



Media release
EMBARGOED UNTIL 09.30 HOURS
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A level and AS results are broadly similar in Wales

GCE A level Results

The A level provisional results for Wales show stability with 98.6% of students achieving A* - E. There was a small increase at A* with 10.8% of candidates collecting these grades.

The total number of A level examination entries in Wales this year was 30,448, a reduction of 3.3% relative to 2019, continuing the decreasing A level entries since the summer of 2015, in line with the reduction in size of the 18-year old population.

In Wales, males continue to outperform females at grade A*, 0.8 percentage points ahead. Whilst at other grades females continued to outperform males, with 99.0% of subject entries by females this year gaining A* - E grades, compared to 98.2% of entries by males.

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Results

There were 45,435 cash-in entries for AS in Wales this year, an increase of 14.6% compared with 39,646 last year, which can be attributed to an extent by the number of candidates cashing in.

22.2% of all grades awarded were A in Wales this year, compared with 20.3% in 2019. The percentage of candidates achieving A - E grades shows a small growth, with 91.4% achieving these grades.

23.8% of all grades achieved by females were an A, 93.4% were A - E. The equivalent figures for males were 20.0% at A grade and 88.9% at grades A - E.

Trends in Subject Entries

There has been an overall reduction in entries for all subjects at A level. However, Biology (+44), Computing (+37), Further Mathematics (+55), Mathematics (+119) Physics (+48), Psychology (+128) and Sociology (+22) have seen an increase in entries.

For AS, overall there has been an upward entry pattern in most subjects, with significant entries for the following: Biology (+941), Chemistry (+654), English Literature (+539), Mathematics (+517), Physics (+476) and Psychology (+673).

Mathematics remains the most popular A level and AS subject with 3,704 and 5,144 entries respectively. Outcomes have remained relatively stable at both levels.

There has been a small increase in entries for Welsh 1st and 2nd Language at AS, but a reduction at 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 13 August 2020 and will be available on WJEC's website from 09.30 on 13 August 2020 – 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 13 August 2020.

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

In Wales, 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.

Standardisation Process

The government asked the regulators to develop a mechanism to award grades this year in the absence of exams based on:

- each student’s ability in the subject, based on an exam centre’s assessment, supplemented by a range of evidence; and
- ensuring that qualification standards are maintained and the distribution of grades follows a similar profile to previous years.

The exam boards and JCQ have worked to deliver results this year in a way as fair as possible given the circumstances, using the standardisation model developed by regulators. Regulators have published information on their standardisation model, which is based on three key sources of information:

- Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) and rank orders of entered students in each subject, reflecting their achievements and work over the previous two years;
- the historical record of the centre; and
- the prior attainment of the cohort of students for each subject.

Exam boards have worked hard to develop entirely new systems, to allow the collection of CAGs and rank orders from exam centres, which then had to be checked thoroughly prior to entering into the statistical model(s). Novel systems for quality assurance were also developed to support the integrity of the results.