

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:30 HOURS, THURSDAY 22 AUGUST 2019

GCSE results show stability in entries and outcomes overall

Today, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) published the 2019 GCSE results for the UK.

Highlights include:

- Overall, stable entries and outcomes from 2018 to 2019 with small increases at grades 7/A and 4/C, with no change in the proportion of students achieving at least a grade 1/G
- Changes in gender entry and outcome patterns:
 - At top grades, females are closing the performance gap in Mathematics and Physics, but males are closing the gap in Biology
 - Significant rise in female entries in Computing
- Modern Foreign Languages entries increase by 3.0%, with French remaining the most popular and Spanish increasing by 7.5%

Overall stable entries and outcomes in the UK

In 2019 entries and outcomes across the three jurisdictions have largely been stable as the period of reform comes to an end. The 16 year-old population has increased by 1.5% and overall GCSE entries are up 1.4%.

Some subjects have seen large increases in entries such as: English (+4.4%); Mathematics (+4.2%); Science Double Award (+4.8%); History (+7.1%); Geography (+3.4%); MFLs (+3.0%); Art and Design (+9.5%) and Computing (+7.2%).

English and English Literature: Females continue to outperform males

There were increases in entries of both English and English Literature of 4.4% and 3.8% respectively. English Literature entries for 15 year-olds increased by 17.9% this year, an increase of 5,777.

Outcomes in both English and English Literature are stable with very little change at the three anchor grades. There was a slight increase of 0.6 percentage points (pp) in English Literature at 7/A.

Entries in both English and English Literature were above the increase in the age population, increasing by 4.4% and 3.8% respectively. This could be due to a number of factors, including:

- change in entry patterns in Wales, with candidates who may have taken English in either summer or November 2018 now taking it in summer 2019; and/or
- a continuation of the trend seen last year for students to enter English at 16 years rather than at 15 years.

Mathematics: increased entries, stable outcomes

Entries in Mathematics increased by 4.2%, with an increase of 4.9% for candidates aged 17 years and over, but a decline of 11.3% of those taking it early (aged 15 years and under). Much like English, this may be due to a range of factors including early entry policies in Wales, a continuation from last year of a dip in 15 year-old entries for Mathematics (with those students being entered at 16 this year instead) and a slight increase in 17 year-old resits.

Outcomes were stable overall with only marginal increases at 7/A (0.3pp), 4/C (0.2pp) and at 1/G (0.2pp). Males continue to outperform females at 7/A, although the gap is narrowing: 16.7% of males achieved 7/A compared to 15.5% of females, whose outcomes at this level increased by 0.6pp compared to a slight decline of 0.1pp by males.

Science increase in entries and improvement in outcomes

Science Double Award entries increased by 4.8%, compared to increases of 0.6% for Biology, 1.0% in Chemistry and 1.1% in Physics.

The proportion of students achieving a 7/A increased by 0.8pp in Biology and Chemistry and by 1.3pp in Physics. There were also increases at 4/C, although these were smaller. As in previous years, females outperformed males in Biology and Chemistry. However, males continue to outperform females in Physics.

In terms of changes in outcomes:

- At 7/A females improved outcomes more than males in Physics (+2.1pp compared to +0.4pp) and Chemistry (+1.1pp compared to +0.5pp)
- In Biology males improved at 7/A by +1.1pp compared to +0.6 by females.
- While there were improvements at 4/C grade in the Science Double Awards and the separate sciences across the board, these were more modest, ranging between +0.2pp to +0.6pp.

Computing: increase in female entries

Computing entries saw a significant increase of 7.2% to 80,027, with female entries increasing by 14.0%, although they remain only 21.4% of the total entry at 17,158.

Overall outcomes for computing were up 0.7pp at 7/A reaching 21.7% and passes at grade 4/C were up 1.1% at 62.7%. Male and female outcomes improved by a similar amount, and females continued to outperform males: 24.9% compared to 20.8% at 7/A; and 66.2% compared to 61.7% at 4/C.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Total entries in MFL increased by 3.0% to 308,047, following the increase of 0.4% seen in 2018.

French remains the most popular MFL at GCSE, increasing by 3.2% to 130,831. Outcomes in French remained stable with 24.3% achieving 7/A grade and 70.4% achieving 4/C.

Spanish entries increased by 7.5% to 102,242: for the first time exceeding 100,000. Outcomes showed a small decline of 0.4pp to 27.7% at 7/A.

While German entries declined, 7/A grades increased by 0.7pp reaching 24.7%.

Update on Reforms

Reforms are complete in Wales and those in England are complete with the exception of a few lesser taught languages. New GCSEs in Northern Ireland have been awarded for the first time, alongside other reformed GCSEs.

Working with regulators, JCQ members across England, Northern Ireland and Wales, remain committed to anchoring grade standards of reformed and legacy qualifications at key grades (7/A, 4/C, 1/G). This means that, all things being equal (i.e. no other changes and a similar cohort profile), outcomes are broadly similar to the legacy outcomes.

Dr Philip Wright, Director General of JCQ said: *“Today students across the UK are receiving their GCSE results. They have worked hard for these results and should be proud of their achievements.*

“Students and teachers have done a great job during a period of reform as this year’s results have overall been stable, with small increases in pass rates at 7/A and 4/C. We are seeing more entries and better outcomes in the sciences and in computing from both males and females.

“Today students should be celebrating their hard work with their friends, family and teachers as they look forward to the future”

Notes to Editors

1. Details on the reforms in England, including content changes and timetable can be found here: [GCSE, AS and A level reforms](#)
2. Details on reforms in Wales and Northern Ireland can be found here: Qualifications Wales – [A and AS Levels in Wales](#); and CCEA – [Regulation GCE and GCSE](#)
3. Detailed tabulations of the GCSE Full Course, GCSE Short Course, GCSE Double Award, Entry Level Certification, Level 1 and Level 2 Project, are published separately, also with the STRICT EMBARGO of 09.30 Thursday 22 August 2019 and will be available on the JCQ website from that time.
4. These results are for qualifications taken by students across the UK but predominantly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

5. Other modern languages are: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Dutch, Gujarati, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu.
6. All awarding organisations are answerable to the regulatory authorities - Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales (Wales) and CCEA (Northern Ireland). The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies' standards. In addition, the awarding organisations themselves conduct a number of comparability studies to compare standards. Maintaining standards within and across all qualifications in order to ensure fairness to all candidates is the paramount concern of the awarding bodies.
7. The JCQ comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the eight largest providers of qualifications in the UK.
8. The JCQ is a membership organisation and enables member awarding bodies to act together in providing, where possible, common administrative arrangements for schools and colleges and other providers which offer their qualifications; and responding to proposals and initiatives in assessment and the curriculum.
9. Media contacts: The JCQ's press office can be contacted on: 020 7227 0671; 020 7638 4132; or 07905 683816