

SAFAL Reports FAQs

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FAQs on Proficiency Scales and Scaled Scores



Illustrative example of SAFAL proficiency scale

1. What is a proficiency scale?

A proficiency scale in student assessments is like a structured system to measure a student's skill levels. It helps readers understand how well students have mastered certain skills or knowledge. It is like a ladder with different steps, where each step represents a progression from basic to more advanced understanding of skills. A student's position on the scale indicates mastery of specific skills/knowledge.

2. Why is a proficiency scale used for reporting assessment results?

Reporting student assessment results using a proficiency scale makes it easier to understand a students' skill level and progress. It helps teachers identify areas the student needs to work on and adjust how they teach to help the student improve.

3. What is the SAFAL proficiency scale?

SAFAL proficiency scales group student achievement into four clear levels. Each level shows what skills and knowledge a student should have at that level (including skills of the levels below). For example, a student at *Advanced* level on the proficiency scale has the skills expected at the *Advanced* level, as well as the *Proficient*, *Basic* and *Below Basic* levels. Similarly, a student at *Proficient* level would have the skills expected at the *Proficient* level, as well as *Basic* and *Below Basic* levels.

There are a total of 6 scales, one for each subject and grade combination. The subjects are Grade 5 Mathematics, Grade 5 EVS (Environmental Studies), Grade 5 Language, Grade 8 Mathematics, Grade 8 Science, and Grade 8 Language. Each scale has a range from 100 to 500. Each subject scale has different cut scores dividing the scale in four proficiency levels, because of which it is not possible to calculate a combined scaled score by adding and averaging scaled scores of different subjects. Please note the differing scales for the three subjects tested under Grade 5, depicted in the example below.

Subject (G5)	Illustrative Scale only			
Language	Below Basic [100 - 276.43]	Basic [276.44 - 299.99]	Proficient [300.00 - 343.56]	Advanced [343.57 - 500]
Mathematics	Below Basic [100 - 245.35]	Basic [245.36 - 299.99]	Proficient [300.00 - 375.42]	Advanced [375.43 - 500]
EVS	Below Basic [100 - 236.76]	Basic [236.77 - 299.99]	Proficient [300.00 - 355.12]	Advanced [355.13 - 500]

4. What do the four levels in SAFAL proficiency scale indicate?

The levels under the SAFAL proficiency scales indicate a specific range of skill and understanding. Each level represents a set of competencies or knowledge that a student is expected to achieve at that

level. These levels help us know where a student stands in their learning and what areas they might need to work on next. These are the four levels (the explanation below uses Grade 5 as an example):

- a. **Below Basic:** Students here show skills and knowledge that are from two grades lower. For example, a Grade 5 student in this category shows knowledge at a Grade 3 level.
- b. **Basic:** Students here show skills and knowledge from one grade below. So, a Grade 5 student in this category shows knowledge at a Grade 4 level.
- c. **Proficient:** Students at this level show skills appropriate for their current grade. A Grade 5 student in this category shows Grade 5 competency.
- d. **Advanced:** Students here show more advanced skills than their current grade.

5. What are the numbers in brackets within each level of the proficiency scale?

The proficiency scale for a specific grade and subject in SAFAL ranges from 100 to 500 and has four levels - *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The numbers in the brackets show the scaled score ranges for each level. Hence, a scaled score can be mapped to one of the four proficiency levels. For example, if in a given school, the average scaled score of Grade 5 on Mathematics is 320, it means that the grade's performance falls in the *Proficient* category.

6. What are scaled scores and how are they different from raw scores or percent correct scores?

Scaled scores are scores that have been adjusted from the original raw score to fit a consistent scale. Think of it like converting temperatures between Celsius and Fahrenheit.

Raw scores are the simple count of how many questions someone got right. For example, if there are 50 questions and a student answers 40 correctly, their raw score is 40.

Percent correct is just the raw score converted into percentage, like 40 out of 50 questions would be 80%.

Scaled scores, however, take the raw score and adjust it, often to account for differences in test difficulty or to make scores from different tests comparable. It's a way to ensure fairness and consistency across tests or test versions.

7. Why does SAFAL use scaled scores for reporting results?

SAFAL is a diagnostic assessment, hence using scaled scores with proficiency levels offers detailed information to educators. This helps identify what competencies a student has mastered and where they can improve. SAFAL also uses scaled scores to report results in a fair and consistent way across different test times. These adjusted scores make it possible to compare results even when tests are different.

To illustrate the significance of scaled scores: Imagine two students, Shantanu and Priya. While Priya takes a relatively simpler Test A, Shantanu attempts the more challenging Test B. If Priya's raw score on Test A is higher, it doesn't automatically mean she's more skilled than Shantanu, especially considering the varying difficulty levels of the tests. While raw scores might position Priya as the

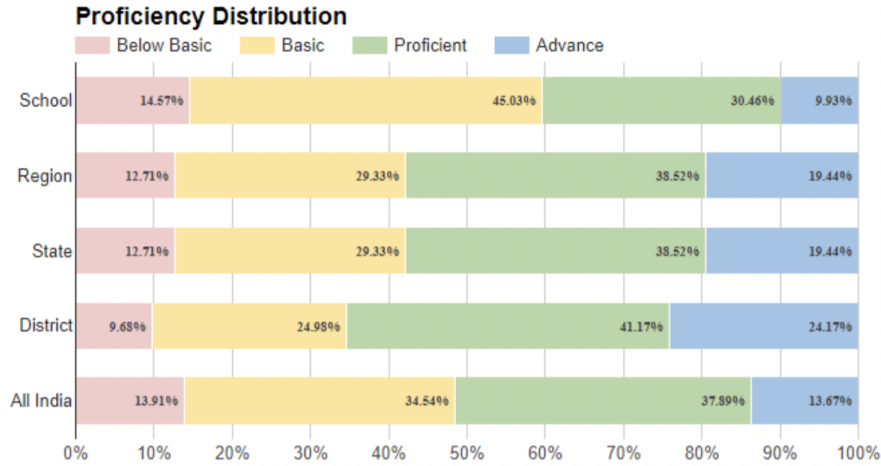
better performer, the scaled score could portray Shantanu in a more favourable light due to the test's rigour. Scaled scores, by adjusting for test difficulty, provide a genuine measure of a student's capability. This method ensures consistent tracking of progress regardless of test alterations or the specific group of students being assessed.

	Raw Score (RS)	Scaled Score (SS)
Priya's performance on test A (Easy)	80/100 RS	250 SS
Shantanu's performance on test B (Difficult)	60/100 RS	300 SS

8. Can scaled scores be depicted in percentages?

No, they cannot be shown as percentages. A scaled score of 400 on a scale of 100 to 500 means the performance is in the *Advanced* level for that grade and subject. But, it doesn't mean they scored 400 out of 500 or 80%. Converting scaled scores to percentages would be incorrect. It's best to understand scaled scores as they are along with their proficiency level descriptions without trying to turn them into percentages.

FAQs on Proficiency Distribution

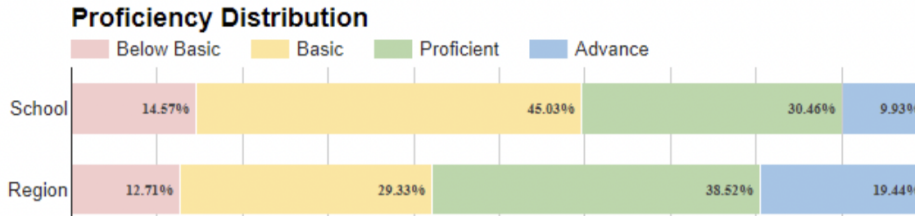


Illustrative example of Proficiency Distribution

9. What does the proficiency distribution indicate?

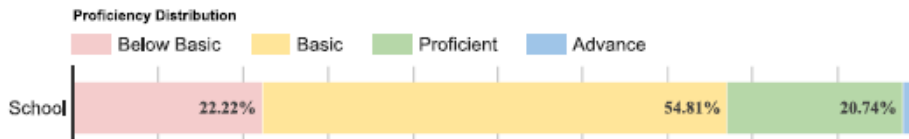
The proficiency distribution divides student achievement into four levels. It shows the percentage of students in your school/district/state/region/all participating schools in each proficiency level.

10. What does the % on the proficiency scale mean?



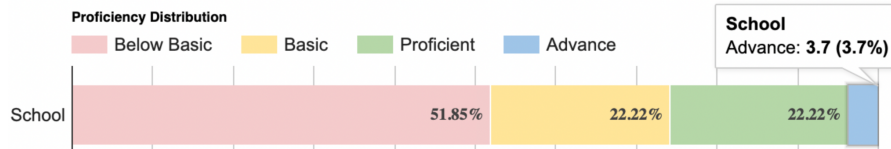
The percentages in the proficiency distribution show how many students are in each level based on their SAFAL test results. For example, in the illustration above, for a given grade and subject, 14.57% of the students who took the test from that school are in the *Below Basic* level, 45.03% are in the *Basic* level, and 30.46% are in the *Proficient* level, and 9.93% are in the *Advance* level. When we look at the performance of all students in that CBSE region who took the test, only 12.71% are in the *Below Basic* level and 29.33% are in the *Basic* level.

11. What does it mean if there is no numerical marking on the proficiency level?



Sometimes, the proficiency levels might not have numbers on them, as illustrated in the image above. This happens where there is no student in that proficiency level or the level's colour band is too small to be visible.

to accommodate numbers. In that case, you'll see the numbers/percentage by moving your cursor over the level (please refer to the illustration given below).



12. What does it mean if a school is not able to see a particular proficiency level?

This might happen when no students or a very small percentage of students fall in a particular proficiency level.

13. Why might the percentages in the proficiency distribution add up to more than 100? (eg. 100.01, 100.1)

Sometimes, when you add up the percentages in the proficiency distribution, the total might not be exactly 100%. It could be a bit more than 100%. This is because the percentages are rounded to the nearest hundredth and then added. This is also observed in other large scale assessments such as the PISA assessment. The table below is an example of instances when the total might exceed 100%.

	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Totals
Original %s	23.9767556188 %	46.086649607 %	21.397688167 %	8.538906606 %	99.99999 % = ~100%
Rounded off %s	23.98 %	46.09 %	21.40 %	8.54 %	100.01%

FAQs on Consolidated Report

Consolidated Report			
#	Number of Schools	Number Of Students	Average Scaled Score
School	—	135	279.53
Region	127	11283	306.57
State	2	162	287.46
District	2	162	287.46
*All	1752	158612	308.41

*All participating schools

Illustrative example of Consolidated Report

14. What is the consolidated report?

The consolidated report is a table that shows a quick overview. It tells you how many students took the SAFAL test for a specific grade and subject in your school. It also shows the average scaled score of these students.

It is important to note that the purpose of the consolidated report is just to give an overview of the achievement of students at various levels, viz. district, state, region, all participating schools. It is NOT for any sort of comparison and should be used only for making strategies for further development of student competencies.

FAQs on Competency Report

Competency Report	2 Grade-Level Below	1 Grade-Level Below	At the Grade-Level	Above Grade-Level
	% of students that correctly answered	% of students that correctly answered	% of students that correctly answered	% of students that correctly answered
Estimate sum/difference/product and quotient of numbers			39%	57%
Express a fraction in decimal notation and vice-versa			79%	58%
Identify and count in whole numbers, and identify their relative magnitude	61%	56%	77%	
Identify and represent fractions using objects, pictures, and symbols, and identify relative		43%	27%	80%

Illustrative example of Competency Report

15. How do I interpret the competency report?

In the SAFAL assessment framework, under each subject, several competencies are assessed. SAFAL tests each competency across different grade levels: two grades lower, one grade lower, at the grade level, and above the grade level. As a result, multiple questions are linked to each competency, targeting these different levels (as indicated by the column headers in the table above). The competency table shows the % of students that correctly answered questions of each competency targeted at different grade levels.

For example, as per the illustration given above, for the competency “Identify and count in whole numbers, and identify their relative magnitude”, 74% of students correctly answered the question testing that competency targeted at 2 grade levels below. This granular analysis highlights areas of students’ strength and pinpoints areas where additional support might be needed.

16. What do the terms "2 Grade Levels below," "1 Grade Level below," "at Grade Level," and "Above Grade Level" signify in the SAFAL competency report?

In SAFAL assessments, students are evaluated at various levels and not just at their current grade. This method, referred to as "scaffolding," helps uncover any learning gaps. For example, a Grade 5 test assesses skills not just at Grade 5 but also at Grade 3, Grade 4, and advanced Grade 5 level. This thorough evaluation helps teachers grasp the complete range of student abilities and areas that require attention.

17. What do the percentages in the competency report mean?

The percentage shows the % of students who correctly answered questions linked to a specific competency targeted at a particular grade level.

Please note that the %s of students correctly answering questions for a specific competency at different grade levels will not sum up to 100% (unlike the Proficiency Distribution presented in the

report). This is because the same students are assessed on a particular competency at different grade levels.

18. What does a blank in the competency report mean?

If you see a blank in the competency report, it means there were no questions from that competency targeted at that grade level in the SAFAL test.

Other Information

19. How do I read and interpret the SAFAL report?

Make sure to refer to the "[Understanding the SAFAL Report](#)" document to correctly understand and use the SAFAL school reports.

20. Can I print the SAFAL report?

You can use the print option provided on the SAFAL reporting dashboard to either save the SAFAL school reports as a PDF or directly print them.

21. Can schools view individual student reports from SAFAL?

SAFAL is designed as a tool to diagnose areas where students can improve without creating high-pressure situations. Its main goal is to assist schools in recognizing and addressing these gaps using specific strategies. To avoid putting unnecessary pressure on students, SAFAL doesn't provide individual student-level reports.

22. Can I add the average scaled scores of different subjects to obtain a single average scale score for the school?

The average scaled scores of different subjects **cannot** be added together and averaged to create a single combined school score. This is because SAFAL has separate proficiency scales for each subject and grade combination tested. Each subject has its own unique scale.

23. Can SAFAL results be compared from one year to the next?

Yes, SAFAL results can be compared from one test administration to another. The use of scaled scores and proficiency levels makes this comparison possible. Even though different groups of students take the Grade 5 SAFAL assessment in 2023 and 2024, and the tests are different for the two years, it is still possible to do a fair comparison of school performance between those years. The use of scaled scores and proficiency levels helps make the comparison fair and equal across different years, even when the tests and students sitting for the tests are different.

24. What was the objective of the SAFAL pilot (February 2023)?

The SAFAL pilot was launched digitally in February 2023. It included 1,887 CBSE-affiliated schools, and about 4,01,241 students across all CBSE regions. The main goals of the SAFAL pilot were:

- a. To check if schools are ready for SAFAL implementation.
- b. To review assessment items and tools for accuracy and relevance
- c. To use the collected data to create performance standards for SAFAL.

Completing the SAFAL pilot successfully is a big step for the assessment. We're grateful to the schools, teachers, and students for their contribution. The SAFAL school reports for participating schools are now available on the SAFAL website.

25. How were the cut scores for SAFAL proficiency scales determined?

The SAFAL pilot data was used to set clear standards for the SAFAL proficiency scale. A workshop was held, bringing CBSE teachers, assessment experts, and CBSE leaders together to analyse the pilot data. Teachers used 'Ordered Item Booklets,' which listed assessment questions by difficulty based on pilot results. This helped understand question complexity and possible student performance at different levels. Teachers marked suggested cut-off points for the four proficiency levels after reviewing. Through feedback and consideration of the impact on student classifications, final cut-off scores were decided. This process ensured the cut-offs were determined objectively, and accurately reflected student abilities.

26. Where can I access the SAFAL assessment framework?

The SAFAL assessment framework handbooks are available under the [handbooks section of the CBSE academic website](#).