

Entries for GCSE, AS and A level: summer 2018 exam series: provisional figures April 2018

Background information accompanying statistical release



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Information about the statistics

Purpose

This release provides information on the number of entries for GCSEs, AS and A levels (in the report and in the data tables) as well as Level 1/Level 2 certificates (in the data tables only) for the summer 2018 exam series. Entries data are collected at the same time every year, at a point when it should be reasonably complete, although final entry numbers may be slightly different from these. These figures are therefore provisional and represent the number of entries submitted by schools and colleges to awarding organisations by 18 April 2018.

Geographical coverage

The report presents data on the number of entries in England for the summer 2018 exam series.

Four exam boards offer GCSE and AS/A level qualifications in England:

- AQA Education (AQA)
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson)
- WJEC-CBAC Ltd. (WJEC/Eduqas)

Description

This release provides information on the number of entries broken down by subject, country and age of students based on school year groups. The figures given in the tables are from combined reformed and non-reformed specifications.

Centres enter students at qualification level ahead of the summer examination series according to the course of study that they have followed.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) assigns a code to every qualification according to a category defined by JCQ which groups qualifications in subject groups. JCQ groupings are used in this release to filter and sort the data in the data tables. Some of these categories may not contain the same specifications from year to year due to some subjects not being available after reforms. For instance, in 2017 GCSE Performing/Expressive arts included specifications related to 'performing arts' and 'expressive arts' but in 2018 contains only 'dance' specifications.

The accompanying data tables also include the entries for Level 1/Level 2 certificates. Although these are not discussed in the report, they are included in the data tables for reference.

External Influences

There are various factors which might have influenced the entries for GCSE, Level 1/Level 2 certificates, AS and A levels given in this release:

AS and A level

- In reformed qualifications (from 2016 for some subjects), AS and A level have been decoupled. This means that AS results do not count towards a student's A level as they did previously. This may mean fewer entries for AS in reformed A level subjects.
- Phase 1 reform subjects were introduced in 2016, mainly comprising facilitating subjects (facilitating subjects are those subjects recognised by some universities as providing the broadest scope of options for university applicants) and some large entry subjects, including biology, chemistry, physics, English language, English literature and history. Phase 2 included most of the remainder of facilitating and large entry subjects including geography, French, German and Spanish. [Phase 3 subjects were available for first teaching in 2017](#) and include mathematics, further mathematics and classical subjects.

GCSE and Level 1/Level 2 certificates

- [Reformed GCSEs are graded on a 9 to 1 scale](#) (9 denoting the highest passing grade and 1 denoting the lowest passing grade). In 2018, [there are now 23 reformed GCSEs](#). Twenty new subjects will be awarded for the first time this year (including computer science, geography, history, biology, chemistry, physics and combined science), to add to the 3 subjects first offered in 2017 (English language, English literature and mathematics).
- Since 2017, Level 1/Level 2 certificates in English language, English literature and mathematics no longer count in school performance tables and therefore there is a continuing fall in the entries for these qualifications and a further shift in the cohort back to GCSEs.
- Since September 2013, only a student's first entry to a GCSE qualification counts in their school's performance tables. Since 2014, this has been associated with an overall fall in the number of early entries from students in Year 10 and below.
- The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a school performance measure relating to attainment in core academic subjects. From 2018 the measure will calculate

a school's average point score for students taking reformed EBacc eligible GCSE subjects. This includes English literature, English language and mathematics, history or geography, a specified combination of science GCSEs and a language.

- In 2016, the Progress 8 measure was introduced to schools. It is a key school accountability measure that is based on students' progress from key stage 2 in eight GCSE subjects. [Progress 8 is made up of four elements:](#)
 1. A double weighted mathematics element
 2. A double weighted English element based on the highest point score in English language or English literature qualification
 3. An element which includes the three highest point scores from EBacc qualifications
 4. An element including three qualifications from the remaining EBacc subjects and/or other GCSEs or other qualifications included on the DfE approved list for performance tables
- Since August 2015 full time students who have not achieved a grade 4 (prior to 2017 a grade C) or above in English language or English literature and mathematics GCSEs must continue studying these subjects in order to be funded post-16.

Data source

Awarding Organisations submit data to Ofqual for Level 1/Level 2 certificates, GCSEs, AS and A levels they award for the summer examination series. Any provider that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period is contacted to make sure the data is as complete as possible.

Data have been collected at an appropriate point when entries are reasonably complete, in this case, by 18 April 2018. However, schools can continue to make late entries right up to the day of the exam, therefore the total entry numbers may change almost on a daily basis. Ofqual agreed these dates with the awarding organisations as a point when the majority of entries would have been submitted. The data is collected at the same time each year to aid year-on-year comparisons.

Limitations

There is potential for error in the information provided by awarding organisations and Ofqual cannot guarantee that the information received is correct. Ofqual quality assures data as far as possible, performing a number of checks on the data eg

checks for systematic issues and compares the data over time. Summary data are sent back to exam boards for checking and confirmation. However, it is still possible that some errors may remain undetected.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the [Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publications](#) published by Ofqual to ensure the accuracy of the data and to challenge or question it, where necessary. Publication may be deferred if the statistics are not considered fit for purpose.

Revisions

Once published, data on the number of provisional entries as at 18 April 2018 are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or to correct an error. In some cases, data may be amended to reflect any new categorisation of subjects.

Confidentiality and rounding

To ensure confidentiality of the accompanying data, all figures for the number of entries are rounded. In the accompanying data tables and commentary, the figures are rounded to the nearest 5. If the value is less than 5 (1 to 4), it is represented as 0~ and 0 represents zero values.

Total values of rows or columns are calculated using unrounded figures; the sum of rounded figures may differ from the total reported.

All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, except where smaller magnitudes are needed for meaningful interpretation. As a result of rounded figures, the percentages (calculated on actual figures) shown in tables may not necessarily add up to 100.

Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

Related Publications

For any related publications for qualifications offered in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland please contact the respective regulators - [Qualifications Wales](#), [CCEA](#) and the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#).

Statistical policies

The [policies and procedures](#) that Ofqual follow for production and release of its statistical releases are available online.

Glossary

Definitions of important terms used in this release are [available online](#).

Useful links

The [report and data tables](#) accompanying this release are available separately.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on our publications. Should you have any comments on this statistical release and how to improve it to meet your needs please contact us at statistics@ofqual.gov.uk.

We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us at publications@ofqual.gov.uk if you have any specific accessibility requirements.



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