



# Attainment Statistics (August) [Centre Type] Methodology

This document forms part of the SQA methodology document releases designed to supplement and support our Official Statistics publications.

## Source Data and Definitions

**Entries** in this publication are defined by the recorded statistical qualification entries as extracted annually in July each year as part of the SQA statistical data pertaining to certification entries and awards.

**Attainment** in this publication is defined by:

- **National 2 - National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher, Scottish Baccalaureate and Skills for Work**  
The recorded statistical qualification results as extracted annually in July as part of the SQA statistical data pertaining to certification entries and awards.
- **Awards, National Progressions Awards and National Certificates**  
The recorded statistical qualification results as extracted on a monthly basis as part of the SQA statistical data pertaining to certificated entries between 1<sup>st</sup> August YYYY and 30<sup>th</sup> June YYYY+1 (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021).

**Stage** in this publication is defined by the candidate's recorded stage for the academic year. SQA statistical stage information is calculated using SQA stage information and a data set from the Scottish Government detailing stage for publicly funded and grant aided schools. The reported stage groups cover third, fourth, fifth and sixth year school candidates, Other School candidates (which includes first year, second year and adults attending school), Further Education Colleges, and Other (which covers candidates out with school or college, for example workplace candidates).

**Centre type** in this publication is defined by aggregated SQA centre reference information describing the type of centre.

## Methodology

The development work required to undertake this reporting was undertaken in-house.

**Entries** and **attainment** allocated to a centre of centre\_type (3 or 5) were allocated to 'EA School', (9) to 'FE College', (8 or 10) to 'Independent', and any not assigned to centre\_type (3, 5, 8, 9, or 10) allocated to 'Other'. (Other includes training providers, voluntary sector organisations, HM Armed Forces, prisons, primary schools, amongst others.).

Total entries are calculated for each qualification within selected qualification types contained in the report: National 2 - National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher, Scottish Baccalaureate and Skills for Work.

Total attainment is calculated for each qualification within all qualification types contained in the report: National 2 - National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher, Scottish Baccalaureate, Skills for Work, Awards, National Progressions Awards and National Certificates

For graded qualifications (National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) attainment is reported cumulatively from A to A-D, with No Awards reported separately. For ungraded qualifications (National 2 - National 4, Scottish Baccalaureate, Skills for Work, Awards, National Progressions Awards and National Certificates) attainment is reported as the number of candidates attaining the qualification. The Scottish Baccalaureate also details the number of candidates obtaining the Pass classification 'Distinction'.

Where the qualification can be completed in different language mediums, the combined total entries and attainment are reported:

- 'Mandarin (Traditional)', 'Mandarin (Simplified)' and 'Cantonese' are combined and reported as 'Chinese Languages'.
- 'Mathematics' and 'Matamataig' are combined and reported as 'Mathematics'.
- 'Applications of Mathematics' and 'Gnìomhachas Matamataigs' are combined and reported as 'Applications of Mathematics'.
- 'History' and 'Eachdraidh' are combined and reported as 'History'.
- 'Geography' and 'Cruinn-eolas' are combined and reported as 'Geography'.
- 'Modern Studies' and 'Nuadh-Eolas' are combined and reported as 'Modern Studies'.

Stage is calculated on a candidate basis, not a record basis, for each level. To ensure the most appropriate stage is reported, each records associated stage is allocated a priority level. Only the highest priority level is retained and reported for each candidate at each level.

- Stage 6 is given priority 1 – 'S6'
- Stage 5 is given priority 2 – 'S5'
- Stage 4 is given priority 3 – 'S4'
- Stage 3 is given priority 4 – 'S3'
- Stages 1, 2 and 7 are given priority 5 – 'Other School'
- Stage 10 is given priority 6 – 'FE College'
- Any other stage given priority 7 – 'Other'

For example, a candidate with three National 5 records and one Higher record will be counted once in the National 5 stage table and once in the Higher stage table with the stage retained at each level being based on the prioritisation detailed above.

Full details of the format and content can be found within the 'Tables Format and Content' tab of the publication.

## **Publication History**

The first publication of '*Attainment Statistics (August) Colleges*' took place during September 2010 and has subsequently been published on an annual basis in September.

From 2021 the '*Attainment Statistics (August) Schools*' publication, published on an annual basis in September, is being replaced by two alternative publications '*Attainment Statistics (August) EA Schools*' and '*Attainment Statistics (August) Independent Schools*'.

'*Attainment Statistics (August) Other*' will also be published from 2021 for the first time.

In addition to the '*Attainment Statistics (August) EA Schools*', '*Attainment Statistics (August) Independent Schools*' and '*Attainment Statistics (August) Other*' publications for diet 2020/21, tables pertaining to diets 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 will also be published. Historically these tables have been made available upon request. These will be published on our main statistics page initially and then moved to the archive webpage for the relevant year. A note will remain on the 2021 webpage to indicate that these were published in September 2021 and can be found on the relevant archive webpage.

As such, in future years, only data pertaining to the most recent diet will then be published following the main August Attainment Statistics publications.

## **Processing Notes/Exceptions**

From 2016, Skills for Work and Personal Development courses are reported separately. Personal Development Courses fall within the SQA 'Award' qualifications, previously being part of SQA National Qualification provision.

## **Information Governance Notes**

All of the data in this publication is defined as being 'statistical' for the purposes of information governance and data protection purposes. This primarily means that the associated processing is not carried out for the purposes of measures or decisions with respect to a particular data subject. Please see the appropriate legislation linked at the end of this document for details of this processing category.

## **Statistical disclosure control**

Statistical disclosure control is applied to published tables to ensure that candidate level information cannot be identified.

Historic statistical disclosure control policy was to suppress grade distribution figures for subjects with fewer than five entries, in order that individual candidates cannot be identified. Issues with this approach included that figures could often be "back-calculated" from totals or by combining information across tables.

In August 2021, the statistical disclosure control procedure has been enhanced with additional suppression of figures. The aim of this has been to ensure that disclosure controlled figures cannot be re-calculated. This applies to August 2021 publications and historic tables have not been amended.

## **Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance procedures include the checking of published figures using different statistical programs by individual members of the statistical team.

## References

Data Protection Act 2018, Processing for archiving, research and statistical purposes (Section 19) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/section/19/enacted>