



Media release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 09.30 HOURS
THURSDAY, 17 AUGUST 2023**

Students perform well as grading continues to return towards pre-pandemic standards

Today, the Joint Council for Qualifications has published the 2023 Wales results for A and AS levels, alongside the release of Level 3 vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ). This is the second-time students have undertaken summer exams marked and graded by exam boards since 2019. Overall outcomes are higher than 2019, but lower than in 2022 where additional measures were put in place.

Working closely with Qualifications Wales, WJEC has introduced measures to support the transition back to pre-pandemic standards. This has included advance information in relation to assessments to mitigate the disruption to teaching and learning caused by the pandemic. Qualifications Wales confirmed that results will broadly reflect a midway point between 2019 and 2022.

Comparisons to any previous years' results should be approached with caution due to the differing methods of assessments and circumstances.

GCE A level Results

The A level results for Wales show that 97.5% of students achieved A* - E grades. 13.5% of candidates achieved an A*, and 34.0% achieved A*-A grades.

The total number of A level examination entries in Wales this year was 32,960, a decrease of 7.2% from 2022, however, entries are consistent with 2019 (32,320).

At A level, Mathematics remains the most popular subject however, there has been an overall downward entry pattern in most subjects, with the largest reduction in entries for the following: Biology (-325), Chemistry (-336), History (-390), Physics (-393) and Religious Studies (-234). However, Computing (+153) and Physical Education (+81) have seen an increase in entries.

In Wales, the overall pass rate for males and females is broadly similar with 96.8% of subject entries by males achieving A* - E grades, compared to 98.0% of entries by females. However, females continue to outperform males at most grade points, for A*-A by 2.4 percentage points and A*-C by 5.2 percentage points, although males outperform females by 0.6 percentage points at A*.

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Results

There were 40,706 cash-in entries for AS in Wales this year, an increase of 6.8% compared with 38,106 last year.

25.5% of all grades awarded were A in Wales this year. The percentage of candidates achieving A - E grades were 90.9%.

For AS, Mathematics remains the most popular subject. Overall there has been an increase in entries for most subjects, with the largest entries for the following: Biology (+276), Chemistry (+352), English Literature (+258), Mathematics (+672), Mathematics (Further) (+223) and Physics (+412).

Females outperform males at all grade points, for A by 2.5 percentage points, for A-C by 7.8 percentage points and A-E by 3.1 percentage points.

Ian Morgan, Chair of JCQ Board of Directors, said:

“On behalf of JCQ, I would like to congratulate A level and vocational students on their achievements today. Their results reflect the effort and determination they've demonstrated throughout their studies, and we wish them well as they take their next steps into higher education, training, and employment.”

We would also like to thank teachers, tutors, and exams officers working at schools and colleges across the country for their hard work, and continued support and commitment to ensuring the successful delivery of this year's exam series. In addition, parents and carers have played a huge role in supporting their children achieve these results today.”

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the results in Wales, contact:

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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 are published with the STRICT EMBARGO of 09.30 THURSDAY 17 August 2023 and will be available on WJEC's website from 09.30 on 17 August 2023 – 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 17 August 2023.

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. The AS contributes 40% to the overall A level.

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.

Summer 2023: Approach to assessment and grading

The information below relates to the following Qualifications Wales approved qualifications:

- *WJEC GCSE, AS and A level qualifications*
- *Skills Challenge Certificates*
- *Level 2 and Level 3 Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts*
- *Level 2 and Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development*

In September 2022, Qualifications Wales confirmed that approved qualifications would continue to be assessed via exams and non-examination assessments as normal, but with advance information to account for the disruption to teaching and learning.

WJEC published advance information in February 2023 for each qualification, which supported learners' revision.

In addition, WJEC supported schools and colleges through the provision of additional guidance, training and resources. Examples of this support is available from the [WJEC Summer 2023 website](#).

Qualifications Wales confirmed in September 2022 that for 2023, results will broadly reflect a midway point between 2022 and 2019. WJEC has worked to implement this policy directive as part of their awarding process.