



Media release
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A level results show some improvement, whilst AS shows stability in Wales

GCE A level Results

The A level provisional results for Wales show an improvement overall with 9.1% of grades awarded at A*, the best outcome in Wales since this grade was introduced, in 2010, 0.4 percentage point higher than the previous best figure in 2018.

The proportion of results awarded A* - A grades this year is 27.0%, which is 0.7 percentage points higher than the figure for 2018. There is stability at all other grades.

The total number of A level examination entries in Wales this year was 31,483, a reduction of 3.0% relative to 2018, continuing the decreasing A level entries since the summer of 2015, in line with the reduction in size of the 18-year old population. The percentage of students achieving A* - E grades is 97.6%, a minor increase when compared with 2018 (97.4%), but consistent in the range of the last decade (97.1% to 97.7%).

In Wales, males continue to outperform females at grade A*, 1.2 percentage points ahead. Whilst at other grades females continued to outperform males, with 98.1% of subject entries by females this year gaining A* - E grades, compared to 96.9% of entries by males. The gap continues to be widest at grade C, with females 5.5 percentage points ahead of males.

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Results

There were 39,646 subject entries for AS in Wales this year, a decrease of 7.6% compared with 42,915 last year, being the fourth consecutive annual reduction in entries, which can be attributed to an extent by the reduction in the size of the 17 year old age group.

20.3% of all grades awarded were A in Wales this year, comparable with the figure for 2018. The percentage of candidates achieving A - E grades shows stability; 90.0% achieving these grades. This follows a trend of continued stability in outcomes shown at AS.

21.2% of all grades achieved by females were an A, 91.6% were A - E. The equivalent figures for males were 19.1% at A grade and 88.0% at grades A - E. As with A levels, the gap was widest at grade C, with females 7.1 percentage points ahead of males, which is consistent with the 2018 results.

Trends in Subject Entries

There has been a mixed pattern of entries at A level, Chemistry (+213) and Psychology (+267) have had an increase in entries. However, Drama (-124), Mathematics (-365), Media/Film/TV Studies (-146) and Religious Studies (-122) have seen a fall in entries.

For AS, there has been a downward entry pattern in all subjects, with the exception of the following: Biology (+61), Computing (+67), Physics (+29) and Psychology (+135).

Mathematics remains the most popular A level and AS subject with 3,585 and 4,627 entries respectively. Outcomes have remained relatively stable at both levels.

There has been a small increase in entries for Welsh 1st Language at A level, but a small reduction at AS. Entries for Welsh 2nd Language have declined at both AS and A level. However, this reflects the year on year fluctuations in entries.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the results in Wales, contact:

Jonathan Thomas, PR Manager, WJEC on 029 2026 5102
jonathan.thomas@wjec.co.uk.

For information about the UK results, contact JCQ^{CIC}'s press office on 020 7227 0671, or 07905 683816 or at pressoffice@jcq.org.uk

Further statistical details on the results for the UK, Wales, England and Northern Ireland may be found at www.jcq.org.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS

General

Detailed tabulations of the GCE AS and A-level, Applied GCE AS and A-level are published separately, also with the STRICT EMBARGO of 09.30 Thursday 15 August 2019 and will be available on WJEC's website from 09.30 on 15 August 2019 – www.wjec.co.uk

Results provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ^{CIC}), representing awarding organisations in the UK, and presented in Wales on behalf of JCQ^{CIC} by WJEC. Results for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification are awarded by WJEC only.

The JCQ^{CIC} comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK

The data provided in the main body of this media release represent the aggregate information for Wales across all awarding organisations, and are provisional, in the sense that they represent the position at the time that results are issued.

The qualifications framework is common across Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Comprehensive data for entries and results on a country-by-country basis are provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications - www.jcq.org.uk - and may be accessed from 9:30 am on Thursday 15 August 2019.

Awarding organisations are regulated by Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales and CCEA (Northern Ireland). The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies' standards. Maintaining standards within and across all qualifications in order to ensure fairness to all candidates is the paramount concern of the awarding bodies.

In comparing the results of individual schools and colleges with any aggregate totals, it should be borne in mind that substantial variations are to be expected. A number of social, economic and educational factors have a bearing on the performance of pupils in examinations, of which the effectiveness of the school or college is only one.

GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level

The A level examination is made up of two parts, the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the A2. The AS and the A2 combined in a single subject constitute the A level.

The standard set for the AS is that expected at the end of the first year of a two year course. The AS covers the less demanding material in an A level course. The AS is not, therefore, of full Advanced level standard. In reformed qualifications approved by Qualifications Wales, the AS contributes 40% to the overall A level, whereas in the previous specifications the contribution was 50%.

During the second year of the course, students develop greater understanding of the subjects they are studying, and the A2 covers the more demanding material in the specification.

The standards for both AS and A level awards in reformed qualifications have been carried forward from previous specifications using a “comparable outcomes” as approved by regulators.

The reformed qualifications for which A level awards were made in 2019 are:

Phase 1 (teaching began in September 2015)

Art and Design, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, English Language, English Language and Literature, English Literature, History, Physics, Psychology, Sociology and Welsh First Language

Phase 2 (teaching began in September 2016)

Drama, French, Geography, German, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Spanish and Welsh 2nd Language

Phase 3 (teaching began in September 2017)

Design & Technology, Further Mathematics, Government & Politics, ICT, Law, Mathematics and Media Studies