

LAT VA Ready Reckoner FAQs

2010/11 Amended Data v2.0

Date of Issue – 6th March 2012

Publication Intent – Not Protectively Marked

Note – This set of frequently asked questions relates to version 2.0 of the LAT VA Ready Reckoner for 2010/11 Amended Data. To better understand the LAT VA measure in general please refer to the LAT handbook, which is available on the Quality Assurance and Intervention section of the YPLA website <http://www.ypla.gov.uk/aboutus/ourwork/ga/>.

1. Does the ready reckoner replace the LAT reports on the provider gateway?

No. The LAT reports remain the official source of value added scores for a provider.

2. Why does the ready reckoner give a different answer to the Online LAT?

The ready reckoner should give the same answer as the Online LAT reports based on 2010/11 amended data. If you get different results this will be due to one of the following:

- The user having entered a different cohort of learners into the ready reckoner or
- The user entering different prior attainment or outcome attainment data for the learners.

3. There is a warning message shown on the ready reckoner. What does this mean?

A warning message appears if you have entered data for more than 50 subjects or if one of the subject codes you've entered is not recognized. See the warning messages section of the guidance for more information.

4. The spreadsheet shows errors values as #N/A! or #DIV/0!

These error messages should not appear in the ready reckoner. Please download a new version of the spreadsheet from the website and enter data again. If the problem persists please contact the Data Service and supply a copy of the spreadsheet that has the errors in.

5. I can't find the correct qualification and subject codes for the course I run?

The Qual Subj Codes sheet contains a full list of the level 3 graded qualifications that are in scope for the LAT VA ready reckoner. If the qualification is not listed there then it is not covered by the tool. The Batch Prior Attainment Calculator contains a lookup from qualification reference numbers to the LAT VA qualification and subject codes.

6. Will this give the same scores as the 2010/11 amended LAT VA release?

No. The 2010/11 LAT VA amended data release will be based on an updated analysis of national achievement in 2010/11. The ready reckoner uses 2010/11 amended data. Therefore the results will differ, however the ready reckoner should act as a broad guide to performance if you enter 2010/11 data into it.

7. Will Ofsted use results from the ready reckoner in inspections?

To inform inspectors' views on value added (VA) performance, Ofsted will use as primary evidence the latest published LAT VA reports, found on the provider gateway. These reports are based on validated awarding body data.

The LAT VA ready reckoner is an important development as it will provide an institution, for the unpublished year, with a useful 'early sight' of potential LAT outcomes. This information can be used to inform the self assessment process for example, enabling contextual information about prior attainment to be recognised and for supporting the target setting process. It should be noted however, that Ofsted does not use LAT information exclusively and where providers use other VA schemes, these will enable a broader view to be taken of learners' progress.

8. What are the data protection implications of entering the names of learners onto the ready reckoner?

The ready reckoner will work even if the name fields are left blank. If you are concerned about having individual learners identified then you can either leave these fields blank or enter a reference number that only authorised staff will recognize.

9. What does a LAT value added score represent?

A LAT value added score represents the average difference between the actual and expected attainment for learners taking a particular qualification and subject. Where the score is positive this means that learners have, on average, done better than expected when compared to the national average performance for learners with a similar level of prior attainment. Where the score is negative it means that learners have not done as well as the national average performance. The scores are expressed in rebased QCA points. As such a score of +30 for an A level is equivalent to learners doing one grade better than the national average. This would mean where learners with a particular level of prior attainment would be expected to get a C grade elsewhere, at this institution they are likely to get a B grade on average.

10. What are rebased QCA points?

The expected attainment, actual attainment and value added scores in the LAT are shown in rebased QCA points. The grades for each level 3 accredited qualification can be represented by a points score that was originally developed by QCA. However using the standard QCA points score would mean unequal gaps between the lowest achievement possible in a qualification and a fail (always zero points). For this reason, the LAT uses a rebased QCA points system that allows fails to be included in the reporting of outcomes, but which retains the scale and validity of the graded score.

11. How is prior attainment calculated?

The prior attainment score used in the value added calculation is

- For 16 and 17 year olds - the average attainment of level 2 qualifications and below achieved up to age 15
- For 18 year olds - the average attainment of level 2 qualifications and below achieved up to age 16

For most learners the prior attainment score is principally based on achievement at GCSEs and will represent the average QCA points of all GCSEs they have taken. Where learners have taken other courses at level 2 or below such as GNVQs these are included in the calculation with each qualification type weighted to take account of differing size. For example a single GNVQ has a size of 4 and a GCSE has a size of 1. There is a Prior Attainment Calculator that is available in the LAT section of the Provider Gateway (<https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk/>).

12. Is it possible to add extra features to the ready reckoner?

If you have any feedback on the ready reckoner, including suggestions for additional functionality, please contact the Data Service's Service Desk. See the Support And Feedback section for contact details.

13. Parts of the spreadsheet are hidden or locked how do I get access to these?

Parts of the ready reckoner spreadsheet have been hidden or locked to avoid users accidentally over-writing formulas and causing the tool to give incorrect answers. As such any user trying to expose hidden parts of the spreadsheet does so at their own risk and we cannot take responsibility for any issues that may occur once this has been done.

However, since we are aware that some users may be keen to get a better understanding of the value added calculation by looking at how the ready reckoner works we have not included any passwords on the spreadsheet. Please note that we do not intend to give technical support on unhiding, unpicking or explaining the inner workings the ready reckoner tool.

14. The ready reckoner will not take more than 1000 records and my institution has more than that. How do I fit all my data into it?

Where you have more records than will fit into the ready reckoner enter each qualification into a separate copy of the tool. So A levels would go into one copy, AS levels into another and so on. If you have more than 1,000 aims within a particular qualification type, for example you have 2,000 AS level records, then you will have to split this data across multiple copies of the spreadsheet and will only be able to see scores for individual subjects and not for the overall qualification.