is **Monday 10 April 2026 at 12:00pm**. We welcome early submission of qualification amendments. **If we do not receive a Step 1 return from you, we will consider that you have not confirmed your qualifications continue to meet the PTQ criteria and we will remove your qualifications from the 16-18 2028 PTQ list.**

A moratorium has been in place since the 2020 performance table lists were published in 2018, which means that no new vocational or technical qualifications can be added to the list of 16-18 qualifications which count towards performance tables.

In this guidance we will refer to qualifications that count towards performance tables as 'performance table qualifications' (PTQs).

This process **excludes Alternative Academic Qualifications** (AAQs) which have their own change process, which should be used if required.

Removal of funding approval in in 2024-2025 and 2025-2026

Qualifications currently on the 2027 PTQ list that had 16-19 funding approval removed on 31 July 2025 will be removed from the 2028 PTQ list.

Guidance

This guidance details the 2-step process for awarding organisations to:

1. confirm current PTQs for inclusion in the 2028 table.
2. submit proposed amendments for qualifications confirmed for inclusion in the 2028 list.

Step 1: Confirm current PTQs for inclusion in the 2028 PTQ list

We attached a pre-populated form listing your PTQs to the email we sent you informing you of this process. Please check the list is complete and then use the 'Yes' dropdown in one of columns E to I of the form to clearly identify:

- **Option A:** the current PTQs that you confirm should be **included** in the 2028 table and **do not require amendment to continue to meet** all the characteristics of a PTQ.
- **Option B:** the current PTQs that you confirm should be **included** in the 2028 table and **do require amendment to continue to meet** all the characteristics of a PTQ.
- **Option C:** the current PTQs that you confirm should **not be included** in the 2028 table because they **no longer meet** all the characteristics of a PTQ.
- **Option D:** the current PTQs that you confirm should **not be included** in the 2028 table because you withdrew them from operation, or funding approval was withdrawn by DfE, on or before 31 July 2025.
- **Option E:** the current PTQs that you confirm should **not be included** in the 2028 table because you will withdraw them from operation on or before 31 July 2026.

For options **D** and **E**:

- please also insert the operational end date and certification end date in columns J and K.

- it is possible you will have a combination of ‘Yes’ in both **option C** and either **option D** or **E**
- Any **option E** PTQ that you withdraw on or before 31 July 2026 will not be eligible to have funded new starts in 2026 to 2027 count towards performance tables in 2028.

Please note:

- if we **do not receive a Step 1 return** from you, we will consider that you have **not confirmed** your qualifications continue to meet the PTQ criteria and we will remove your qualifications from the 16-18 2028 PTQ list.
- please ensure you capture all your PTQs on the [2027 PTQ List](#) and confirm their status. We will consider any qualifications missing from your form as **not confirmed** as continuing to meet the PTQ criteria and we will remove them from the 16-18 2028 PTQ list.
- there is at present **no facility for qualifications to re-enter** the PTQ list once they have been removed.
- We ask that you complete this form and return it by **12:00pm on Monday 20 March 2026** to: Qualifications.APPROVAL@education.gov.uk.

Please ensure that your email subject title is: **16-18 2028 PTQ Step 1 confirmations [insert awarding organisation name]**.

Step 2: Submit proposed amendments for qualifications confirmed for inclusion in the 2028 list

If you chose **option B in step 1** for any of your PTQs you must submit your amendments to be assessed by the department. You have an extended deadline of **Monday 10 April 2026** to do this.

- See the ‘Amendments and qualifications in scope’ section below for details of the type of amendments accepted.
- See the ‘Evidence’ section below for details of the evidence you need to submit.

You must clearly identify:

- the qualification(s) you are amending.
- the specific changes you propose.
- how the qualification(s) remains compliant with the [characteristics in the 2020 Technical Guidance](#).

The department will review all proposed amendments and decide whether the changes are within scope and if the qualification(s) continues to demonstrate all the [characteristics](#) of a performance table qualification.

Please submit the amendments for each qualification or each suite of related qualifications on a separate email. Where you are amending a suite of qualifications, please can you indicate which amendments are common throughout each qualification in the suite.

All proposed changes to qualifications should be submitted via e-mail to Technical.EDUCATION@education.gov.uk by **12:00pm on Monday 10 April 2026**.

Please ensure that your email subject title is: **16-18 2028 PTQ Step 2 amendments: [insert qualification number and title]**.

If you chose **option A in step 1** but now need to amend your qualification you can also follow this process but should clarify your reasons in the email to us.

If you chose **option C, D or E in step 1**, your qualifications will either:

- be withdrawn from the list of qualifications counting towards performance tables in 2028.
- remain on the list of qualifications counting towards performance tables in 2028 to count for small number, if any, funded enrolments by students who started the qualification concerned in 2024 to 2025 and take over 2 years to complete.

The department intends to inform awarding organisations of the initial outcomes of the review process by August 2026. Please note that this date is dependent on the overall number of qualifications submitted by awarding organisations for review.

If the initial outcome is not to approve the amendments, details of the appeal process will be communicated to awarding organisations in the initial outcome letters. The department intends to inform awarding organisations of the outcomes of the appeal process in late summer 2026. Note that this date is dependent on the overall number of qualifications submitted by awarding organisations for review and appeal.

Amendments and qualifications in scope

Any proposed amendments to a qualification should not be so extensive that it starts to become a new or substantially different qualification. Amendments considered to be too extensive or not compliant with the [2020 Technical Guidance](#) criteria will not normally be accepted, in which case the original qualification will remain on the department's performance tables list.

Please note: If your amended qualification does not have the same qualification number (QAN) on the Ofqual Register as the current qualification it is considered a new qualification and so cannot be included on the 2028 PTQ List.

The baseline for qualifications to be included in 2028 performance tables is that they:

- are on the List of Qualifications approved for funding, showing as approved for 16-19 funding (without being restricted to 18+ only) in 2025 to 2026 and are eligible to be extended into 2026 to 2027 by the department in due course.
- were originally approved for inclusion in 2020 performance tables and were subsequently extended annually into each subsequent year's PTQ list.
- only contain amendments to those qualifications that were approved by the department as part of the annual amendments processes run since September 2018.

Examples of amendments that will be considered are listed below. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, other reasonable proposed changes will be considered.

- **Update to content** – amendments incorporating changes in legislation, changes in trade standards/specifications, reacting to feedback from centres about the content.
- **New content** – the introduction of new units totalling not more than 20% of the number of units in the qualification, the guided learning hours of the new units do not total more than 20% of the qualification's guided learning hours.
- **Changes of assessment methodology** – amendments to bring assessment in line with that of other qualifications in a suite, increasing the percentage of external assessment beyond the minimum level set out in technical guidance, replacing some multiple-choice questions within an assessment with longer-response questions.
- **Name change** – changes to one or two words within the name, reacting to feedback from centres about the name of the qualification.
- **Technological advances** – such as introduction of online assessment or remote invigilation options, with necessary controls and conditions set out.

Please note: Decisions about amendments are within the department's discretion. Where a proposed amendment reflects one of the above listed examples, that will not guarantee that the amendment will be allowed. Each qualification will be reviewed to ensure that the proposed amendments are within scope and that the amended qualification still demonstrates the characteristics of a performance tables qualification, as set out in the 2020 Technical Guidance and in this guidance.

Evidence

For the department to assess the changes fully, please submit the following documentation, with all amendments clearly identified and highlighted using 'tracked changes'.

- **Rationale for the proposed changes** – in particular, the rationale for any amendments to the assessment scheme should be clear.
- **Specification** - showing the amendments in ‘tracked changes’.

Documentation that does not show the amendments in the format required will not be considered and the amendments will not be approved.

If your proposed changes necessitate any amendments to the **purpose statement**, **sample assessment materials**, or **recognition letters**, please also submit those amended documents along with the rationale for the proposed changes and ‘tracked changes’ specification.

For clarification, the department does not provide advice and guidance on the development of assessments or amendments to any parts of an approved qualification. The department will only provide advice on, and clarification of, the required characteristics contained within the 2020 Technical Guidance, and advice on the process for awarding organisations to follow when proposing changes to approved qualifications.

Changes to Step 1 confirmation status and withdrawing qualifications from the 2028 list

If you chose **option A or B in step 1** but now intend to withdraw a qualification you indicated would continue, and do not wish it to count towards performance tables in 2028, please send the details (Qualification Number and Title) to:

Technical.EDUCATION@education.gov.uk, so that the department can remove it when updating our list for publication. Please ensure that your email subject title is: **16-18 2028 PTQ Step 2 withdrawals: [insert awarding organisation name]**.

Alternative Academic qualifications

Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) were added retrospectively to the 2027 PTQ lists. Please complete Step 1 only for these qualifications. We will not accept amendments to these qualifications through Step 2. Instead, you should use the change process for new reformed qualifications.

If the department has already agreed a change to your AAQs which are on the 2027 PTQ list, we will automatically accept this as valid for the 2028 PTQ list and you do not need to re-submit your changes through Step 2 of this process.

AAQs approved for funding for 2026 to 2027 will automatically be added to the 2028 PTQ lists. The department will make further announcements about this in due course.

2028 Key Stage 4 (KS4) Qualifications

Please note the KS4 process is separate from the one described in this 16-18 guidance and is administered by a different team. KS4 colleagues will write to awarding organisations in due course regarding the minor amendments process for 2028 performance tables for KS4 Technical Awards.

Contact

Any enquiries about the submission process should be sent to:

Technical.EDUCATION@education.gov.uk. Please ensure that your email subject title is: **16-18 2028 PTQ amendments enquiry [insert awarding organisation name]**.



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