

# Entries for GCSE, AS and A level

## Summer 2019 exam series

Annual

Published: 24 May 2019

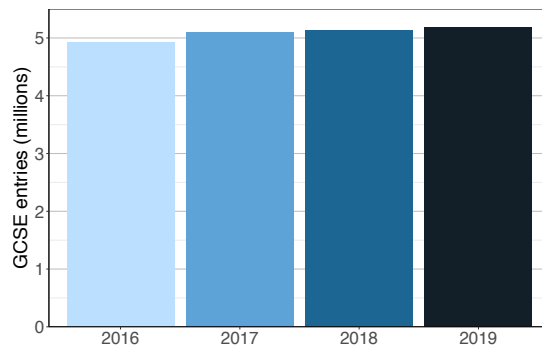
Coverage: England

Official statistics

This report presents **provisional** figures on the number of entries for GCSEs, AS and A levels submitted by schools and colleges in England to exam boards by 17 April 2019 for qualifications being taken in summer 2019.

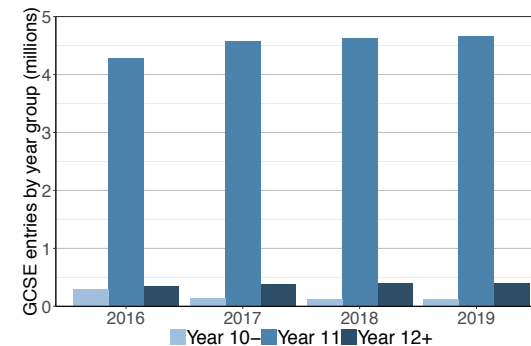
### GCSE entries remain stable

GCSE entries in 2019 (5.2m) increased by just under 1% compared to 2018.



### GCSE entries by year group over time

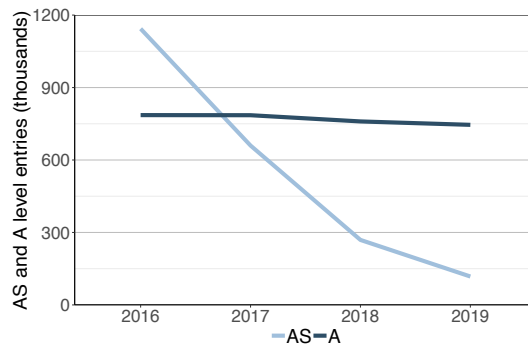
GCSE entries are mostly from year 11 students. Entries from all age groups have increased slightly in 2019 compared to 2018.



### AS entries continue to decline but A level entries stable

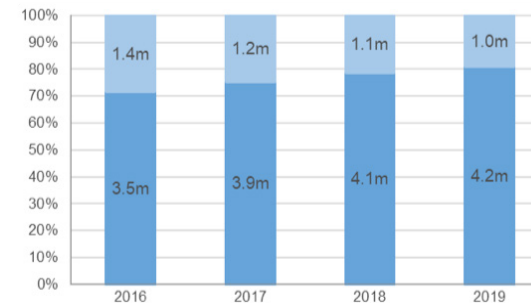
A level entries in 2019 (0.75m) have dropped slightly, by 2% from 2018.

AS entries (0.12m) have continued to fall (almost 60% fewer than 2018).



### EBacc subjects increase share of GCSE entries

Entries in EBacc subjects increased (by 4%) and entries in non-EBacc subjects decreased (by 9%) compared to 2018.



<b>Change in GCSE entries for EBacc subjects</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Change in GCSE entries for non-EBacc subjects</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Entries for EBacc subjects by year group over time</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Entries for tiered GCSEs</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>AS entries</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A level entries</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Change in A level entries over time for facilitating and larger entry subjects</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Entries by centre type</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Head of Profession:</b>	<b>Vikas Dhawan</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>statistics@ofqual.gov.uk</b>
<b>Published:</b>	<b>24 May 2019</b>
<b>Ofqual:</b>	<b>Ofqual/19/6509/1</b>

## Provisional summer entries

In this report, Ofqual presents data on the number of provisional entries for GCSEs, AS and A levels in England received by exam boards for the summer 2019 exam series. The data tables accompanying this release also include entries for those Level 1/Level 2 certificates regulated by Ofqual.

Schools and colleges enter students with exam boards to take qualifications in the summer. The figures for entries can change up to the day of the exams. We collect provisional data at the same time every year, at a point when it should be reasonably complete, although final entry numbers may be slightly different from these. The figures presented here are the provisional figures as submitted by exam boards to Ofqual on 17 April 2019.

In this report, all figures for the number of entries are rounded to the nearest 5 to aid understanding.

[Background information](#) accompanying this report includes factors which may have an impact upon the entries in 2019 as well as information on data collected for this release and definitions of important terms used in the report.

[Data tables](#) published along with this report give provisional entry data (rounded to the nearest 5) for different subjects broken down by year group for GCSE, Level 1/Level 2 certificates, AS and A levels.

## Change in GCSE entries for EBacc subjects

The overall entry for GCSEs in England in summer 2019 increased slightly (by just under 1%) from 5,136,495 in 2018 to 5,185,840 in 2019. This was mostly due to a rise in entries to [EBacc subjects](#) (almost 4%, see table below).

### Changes in GCSE entries for EBacc subjects between 2018 and 2019

Subject group	Number of entries		Percentage change in entries				
	2018	2019	-100%	-50%	0%	50%	100%
Ancient languages	10,885	11,275					
Biology	167,075	167,525					
Chemistry	160,110	160,980					
Combined science	744,185	786,830					
Computing	72,360	78,080					
English language	706,255	729,315					
English literature	537,990	551,205					
French	120,605	125,700					
Geography	244,925	253,125					
German	43,260	42,175					
History	248,925	265,575					
Mathematics	715,775	742,245					
Other modern languages	32,460	32,100					
Physics	158,295	159,555					
Spanish	91,980	101,080					
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,055,085</b>	<b>4,206,765</b>					

There have been increases in entry in most EBacc subjects, particularly combined science, English language and mathematics. The largest proportional increases were in computing, history and Spanish.

Modern foreign language entries have increased overall by over 4% (from 288,305 to 301,055), after stabilising last year, this is the first significant increase in recent years. French and Spanish entries increased (by around 4% and 10%, respectively) and there was a slight decrease in German entries (-2.5%).

Notes: 1. The figure for history includes approximately 900 candidates taking ancient history specifications included in EBacc. These, and entries for 'ancient languages, are included in the classical subjects' group in the accompanying data tables.

2. Combined science entries have been doubled throughout the report and data tables to reflect the fact that it counts as two GCSEs.

## Change in GCSE entries for non-EBacc subjects

Overall entries in non-EBacc subjects showed a decline in 2019. This decline indicates that schools/colleges are continuing to focus more on EBacc subjects than those subjects which do not count towards the EBacc. [Progress 8 and Attainment 8](#) measures are also likely to be influencing these patterns as their calculation can only include a maximum of three non-EBacc GCSEs. However, the largest changes in the number of entries are in subjects which are now discontinued as part of the [overall reform process](#).

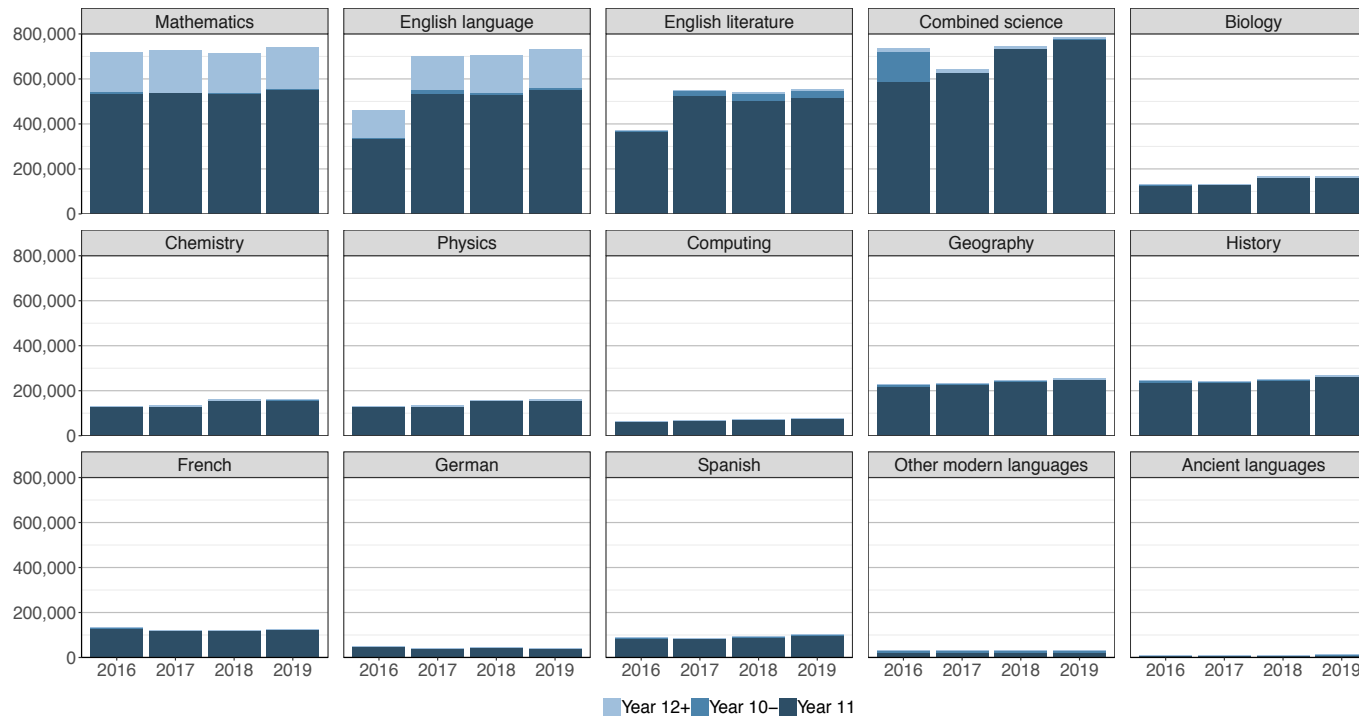
### Changes in GCSE entries for non-EBacc subjects between 2018 and 2019

Subject group	Number of entries		Percentage change in entries				
	2018	2019	-100%	-50%	0%	50%	100%
All other subjects	2,950	0					
Art and design subjects	168,765	184,060					
Business & comm. systems	7,165	0					
Business studies	85,465	89,860					
Citizenship studies	18,705	20,425					
Classical subjects (non-EBacc)	3,625	3,575					
Design & technology	117,605	90,805					
Drama	58,595	58,255					
Economics	5,220	6,145					
Engineering	4,715	2,990					
Food preparation & nutrition	48,075	45,295					
Health & social care	13,095	0					
Home economics	8,810	0					
Hospitality	2,355	0					
ICT	43,995	0					
Leisure & tourism	1,800	0					
Manufacturing	50	0					
Media / film / TV studies	41,925	36,870					
Music	35,895	34,990					
Other sciences	2,525	2,600					
Performing / expressive arts	8,795	9,335					
Physical education	87,825	80,665					
Religious studies	260,300	251,140					
Social science subjects	37,895	38,355					
Statistics	15,255	23,720					
Welsh: second language	15	0					
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,081,410</b>	<b>979,075</b>					

Entries in design and technology and engineering have declined. This is the first year that new specifications in these subjects are being awarded. The reformed specifications, are different to the legacy specifications so we might expect some changes in entries.

## Entries for EBacc subjects by year group over time

Entry patterns by year group are relatively stable between 2018 and 2019. The largest change in entry numbers is in combined science, available for the second time this year. Entries in combined science have increased in 2019, whereas entries to the separate sciences have remained stable.

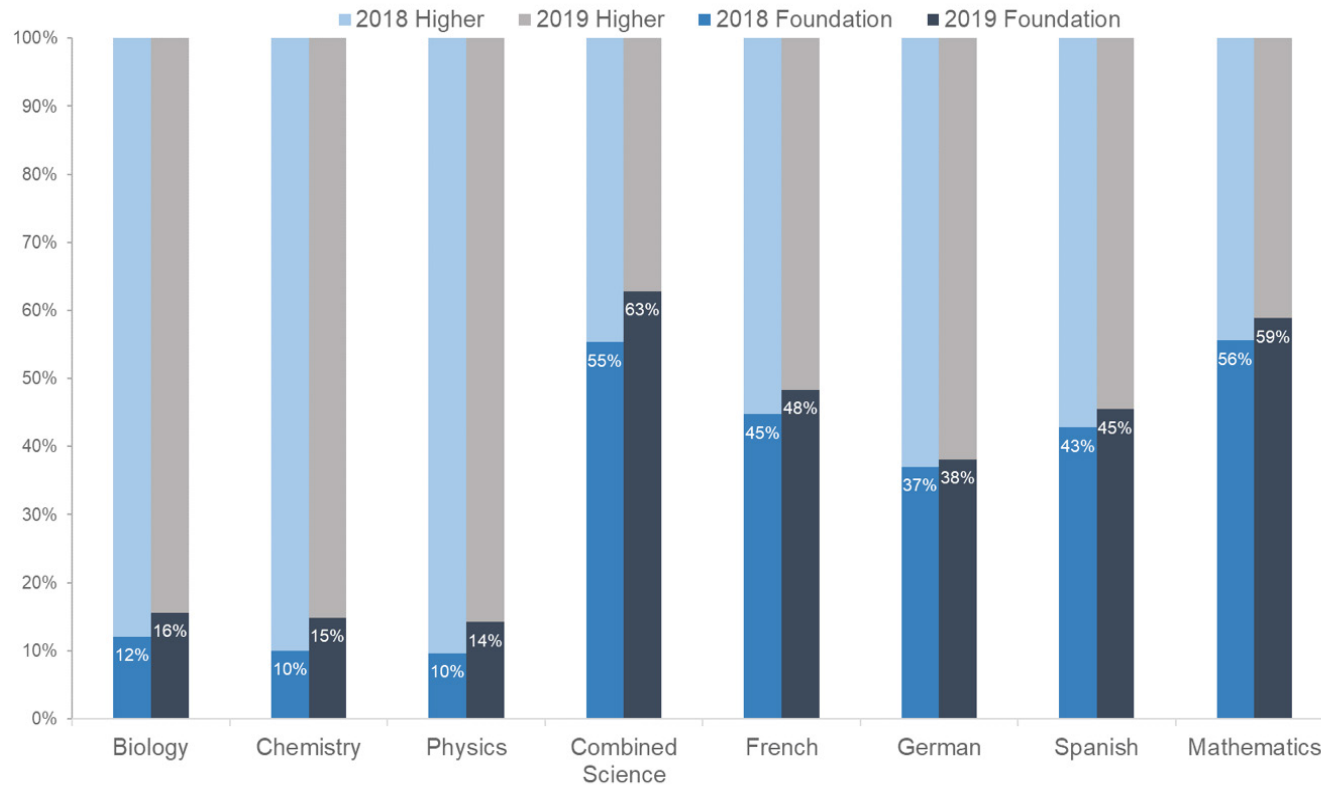


Entries in English literature and English language have remained comparatively stable after a large increase in 2017. The increase in 2017 was due to their inclusion and weighting in [Progress 8](#) and the removal of alternative Level 1/Level 2 certificates from performance tables.

Notes: In the chart above figures for 'combined science' from 2018 and 2019 have been doubled to reflect the fact that it counts as two GCSEs. Entries in 2016 and 2017 include GCSE science and GCSE additional science for comparison.

## Entries for tiered GCSEs

In some reformed 9 to 1 subjects there are two tiers of entry: foundation and higher. The data below shows the entry by tier in 2018 and 2019 for those reformed specifications which are tiered.



In all subjects entry to the foundation tier (shown here as percentage labels on the bars) has increased in 2019. The biggest shifts are in combined science and French, which is likely in part a response to advice provided to schools and colleges about tier entry in 2019, following evidence of some inappropriate tier entry in 2018 ([see Ofqual's blog](#)).

## AS entries

Overall entries for all AS subjects fell by almost 60% from 269,090 in 2018 to 117,595 in 2019. Entries in all AS subjects saw a substantial decrease this year (at least 20%). This drop in AS entries is due to the decoupling of AS from A levels as part of the government policy [reforms of AS and A levels](#). The largest percentage decreases are in subjects which are not available as an AS post reform. There has been an overall decline of 91% from 1,331,955 entries in 2015, the year before reforms of AS and A levels began.

### Changes in AS entry for all subjects between 2018 and 2019

Subject group	Number of entries		Percentage change in entries										
	2018	2019	-100%	-80%	-60%	-40%	-20%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
All other subjects	4,665	1,260											
Art and design subjects	8,805	5,160											
Biology	14,880	9,180											
Business studies	7,970	5,315											
Chemistry	12,695	8,175											
Classical subjects	2,090	720											
Communication studies	310	0											
Computing	2,780	2,025											
Critical thinking	415	15											
Design and technology	4,440	775											
Drama	1,350	650											
Economics	6,355	4,300											
English	7,400	4,580											
English language	4,220	2,390											
English language and literature	1,995	995											
French	1,700	1,250											
General studies	2,660	85											
Geography	5,950	3,030											
German	680	530											
Health & social care	525	0~											
History	9,715	4,995											
ICT	1,220	10											
Law	6,160	2,245											
Leisure	5	0											
Mathematics	71,325	17,190											
Mathematics (further)	16,870	5,330											
Media / film / TV studies	8,390	2,855											
Music	1,060	530											
Other modern languages	5,700	2,355											
Other sciences	1,210	420											
Performing / expressive arts	230	90											
Physical education	1,700	965											
Physics	9,060	5,820											
Political studies	8,360	2,280											
Psychology	17,500	10,845											
Religious studies	4,475	2,565											
Science	325	0~											
Sociology	11,990	7,415											
Spanish	1,640	1,235											
Travel & tourism	250	0~											
Welsh second language	0~	0											
<b>Total</b>	<b>269,090</b>	<b>117,595</b>											

## A level entries

Overall A level entries remained broadly stable, with a slight decrease of almost 2% from 759,670 in 2018 to 745,585 in 2019. Large percentage decreases were seen in small entry subjects and those which were only available for final re-sits this year including general studies, science and ICT. The change in A level entries is mixed with some subjects increasing in entry and other subjects showing a decrease. Overall modern foreign language (French, German, Spanish) entries are stable and single sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) all show an increase in 2019.

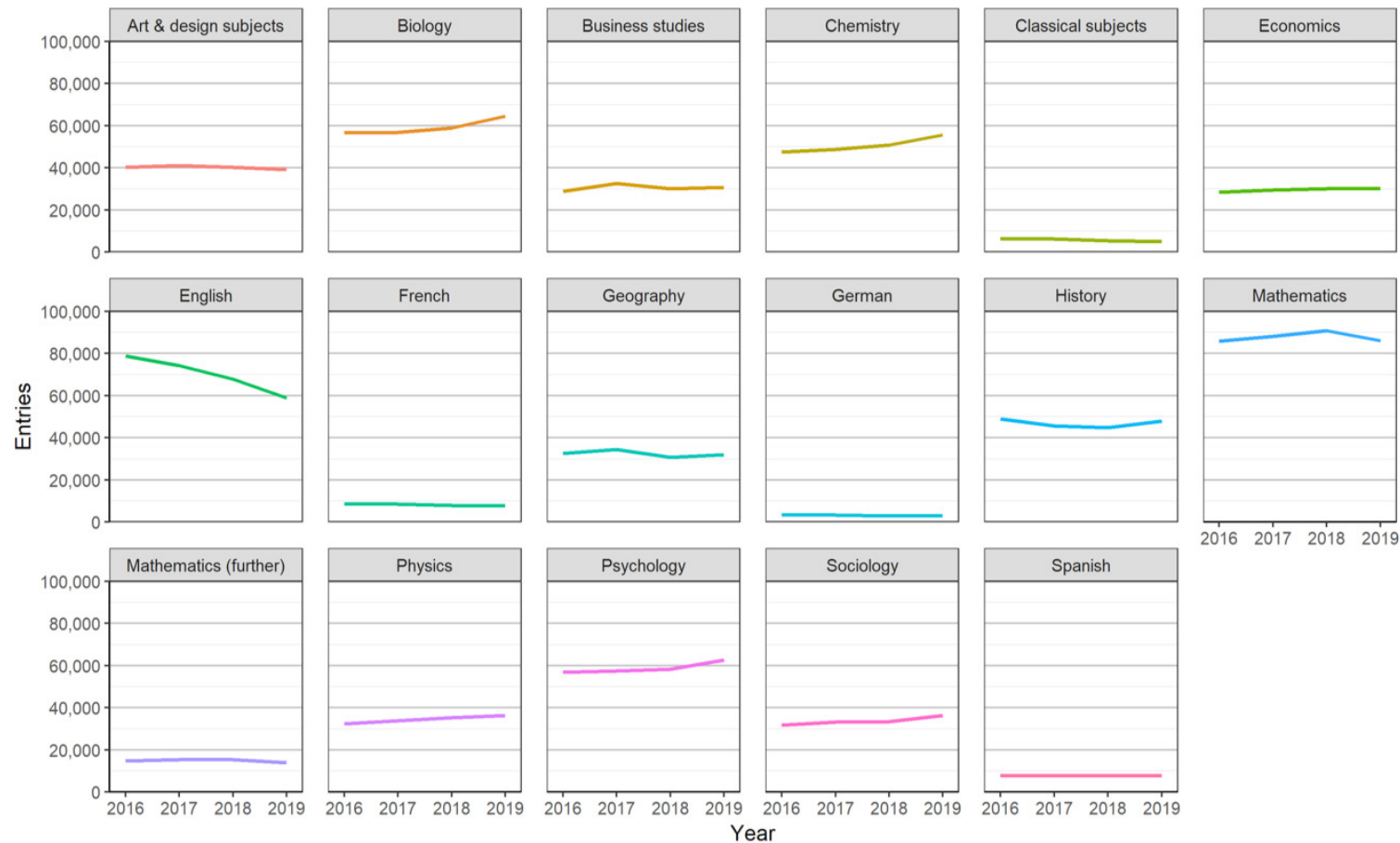
### Changes in A level entry for all subjects between 2018 and 2019

Subject group	Number of entries		Percentage change in entries										
	2018	2019	-100%	-80%	-60%	-40%	-20%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
All other subjects	9,025	6,020											
Art and design subjects	40,300	39,170											
Biology	58,925	64,460											
Business studies	30,155	30,820											
Chemistry	50,830	55,615											
Classical subjects	5,470	4,995											
Communication studies	1,190	0											
Computing	9,685	10,550											
Critical thinking	30	0											
Design and technology	9,780	9,375											
Drama	10,260	9,320											
Economics	30,190	30,095											
Engineering	10	0											
English language	17,875	13,815											
English language and literature	9,000	7,580											
English literature	40,990	37,475											
French	7,945	7,680											
General studies	3,505	40											
Geography	30,650	32,050											
German	2,890	2,905											
Health & social care	2,610	15											
History	44,900	47,920											
ICT	4,635	55											
Law	10,640	11,245											
Leisure	115	0											
Mathematics	90,955	86,185											
Mathematics (further)	15,450	13,920											
Media / film / TV studies	23,175	19,985											
Music	5,485	5,155											
Other modern languages	9,135	8,035											
Other sciences	2,040	1,755											
Performing / expressive arts	1,310	1,085											
Physical education	10,110	9,905											
Physics	35,255	36,420											
Political studies	16,605	18,495											
Psychology	58,300	62,685											
Religious studies	17,265	16,455											
Science	905	5											
Sociology	33,420	36,295											
Spanish	7705	7995											
Travel & tourism	945	5											
<b>Total</b>	<b>759,670</b>	<b>745,585</b>											



## Change in A level entries over time for 'facilitating' and larger entry subjects

The graphs below show the change in entries from 2016 to 2019 for subjects with relatively large entry in 2019 (more than 30,000) and subjects which are regarded as 'facilitating subjects' at A level, ie subjects identified by some universities as giving the widest range of options for university study.



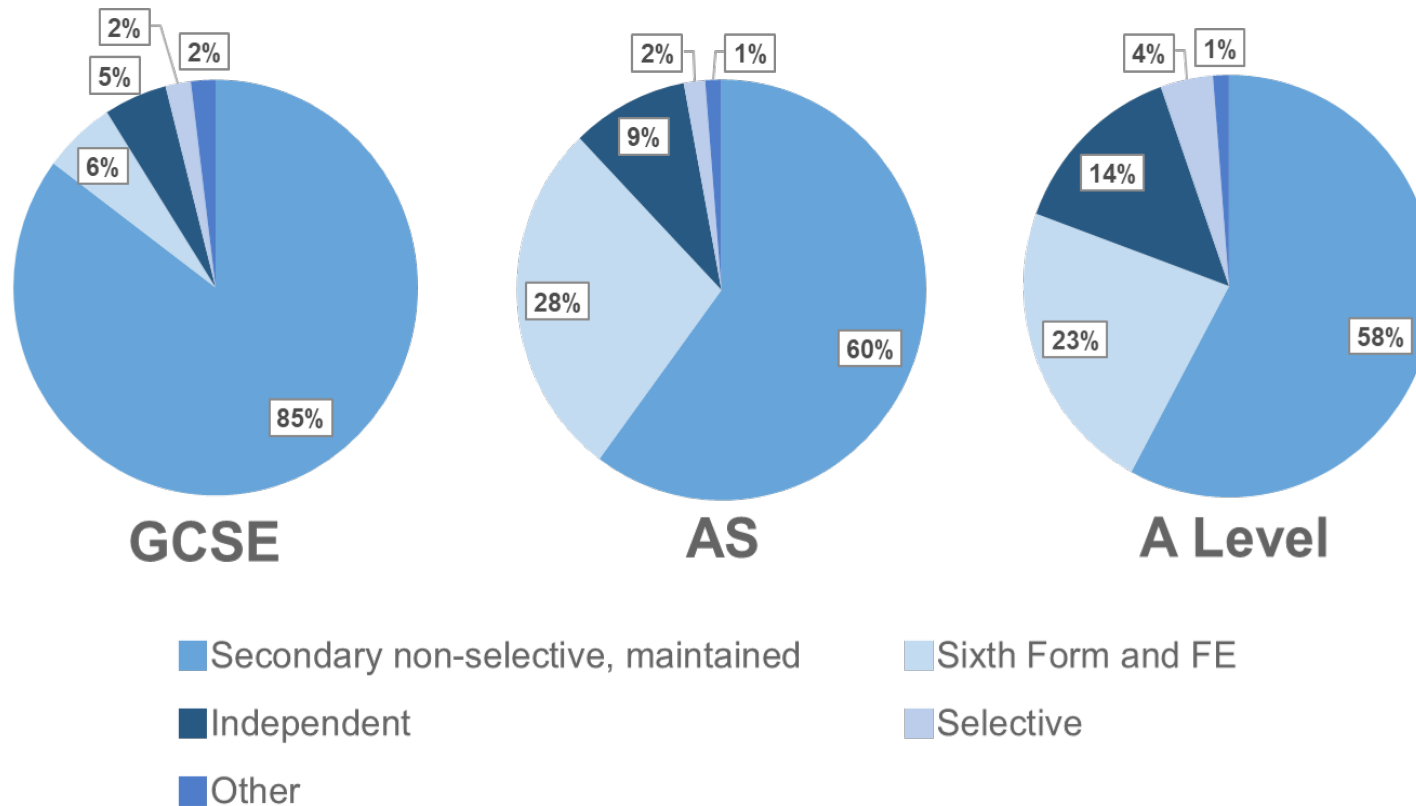
Entries have increased over time in biology, chemistry, physics, psychology and sociology and declined in English subjects. Entries between 2016 and 2019 have remained relatively stable in all other subjects.

Note 1: There is a move away from the term and concept of 'facilitating' subjects ([see link](#)).

Note 2: In this chart 'English' includes English language, English literature and English language & literature specifications.

## Entries by centre type

The graphs below indicate the proportion of entries for each qualification from each centre type. In all cases the majority of entries are from secondary non-selective, maintained centres, followed by sixth form and further education establishments.



Note: Centre categorisation was not published in the statistical release for summer 2018 as JCQ informed us about some uncertainty about the quality of the centre categorisation, particularly in respect of selective schools that may have categorised themselves as academy or free school rather than as selective. JCQ has now issued new guidance to centres and therefore this issue should have been resolved in the 2019 data. For breakdown of entry numbers see the [accompanying data tables](#).



© Crown Copyright 2018

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this license, visit

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/)

or write to

Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London  
TW9 4DU

Published by:

**ofqual**

Earlsdon Park  
53-55 Butts Road  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

0300 303 3344  
[public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/ofqual](http://www.gov.uk/ofqual)

**24 May 2019**

**Ofqual/19/6509/1**