

# Scoring at EXPLORE - an explanation

Dear EXPLORERS,

A number of you have had questions about your marks for each sprint and what they mean. This communication is meant to address those questions (and hopefully answer one or two you didn't know you had).

- How do I get marks and what do they mean?

At EXPLORE the Data Science qualification is aligned with SETA, meaning that when you have successfully finished with the course, you will have an NQF 5 accredited qualification. Since the course is SETA accredited, you don't "pass" or "fail". You are found either "competent" or "not yet competent" in a given area, or "unit standard". The trains, tests and predicts are built to align with these unit standards.

In each Sprint, there are a set number of belt points available. These points are divided among Trains, Tests and Predicts and align with the various unit standards. Your overall sprint score is an indication of the proportion of available belt points you have gained for that sprint (i.e. a score of 70% means that you have gained 70% of the points for that Sprint).

As you go through the course and complete the material, you accumulate points in unit standards. You need to accumulate enough points to be deemed "competent". An overall "competent" mark equates to about **70% (or approximately 460)** of the belt points available in the fundamentals phase. However, this is the bare minimum and we expect the majority of our students will perform much better than this.

- So if I don't get 70% for the fundamentals phase, does that mean I fail the course? Will I be kicked out if I do badly in any sprint?

Not at all! Belt points are cumulative, so if you do not have enough belt points at the end of fundamentals, you will have plenty of opportunity to accumulate more through the machine learning phase (the second six months) to make up the shortfall.

Therefore, you cannot "fail" a sprint and you will not be kicked out of the course. In the unlikely event that you do not accumulate the required points throughout the entire course, you will not get an accredited qualification, but will still get a certificate of completion stating the tools and techniques that you have experience with.

- Does that mean that any belt points above the required amount are meaningless?

No. Your accumulated belt points are also used to calculate your belt level, which is indicative of your mastery of the content. The scales are as follows:

Belt colour	Score (total accumulated belt points)
White:	<15%
Yellow:	>15%
Orange:	>30%
Green:	>40%
Blue:	>50%
Brown:	>65%
Red:	>80%
Black:	>90%

Your belt level will also be displayed on your certificate, so it's in your best interest to do as well as you can, especially if you want to wow future employers.

- So then how do I track my progress?

Your current belt level and belt score (accumulated total of belt points so far) can be found under your profile in Athena. This is the best indicator of your progress. The EGAD diagram shows the proportion of the **total** available belt points that you have earned for each EXPLORE basic pillar of Data Science (Explain, Gather, Analyse, Deploy). This is purely for your own enlightenment, to give you an idea of where your own strengths lie, but otherwise has no bearing on your marks.

- Great! Can you tell me how many points each thing is worth so I know what to focus on?

We're reluctant to share exact point allocations and weightings for each piece of content. This is because we want to discourage "point chasing" and gaming of the system. Many an EXPLORER has found themselves in a difficult place because they spent too much time maximizing belt points and too little time understanding the material.

However, a VERY rough breakdown is as follows: 33% of points go to Trains, 33% to tests and 33% to the Predict. This will change slightly depending on the sprint and its requirements but holds more or less true throughout.

- Help! My points went up/down/disappeared/blew up/took my dog and left in the night!

Athena is a complex beast with lots of calculations going on in the background. Occasionally we may also have to slightly change belt point allocations due to errors with tests or submission or other administrative gremlins. As such, your belt point totals may vary slightly from time to time. If you notice a big change or feel that something is wrong, you are welcome to reach out to us at [online@explore-ai.net](mailto:online@explore-ai.net) and we will do what we can to help.

- Thanks for the info, but you didn't address (insert important thing here).

We're sure we've forgotten something, so if you have any burning questions around this, feel free to reach out to us at [online@explore-ai.net](mailto:online@explore-ai.net) and we will do our best to give you an accurate and honest answer.