

Entries and late entries for GCSE and A level: 2016 to 2017 academic year

Background information accompanying the statistical release



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Information about the statistics

Purpose

This statistical release presents data on entries and late entries for GCSE, AS and A level exams during the 2016/17 academic year.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) is a membership organisation comprising seven providers of qualifications in the UK, including those awarding GCSEs and A levels. JCQ publishes [deadlines](#) by which entries should be made on behalf of the exam boards. If an entry is made after the deadline it is classed as late and may be subject to an additional charge.

Geographical coverage

This report presents data on entries, late entries and certifications for GCSEs, AS and A levels in England. Reports published in previous years included data for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland as well. As such, historical figures in this year's report reflect England only data and may therefore differ from previously published figures.

For this, and all other releases for the academic year 2016/17, Ofqual will publish separate data tables for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland without commentary, in addition to data tables and report for England. This is following a [transition arrangement](#) with Qualifications Wales (the regulator in Wales) and CCEA (the regulator in Northern Ireland) whereby the responsibility for publishing data for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland for the academic year 2017/18 and beyond has been passed to Qualifications Wales and CCEA respectively.

Description

Five exam boards offer GCSE and AS/A level qualifications in England, Wales and/or Northern Ireland:

- AQA Education (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson)
- WJEC-CBAC Ltd. (WJEC)

Schools and colleges are responsible for submitting entries to exam boards for GCSEs and A levels on behalf of their students. Students are entered separately for each unit or component that makes up a qualification.¹ An entry therefore is counted as a student being put forward for an individual assessment, whereas certifications refer to the overall qualification. However due to the linear nature of reformed GCSE and A-level specifications, entries are at qualification level for these qualifications. A school or college submits entries to the relevant exam board on behalf of its students. We collect provisional data from exam boards at the point when it is reasonably complete, although final entry numbers may be slightly different from these.

GCSEs and A levels have been undergoing major reform in England. Reformed A levels in England are different from the legacy qualifications in that the results of the AS qualification do not count towards a student's final A level grade. As such, there is no requirement for students to enter the AS units in a given subject, even if they intend to study the full A level. The introduction of reformed AS and A level qualifications started to be phased in in 2016 ([click for the complete timetable](#)).

Reformed GCSEs started to be phased in from 2015 with the first results issued for English language, English literature and maths in 2017. Ofqual announced in March 2016 that there would be two resit opportunities for legacy GCSEs in English, English language and maths, one in November 2016 and one in summer 2017. Reformed GCSEs in other subjects will start to be awarded over the following three years ([click for the complete timetable](#)).

The governments of Wales and Northern Ireland have retained the unitised structure of GCSEs, so schools and colleges in [Wales and Northern Ireland](#) will still be able to enter students for exams in the winter exam series in some subjects.

Data source

Exam boards submit data to Ofqual for GCSEs, AS and A levels they have awarded as well as entries and late entries in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas.

Exam boards send data to Ofqual for each exam series. Any provider that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period is contacted to make sure the data are as complete as possible. For this release, Ofqual received data from all the exam boards.

¹ For linear specifications, units are referred to as components.

Data was collected for AS and A level separately for the first time in 2016. Therefore, in this publication pre-2016 data are reported combined for AS and A level. From 2016 onwards where data is available, AS and A level numbers are reported separately within tables.

Limitations

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. Summary data are sent back to exam boards for checking and confirmation.

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. Ofqual continuously manages this process by:

- ensuring that data providers are clear about what is required of them – a process helped by ensuring that providers are fully consulted during the initial design phase and for any subsequent change;
- 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
- having a proportionate data-auditing framework in place, allowing for auditing of providers' information collection, collation and delivery processes as necessary.

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

Revisions

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

Confidentiality and rounding

To ensure confidentiality of the published accompanying data, figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. If the value is less than 5, it is represented as 0~ and 0 represents zero entries.

As a result of rounded figures, the percentages (calculated on actual figures) shown in any tables may not necessarily add up to 100.

Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

Related publications

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

- [Summer 2017 Exam Entries: GCSEs, level 1 / 2 Certificates, AS and A Levels in England](#) (published by Ofqual).
- [GCSE and equivalent results: 2016 to 2017 \(provisional\)](#) and [GCSEs \(key stage 4\) collection](#) (published by the Department for Education).
- [16 to 19 attainment collection](#) (published by the Department for Education).

Glossary

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

Statistical policies

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

Useful links

The [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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