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Official Statistics

Provisional November 2023 exam entries: GCSE English language and mathematics

Published 30 November 2023

Applies to England

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The provisional figures below show the number of entries for GCSE English language and mathematics for exams sat in November 2023. Schools and colleges submitted the data to awarding organisations by 26 October 2023.

The November series is usually restricted to students who were aged 16 and over by the end of the preceding August. This is the case in 2023 and was the case in 2022 and before the pandemic. There were alternative arrangements in 2020 and 2021, because of summer exams being cancelled due to the pandemic. This meant any students, including younger students, who were entered in the summer and wished to do so could sit these exams.

The 2020 and 2021 November series were also open to students the awarding organisations believed had intended to enter in the summer but were unable to do so or who chose not to do so when exams were cancelled. [Further information about arrangements for the November series is available on the Ofqual website](#). For this reason, comparisons with 2019, the last year before the pandemic, are also drawn in this report. In addition to the different entry requirements, different grading policies have also been in place during and since the pandemic. For example, the policy for summer 2022 was to set a standard midway between summer 2021 outcomes and standards seen pre-pandemic. These differences in policy in the summer series will have impacted on the number of students deciding to enter for subsequent re-sits.

Key headlines



- Total GCSE entries in November 2023 increased by 23%, from 102,405 in November 2022, to 125,615 in November 2023. Entries in November 2023 were also higher than in November 2019, the last year exams took place before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- GCSE English language entries in November 2023 increased by 29% from 46,900 in November 2022, to 60,365 in November 2023.
- GCSE mathematics entries in November 2023 increased by 18% from 55,500 in November

2022, to 65,250 in November 2023.

- Year 12 entries increased by 25% from 60,395 in November 2022 to 75,555 in November 2023.
- Year 13 entries increased by 19% from 41,980 in November 2022 to 50,035 in November 2023.

November GCSE entries over time

GCSE entries in November 2023 increased by 23%, from 102,405 in November 2022, to 125,615 in November 2023. Entries in November 2023 were also higher than in 2019, the last year before the pandemic.



Table 1. GCSE entries from November 2019 to November 2023

Year	Total entries	Percentage change with previous year
2019	109,495	Not applicable
2020	131,300	20%
2021	114,040	-13%
2022	102,405	-10%
2023	125,615	23%

Variations in entries over recent years may reflect a number of factors such as; the alternative awarding arrangements for the [summer 2020](#) and [summer 2021](#) series', the approach to grading in [summer 2022](#) (when results reflected a midpoint between summer 2021 and summer 2019), and the return to pre-pandemic standards in [summer 2023](#) (when results were broadly similar to summer 2019). The 16 year-old cohort has also increased by 10.4% in 2023 compared with the past 5 years, from 613,025 in 2019 to 676,773 in 2023 according to [ONS population estimates](#).

November GCSE entries by subject

GCSE English language entries in November 2023 increased by 29% from 46,900 in November 2022, to 60,365 in November 2023. In November 2023 entries were higher than in 2019.

GCSE mathematics entries in November 2023 increased by 18% from 55,500 in November 2022, to 65,250 in November 2023.

**Table 2. GCSE English language and mathematics entries from November 2019 to November 2023**

Year	Subject	Total entries	Percentage change with previous year
2019	English language	53,540	Not applicable
2020	English language	59,185	11%
2021	English language	50,345	-15%
2022	English language	46,900	-7%
2023	English language	60,365	29%
2019	Mathematics	55,955	Not applicable
2020	Mathematics	72,115	29%
2021	Mathematics	63,695	-12%
2022	Mathematics	55,500	-13%
2023	Mathematics	65,250	18%

November GCSE mathematics entries by tier

GCSE mathematics is a tiered qualification with foundation and higher tiers. The tier of entry determines the possible range of grades. The November entries followed a similar pattern to previous years with the majority (95%) of entries being for the foundation tier.

**Table 3. GCSE mathematics entry by tier from November 2019 to November 2023**

Exam series	Foundation tier entries	Higher tier entries	Percentage of foundation tier entries	Percentage of higher tier entries
November 2019	52,860	3,095	94%	6%

November 2020	66,935	5,180	93%	7%
November 2021	60,910	2,785	96%	4%
November 2022	52,755	2,750	95%	5%
November 2023	61,955	3,295	95%	5%

GCSE entries by year group

Year 12 entries increased by 25% from 60,395 in November 2022 to 75,555 in November 2023.

Year 13 entries increased by 19% from 41,980 in November 2022 to 50,035 in November 2023.

Year 11 and below entries were lower in November 2022 and 2023 than in November 2020 and 2021. This is likely a result of the altered entry arrangements following the alternative assessment arrangements that were in place in summer 2020 and 2021.



Table 4. GCSE entries by year group from November 2019 to November 2023

Year group	November 2019	November 2020	November 2021	November 2022	November 2023
Year 11 and below	Fewer than 5	1,285	1,380	30	25
Year 12	60,090	62,565	64,830	60,395	75,555
Year 13 and above	49,400	67,450	47,830	41,980	50,035
Total entry	109,495	131,300	114,040	102,405	125,615

English language entries in November 2023 increased by 32% for students in year 12 and increased by 23% for students in year 13 and above, when compared with November 2022.

Mathematics entries in November 2023 increased by 18% for students in year 12 and increased by 17% for students in year 13 and above, when compared with November 2022.

Table 5. GCSE English language and mathematics entries by year group in November 2022 and November 2023

Subject	Year group	November 2022	November 2023	Percentage change
English language	Year 12	28,900	38,280	32%
English language	Year 13 and above	18,000	22,075	23%
Mathematics	Year 12	31,495	37,275	18%
Mathematics	Year 13 and above	23,980	27,965	17%

Background information

In this release, Ofqual presents data on the number of provisional entries for GCSE English language and mathematics received by awarding organisations for the November 2023 exam series. In England, GCSE English language and mathematics exams are routinely available in November. Since 2017, entry to the November series has been limited to students who were aged 16 or above on 31 August of the year of the November series. In 2020 and 2021, any students, including younger students, who were entered in the summer and wished to do so could sit the November exams. The 2020 and 2021 series were also open to students the awarding organisations believed had intended to enter in the summer but were unable to do so.

The figures for entries can change daily up to the day of the exams. We collect provisional data at the point when it is reasonably complete, although final entry numbers may be slightly different. The figures presented here are the provisional figures as submitted by schools and colleges to awarding organisations by 26 October 2023.

In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data.

Further information is available in the [detailed background information and data tables](#) accompanying this release.

User feedback

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