

Statistical Release

November GCSE and Level 1/ Level 2 Certificates Entries for England: October 2015

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Published:

19th November 2015

Caroline Morin
Interim Head of Profession
024 7671 6809
statistics@ofqual.gov.uk

Key points

This release presents figures on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates (commonly known as IGCSEs) submitted to exam boards ahead of the November 2015 exam series.

The key findings for this release are:

- The overall entry for GCSEs in England in November 2015 is up in comparison with November 2014 from 58,880 to 68,170 – an increase of 16 per cent.
- The overall number of GCSE entries from students in Year 11 and below in November 2015 has decreased by 51 per cent from 12,840 in November 2014 to 6,260.
- The overall number of GCSE entries from students in Year 12 and above in November 2015 increased by 34 per cent from 46,040 in November 2014 to 61,920, which represents 91 per cent of the total number of entries in November 2015.
- There was an increase in the number of entries in GCSE mathematics and English language but a decrease in the number of entries for GCSE English.
- The Level 1/ Level 2 certificate English language entry for November 2015 has increased by 42.3 per cent from 29,130 in 2014 to 41,460 in November 2015.

Introduction

Ofqual regulates qualifications, exams and assessments in England, and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Under the *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009*, one of Ofqual's objectives is to improve public confidence in regulated qualifications and assessments by raising awareness and understanding of the qualifications it regulates.

In this release, Ofqual presents data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates (commonly known as IGCSEs) in England received by exam boards ahead of the November exam series. The figures represent the number of entries, rounded to the nearest 10, submitted by 26th October 2015. The figures for entries can change daily up to the day of the exams.

Key statistics

From November 2014, GCSEs were offered only for those students re-sitting English, English language and mathematics. The re-sit only rule in November does not apply to Level 1/ Level 2 certificates, and students may still enter for a Level 1/ Level 2 certificate for the first time in November.

Overall

- The overall number of entries for GCSEs in England in November 2015 is up, compared with November 2014, from 58,880 to 68,170 – an increase of 16 per cent.
- The overall number of GCSE entries from students in Year 11 and below has decreased by 51 per cent, from 12,840 in November 2014 to 6,260 in November 2015.
- The overall number of GCSE entries from students in Year 12 and above has increased by 34 per cent, from 46,040 in November 2014 to 61,920 in November 2015.
- The majority of GCSE entries in November 2015 are from students in Year 12 and above, with 61,920 making up 91 per cent of the total entries in November 2015. This is likely to be due to the policy changes put in place to encourage students who did not achieve a grade C to re-take GCSEs.

Mathematics

- The overall number of entries for GCSE mathematics in November 2015 has increased by 22 per cent, from 38,840 in November 2014 to 47,230.
- The number of entries for students in Year 11 and below has dropped by 44 per cent, from 8,820 in November 2014 to 4,580 in 2015.
- Entries from students in Year 12 and above have risen from 30,030 in November 2014 to 42,670, an increase of 42 per cent. This represents 92 per cent of the total number of entries.

English language

- The number of entries for GCSE English language in November 2015 is 15,210 – an increase of 14 per cent from 13,300 in November 2014.

- For students in Year 11 and below, entries have fallen by 59 per cent from 2,970 in 2014 to 1,230 in 2015.
- For students in Year 12 and above, the entries have increased by 35 per cent, from 10,330 in 2014 to 13,980 in 2015.
- The majority of entries in November 2015 are from students in year 12 and above, accounting for 92 per cent of the total number of entries (13,980 out of 15,210).
- The entries for Level 1/ Level 2 certificate in November 2015 has increased by 41 per cent, compared to 2014, from 29,130 to 41,060.

English

- The number of entries for GCSE English in November 2015 is 5,730, which represents a 15 per cent fall from November 2014 when there were 6,740 entries.
- There are 450 entries from students in Year 11 and below, which is a decrease of 57 per cent from the entry in November 2014 (1,060).
- There are 5,280 entries from students in Year 12 and above, which is a decrease of 7 per cent from the entry in November 2014 (5,690).
- The majority of the entries in November 2015 are from students in Year 12 and above which equates to 92 per cent of all entries in English in November 2014.

Glossary of terms

GCSEs

General Certificates of Secondary Education are the main school-leaving qualification in England. They are available in a range of subjects and can be studied alongside other qualifications. They are generally sat by 15–18 year olds in schools and colleges but are open to anyone who wants to gain a qualification.

Level 1/ Level 2 certificates

Also known as International General Certificates of Secondary Education (IGCSEs), they are taken by students as alternatives to GCSEs. A number of these qualifications count towards school performance measures.

Year 11

Students who are 16 by the end of the academic year.

Year 12

Students who are 17 by the end of the academic year.

Background notes

This document is in line with Ofqual Statistics Policies¹ and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.²

Data source

The exam boards that provide GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates have submitted information to Ofqual about the number of entries for each qualification available in November 2015. The entries are for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of the type of school or college. This release covers the number of entries broken down by subject and age of students in England based on school year groups (Year 11 is the academic year where students become 16 years old). Similar data for Wales and Northern Ireland is available in the appendix tables.

Limitations of data

There is potential for error in the information provided by exam boards, therefore Ofqual cannot guarantee that the information received is correct. Ofqual compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues. Quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publication and the Data Audit Framework,³ to ensure the accuracy of the data and challenge or question it, where necessary. Ofqual continuously manages this process by:

- ensuring that data providers are clear about what is required of them and are fully consulted during the initial design and any subsequent change phases;
- reminding all providers (if appropriate) that, as a condition of them being regulated, all data must be completely accurate;
- being alert to unexpected changes in the data submitted by comparing individual returns over time from the same provider;
- actively challenging any unexpected results with the data providers; and

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures

² www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures

- having a proportionate data-auditing framework in place, allowing for auditing of providers' information collection, collation and delivery processes as necessary, using a wide range of tools from questionnaires to on-site process audits.

The publication may be deferred if the statistics are not considered fit for purpose.

Data have been collected at an appropriate point when they are reasonably complete. For GCSE and the Level 1/ Level 2 certificate this was 26th October 2015. However, schools can continue to make late entries right up to the day of the exam, so the total entry numbers will change almost on a daily basis. Ofqual agreed these dates with the exam boards as the date when the majority of entries would have been submitted.

Entry data for 2014 was collected as at 10th October for Level 1/ Level 2 certificates and as at 24th October for GCSEs.

Geographical coverage

This release presents data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates for the November 2015 exam series in England. In Tables 2 and 3, entry figures for Wales and Northern Ireland are provided for comparison. However, this release does **not** include GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates taken outside of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Revisions

Once published, data on the number of entries are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or correct an error.

Completeness of the data

Exam boards send Ofqual entry data for all regulated qualifications classified as GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates. Ofqual contacts any exam board that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period, to make sure the data are as complete as possible. For this release, Ofqual received data from all the exam boards that were in a position to award qualifications.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality of the published accompanying data, all figures are rounded.

Rounding

In accordance with Ofqual's Rounding Policy,⁴ all figures for the number of certificates issued are rounded. In the commentary and tables, they are rounded to the nearest 10. This is to ensure that the data does not reveal an individual candidate. All percentages within the commentary are based on figures from the tables.

Users of these statistics

These statistics are of particular interest to Ofqual, recognised exam boards and the Department for Education. Ofqual uses these statistics to inform understanding of entry patterns on awarding outcomes. Exam boards use these statistics to help create predictions for exam outcomes.

Related statistics and publications

A number of other statistical releases and publications relate to this one, including:

- The statistical publication on Summer 2015 exam entries: GCSEs, level 1 / 2 certificates, AS and A levels in England.⁵
- The statistical publication on *Entries and Late Entries for GCSE and A Level: 2014/15 Academic Year*.⁶
- *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2015*,⁷ published by the Department for Education.
- *Annual Qualifications Market Report 2013/14*.⁸

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/summer-2015-exam-entries-gcses-level-1-2-certificates-as-and-a-levels-in-england

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entries-and-late-entries-for-gcse-and-a-level-201415-academic-year

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2015

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-qualifications-market-report-academic-year-201314

Useful information

A glossary of terms is available on page 5 to help you interpret this release.

You can find Ofqual's publication schedule for the next releases on the gov.uk website.⁹

The Ofqual Register gives information on regulated qualifications and recognised awarding organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹⁰

User feedback

Ofqual is running a rolling series of online surveys to make sure its statistical releases meet your needs.

Ofqual would like to invite you to take part in the following online survey for this release:

www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1834939/gcse-and-level-1-level-2-certificate-entries-in-england-november. This will take about 10 minutes to complete and your responses will remain entirely confidential in any reports published about the survey.

If you would like to take part in the survey, have any questions, or would prefer a paper or large-type copy, please contact Ofqual at: statistics@ofqual.gov.uk.

⁹ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements

¹⁰ <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>

Appendix

Table 1	November GCSE entries for England, as at 26th October, 2015
Table 2	November GCSE entries for Northern Ireland, as at 26th October 2015
Table 3	November GCSE entries for Wales, as at 26th October 2015
Table 4	November Level 1/ Level 2 certificates entries for England, as at 26th October 2015

Table 1: November GCSE entries for England, as at 26th October, 2015

GCSE Subject	2015								2014							
	Total entry	Change from 2014	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Year 12 and above		Total entry	Change from 2013	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Year 12 and above	
			Entries	Change from 2014	Entries	Change from 2014	Entries	Change from 2014			Entries	Change from 2013	Entries	Change from 2013	Entries	Change from 2013
Mathematics	46,470	24%	100	-87%	3,960	-43%	42,420	43%	37,360	-71%	790	-27%	6,900	-93%	29,680	1%
Linked pair mathematics	760	-48%	20	-65%	500	-54%	250	-29%	1,480	-76%	50	-76%	1,080	-81%	350	114%
English language	15,210	14%	20	-58%	1,210	-59%	13,980	35%	13,300	-88%	40	-83%	2,930	-97%	10,330	-14%
English	5,730	-15%	10	-74%	440	-56%	5,280	-7%	6,740	-79%	40	-86%	1,020	-96%	5,690	-28%
Total	68,170	16%	150	-84%	6,110	-49%	61,920	34%	58,880	-79%	920	-49%	11,920	-95%	46,040	-7%

Table 2: November GCSE entries for Northern Ireland, as at 26th October, 2015

GCSE Subject	2015								2014							
	Total entry	Change from 2014	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Year 12 and above		Total entry	Change from 2013	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Year 12 and above	
			Entries	Change from 2014	Entries	Change from 2014	Entries	Change from 2014			Entries	Change from 2013	Entries	Change from 2013	Entries	Change from 2013
Mathematics	1,350	-4%	0~	-93%	270	27%	1,080	-5%	1,410	-48%	60		210	-77%	1,140	-36%
Linked pair mathematics									-		-		-		-	
English language	240	93%	-		70	957%	160	41%	120	31%	-		0~	0%	120	27%
English	180	-55%	-		-		180	-55%	410	-26%					410	-26%
Total	1,770	-9%	0~	-93%	340	57%	1,420	-14%	1,940	-42%	60		220	-77%	1,660	-31%

Table 3: November GCSE entries for Wales, as at 26th October, 2015

GCSE Subject	2015								2014							
	Total entry	Change from 2014	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Year 12 and above		Total entry	Change from 2013	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Year 12 and above	
			Entries	Change from 2014	Entries	Change from 2014	Entries	Change from 2014			Entries	Change from 2013	Entries	Change from 2013	Entries	Change from 2013
Mathematics	22,130	12%	20	-96%	19,630	15%	2,480	17%	19,690	-	450	297%	17,120	7%	2,120	0%
Linked pair mathematics																
English language																
English									-							
Total	22,130	12%	20	-96%	19,630	15%	24,780	17%	19,690	0%	450	297%	17,120	-2%	2,120	0%

Entries with fewer than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented by this symbol 0~

Figures have been rounded independently and may not sum to the total

Table 4: November Level 1/ Level 2 certificate entries for England as at 26th October, 2015

Level 1/Level 2 Subject	November 2015 entry	November 2014 entry	November 2013 entry	Change in entry 2014 to 2015
English language	41,460	29,130	27,770	42%
English literature	950	610	240	55%
English as a second language	260	580	90	-55%
Mathematics (no coursework)	220	560	230	-61%
Biology	60	60	110	-3%
ICT	50	30	30	57%
Physics	50	50	30	2%
Chemistry	40	50	50	-17%
Business studies	30	50	40	-32%
History	20	30	10	-43%
Enterprise	10	0~	0	600%
French	10	0~	10	50%
Geography	10	30	40	-31%
Spanish	10	10	10	-17%
Art and design	0~	10	10	-64%
Total	43,180	31,200	28,670	38%

¹¹ Entries with fewer than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented by this symbol 0~

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Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB

2nd Floor
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346