

News Release

Strict embargo: 09.30 hours Thursday 19 August 2010

First year of A* and continued resurgence of science, technology and mathematics (STEM subjects)

The successful introduction of the new A* grade accounts for 8.1 per cent (69,302) of all A-level results issued.

Overall, girls outperform boys at A* – 8.3 per cent of grades (38,098 grades) issued to girls were A* compared to 7.9 per cent of grades (31,204 grades) issued to boys. However, overall within the STEM subjects, boys outperform girls at A*.

The data published today shows the cumulative percentage of A-level grades A-E has increased by 0.1 percentage points from 97.5 per cent to 97.6 per cent. The results also show an increase of 0.3 percentage points (from 26.7 per cent in 2009 to 27.0 per cent in 2010) at grade A.

There were 853,933 grades published for A-level this year, which is a 0.8 per cent increase on the figure of 846,977 in 2009.

Mathematics and further mathematics continue their upward trend with increased entries of 4,526 for mathematics (6.2 per cent) and 1,209 entries for further mathematics (11.5 per cent).

Biology, chemistry and physics show very positive signs with increased entries of 2,369, 1,560 and 1,540 (4.3 per cent, 3.7 per cent and 5.2 per cent) respectively.

Traditional subjects remain the most popular with English, mathematics, biology, psychology and history being the top five subject choices in 2010.

While entries for Spanish are up (4.0 per cent), entries for French and German are down (3.4 per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively) continuing the pattern seen last year. Entries for other languages are also down by 7.1 per cent reversing a long-term trend.

AS

There were 1,197,490 grades published for all subjects at AS in 2010, an increase of 20,141 (1,177,349 in 2009).

The increased entry for STEM subjects follows through to the AS with 83,408 grades published for biology, an increase of 4,296 (79,112 in 2009), 62,232 for chemistry, an increase of 3,759 (58,473 in 2009) and 45,534 for physics, an increase of 3,579 (41,955 in 2009).

There were 14,884 grades published for further mathematics, an increase of 1,720 (13,164 in 2009) and 112,847 for mathematics, an increase of 9,535 (103,312 in 2009).

Extended Project

This is the second 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 15,958 grades published in 2010 (5,094 grades in 2009), with cumulative percentages of 12.0 at grade A*, 27.9 at grade A and 90.4 at grades A*-E.

Applied AS and A-level

This is the fourth year in which the Applied A-levels have been awarded. There were decreases in entry with 36,810 grades published for the Applied A-level Single Award (38,427 in 2009) and 9,576 for the Applied A-level Double Award (11,586 in 2009).

There were 50,766 grades published for the Applied AS Single Award in 2010, a decrease of 1,534 (52,300 in 2009). There were 8,565 grades published for the Applied AS Double Award in 2009, a decrease of 2,056 (10,621 in 2009).

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

“This is a day for celebration. The results reflect the hard work and dedication of students and their teachers, supported by students’ parents.

“The successful introduction of the new A* grade and the increased entries for STEM subjects are good news.”

Notes for Editors

1. ‘Results 2010’- 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 19 August 2010.

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 superseded the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ, 1998-2003). The JCQ was 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.

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