



A level and AS entries 2014

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of UK entry statistics for A level and AS qualifications for 2014. The high level data forms part of our communications strategy to provide information to stakeholders in the run up to the publication of results in August.

There has been a significant amount of change in the system this year, affecting entry patterns and potentially results. AS and A levels have effectively become linear in England in a similar manner to GCSEs, with no opportunity for resits within the year. These changes make year on year comparisons more difficult. For example, the increase in AS entries may be due, in part, to candidates who would previously have retaken their exams in January doing so in June. Despite this, the dramatic increases in some subjects compared with others point to a large number of candidates sitting the subjects for the first time.

Commentary

This is the first year we would expect to see an impact of the EBacc, a GCSE performance measure in England, on post 16 choices. As the data below shows, the Ebacc appears to be influencing student and centre choice at AS. Although introduced in 2010, any impact of the EBacc on GCSE entries was not expected until 2013, two full academic years after it was introduced. Indeed we did see increases in GCSE entries last year for Geography, History, French, German, and Spanish (19.2 per cent; 16.7 per cent; 9.4 per cent; 15.5 per cent; and 25.8 per cent respectively) compared with 2012.

Of particular interest in these data is the significant increase in AS entries for Geography, History and Spanish (16.9 percent; 14.2 per cent; 14.8 per cent respectively). French and German entries also increased with French, German and Spanish combined rising 6.1 per cent and all MFL rising 5.6 per cent. In fact, AS entries for all EBacc subjects have increased.

At A Level, the EBacc effect has not yet worked its way through and it will be interesting to see if it does in 2015. In 2014, there have been increases in A Level entries for Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, and a marginal increase in Geography, although Modern Foreign Languages overall have declined. However, taking into consideration the drop in the number of A Levels taken, MFL entries remain stable as a proportion of the national entry with marginal increases for Spanish and German and a small decline in French.

National cohort

The table below shows the number of students by age in the UK and the year on year change.

	2013	2014	% Change
AS (17 yr olds)	713,000	704,000	-1.3
GCE (18 yr olds)	711,000	712,000	0.1

Entry data 2014

The data below shows entry figures for the 'facilitating subjects' (most commonly requested subjects for university access) for both A level and AS.

A level entries

Subject Area	June 2013 Entry	June 2014 Entry	% Change in Entry
Biology	64773	64284	-0.8
Chemistry	52828	53705	1.7
English	90007	86036	-4.4
French	11319	10470	-7.5
Geography	32926	33156	0.7
German	4251	4212	-0.9
History	52470	52335	-0.3
Mathematics	89086	89467	0.4
Mathematics (Further)	14214	14584	2.6
Physics	36096	36862	2.1
Spanish	7733	7638	-1.2
Other Modern Languages	9346	9127	-2.3
All 'facilitating subject' Entries	465049	461876	-0.7
All A Level Entries	859513	838798	-2.4
MFL (French/German/Spanish)	23303	22320	-4.2
All MFL	32649	31447	-3.7

AS entries

Subject Area	June 2013 Entry	June 2014 Entry	% Change in Entry
Biology	105783	106085	0.3
Chemistry	87656	89226	1.8
English	121318	132535	9.2
French	17631	17867	1.3
Geography	47853	55958	16.9
German	7036	7248	3.0
History	71669	81843	14.2
Mathematics	151281	162007	7.1
Mathematics (Further)	22324	24402	9.3
Physics	62529	65328	4.5
Spanish	12276	14089	14.8
Other Modern Languages	10185	10585	3.9
All 'facilitating subject' Entries	717541	767173	6.9
All AS Level Entries	1365584	1426914	4.5
MFL (French/German/Spanish)	36943	39204	6.1
All MFL	47128	49789	5.6