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Official Statistics

# Background information for provisional entries for AS and A level: autumn 2021 exam series

Published 7 October 2021

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## 1. Purpose

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This release provides information on the provisional number of entries for AS and A levels (in the report and in the data tables) for the autumn 2021 exam series. The autumn 2021 series was put in place, following consultation, for students who received a teacher assessed grade in the same subject in summer 2021 or those who awarding organisations believe would have sat the exams in summer 2021 had they not been cancelled.

[Ofqual required awarding organisations to offer an autumn series of exams](#) in all GCSE and A level subjects and AS exams in biology, chemistry, further maths, maths and physics (offering exams in other AS subjects was optional). A similar exam series formed part of the exceptional arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2020 and the [reasons and arrangements for the autumn 2020 are also set out on the Ofqual website](#).

## 2. Geographical coverage

The report presents data on the number of entries in England for the autumn 2021 exam series.

Four awarding organisations offer GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in England:

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

## 3. Description

This release provides information on the number of entries broken down by subject and age of students based on school year groups.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) assigns a title (JCQ title) and a code (JCQ 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. Only subject groups with entries in the autumn 2020 or autumn 2021 exam series are shown in the data tables.

Entries are also broken down by the candidates' affiliation, generally the type of centre they attend.

The categories used in this report are:

- secondary non-selective (maintained)
- sixth form and FE

- independent
- selective
- other

Private candidates pursue independent courses of study assessed at approved examination centres (for example, part-time students, distance learners or individuals who are home-educated or privately tutored). Some centres may also classify year 14 students who left the centre at the end of the 2019 to 2020 academic year as private or external for the autumn series despite previously being internal candidates at the same centre. Private candidates are included with 'other' in the centre type breakdown although their assessment may take place in any of the categories listed.

## 4. Data source

Awarding organisations submit data to Ofqual for GCSE, AS and A levels they award. We contact any awarding organisation that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period to make sure the data is as complete as possible.

Entries data are collected at a point when they should be reasonably complete, although final entry numbers may be slightly different from these. These figures are therefore provisional and represent entry information for AS and A levels received by awarding organisations by 17 September 2021. Ofqual agreed these dates with the awarding organisations as a point when the vast majority of entries would have been submitted. GCSEs have a later entry date and provisional entries for GCSE exams will be published separately.

[Total entries for the summer 2021 exam series are published by the Joint Council for Qualifications](#) and these are provided for reference in the report.

## 5. Limitations

There is potential for error in the information provided by awarding organisations and Ofqual cannot guarantee that the information it received is correct. Ofqual quality assures data as far as possible, performing a number of checks on the data, for example, checks for systematic issues. Summary data are sent back to awarding organisations for checking and confirmation. However, it is still possible that some errors may remain undetected.

## 6. 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.

## 7. Published data

The data underlying these statistics are published alongside this statistical release at 9:30am on the day of release.

## 8. Revisions

Once published, data on the number of provisional entries 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.

## 9. 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.

## 10. Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

## 11. Related publications

- [Provisional entries for AS and A level: autumn 2020 exam series](#)
- [Provisional entries for GCSE, AS and A level: summer 2021 exam series](#)

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).

## 12. Useful links

- [report and data tables](#) accompanying this release
- [definitions](#) of important terms used in this release
- [policies and procedures](#) that Ofqual follow for production and release of its statistical releases

## 13. 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 [data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk).

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