

Statistical Release

Entries and Late Entries for GCSE and A Level: 2013/14 Academic Year

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Key points

This release provides information on the number of entries and late entries for GCSE and A level in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas, during the 2013/14 academic year.

Schools and colleges make entries, to the exam boards, for each unit of a GCSE and A level qualification (for example, an exam paper or other form of assessment).

If a school or college registers an entry after the agreed deadline it is classed as late and may be subject to an additional charge.

The key findings for this release are as follows.

- There has been a 6 per cent decrease in GCSE entries and a 15 per cent decrease in A level entries.
- There were 503,200 GCSE entries that were late in the 2013/14 academic year, compared with 1,252,700 in 2012/13. The proportion of GCSE entries that were late in 2013/14 was 3 per cent, compared with 7 per cent in 2012/13.
- There were 173,400 A level entries that were late in the 2013/14 academic year, compared with 295,900 in 2012/13. The proportion of A level entries that were late in 2013/14 was 2.9 per cent, compared with 4.1 per cent in 2012/13.

Introduction

This statistical release, published on behalf of the qualifications regulators for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, presents data on entries and late entries for GCSE and A level exams during the 2013/14 academic year.

Five exam boards offer GCSE and A level qualifications in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas:

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

From 2011 to 2013, International Curriculum & Assessment Agency (Examinations) ICAA(E) also offered GCSEs.

Entries are made up of units for each subject of a GCSE or A level qualification.¹ A school or college submits entries on behalf of its candidates to the relevant exam board.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publishes deadlines by which entries should be made.² If an entry is made after the deadline it is classed as late and may be subject to an additional charge.

In this release, AS figures are included in the figures reported for A level, since AS units are a subset of the A level qualification.

Note: figures within the commentary and tables have been rounded to the nearest 100.

All tables referred to in the text are provided in the appendix.

¹ For linear specifications units are referred to as components.

² www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/key-dates-and-timetables/key-dates-in-the-examination-cycle-201415

Key statistics

Certificates awarded

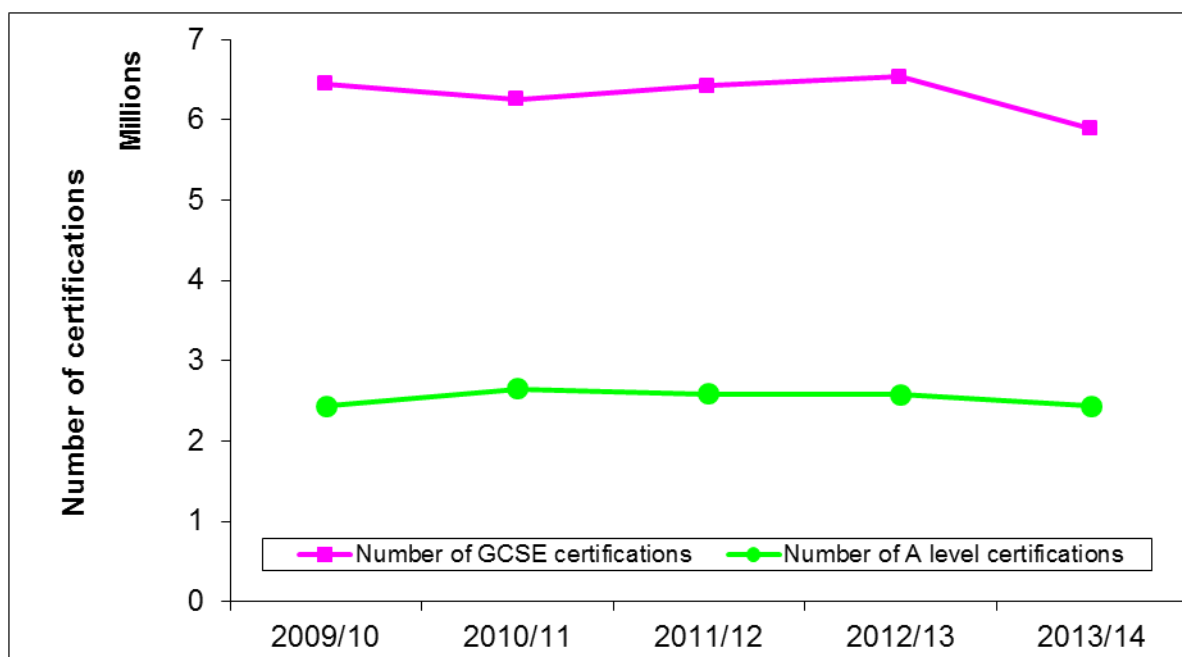
In the 2013/14 academic year, more than 2.4 million AS and A level certificates were awarded and just under 5.9 million GCSE certificates were awarded in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas.

The number of certifications for GCSEs saw a decrease of 9.9 per cent. This decrease is likely to be due to changes in the system this year. GCSEs became linear from 2014 and there were fewer exam series in the 2013/2014 academic year, so students had fewer opportunities to enter GCSEs during this academic year. In addition, a change to the way schools' performance measures are calculated, so that only the first GCSE entry in a subject counts, is likely to have discouraged entry from students aged 15 and under.

A level certifications (which include AS) were down 5.7 per cent on last year, but by just 0.2 per cent when compared with 2009/10 (see figure 1 and table 1).

Some year-on-year variation in the overall number of qualifications awarded is inevitable, as a result of fluctuations in the size of the cohort and changes in the timing of candidates being entered for some qualifications.

Figure 1: Number of certifications for GCSE and AS/A level, academic years 2009/10 to 2013/14



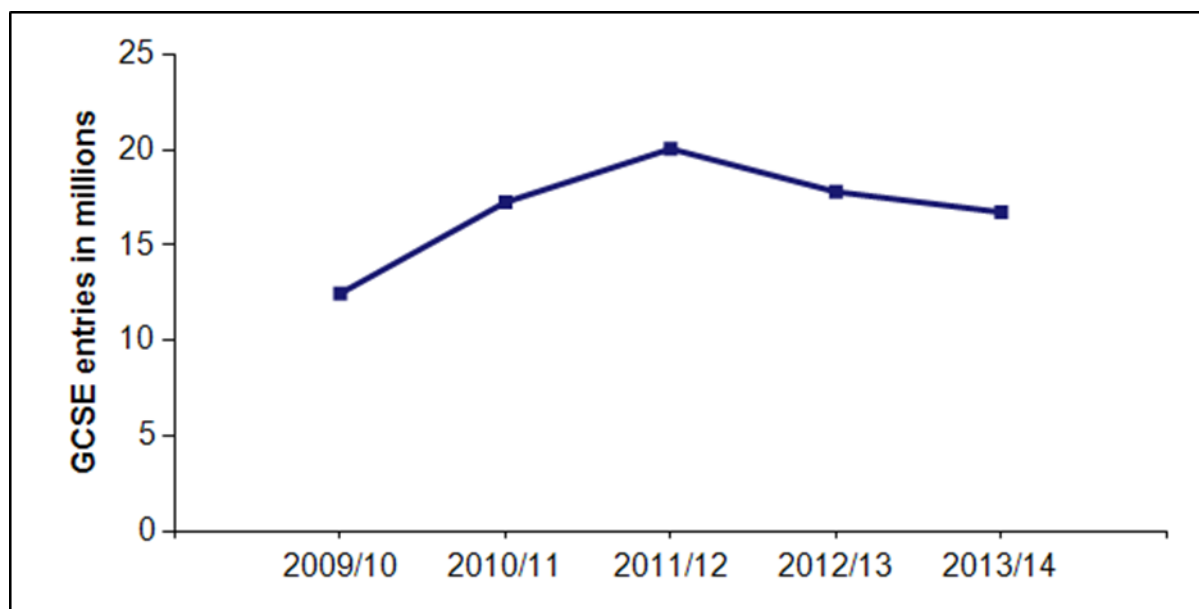
GCSE entries

Over the last five years there have been some significant changes to the structure of GCSE qualifications. The majority of GCSEs changed from linear, recorded as one entry, to a unitised structure where GCSEs are made up of a number of units and reported at unit level. As more GCSEs became unitised, the number of entries increased. However the actual number of certifications remained fairly stable (see figure 1).

We know that there was a significant increase in the number of candidates entered for units at a younger age from 2010 to 2011. This accounts for some of the increase in entries during this period.

There was a 6 per cent decrease in entries in 2013/14, compared with 2012/13, from 17.8 million to 16.7 million (see figure 2 and table 2). This decrease is probably a result of fewer exam series in the 2013/14 academic year, compared to previous years. Students therefore have fewer opportunities to enter and resit these qualifications. Changes to school performance tables so only the first entry in a subject counted, which took effect in autumn 2013, will have discouraged some schools from entering younger students (those in Year 10 or earlier), further reducing the entry numbers.

Figure 2: Total GCSE entries, academic years 2009/10 to 2013/14

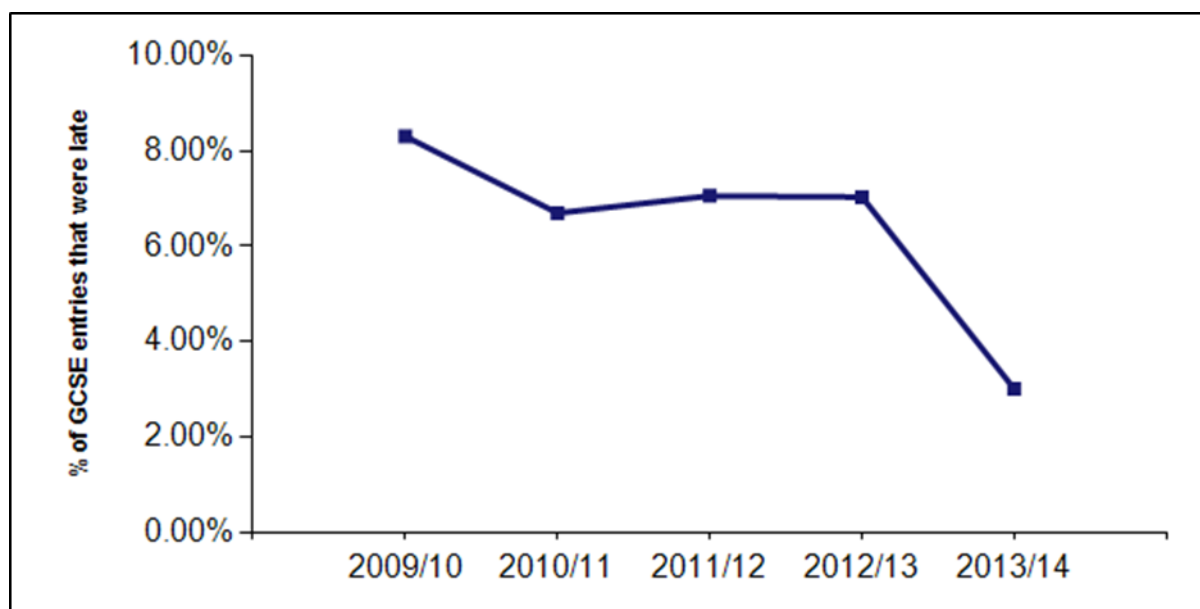


GCSE late entries

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publishes deadlines by which entries should be made. This information is also available from exam boards. If a school or college registers an entry after the agreed deadline, it is classed as late and may be subject to an additional charge.

There were 503,200 GCSE entries that were late in the 2013/14 academic year, compared with 1,252,700 in 2012/13. The proportion of GCSE late entries in the 2013/14 academic year was 3 per cent. This is down on the 2012/13 academic year, when 7 per cent of GCSE entries were late, and is the lowest level since 2009/10.

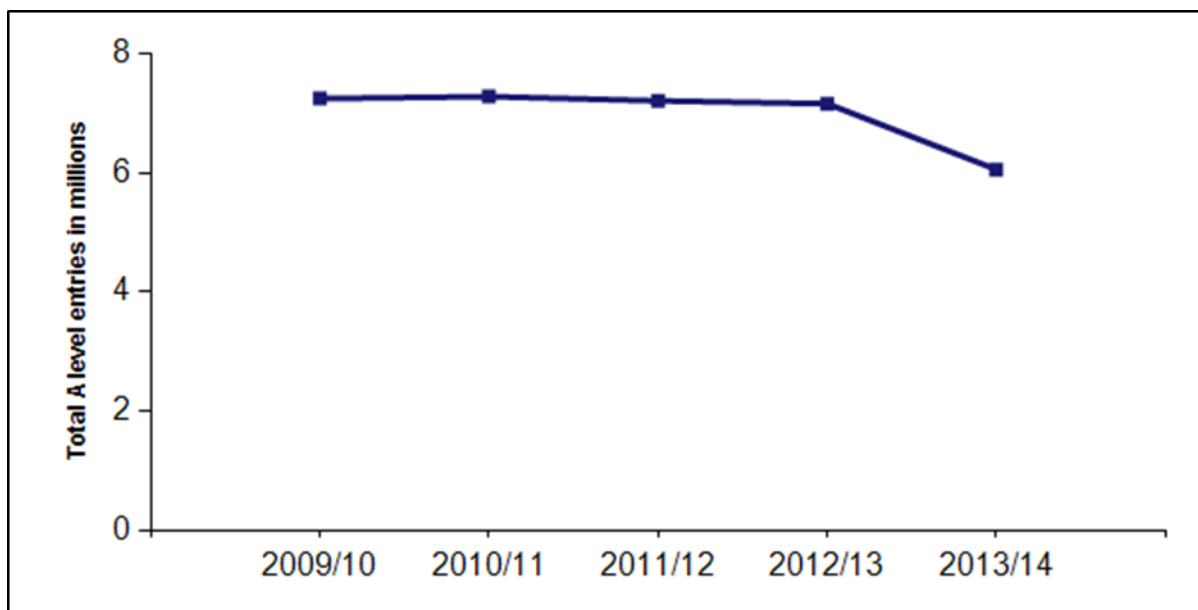
Figure 3: Proportion of total GCSE entries that were late, academic years 2009/10 to 2013/14



A level entries

The number of A level unit entries remained fairly constant from 2009/10 to 2012/13, but there has been a sharp drop in 2013/14, from 7.2 million entries to 6 million entries; a 15 per cent decrease and the lowest level since 2009/10 (see figure 4 and table 3). This decrease is due to the removal of the January exam series in England, reducing the opportunities for candidates to resit units.

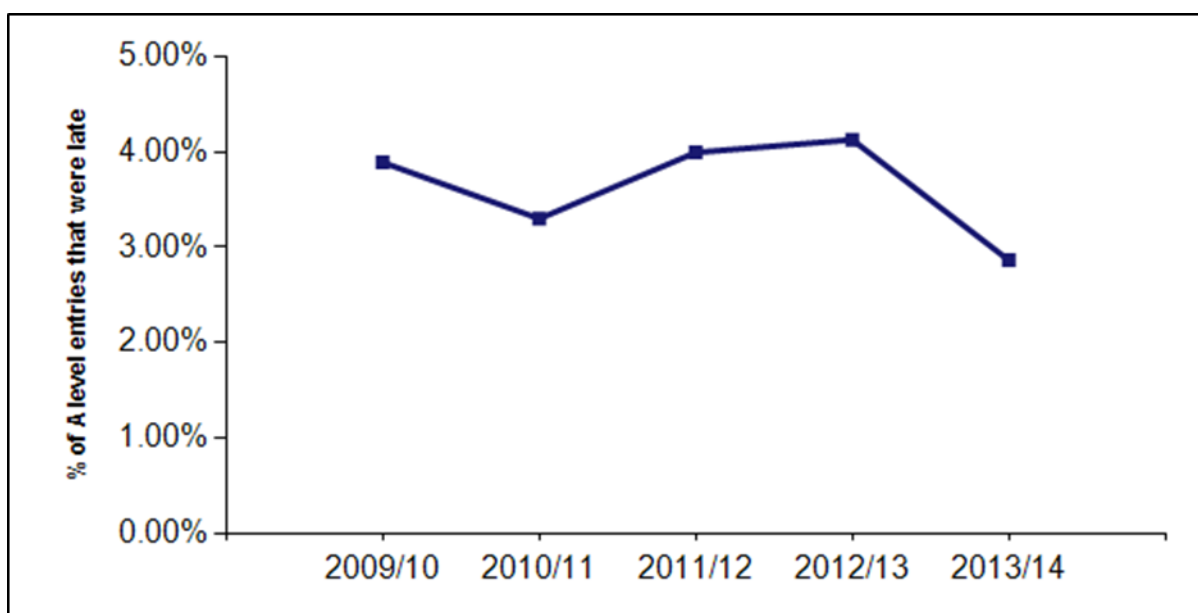
Figure 4: Total A level unit entries, academic years 2009/10 to 2013/14



A level late entries

There were 173,400 entries that were late in the 2013/14 academic year, compared with 295,900 in 2012/13. The proportion of A level unit entries that were late in the 2013/14 academic year was 2.9 per cent, compared with 4.1 per cent in 2012/13 (see figure 5 and table 3). This is the lowest level since 2009/10 and follows the trend seen at GCSE.

Figure 5: Proportion of total A level unit entries that were late, academic years 2009/10 to 2013/14



Glossary of terms

A level

Available as advanced level (A level) and advanced subsidiary (AS) qualifications. They are the qualifications that the majority of candidates use to gain entry to university. They are generally sat by 17–18 year olds in schools and colleges, but are open to anyone who wishes to gain a qualification.

Certificate/certification

A formal acknowledgement of a student's achievement.

GCSE

General Certificates of Secondary Education 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 15 – 18 year olds in schools and colleges, but are open to anyone who wishes to gain a qualification.

Background notes

Qualification reform

There were four exam series available in each academic year from 2009/10 to 2012/13. GCSE and A level exams could be taken in the winter and summer exam series³. Additionally, there were a further two exam series for a small range of GCSEs in November and March.

The Government set out its intention to reform GCSEs and A levels in *The Importance of Teaching – Schools White Paper 2010*.⁴ The changes meant that, for schools and colleges in England, there was no longer an opportunity to take GCSE and A level exams in the winter series.

The structure of GCSEs has also changed in England. GCSEs are now linear, which means exams must be taken at the end of the period of study. There will be a retake opportunity in the November series, but only for GCSEs in English, English language and mathematics.

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 candidates for exams in the winter exam series.

Data source

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

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

Quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publication and the Data Audit Framework (www.ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/statistics/policies-statistics) to ensure the accuracy of the data and challenge or question it where necessary. Ofqual continuously manages this process by:

³ The winter exam series typically runs from January to February. The summer exam series runs from May to June.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf

- 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 and any subsequent change phases;
- reminding all providers (if appropriate) that, as a condition of 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;
- 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.

Geographical coverage

In this release, Ofqual presents data on entries, late entries and certifications for GCSEs, AS and A levels in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas.

Revisions

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

(www.ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/statistics/policies-statistics).

Following quality assurance activities several revisions have been made to figures published in last year's report. This has resulted in changes to some of CCEA's figures and all of Pearson's figures from last year's publication. For details of these changes, see the spreadsheet published on our website.

Completeness of the data

Exam boards send us data 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.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality of the published accompanying data, the figures have been rounded to the nearest 100. If the value is less than 50, it is represented as 0~ and 0

represents zero achievements. The Statement of Confidentiality policy can be found on the website.⁵

Rounding

Figures in the commentary and tables are rounded to the nearest 100.

Related statistics and publications

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

- *The Statistical Release: Summer GCSE and IGCSE entries for England: Provisional Figures April 2014.*⁶
- *The Statistical Release: Summer AS and A level entries for England: Provisional Figures April 2014.*⁷
- *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2014.*⁸
- *A level and other level 3 results: 2013 to 2014 (provisional)*⁹

Users of these statistics

These statistics are of particular interest to Ofqual, recognised exam boards and the Department for Education. Other users include government policy officials, academics, researchers, the public, government departments in Northern Ireland and Wales, and other interested parties. Ofqual uses these statistics to monitor for potential issues and to analyse trends over time. Central government officials use the statistics for policy implementation and ministerial briefings.

⁵ www.ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/statistics/policies-statistics

⁶ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/summer-gcse-igcse-entries-england

⁷ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/summer-level-entries-england-provisional-figures-april-2014

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2014

⁹ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-level-3-results-2013-to-2014-provisional

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.

www.ofqual.gov.uk/standards/statistics/entries-and-late-entries.

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 us at: statistics@ofqual.gov.uk.

Appendix

Table 1	Total number of certifications for GCSE and A level in each academic year, 2009/10 to 2013/14
Table 2	Total number of GCSE entries and late entries in each academic year, 2009/10 to 2013/14
Table 3	Total number of A level entries and late entries in each academic year, 2009/10 to 2013/14

Table 1: Total number of certifications for GCSE and A level in each academic year, 2009/10 to 2013/14

England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas								
	Year	AQA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	Total
GCSE (certifications)	2009/10	2,884,700	1,454,300	1,295,000	638,300	175,400		6,447,700
	2010/11	2,778,000	1,524,600	1,113,500	675,000	151,100	16,200	6,258,400
	2011/12	2,601,000	1,858,700	1,117,500	699,900	143,700	2,200	6,423,100
	2012/13	2,683,000	2,040,400	980,200	697,800	137,600	800	6,539,900
	2013/14	2,431,400	1,714,300	877,400	723,000	146,600		5,892,700
A level (certifications)	2009/10	1,000,900	559,000	628,400	188,000	61,100		2,437,400
	2010/11	1,101,800	619,300	663,700	205,200	57,800		2,647,800
	2011/12	1,069,500	629,000	621,500	203,300	66,700		2,590,000
	2012/13	1,069,900	634,100	603,800	204,200	68,100		2,580,200
	2013/14	1,028,000	577,400	548,400	209,600	69,900		2,433,400

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

1. Data includes applied subjects.
2. Data are rounded to the nearest 100. Figures have been rounded independently so may not add up to the total.
3. ICAA(E) awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. Final awards were in 2013. ICAA(E) do not currently offer any GCSEs, so have a blank for 2014.

Table 2: Total number of GCSE entries and late entries in each academic year, 2009/10 to 2013/14

England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas								
	Year	AQA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAAE	Total
Number of ontime entries for GCSE	2009/10	4,637,300	3,323,900	3,074,500	252,300	146,400		11,434,400
	2010/11	6,532,000	4,673,300	3,675,100	936,200	270,500	16,400	16,103,500
	2011/12	7,858,600	4,940,300	3,348,700	2,131,400	368,800	2,200	18,650,000
	2012/13	7,152,000	3,984,800	2,754,200	2,207,400	454,800	1,000	16,554,100
	2013/14	6,724,000	3,717,500	2,749,900	2,583,000	458,400		16,232,800
Number of late entries for GCSE	2009/10	344,000	389,300	284,100	9,700	9,500		1,036,600
	2010/11	443,800	386,800	300,000	14,700	10,600	200	1,156,000
	2011/12	737,100	288,300	339,500	36,600	15,100	0	1,416,600
	2012/13	717,300	229,400	245,700	40,800	19,400	0	1,252,700
	2013/14	289,800	69,100	93,200	32,400	18,700		503,200
Total GCSE entries	2009/10	4,981,300	3,713,200	3,358,600	261,900	155,900		12,471,000
	2010/11	6,975,800	5,060,100	3,975,100	950,800	281,100	16,600	17,259,500
	2011/12	8,595,800	5,228,500	3,688,200	2,168,000	383,900	2,200	20,066,600
	2012/13	7,869,300	4,214,200	2,999,900	2,248,300	474,200	1,000	17,806,800
	2013/14	7,013,800	3,786,500	2,843,100	2,615,400	477,100		16,736,000
Proportion of total GCSE entries that were late	2009/10	6.91%	10.49%	8.46%	3.69%	6.11%		8.31%
	2010/11	6.36%	7.64%	7.55%	1.54%	3.77%	1.48%	6.70%
	2011/12	8.58%	5.51%	9.21%	1.69%	3.93%	0.00%	7.06%
	2012/13	9.12%	5.44%	8.19%	1.82%	4.10%	0.00%	7.04%
	2013/14	4.13%	1.82%	3.28%	1.24%	3.93%		3.01%

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

1. Data includes applied subjects, certifications from other UK regions and overseas.
2. Data are rounded to the nearest 100. Figures have been rounded independently so may not add up to the total.
3. ICAA(E) awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2010/11. In previous years, specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA. ICAA(E) do not offer A levels.

Table 3: Total number of A level entries and late entries in each academic year, 2009/10 to 2013/14

England, Wales, Northern Ireland, other UK regions and overseas							
	Year	AQA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	Total
Number of ontime entries for A level	2009/10	2,760,900	1,759,300	1,811,500	467,500	168,000	6,967,100
	2010/11	2,763,500	1,796,900	1,790,300	516,700	175,200	7,042,600
	2011/12	2,733,800	1,859,700	1,630,200	517,900	182,200	6,923,800
	2012/13	2,683,600	1,867,400	1,611,200	519,000	186,900	6,868,100
	2013/14	2,362,100	1,521,100	1,319,500	499,400	181,100	5,883,200
Number of late entries for A level	2009/10	78,700	66,000	101,000	33,800	2,600	282,100
	2010/11	80,800	66,700	87,300	3,100	2,600	240,400
	2011/12	64,000	60,300	155,800	4,500	3,700	288,200
	2012/13	100,000	58,300	127,000	6,900	3,600	295,900
	2013/14	27,900	21,600	116,800	3,500	3,500	173,400
Total A level entries	2009/10	2,839,600	1,825,300	1,912,500	501,300	170,600	7,249,300
	2010/11	2,844,300	1,863,500	1,877,600	519,800	177,900	7,283,000
	2011/12	2,797,800	1,920,000	1,786,000	522,400	185,800	7,212,000
	2012/13	2,783,700	1,925,700	1,738,200	525,900	190,500	7,163,900
	2013/14	2,390,000	1,542,700	1,436,400	502,900	184,600	6,056,600
Proportion of total A level entries that were late	2009/10	2.77%	3.61%	5.28%	6.75%	1.55%	3.89%
	2010/11	2.84%	3.58%	4.65%	0.59%	1.47%	3.30%
	2011/12	2.29%	3.14%	8.72%	0.86%	1.96%	4.00%
	2012/13	3.59%	3.03%	7.31%	1.30%	1.90%	4.13%
	2013/14	1.17%	1.40%	8.13%	0.70%	1.91%	2.86%

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

1. Data includes applied subjects, certifications from other UK regions and overseas.
2. Data are rounded to the nearest 100. Figures have been rounded independently so may not add up to the total.
3. ICAA(E) awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2010/11. In previous years, specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA. ICAA(E) do not offer A levels.

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