



Media release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 09.30 HOURS
THURSDAY, 22 AUGUST 2019**

GCSE performance slightly improves in Wales

Overall GCSE performance in Wales has improved by 1.2 percentage points with 62.8% of candidates achieving a C grade or above when compared with 2018.

The proportion of students in Wales being awarded the top grades A* - A has decreased very slightly; from 18.5% to 18.4% this year.

This year is the first qualification award for seven new GCSE subjects: Business, Computer Science, Design & Technology, History, Media Studies, Religious Studies (full course), and Welsh Second Language

Mathematics - outcomes broadly similar to last year

In Wales, students have the opportunity to take either GCSE Mathematics or GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy, with the majority taking the opportunity to study both subjects.

58.1% of students achieved grade A*-C¹ in GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy; a slight decrease of 1.5 percentage points on 2018.

Meanwhile, there has been a slight fall, of 1.4 percentage points, in the number of students being awarded grades A*-C for GCSE Mathematics.

For GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy, entries and outcomes are most appropriately reflected in the best outcome obtained by 16 year olds across both the November and summer series.

¹ A small proportion of candidates in independent centres take 9-1 GCSEs which align with A*-G at A=7, C=4, G=1.

Figure 1: GCSE Mathematics – cumulative best grade all boards distributions for 16 year olds

	2017/18	2018/19
Grade		
A (7)	18.9%	18.7%
C (4)	61.0%	59.1%
G (1)	96.2%	95.5%
Entries	30231	30704

Figure 2: GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy – cumulative best grade distributions for 16 year olds

	2017/18	2018/19
Grade		
A (7)	16.7%	16.1%
C (4)	59.6%	58.1%
G (1)	96.2%	95.2%
Entries	29655	30073

Stability in the separate sciences and double award

For GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics there has been an increase in the number of entries of between 200 to 400 candidates, an upward trend that has continued year on year since 2015.

A* - C outcomes for GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics have increased slightly (89.2%, 90.4% and 90.9%).

The proportion of students achieving A* grades for each of the separate science subjects has increased, with GCSE Biology increasing 0.8 percentage points to 18.2%, GCSE Chemistry increasing 1.9 percentage points to 20.1%, and GCSE Physics increasing 3.5 percentage points to 21.9%.

This year there was also an increase of 1.3 percentage points, to 52.2%, in the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE Science Double Award qualification.

The Double Award qualification and the separate science qualifications are of the same academic standard, however, the separate science subjects continue to attract the highest proportion of the most able students.

English Language and English Literature – outcomes best reflected when considered across full academic year

GCSE English Language outcomes have fallen by 4.3 percentage points at grade C. However, outcomes have remained relatively stable at grade A (13.4% in 2019, compared with 13.8% in 2018).

For GCSE English Literature outcomes have fallen to 74.9% of students achieving grades A* - C – compared to 79.7% last year. However, entries have increased by 4,299.

Figure 3: GCSE English Language – cumulative best grade all boards distributions for 16 year olds

	2017/18	2018/19
Grade		
A (7)	13.8%	13.4%
C (4)	63.9%	59.6%
G (1)	98.7%	98.6%
Entries	30375	30816

Figure 4: GCSE English Literature – cumulative best grade all boards distributions for 16 year olds

	2017/18	2018/19
Grade		
A (7)	22.5%	20.3%
C (4)	79.7%	74.9%
G (1)	99.2%	99.1%
Entries	20590	24889

Welsh Language – stability for first language qualification

Entries and outcomes for GCSE Welsh (1st) Language are most appropriately reflected in the best outcome obtained by 16 year olds across the whole academic year. Figure 5 demonstrates relative stability in outcomes.

Figure 5: GCSE Welsh (1st) Language – cumulative best grade distributions for 16 year olds

	2017/18	2018/19
Grade		
A*	4.1%	4.1%
A	14.8%	15.7%
B	40.9%	42.0%
C	74.0%	73.7%
D	89.2%	87.8%
E	95.7%	94.6%
F	98.4%	97.9%
G	99.5%	99.4%
Entries	5274	5401

Welsh Literature – entries and outcomes increase

There has been a slight increase in the proportion of students being awarded grades A*-C for GCSE Welsh Literature. This year, 76.4% of students achieved A*-C, compared to 76.0% in 2018.

There has been an increase in entries for GCSE Welsh Literature compared to last year with 3,666 students taking the examination this year, compared to 3,298 in 2018.

Welsh (2nd) Language – significant increase in entries

We have nearly seen a 5,000 increase in entries for GCSE Welsh (2nd) Language full course, however, there is no longer GCSE Welsh (2nd) Language short course. This has affected overall student outcomes with 63.1% achieving grades A*-C in 2019, compared to 74.8% in 2018.

Modern Foreign Languages – slight decline in overall entries, but outcomes have improved

There has been a decline in entries for French (-507) and German (-195), whilst there has been an increase in numbers opting to take Spanish (+334).

The number of students awarded A*-C² has remained relatively stable; with 79.1% students achieving A*-C for French, 83.9% for German, and 72.8% for Spanish – improvements on 2018 figures.

² A small proportion of candidates in independent centres take 9-1 GCSEs which align with A*-G at A=7, C=4, G=1.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the results in Wales, contact:

Jonathan Thomas, PR Manager, WJEC on 029 2026 5102 or 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

1. 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.
2. These results are 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.
3. The qualifications framework is common across Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Comprehensive data for entries and results on a country-by country basis (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) are provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications – www.jcq.org.uk - and may be accessed from 9.30 am on Thursday 22 August 2019.
4. All awarding organisations are answerable to the qualification regulators – Qualifications Wales, Ofqual (England) and CCEA (Northern Ireland) – for examinations standards. The qualification regulators monitor the awarding organisations' 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.
5. 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.

Data Analysis

- There is a small number of candidates, mainly from the independent sector, who sit the reformed GCSE 9-1 examinations. Their overall outcomes are included in the headline figures, however, their outcomes are not included in the subject analysis which is A* - G only. Their data is available from the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk.

GCSE Reform Timetable

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

- Phase 1 (teaching began in September 2015)
English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Mathematics - Numeracy, Welsh (1st) Language and Welsh Literature

- Phase 2 (teaching began in September 2016)
Art and Design, Biology, Chemistry, Drama, Food and Nutrition, French, Geography, German, Music, Science (Double Award), Applied Science (Single Award), Applied Science (Double Award), Spanish, Physical Education and Physics
- Phase 3 (teaching began in September 2017)
Business, Computer Science, Design & Technology, History, Media Studies, Physical Education (Short Course), Religious Studies and Welsh Second Language