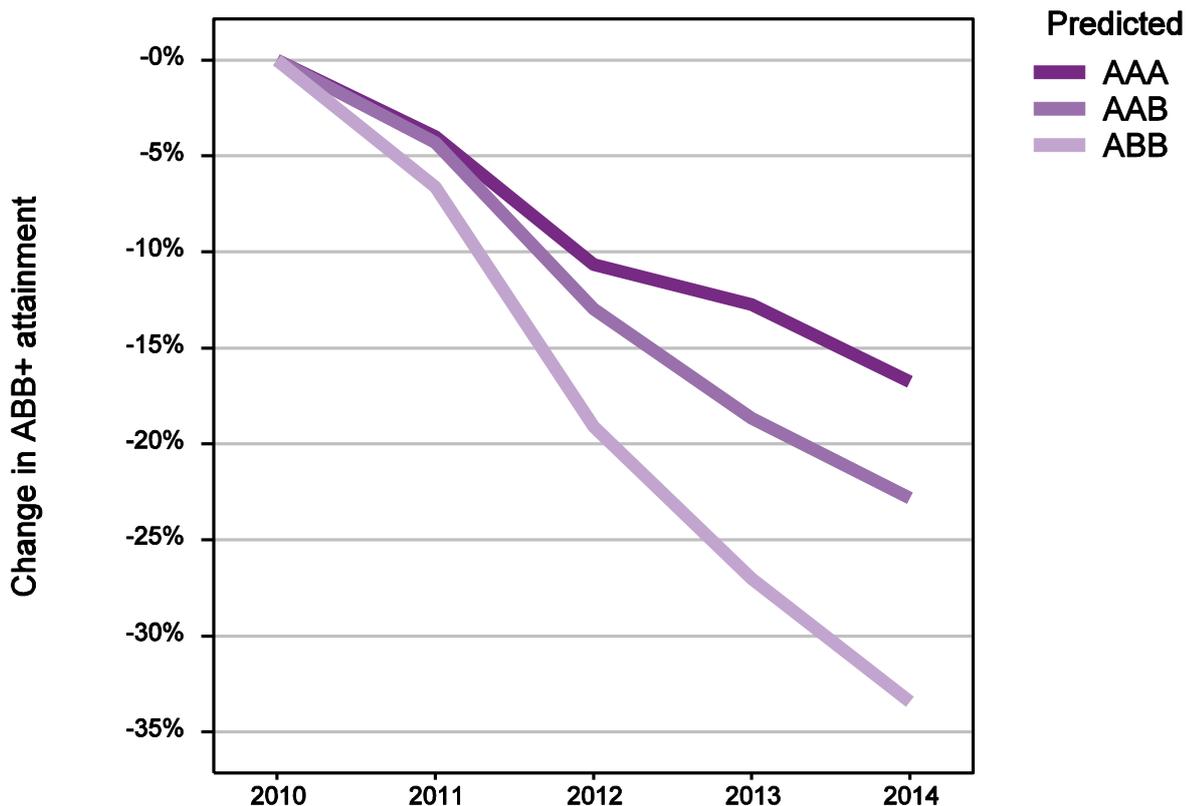




Achieved A level grades fall against predictions in 2014

More than a quarter of 18 year old UCAS applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales are usually predicted to achieve A level grades of exactly AAA, AAB or ABB. The chance of achieving ABB or higher grades has fallen in each cycle since 2010 for all these predicted grade profiles. In 2014 the chances of achieving ABB or higher fell by a further 5 per cent proportionally for the AAA and AAB predicted grade profiles and 9 per cent for the ABB grade profile. Compared to 2010, applicants predicted these grade profiles are between 17 per cent (AAA) and 33 per cent (ABB) less likely to achieve ABB or higher grades.

Figure 1: Proportional change since 2010 in chance of achieving A level grades of at least ABB (or equivalent) for selected predicted grade profiles (18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales)



Most 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales apply to UCAS with predicted A level grades (79 per cent in 2014). Three commonly predicted A level grade profiles are AAA, AAB and ABB. As a set these cover more than one quarter of all 18 year old applicants from these countries.

Predicted grades are a measure of an applicant's potential when they apply, the achieved A level grades are often lower than the predicted grades. Whether applicants achieve A level grades of ABB (or their point equivalent) can be used as a common fixed measure of actual attainment across these grade profiles.

In 2014, 67 per cent of those predicted AAA achieved ABB or higher; for those predicted AAB, 41 per cent achieved ABB or higher; and for those predicted ABB 19 per cent achieved ABB or higher.

The chance of achieving this ABB or higher level from each of these predicted grade profiles has been reducing since 2010. Those predicted AAA were 17 per cent less likely to achieve ABB or higher in 2014 than those predicted the same grade profile in 2010. For those predicted AAB the proportional fall in achievement of ABB or higher grades over this period was 23 per cent, and for those predicted ABB, 33 per cent.

The chance of achieving ABB or higher grades has fallen in each cycle since 2010 for all three predicted grade profiles. In 2014 the chances of achieving ABB or higher grades fell, proportionally, by 5 per cent for the AAA and AAB predicted grade profiles and 9 per cent for the ABB grade profile.

1. The predicted grade profiles are based on the best three A level grades predicted for applicants by their schools or colleges.
2. The achievement of A level grades of ABB or higher is determined from the best three grades that an applicant achieves, not necessarily the three subjects used for the best three predicted grades. ABB or higher grades is determined by whether the total grade points achieved by an applicant from the best three A levels is equal to higher than 13 (one A level grade = 1 point).
3. Applicants who have applied by the January deadline are used for the analysis. Achieved A levels are measured through those supplied through the Awarding Body Linkage to UCAS. For 2014 achievement is measured at 5 days after A level results, for other cycles the A level grades are those recorded at the end of the cycle. In previous cycles there has been no material change in the patterns shown resulting from the small number of A level grades received after the 2014 reference point but before the end of the cycle.
4. The 2013 End of Cycle report shows a similar analysis of achievement against predicted grades. The achievement levels reported there are different for some grade profiles since A* grades were treated as A grades to enable a longer time series. This analysis treats A* and A grades as distinct.
5. The numbers and proportions of English, Northern Ireland and Welsh UCAS 18 year old applicants achieving ABB or higher at A level are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number, proportion and change in proportion of 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales achieving ABB or higher A level grades for selected best three predicted grade profiles

	Best 3 predicted A level grades	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of applicants	AAA	30,000	26,890	25,120	26,390	23,880
	AAB	20,660	20,260	20,460	21,070	21,510
	ABB	20,120	20,420	19,600	20,220	20,960
Number achieving ABB or higher grades	AAA	24,300	20,910	18,190	18,660	16,100
	AAB	10,970	10,290	9,450	9,090	8,810
	ABB	5,760	5,460	4,540	4,220	3,990
Proportion achieved ABB or higher grades	AAA	81%	78%	72%	71%	67%
	AAB	53%	51%	46%	43%	41%
	ABB	29%	27%	23%	21%	19%
Proportional change since 2010 in proportion achieving ABB or higher grades	AAA	0%	-4%	-11%	-13%	-17%
	AAB	0%	-4%	-13%	-19%	-23%
	ABB	0%	-7%	-19%	-27%	-33%