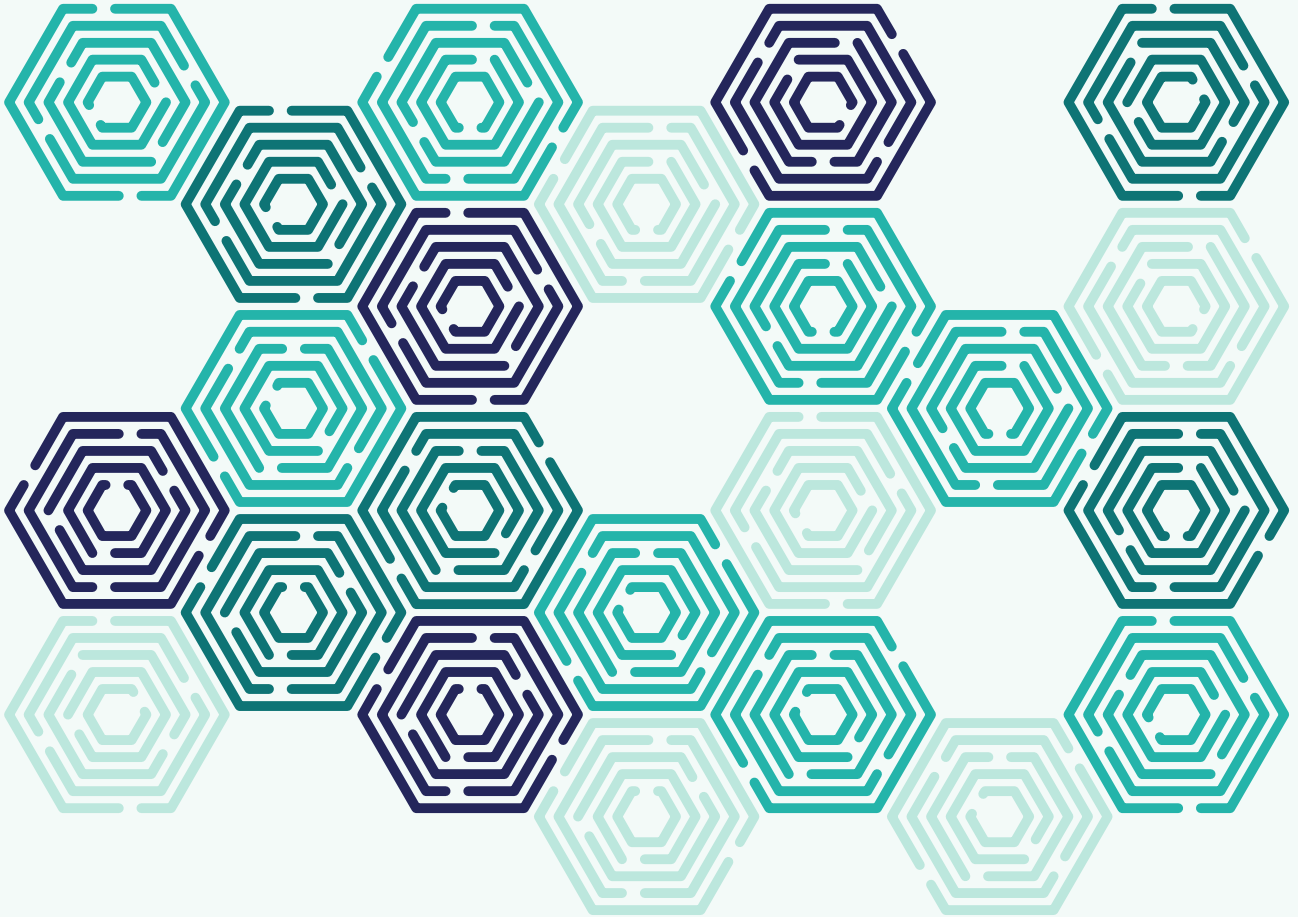




**EngineeringUK**

INSPIRING FUTURES TOGETHER



# ENGINEERINGUK PRIORITY SCHOOLS APPROACH

Academic year 2024/25

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# Background to Priority Schools Approach

EngineeringUK's vision is that **the UK has the diverse workforce needed for engineering and technology to thrive and to drive economic prosperity, improve sustainability and achieve net zero.**

The engineering workforce could and should be much more diverse, for example: women make up just 15.7% of the engineering workforce, compared to 56% across other sectors; 12.4% of the engineering workforce are from a UK minority ethnic group, compared to 16% across other sectors; 13.6% of the engineering workforce are disabled, compared to 18%; and 24% are from a lower socioeconomic background, compared to 26%. It will be impossible to resolve the homogeneity of the engineering workforce without drawing in new entrants and we know that potential future engineers coming up through the education system are increasingly diverse. For example, the proportion of those taking engineering-related apprenticeships that are female or UK minority ethnic has increased since 2014.

## **Priority Schools (formerly known as EDI Criteria) Pilot and Outcomes (2020/21 Academic Year)**

In Autumn 2020, EngineeringUK developed a set of 'EDI Criteria' to identify schools that we would prioritise for our programmes in order to reach more young people from groups under-represented in engineering. In the first year that we applied this approach, it led to an increase in the proportion of schools accessing our programmes who met these criteria (now known as 'Priority Schools'). Since then this has remained consistent for several years- for all EngineeringUK programmes the proportions of Priority Schools who participate are now at least approximately in line with the national proportion of Priority Schools (47%-54%) and in most of the programmes this is above the national proportion. More importantly, analyses of the demographic profile of the young people who participated shows that when working with Priority Schools, there were higher proportions of young people from UK minority ethnic backgrounds, those eligible for Free School Meals, disabled young people and those with special educational needs.

## **Priority Schools Approach Iterations**

The approach for secondary schools has remained consistent since the approach was established, with one exception— with the under-representation of females in mind, in 2021/22 we sought to ensure that the Priority Schools approach included girls schools who meet the FSM and UK minority ethnic criteria at a lower threshold (see below for details). By making this minor change, we ensured that the approach reached schools where a proportion of the girls also have intersectionality of being from a lower socio-economic group or from a UK minority ethnic background.

In 2023/24, we also introduced a criteria for primary schools. We tested taking the same approach as secondary schools, and this yielded similar results. This approach has worked well in 2023/24, and so we are continuing with the same for 2024/25. We will continue to review the criteria for both primary and secondary schools to ensure it is working, and make any necessary amends as required.

## Priority Schools Selection

Whilst it is noted that there will be regional variations in the data provided below, it was decided that using national statistics was the best approach as EngineeringUK focusses on the national picture – aiming to improve the diversity of the engineering workforce in the UK, rather than on a region-by-region basis.

## Participant Level Data Collection

As outlined above, in addition to school data, we have also collected data on the demographics of students who participate in our programmes, to understand whether we are engaging with young people from groups under-represented in engineering. An example of the types of questions asked is available here: [Demographic Question Data Bank](#)

# Secondary school criteria

We consider a school to meet our criteria for being a Priority School if they are:

- Equal to or above national average in both Free School Meals (FSM) and proportion of UK minority ethnic students (middle column)

or

- Equal to or above one of the 'significantly above average' criteria (right hand column)

	National Average (median)	Significantly above average
<b>England</b>		<b>(Top 30% FSM<sup>1</sup>, Top 25% UK minority ethnic students)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	≥ 24.3%	≥ 32.5%
UK minority ethnic students	≥ 28%	≥ 59%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location	-	rural settlement (less than 10,000 people), sparse area <sup>2</sup>
<b>Wales</b>		<b>(Top 25% FSM, Top 25% UK minority ethnic students)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	≥ 17.7%	≥ 26.7%
UK minority ethnic students	≥ 9.4%	≥ 17.6%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location	-	(Data unavailable – identify this manually)
<b>Scotland</b>		<b>(Top 25% FSM, Top 5% UK minority ethnic students)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	≥ 16.1%	≥ 22.8%
UK minority ethnic students	≥ 12.1%	≥ 21.2%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location		settlement of less than 10,000 people with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
<b>Northern Ireland</b>		<b>(Top 40% FSM, no ethnicity data available)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	-	≥ 28.5%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location	-	(Data unavailable – identify manually)

<sup>1</sup> 30% FSM used in England so address regional disparity

<sup>2</sup> For a full definition of sparse according to the ONS 2011 Urban Rural classification, please see:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/239477/RUC11methodologypaperaug\\_28\\_Aug.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239477/RUC11methodologypaperaug_28_Aug.pdf)

For reference (these percentages do not include special schools as 100% of special schools meet the criteria):

- 49% of secondary schools in England meet the criteria
- 60% of secondary and middle schools in Wales meet the criteria
- 40% of post-primary schools in Northern Ireland meet the criteria
- 63% of secondary schools in Scotland meet the criteria

## Gender

Single-sex girls schools who have above average proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals OR above average proportions of students from UK minority ethnic backgrounds meet the criteria. This is a lower threshold than for other mainstream schools in order to prioritise schools which have 100% girls of whom a high proportion are also from lower socio-economic groups or UK minority ethnic backgrounds.

**Programme participants from co-ed schools should be at least 50% female unless there is a good case otherwise.**

# Primary school criteria

We consider a school to meet our criteria for being a Priority School if they are:

- Equal to or above national average in both Free School Meals (FSM) and proportion of UK minority ethnic students (middle column)

or

- Equal to or above one of the 'significantly above average' criteria (right hand column)

	National Average (median)	Significantly above average
<b>England</b>		<b>(Top 30% FSM<sup>3</sup>, Top 25% UK minority ethnic students)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	≥ 20.5%	≥ 30.9%
UK minority ethnic students	≥ 22%	≥ 49%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location	-	rural settlement (less than 10,000 people), sparse area <sup>4</sup>
<b>Wales</b>		<b>(Top 25% FSM, Top 25% UK minority ethnic students)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	≥ 17.6%	≥ 30.3%
UK minority ethnic students	≥ 31.8%	≥ 38.4%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location	-	(Data unavailable – identify this manually)
<b>Scotland</b>		<b>(Top 25% FSM, Top 5% UK minority ethnic students)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	≥ 13.6%	≥ 27.7%
UK minority ethnic students	≥ 13.5%	≥ 23.0%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location		settlement of less than 10,000 people with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
<b>Northern Ireland</b>		<b>(Top 40% FSM, no ethnicity data available)</b>
Free School Meal Eligibility*	-	≥ 26.6%
SEND students	-	SEN schools/PRU
Rural Location	-	(Data unavailable – identify manually)

<sup>3</sup> 30% FSM used in England so address regional disparity

<sup>4</sup> For a full definition of sparse according to the ONS 2011 Urban Rural classification, please see:

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For reference (these percentages do not include special schools as 100% of special schools meet the criteria):

- 48% of primary schools in England meet the criteria
- 61% of primary schools in Wales meet the criteria
- 40% of primary schools in Northern Ireland meet the criteria
- 61% of primary schools in Scotland meet the criteria

## **Gender**

Single-sex girls schools who have above average proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals OR above average proportions of students from UK minority ethnic backgrounds meet the criteria. This is a lower threshold than for other mainstream schools in order to prioritise schools which have 100% girls of whom a high proportion are also from lower socio-economic groups or UK minority ethnic backgrounds.

Programme participants from co-ed schools should be at least 50% female unless there is a good case otherwise.