

# Office for Students postcode look-up tool

## Change notes

This data release was published in January 2020. It supersedes the previous postcode look-up tool published in September 2019.

### Summary of changes

1. We have now added 55,891 Northern Ireland postcodes. The use of these postcodes is licenced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.
2. We have added an extra field that lists postcodes with spaces.
3. We have added an extra field which shows the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics 2 (NUTS2) area for each postcode (based on May 2019 Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory, or ONSPD, data) in order to assist users with subsetting the data.

Postcodes with blank or 'reused' Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) and Census Area Statistics wards (CAS wards), and those with MSOAs and CAS wards that did not match the May 2019 Office for National Statistics Postcode Lookup (ONSPL), and ONSPD files were not assigned to a NUTS2 region for the following reasons:

- Unlike our area-based measures, in which we assign an MSOA/CAS ward a quintile, then assign postcodes within these areas that quintile, postcodes were assigned NUTS2 areas directly and not via MSOAs or CAS wards. This is because choosing one geography over the other (MSOA over CAS ward, or vice versa) is impossible.
- NUTS2 areas have changed boundaries across the six years of historical data used for the postcode look-up and assigning postcodes to the NUTS2 region that they belonged to in the same year of data we use to assign their MSOA/CAS ward doesn't produce sensible and consistent results.

There are still a small number of postcodes within certain MSOAs and CAS wards that belong to a NUTS2 area that is different to all other postcodes in their respective MSOA or CAS ward. This is because NUTS2 areas are based on different hierarchies to MSOAs and CAS wards. Out of the all postcodes that were assigned to a NUTS2 region, there are 116 postcodes in five MSOAs and 91 postcodes in seven CAS wards which differ from the majority of postcodes within those MSOAs and CAS wards.

4. We have added CAS wards and MSOA names to the data file.

CAS ward names are based on official Office for National Statistics (ONS) data.

MSOA names for the four constituent countries in the UK are assigned in the following ways:

- Names for England and Wales are based on unofficial data published by the House of Commons Library. The names are not intended to supplant any names that might already be used locally but to make MSOA data easier to interpret and present. More information about these can be found on: <https://visual.parliament.uk/msoanames>.
  - Names for Scotland are obtained from the ONS geography portal and refer to the names given to intermediate zones in Scotland in 2001 (as they are the geographical units used in determining POLAR4 and TUNDRA quintiles).
  - Names for Northern Ireland are also obtained from the ONS geography portal and refer to the names given super output areas (SOAs) in Northern Ireland in 2011 (once again, as they are the geographical units used in determining POLAR4 and TUNDRA quintiles).
5. The Postcode\_status field has been changed to indicate whether a postcode has been terminated.
  6. The postcode look-up on our website has been updated to display results for Northern Ireland postcodes. However, for licencing reasons, only MSOA and CAS wards boundaries are displayed and specific postcodes locations are not shown.
  7. Gaps GCSE and Gaps GCSE Ethnicity quintiles have been changed to say 'NA' rather than 'Removed' when a postcode is outside England.
  8. On very rare occasions some postcodes may appear to be outside of their CAS wards boundaries in the postcode look-up. This is caused by changes in CAS ward geographical boundaries used for the development of POLAR3, Gaps and Adult HE area based measures. More information about the affected CAS wards can be found on: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2001censusandearlier/dataandproducts/correctionstotableandproducts/generalissuesandcorrections>.