



Joint Council for  
Qualifications <sup>CIC</sup>

# **Notes for users of the JCQ results tables**

## **A and AS level June 2023 series**

## A and AS level June 2023: Notes for users of the JCQ results tables

These notes put the results in context and provide an explanation for some year-on-year changes in reporting and outcomes. The notes should be read before consulting the results tables.

The notes do not attempt to outline the detail of every change that may influence results or entries in some way. You should consult relevant regulatory and governmental websites for a more extensive overview of system changes.

### Regulator links

#### England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>

#### Northern Ireland

<https://ccea.org.uk/regulation>

#### Wales

<https://qualificationswales.org/english/>

<https://qualificationswales.org/cymraeg/>

### Education Department links

#### England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

#### Northern Ireland

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/>

#### Wales

<https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

### Interpretations by country

Each nation's respective governments and regulators determine education policy and regulatory arrangements.

It is important to note that A and AS qualifications differ in design and content between the nations. For example, A level qualifications are modular in Northern Ireland and Wales, with AS results contributing to the full A level award. In England, the AS and A levels are stand-alone qualifications, and all exams are taken at the end of the course.

### Changes in entries – A level

A level UK entries increased by 2.2% from 848,910 in summer 2022 to 867,658 in 2023. However, the individual picture across the nations differs. Whilst England and Northern Ireland saw an increase in A level entries, Wales saw a slight decrease.

According to [ONS population estimates](#), the 18-year-old population increased by 0.5 % for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland combined. Entries from this age group account for 92.6% of UK A level entries.

### Changes in entries – AS level

UK entries for AS qualifications increased by 4.2% from 135,397 in summer 2022 to 141,096 in 2023. However, the individual picture across the nations differs. Whilst Northern Ireland and Wales saw an increase in AS entries, there was a decrease in England, mostly due to differences in qualification design where AS is a stand-alone qualification.

According to [ONS population estimates](#), the 17-year-old population increased only slightly by 0.1 % for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland combined. Entries from this age group account for 80.2% of UK AS entries.

## England

Last September, [Ofqual](#) set out its expectations for returning to pre-pandemic grading in England, with protection built into the grading process to recognise the disruption that students have faced. Therefore, comparisons to 2019 results will be most meaningful.

Senior examiners were asked to make allowances when recommending grade boundaries where national performance was weaker than before the pandemic. As in any year, grade boundaries may change to reflect differences in the demand of the assessments and might be higher or lower than in 2019. Senior examiners recommended the grade boundaries for each specification after reviewing the work produced by students and drawing on all the available evidence, including data.

## Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is on a journey back to pre-pandemic awarding arrangements, and this is reflected in this year's summer 2023 awards. [CCEA](#) expects to return to pre-pandemic standards across all subjects by the summer of 2024.

Students were provided with high-level [Advance Information](#) for the majority of CCEA AS and A level summer 2023 examinations to recognise the disruption students may have faced.

There is an open qualifications market in Northern Ireland, meaning schools can choose to offer AS/A levels from awarding organisations other than CCEA, provided these comply with Department of Education requirements.

## Wales

[Qualifications Wales](#) set out its approach to grading in Wales in September 2022. Grades would be awarded broadly mid-way between the 2019 and 2022 results. Qualification Wales expects to return to pre-pandemic arrangements in 2024.

[Advance Information](#) (excluding Art and Design) was provided for students to recognise the disruption they may have faced and to support the transition back to pre-pandemic arrangements. There were no omissions of units for the 2023 exams and no changes to the content of courses. Examiners used the review of learner work along with other supporting evidence to set grade boundaries that take into account the context of the series.

Only WJEC offers the AS and A levels designed and approved for Wales. Where WJEC does not provide a subject, maintained schools and colleges can offer qualifications from other exam boards.

## Data Presentation

A set of key tables has been made available in a machine-readable format, allowing comparison of overall results between 2019, 2022, and 2023. These are classified on the JCQ website as 'Main Results Tables.'

The established tables are available on the JCQ website under 'Other Results Information.' Tables showing comparisons to 2019 and 2022 are provided. Comparisons to 2020 and 2021 have not been provided due to different assessment arrangements because of the pandemic.

## Confidentiality and Data Suppression

Every effort is made to protect student anonymity and ensure that data does not identify any individual student.

Where the total number of student entries for a subject is fewer than ten, then all rows for the subject have been suppressed.

Where the number of entries by either male or female students is fewer than ten, the separate rows for male and female have been suppressed, but the combined 'male & female' row has not been suppressed.

## Quality Assurance and Limitations

JCQ carries out quality assurance checks to ensure that the data received is accurate to the best of its knowledge.

The results tables are provisional. Results are updated after this point to include changes such as appeals. Whilst provisional, we do not anticipate significant changes to outcomes will occur and will not publish any updates to these results tables.

The provisional results are only for the June 2023 series and do not include results for qualifications awarded earlier in the 2022/23 academic year.