

# Statistical Release

## November 2016 GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 Certificates entries for England

### Contents

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....       | 2  |
| Key statistics .....    | 3  |
| Glossary of terms ..... | 7  |
| Background notes.....   | 8  |
| Appendix .....          | 12 |

### Key points

This release presents figures on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates submitted to exam boards ahead of the November 2016 exam series. From 2014, in England the only GCSEs on offer in November were for those students re-sitting English, English language and mathematics. As a result, most of the entries in the November series are from the year 12 cohort who have previously taken the examination in year 11. The key findings for this release are:

- The overall entry for GCSEs in England in November 2016 has increased by 24% – from 68,180 in 2015 to 84,450 in 2016. This could be because November 2016 is the penultimate opportunity to re-sit these specifications, as well as the policy changes which were put in place which encourage students who did not achieve a grade C to re-take GCSEs.
- Students in year 12 and above represent 98% of the total entries in November 2016.
- The number of GCSE entries from students in year 11 and below in November 2016 has decreased by 78% from 6,260 in November 2015 to 1,360. This is likely to be due to the introduction of reformed 9-1 GCSE specifications in summer 2017, which are the only qualifications in English and mathematics that will count for school performance tables in 2017.
- Level 1/ Level 2 certificate entries for November 2016 have decreased by 63% from 43,180 in 2015 to 15,960 in November 2016. This could be because November 2016 is the penultimate opportunity to re-sit these specifications which from 2017 will no longer be counted in school performance tables.

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## Introduction

Ofqual regulates qualifications, exams and assessments in England, and until May 2016, it also regulated 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.

This release presents data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates in England<sup>1</sup> received from exam boards ahead of the November exam series. November 2016 is a re-sit only series in GCSE English, English language and mathematics but Level 1/ Level 2 certificates are available for first sitting in a range of subjects. The figures represent the number of entries submitted by 25 October 2016. The figures for entries can change daily up to the day of the exams.

Note: Ofqual has changed the name of its Official Statistics publication Enquiries about results for GCSE and A level to Reviews of marking and moderation for GCSE and A level. The next release of the publication is scheduled for 13 December 2016. The change of name was required to reflect recent changes in rules for reviewing candidate results which came into effect in August 2016. Ofqual made changes to the rules following two user consultations published in [May](#) and [July](#) 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> The report contains England only data, however, separate tables in the appendix have also been given for Wales and Northern Ireland.

## Key statistics

From 2014, the only GCSEs on offer in November were 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.

GCSEs have been reformed and new GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics, graded on a 9 to 1 scale, will be awarded for the first time in summer 2017. November 2016 is the penultimate opportunity for students who took the previous qualifications to re-sit those qualifications. There will be a final re-sit opportunity in summer 2017.

The key points in relation to entries this November are as follows:

- The overall entry for GCSEs in England in November 2016 has increased by 24% from 68,180 in 2015 to 84,450 in 2016.
- The number of GCSE entries from students in year 12 and above in November 2016 has increased by 34% from 61,920 in November 2015 to 83,090.
- Entries from students in year 12 and above represent 98% of the total entry in November 2016. This continues the trend seen in 2015 and 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 <sup>2</sup>
- The number of GCSE entries from students in year 11 and below in November 2016 has decreased by 78% from 6,260 in November 2015 to 1,360. This is likely to be due to the introduction of reformed 9-1 GCSE specifications in summer 2017, which are the only qualifications in English and mathematics that will count for school performance tables in 2017.
- November 2016 is the penultimate re-sit opportunity for the existing English, English language and mathematics specifications, which may also account for the overall increase in entries. In November 2017 the re-sit opportunity will be for the reformed specifications.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>

### **Mathematics (including linked pair mathematics)**

- The number of entries for GCSE mathematics in England in November 2016 has increased by 25%, from 47,230 in November 2015 to 58,840. This could be because November 2016 is the penultimate opportunity to take a re-sit for the unreformed specifications, as well as the policy changes to encourage students who did not achieve a grade C in mathematics to re-take GCSEs<sup>3</sup>.
- The number of entries from students in year 11 and below has dropped by 79%, from 4,580 in November 2015 to 960 in 2016.
- Entries from students in year 12 and above have increased by 36% from 42,670 in November 2015 to 57,880 in 2016.
- The total entry for the linked pair mathematics GCSEs has continued to fall, from 770 in 2015 to 230 in 2016.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>

## English language

- The number of entries for GCSE English language in England in November 2016 has increased by 40%, from 15,210 in November 2015 to 21,310. Some of this increase may be due to students moving from GCSE English.
- The increase in the entry for English language could also be because November 2016 is the penultimate opportunity to re-sit the unreformed specifications, as well as the policy changes which were put in place to encourage students who did not achieve a grade C to re-take GCSEs<sup>4</sup>.
- For students in year 11 and below, the entry has fallen from 1,230 in 2015 to 210 in 2016.
- For students in year 12 and above, the entry has increased by 51%, from 13,980 in 2015 to 21,090 in 2016.
- The majority of entries in November 2016 are from students in year 12 and above, accounting for 99% of the total number of entries.
- Level 1/ Level 2 certificate entries for English language in November 2016 have decreased by 63% from 41,460 in 2015 to 15,290 in November 2016.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>

## English

- The number of entries for GCSE English in England in November 2016 has decreased by 25%, from 5,730 in November 2015 to 4,300. Some of this decrease may be due to students moving to GCSE English language.
- There are 190 entries from students in year 11 and below, which is a decrease of 58% from the entry in November 2015 of 450.
- There are 4,110 entries from students in year 12 and above, which is a decrease of 22% from the entry in November 2015 of 5,280.
- The majority of the entries in November 2016 are from students in year 12 and above, accounting for 95% of all entries.
- The entry patterns seen here show that schools and colleges are increasingly choosing to enter students for English language rather than English.

## Glossary of terms

### **GCSEs**

General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) are the main school-leaving qualification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are available in a range of subjects and can be studied alongside other qualifications. They are generally sat by 16-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, they are taken by students as alternatives to GCSEs.

### **Year 11 (England and Wales)**

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

### **Year 12 (England and Wales)**

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

### **Year 12 (Northern Ireland)**

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

### **Year 13 (Northern Ireland)**

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

## Background notes

This document is in line with Ofqual Statistics Policies<sup>5</sup> and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.<sup>6</sup>

### 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 2016. The entries are for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of the type of school or college. The report contains England only data, however, separate tables in the appendix have also been given for Wales and Northern Ireland. For reference, the Wales data includes the new GCSE mathematics and mathematics-numeracy qualifications which are being offered for the first time in November 2016 – these are regulated by Qualifications Wales. This release shows the number of entries broken down by subject, country and age of students based on school year groups (In England and Wales, year 11 is the academic year when students become 16 years old).

### 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,<sup>7</sup> 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;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures>



- 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, 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 GCSEs and the Level 1/ Level 2 certificates this was 25 October 2016. 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 the date with the exam boards as the date when the majority of entries would have been submitted.

### **Geographical coverage**

This release presents data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates for the November 2016 exam series in England. In Tables 2 and 3, entry figures for Wales and Northern Ireland are provided for comparison. 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,<sup>8</sup> all figures for the number of entries 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. Percentage values within the tables of the appendix are based on unrounded values.

## 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 2016 exam entries: GCSEs, level 1 / 2 certificates, AS and A levels in England*.<sup>9</sup>
- The statistical publication on *Entries and Late Entries for GCSE and A Level: 2015/16 Academic Year*.<sup>10</sup>

## Useful information

A glossary of terms is available in the report to help you interpret this release.

You can find Ofqual's publication schedule for the next releases on the gov.uk website.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/summer-2016-exam-entries-gcses-level-1-2-certificates-as-and-a-levels-in-england>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entries-and-late-entries-for-gcse-and-a-level-2015-to-2016-academic-year>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&organisations%5B%5D=ofqual>

## **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 online survey for this release.

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1834939/gcse-and-level-1-level-2-certificate-entries-in-england-november>

It will take about 10 minutes to complete. 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](mailto:statistics@ofqual.gov.uk).

## Appendix

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <a href="#">Table 1</a> | November GCSE entries for England, as at 25 October 2016                         |
| <a href="#">Table 2</a> | November GCSE entries for Northern Ireland, as at 25 October 2016                |
| <a href="#">Table 3</a> | November GCSE entries for Wales, as at 25 October 2016                           |
| <a href="#">Table 4</a> | November Level 1/ Level 2 certificate entries for England, as at 25 October 2016 |

**Table 1: November GCSE entries for England, as at 25 October 2016**

| GCSE Subject            | 2016          |                         |                   |                         |              |                         |                   |                         | 2015          |                         |                   |                         |              |                         |                   |                         |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Total entry   | % change<br>(from 2015) | Year 10 and below |                         | Year 11      |                         | Year 12 and above |                         | Total entry   | % change<br>(from 2014) | Year 10 and below |                         | Year 11      |                         | Year 12 and above |                         |
|                         |               |                         | No. entries       | % change<br>(from 2015) | No. entries  | % change<br>(from 2015) | No. entries       | % change<br>(from 2015) |               |                         | No. entries       | % change<br>(from 2014) | No. entries  | % change<br>(from 2014) | No. entries       | % change<br>(from 2014) |
| Mathematics             | 58,610        | 26%                     | 60                | -39%                    | 880          | -78%                    | 57,670            | 36%                     | 46,470        | 24%                     | 100               | -87%                    | 3,960        | -43%                    | 42,420            | 43%                     |
| Linked pair mathematics | 230           | -71%                    | 10                | -59%                    | 10           | -97%                    | 210               | -17%                    | 760           | -48%                    | 20                | -65%                    | 500          | -54%                    | 250               | -29%                    |
| English                 | 4,300         | -25%                    | 0~                | -89%                    | 190          | -57%                    | 4,110             | -22%                    | 5,730         | -15%                    | 10                | -74%                    | 440          | -56%                    | 5,280             | -7%                     |
| English language        | 21,310        | 40%                     | 10                | -22%                    | 200          | -83%                    | 21,090            | 51%                     | 15,210        | 14%                     | 20                | -58%                    | 1,210        | -59%                    | 13,980            | 35%                     |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>84,450</b> | <b>24%</b>              | <b>80</b>         | <b>-42%</b>             | <b>1,280</b> | <b>-79%</b>             | <b>83,090</b>     | <b>34%</b>              | <b>68,180</b> | <b>16%</b>              | <b>150</b>        | <b>-84%</b>             | <b>6,110</b> | <b>-49%</b>             | <b>61,920</b>     | <b>34%</b>              |

Entries with fewer than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented as 0~. Where there are no entries these are recorded as 0.

**Table 2: November GCSE entries for Northern Ireland, as at 25 October 2016**

| GCSE Subject            | November 2016 late entry |                      | November 2015 entry |                      | November 2014 entry |                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|                         | Total entry              | % change (from 2015) | Total entry         | % change (from 2014) | Total entry         | % change (from 2013) |
| Mathematics             | 1,230                    | -9%                  | 1,350               | -4%                  | 1,410               | -48%                 |
| Linked pair mathematics |                          |                      | -                   |                      |                     |                      |
| English                 | 90                       | -48%                 | 180                 | -56%                 | 410                 | 31%                  |
| English language        | 30                       | -90%                 | 240                 | 100%                 | 120                 | -26%                 |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>1,350</b>             | <b>-24%</b>          | <b>1,770</b>        | <b>-9%</b>           | <b>1,940</b>        | <b>-42%</b>          |

Entries with fewer than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented as 0~. Where there are no entries these are recorded as 0.

**Table 3: November GCSE entries for Wales, as at 25 October 2016**

| GCSE Subject                         | November 2016 entry |                      | November 2015 entry |                      | November 2014 entry |                      |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|                                      | Total entry         | % change (from 2015) | Total entry         | % change (from 2014) | Total entry         | % change (from 2013) |
| Mathematics                          | 2,810               | -87%                 | 22,130              | 12%                  | 19,700              |                      |
| Linked pair mathematics              |                     |                      |                     |                      |                     |                      |
| Mathematics*                         | 23,070              |                      |                     |                      |                     |                      |
| Mathematics - Numeracy*              | 29,210              |                      |                     |                      |                     |                      |
| English                              |                     |                      |                     |                      |                     |                      |
| English language (Wales only spec)** | 2,360               |                      |                     |                      |                     |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>57,450</b>       | <b>160%</b>          | <b>22,130</b>       | <b>12%</b>           | <b>19,700</b>       |                      |

\* New qualifications for Wales regulated by Qualifications Wales

\*\* There was previously no November entry for English Language in 2015 and 2014

Entries with fewer than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented as 0~. where there are no entries these are recorded as 0

**Table 4: November Level 1/ Level 2 certificate entries for England as at 25 October 2016**

| Level 1 / Level 2 Subject    | November 2016 entry | November 2015 entry | November 2014 entry | Change in entry between 2014 and 2015 | Change in entry between 2015 and 2016 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| English language             | 15,290              | 41,460              | 29,130              | 42%                                   | -63%                                  |
| English literature           | 70                  | 950                 | 610                 | 56%                                   | -93%                                  |
| English as a second language | 130                 | 260                 | 580                 | -55%                                  | -50%                                  |
| Mathematics (no coursework)  | 170                 | 220                 | 560                 | -61%                                  | -23%                                  |
| Biology                      | 60                  | 60                  | 60                  | 0%                                    | 0%                                    |
| ICT                          | 70                  | 50                  | 30                  | 67%                                   | 40%                                   |
| Physics                      | 50                  | 50                  | 50                  | 0%                                    | 0%                                    |
| Chemistry                    | 40                  | 40                  | 50                  | -20%                                  | 0%                                    |
| Business studies             | 30                  | 30                  | 50                  | -40%                                  | 0%                                    |
| History                      | 20                  | 20                  | 30                  | -33%                                  | 0%                                    |
| Enterprise                   | 0                   | 10                  | 0~                  |                                       | -100%                                 |
| French                       | 10                  | 10                  | 0~                  |                                       | 0%                                    |
| Geography                    | 20                  | 10                  | 30                  | -67%                                  | 100%                                  |
| Spanish                      | 0~                  | 10                  | 10                  | 0%                                    |                                       |
| Art and design               | 0~                  | 0~                  | 10                  |                                       |                                       |
| Total                        | 15,960              | 43,180              | 31,200              |                                       | -63%                                  |

<sup>12</sup> Entries with fewer than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented as 0~. Where there are no entries these are recorded as 0.



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