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Official Statistics

Background information for provisional entries for GCSE, AS and A level: summer 2026 exam series

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Applies to England

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Provide your feedback

We welcome your feedback on our publications. If you have any comments on this statistical release, or how to improve it to meet your needs, please complete this short survey to stay informed and involved in the future development of these statistics.

About this release

This annual statistics release provides information on the provisional number of entries for GCSEs, AS and A levels for the summer exam series. Entries data are collected at the same time every year, at a point when they should be reasonably complete, although final entries are always expected to vary to some degree. These figures are therefore provisional and for the 2026 summer exam series represent the number of entries submitted by schools and colleges (centres) to exam boards by 15 April 2026.

Our statistics on entries and late entries give final numbers, which are published later in the year.

Scope of this release

Figures provided within this release relate to GCSE, AS and level qualifications taken by students in schools and colleges in England only. Both full- and short-course GCSEs are included.

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

- AQA Education (AQA)
- Cambridge OCR

- Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson)
- WJEC-CBAC Ltd. (WJEC Eduqas)

Please note that we do not provide information on the number of entries for Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs). Entry data for VTQs is not available due to the flexible and diverse structure of these qualifications. This flexibility means that data on provisional entries for VTQs would not be a reliable indication of student volumes.

Context

GCSE

GCSEs are graded on a 9 to 1 scale (9 denoting the highest grade and 1 denoting the lowest grade). Combined science is counted as 2 GCSEs in terms of grading and weighting in school accountability measures. Combined science results are therefore reported on a 17-point grade scale from 9-9, 9-8, and down to 1-1. To reflect this, entries for combined science are double counted in this report and associated data tables.

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a school accountability measure relating to attainment in core academic subjects (English literature, English language, mathematics, history or geography, a specified combination of science GCSEs and a language). Schools are measured on the number of students that take GCSEs in these core subjects and on how well their students do.

AS and A level

It is worth noting that entries for AS and A level in summer 2022, summer 2023 and summer 2024 might be affected by the exceptional nature of GCSE awarding in summer 2020 and summer 2021, as well as a package of support available for students in summer 2022 respectively, as it may have impacted on students' progression decisions. Entries for AS and A level in summer 2025 were likely informed by return to normal grading patterns of GCSE in summer 2023.

Data sources

Provisional entries data for GCSEs, AS and A levels

Exam boards submit data to Ofqual for 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 has been collected at an appropriate point when entries are reasonably complete, in this case by 15 April 2026. Ofqual agreed these dates with the exam boards at a point when the majority of entries would have been submitted. The data is collected at around the same time each year to aid year-on-year comparisons.

ONS population projection

In this release, the size of the 16-year-old and 18-year-old cohort is derived from Office for National Statistics: Population projections. These projections use observed population data up to a defined base year (for example, mid-2022 for the 2022-based projections) and apply assumptions about future fertility, mortality, and migration trends to estimate the population in more recent years.

Population totals for 16-year-olds and 18-year-olds were obtained by downloading the relevant ONS projection dataset for each year. For example, 2026 population projections are available in the 2022-based “ppp” (principal projection) file. In all cases, the total population for ages 16 and 18 were calculated by summing the male and female entries for the relevant age within the ‘population’ tab.

This is a change from previous releases, which relied on ONS mid-year estimates based on actual population counts carried forward from each mid-year. Unlike those estimates, the projection-based approach incorporates demographic trends such as changes in fertility, mortality, and migration.

Data quality and areas of uncertainty

There may be errors in the data we receive from exam boards and as such Ofqual cannot guarantee that the information received is correct. Nevertheless, we do take appropriate steps to assess accuracy prior to publication.

The way we work with our data suppliers to promote data quality at source is described in our statement on administrative data sources. We also carry out our own quality assurance procedures as explained in our quality framework for statistical publications, to check 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.

Corrections and revisions policy

Once published, figures within this release are not usually subject to revision, unless an error is discovered, which would then be dealt with according to our corrections and revisions policy for official statistics.

Methodology

This release provides information on the number of entries broken down by subject and age of students based on school year groups. Centres enter students at qualification level ahead of the summer 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.

The total number of entries submitted by centres, including breakdowns by qualification type or age, exceeds the number of individual students, as a single student may be entered for multiple qualifications. Entry figures for individual subjects (rather than aggregated subject groups) also correspond to the number of students entered for those subjects.

Confidentiality and disclosure control

To ensure confidentiality and clarity of the accompanying data, all figures are rounded, as per our rounding policy for statistical publications.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5. If the value is less than 5 (1 to 4), it is represented as ‘Fewer than 5’. True zero is denoted as ‘0’. This applies to reports as well as accompanying data tables.

Where individual rounded values have been presented in a table along with their sum total, this total may be slightly different to the sum of the individual rounded values. This is because the total has been calculated from unrounded values before being rounded.

We also use unrounded values to derive percentages. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place. Due to this rounding, percentages may not always add to up exactly 100%.

Related statistics

See Statistics at Ofqual for other statistical releases and interactive visualisations.

For qualifications statistics relating to Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, see:

- Qualifications Wales
- CCEA
- Qualifications Scotland

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

Make a freedom of information (FOI) request to access official information.

Official statistics designation

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly at data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Contact details

Email: data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk

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