

Data & assessment Q&A

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[What do WT/WA/WB mean in Years 7-9?](#)

WT stands for **Working Towards**, WA for **Working At** and WB for **Working Beyond**. We brought in these attainment descriptors for several reasons. We wanted to have continuity from primary school. AHS has over 70 primary feeder schools, the majority of which use descriptors similar to these. We want Years 7-9 to be about students learning new skills, gaining new knowledge, working out how they learn best and focusing on how to improve. We feel that grades/marks can distract from this process as students become fixated on them to the detriment of any feedback given. The **WA** is where we expect AHS students to be in each subject, in each year group, it is specific to our school. If a student is given a **WT** descriptor, it doesn't mean that they are failing, rather it means that they haven't yet hit the requirements of the **WA** descriptor. **WB** means that a student has gone beyond where we would expect them to be.

[How do the 1-4 engagement grades work?](#)

In contrast to the attainment descriptors and LAGs, where there are different systems in different year groups, the engagement grades are the same across the whole school. Teachers give one engagement grading of 1-4 once a term for work done in class, and one for homework. The data report letter explains what the descriptors mean; what is expected of a Year 7 is obviously not the same as for a Year 13, but the descriptors do take this into account. Teachers read the descriptors and apply them according to a policy of best fit. Our expectation is for a 2. Where students receive a 3 or a 4, this will be followed up internally. Students can, of course, achieve a 1. Judging the amount of effort that goes into homework is obviously difficult to do, but what is possible is assessing if it is always done, is it on time, what is its quality, and then, higher up the school, does it show evidence of extra reading/effort.

[How is data checked/followed up internally?](#)

Heads of Department check the data for their own subject areas. They do this to see if there are any differences between different classes, and, where there are, they investigate them. At departmental meetings data is regularly discussed to ensure that everybody is working to the same criteria. We use

a data analysis tool in school to help do this in more depth. Heads of Department can also see the data for other departments to see how it compares. Heads of Year also get involved in the process. Where there are any issues, subject teachers, heads of department, tutors or heads of year will have follow up conversations with students, depending on the nature of the issue. At least once a year we hold a 'data summit' for each year group. At these meetings members of the leadership team responsible for data analysis, heads of year, the SENDCO and school safeguarding lead discuss the data from different points of view, and again there are interventions with students as appropriate.

How should I read the termly data sheets?

Students receive either an attainment descriptor (WT/WA/WB) or a LAG and two engagement grades each term. By the summer term, the table has been filled, i.e. the data from the previous two terms can still be seen for comparison. When it comes to the engagement grades, we expect a grade 2. If this is what students are achieving, this is fine. If they get 1s, that is fantastic, but we are perfectly happy with 2s. It is natural for students to have more interest in some subjects than others, and getting 1s for both categories for all subjects isn't realistic. If there is a drop off in engagement, this would be followed up in school, but is also something that students can talk about with their parents. The attainment descriptors/LAGs can also go up or down and can also be the starting point for conversations with parents. The LAGs can be compared to the target grades for either GCSE or A Level, which the students themselves were involved in setting (see below). If parents/students don't understand any of the engagement grades/LAGs/attainment descriptors they have been given, they can of course ask teachers in class, or contact them to ask for an explanation.

What are LAGs?

LAGs are Likely to Achieve Grades. When students are in Years 10-11, and then 12-13, they receive 5 LAGs over the 5 full terms they are in school for those courses. These are the grades that teachers think students are likely to achieve, if they carry on working in the same way, by the end of the course, GCSE or A Level. They can be full grades, e.g. an 8 at GCSE or an A at A Level, or split if the evidence available to teachers isn't entirely conclusive, e.g. a 7/8 at GCSE or a B/A at A Level. Students don't know all the content and skills required to complete either GCSEs or A Levels until they have completed the courses. Teachers use their professional judgement to allocate LAGs, taking into account progress in class, homework, tests and assessments, in addition to comparable progress with previous cohorts of students. This is where our internal data analysis tools come in very helpful. These LAGs can go up or down depending on how students progress. They should be more accurate towards the end of the courses, as teachers have increasing amounts of information to go on.

Why are there no LAGs in Years 7-9?

In 2022-23 the school moved away from having GCSE style 9-1 grades from Year 7-9. We did this because we felt that we wanted students to concentrate much more on acquiring skills and knowledge, on how to improve and, most importantly, to enjoy their subjects in Years 7-9. It is also the case that, for some subjects, the curriculum requirements in Years 7-9 are very different from the GCSE requirements of those subjects, and therefore allocating grades wasn't very realistic. We want students in Years 7-9 to focus on how to improve, without worrying about GCSE style grades that aren't 'real' until Years 10-11, when they have started their GCSE courses.

How are targets set for students in Years 10&11?

When students are in Year 6, the majority of them do SATs. These tests are used not only to see how they are doing at primary school, but also to predict what they will get at GCSE level. Their performance on the Reading and Maths is compared to that of many thousands of students who went before them and used to come up with targets. We feel it is important to involve our students in the target setting process, so we share their data profiles with them, but then they are able to set their own aspirational targets (ASTs). Many schools just assign targets to students whereas we want them to be more involved in the process. Engaging students in the data is one reason, but we feel it is also important to recognise that a student's data profile doesn't reflect an ability or interest in a subject. It might also be the case that students worked harder at GCSE for the subjects they were planning to take, and yet their data profile involved all of their subjects. Students are encouraged to take all of this into account, and then they have a meeting with their form tutor to discuss the individual subject grades. These grades have no bearing on LAGs or GCSE grades, rather they are used as a tool for students to challenge themselves and to have useful discussions with their tutors about their courses. For students who were in Year 6 in 2019-20 or 2020-2021 there were no SATs. All students who join us in Year 7 do CATs (Cognitive Aptitude Tests) in the first few weeks. These tests are also used to give targets and we cross reference them with the SAT results for greater reliability. If students joined us late in Year 7, or subsequently in Years 8/9/10, they then also sit CATs and are able to fully engage in the process. For those students who didn't do SATs, we exclusively use the CATs.

How are targets set for A Level students?

The grades that students get for their GCSEs are compared with the grades that many thousands of students before them got for their GCSEs in the same subjects. (Not just at AHS but across the whole country). The data is then crunched and predictions are made for each student in each subject. Even when students get 10 grade 9s at GCSE, it doesn't guarantee A* predictions across the board. This might seem strange, but it is based upon the fact that A Levels are difficult and that for students to get the very top grades, which our students frequently do in all subjects, they have to make better than the expected progress. We feel it is important to involve our students in the target setting process, so we share their data profiles with them. We talk them through what these data profiles mean and then they are able to set their own aspirational targets (ASTs). Many schools just assign targets to students whereas we want them to be more involved in the process. Engaging students in the data is one reason, but we feel it is also important to recognise that a student's data profile doesn't reflect an ability or interest in a subject. It might also be the case that students worked harder at GCSE for the subjects they were planning to take, and yet their data profile involved all of their subjects. Students are encouraged to take all of this into account, and then they have a meeting with their form tutor to discuss the individual subject grades. These grades have no bearing on LAGs or UCAS grades, rather they are used as a tool for students to challenge themselves and to have useful discussions with their tutors about their courses.

How do we calculate UCAS grades, and are they final?

UCAS grades are given out at the end of the summer term. These are the predicted grades which we send to universities when students are applying for places. Year 12 students do exams in the summer term, and these exams do of course play a role in the allocation of the UCAS grades. However, classwork, homework and other assessments from the whole year are taken into account when teachers make their decisions. UCAS grades, unlike LAGs, cannot be split. Teachers are encouraged to be 'realistically optimistic' about these grades i.e. if a teacher has given a split LAG of B/A they

would probably give a UCAS predicted grade of an A. It is important to our reputation that our predicted grades are respected, i.e. if universities know that our predictions are made properly, they are more likely to take them seriously. UCAS grades can be changed in the autumn term if teachers feel that the appropriate progress has been made and can be evidenced.

What grades do students achieve for GCSE at AHS?

The average grade students at AHS achieve at GCSE across all subjects is a grade 7. This is a very high average, and illustrates just how much progress students make across all subjects.

What grades do students achieve for A Level at AHS?

The average grade students at AHS achieve at A Level is a grade B. This is a very high average, and again illustrates just how much progress students make across all subjects. Students achieve up to and including A* grades in all the different subjects that we offer. The grades students achieve mean that a very high percentage of them are able to accept their first choice university offers.

How are students assessed in Years 7-9?

The emphasis in Years 7-9 is on progress and enjoyment; however, students are still assessed both summatively and formatively. Students can expect to have end of unit tests to check understanding and the feedback from those tests will allow students to see how they can improve. These end of unit tests can vary considerably from subject to subject, from a listening test in French to an algebra test in Maths. Students will be informed of what is in the tests and the skills/content they need to learn to be able to perform well in them. We do not have end of year exam weeks, rather students are assessed at the appropriate times during the course of the year as decided by each subject area. The marks that students receive might be out of 10 or 20, they might be percentages, or they might be WT/WA/WB grades. This will be decided as appropriate by each department.

How are students assessed in Years 10-11?

Students will still be assessed both summatively and formatively when they start their GCSEs. They will be guided over the duration of their courses as to what they will be assessed on and how this will be done in each subject. There is a formal Year 10 exam week in the summer term where grades 9-1 are given. Grades 9-1 may be given at other times during the course of the year depending on the department. What must be borne in mind is the fact that grades are only really 100% applicable at the end of a course - teachers use their professional judgement, moderate work internally and use exam board guidance when deciding on interim grades. Once in Year 11, students have a mock exam period shortly after the Christmas holidays. This will highlight strengths and areas to focus on for the remainder of their time in school. All departments provide access to past papers and guidance on exam technique.

How are students assessed in the Sixth Form?

Students will continue to be assessed both summatively and formatively once they start their A Levels. Students will once again be guided through their courses by their subject teachers, a principle

difference at A Level being smaller class sizes which allow for greater student-teacher interaction. In November of the first autumn term, students have a formal assessment point which we call November tests. These tests act as a useful way of highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. By this time students should have settled into their courses and know what to expect from the types of assessment they will face. At the end of the summer term they have a formal exam period. At this time they are given grades A*-E for their performance. These grades help to inform the UCAS grades which students need to get into university. They are not the only factor however. Students' performance in tests, assessments, homework and class work will also play a role in the decision making process. In the spring term of Year 13 just before the February half term, students will sit mock exams which are also graded. The information gleaned from these exams will allow students to focus on key areas ahead of their real exams in May and June.