



News Release

Strict embargo: 09.30 hours Thursday 14 August 2008

Mathematics, sciences and languages boost A-level results

Improvement in A-level results and increased entries in mathematics, sciences and languages combine to give record achievements for students this year.

Data published today (Thursday 14 August 2008) by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), show the cumulative percentage of results awarded A-level grades A-E increased by 0.3 percentage points from 96.9 per cent to 97.2 per cent. The results show an increase of 0.6 percentage points in the percentage of candidates awarded a grade A (from 25.3 per cent in 2007 to 25.9 per cent in 2008).

With a record 827,737 grades published for A-level this year (805,657 in 2007), the awarding bodies have once again delivered a complete set of results on time.

Mathematics and further mathematics now have their largest ever numbers of candidates with increases of 4,500 for mathematics (7.5 per cent) and 1,219 for further mathematics (15.5 per cent).

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

A greater interest in sciences has resulted in increased entries for chemistry (up 3.5 per cent), biology (up 2.7 per cent) and physics (up 2.3 per cent).

Languages show an improvement with increases in French (2.8 per cent) and Spanish (1.5 per cent) but a decrease in German (0.9 per cent). Other languages, including Arabic, Chinese and Russian, have shown steady increases in entry every year since 2002.

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

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

“These results are excellent and we congratulate all students on their achievement. The results show not only an improvement in the grades achieved but also an increased entry for mathematics, sciences and languages, which are positive and encouraging developments all round. This has to be a day for celebration.”

AS level

There were 1,128,150 grades published for all subjects at AS in 2008, an increase of 1.2 per cent (1,114,424 grades in 2007).

The top ten subject choices remain the same as in 2007. The results show an improvement overall, with a 0.2 percentage point increase at grade A (to 18.7 per cent) and 0.4 percentage point increase at grades A-E (to 88.2 per cent).

Applied AS and A-level

This is the second year in which the applied A-levels have been awarded. There were 37,582 grades published for the Applied A-level Single Award (33,466 in 2007) and 14,093 for the Applied A-level Double Award (15,298 in 2007).

There were 53,477 grades published for the Applied AS Single Award in 2008, an increase of 2,495 or 4.9 per cent (50,982 in 2007). There were 12,875 grades published for the Applied AS Double Award in 2008, a decrease of 2,681 or 17.2 per cent (15,556 entries in 2007).

AEA (Advanced Extension Awards)

There were 10,364 entries for all subjects at AEA in 2008, a decrease of 887 (7.9 per cent) on 2007 (11,251 in 2007).

Achievements rose at distinction by 1.7 percentage points (from 18.0 per cent to 19.7 per cent) and at merit by 2.2 percentage points (from 49.8 per cent to 52.0 per cent) in 2008.

Notes for Editors

1. 'Results 2008'- 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 14 August 2008.
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.

The JCQ can be contacted at:

Veritas House
125 Finsbury Pavement
London
EC2A 1NQ

Tel: 020 7638 4132

E-mail: pressoffice@jcq.org.uk

www.jcq.org.uk