



News Release

Strict embargo: 09.30 hours Thursday 20 August 2009

Mathematics and science A-levels continue upward trend

The A-level results for 2009 show excellent achievement overall, with improvements in grades for mathematics and science, and increased entries again in mathematics, physics and chemistry.

The new AS exams also have increased science entries – continuing the trend of the old AS specification.

Data published today (Thursday 20 August 2009) by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), show the cumulative percentage of A-level grades A-E has increased by 0.3 percentage points from 97.2 per cent to 97.5 per cent. The results also show an increase of 0.8 percentage points (from 25.9 per cent in 2008 to 26.7 per cent in 2009) achieving grade A.

There were 846,977 grades published for A-level this year, which is a 2.3 per cent increase on the figure of 827,737 in 2008.

Mathematics and further mathematics continue their upward trend with increases of 7,882 entries for mathematics (improved by 1.2 per cent at grade A) and 1,382 entries for further mathematics (improved by 0.6 per cent at grades A and E).

Chemistry and Physics show positive signs with increased entries of 811 and 1,340 (improved by 0.7 per cent and 0.2 per cent at grade A) respectively. Biology, however, has a 525 decrease in entries but shows an improvement of 1.1 per cent at grade A.

Traditional subjects remain the most popular with English and mathematics still the top choices, followed by biology.

Subjects which continue to show a decline in entry are general studies, down 4,867, computing and ICT down, 358 and 329 respectively.

Entries for Spanish are up (4.0 per cent) but entries for French and German are down (3.7 per cent and 7.7 per cent) respectively. Other languages continue to show a steady increase in entry since 2002, up 7.5 per cent on 2008.

Girls continue to outperform boys at grades A-E but the gap continues to narrow by 0.3 percentage points to 2 per cent at grade A.

Dr Jim Sinclair, Director, Joint Council for Qualifications, commenting on the publication of the GCE results, said:

“These are excellent results. They are the outcome of the hard work of students and teachers, who deserve to be congratulated.

“It is particularly good to report improved uptake and outcomes for mathematics and science.”

Extended Project

This is the first year in which results for the Extended Project have been published. This new qualification uses the extended grade range, which includes the A* grade.

There were 5,094 grades published in 2009, with cumulative percentages of 11.7 at grade A*, 30.7 at grade A and 90.3 at grades A*-E.

AS

There were 1,177,347 grades published for all subjects at AS in 2009, an increase of 49,197 (1,128,150 in 2008).

The overall results are for the new and old AS specifications combined. Over 70 per cent of these results are for the new AS qualifications, which were being examined for the first time in 2009.

There were 79,112 grades published for biology, an increase of 6,873 (72,239 in 2008), 58,473 for chemistry, an increase of 4,316 (54,157 in 2008) and 41,955 for physics, an increase of 3,826 (38,129 in 2008).

There were 13,164 grades published for further mathematics, an increase of 4,219 (8,945 in 2008) and 103,312 for mathematics, an increase of 18,699 (84,613 in 2008).

Applied AS and A-level

This is the third year in which the Applied A-levels have been awarded. There were 38,427 grades published for the Applied A-level Single Award (37,582 in 2008) and 11,586 for the Applied A-level Double Award (14,093 in 2008).

There were 52,300 grades published for the Applied AS Single Award in 2009, a decrease of 1,177 (53,477 in 2008). There were 10,621 grades published for the Applied AS Double Award in 2009, a decrease of 2,254 (12,875 in 2008).

AEA (Advanced Extension Awards)

There were 9,119 entries for all subjects at AEA in 2009, a decrease of 1,245 (10,364 in 2008).

Achievements rose at distinction by 0.9 percentage points (from 19.7 per cent to 20.6 per cent) however, decreased at merit by 0.9 percentage points (from 52.0 per cent to 51.1 per cent) in 2009.

Notes for Editors

1. 'Results 2009'- detailed tabulations of the GCE AS and A-level, Applied GCE AS and A level and AEA examinations are published separately, also with the STRICT EMBARGO: 09.30 hours Thursday 20 August 2009.
2. These are the results for the above qualifications taken by students across the UK but predominantly in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.
3. The JCQ consists of AQA, CCEA, City and Guilds, Edexcel, OCR, SQA and WJEC, the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK, offering GCSE, GCE, AEA, Entry Level, Vocational and vocationally-related qualifications.
4. The JCQ was established in January 2004 and supersedes the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ, 1998-2003). The JCQ has been formed to enable member awarding bodies to act together in
 - providing, wherever possible, common administrative arrangements for the schools and colleges and other providers which offer their qualifications;
 - dealing with the regulators; in responding to proposals and initiatives on assessment and the curriculum;
 - dealing with the media on issues affecting all member Bodies.

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