



## **Media release**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 09.30 HOURS**

**THURSDAY, 15 AUGUST 2024**

### **Students perform well as grading returns to pre-pandemic standards**

Today, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has published the 2024 Wales results for A and AS levels, alongside the release of Level 3 vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ). This year's results are similar to those that were awarded to students before the pandemic in 2019. The approach to grading was based on the decision made by Qualifications Wales.

Comparisons to any previous years' results should be approached with caution due to the differing methods of assessments and circumstances.

#### **GCE A level Results**

The A level results for Wales show that 97.4% of students achieved A\* - E grades. 10.1% of candidates achieved an A\*, and 29.9% achieved A\*-A grades.

The total number of A level examination entries in Wales this year was 32,235, a decrease of 2.2% from 2023 (32,960) however, entries are consistent with 2019 (32,320).

At A level, Mathematics remains the most popular subject, there has been an overall mixed entry pattern in most subjects compared with 2023, with the largest reduction in entries for the following: Biology (-104), Digital Technology (-275), Geography (-253) and Psychology (-133). However, English Literature (+130), Mathematics (+104) and Physics (+106) have seen an increase in entries.

In Wales, the overall pass rate for males and females is broadly similar with 96.4% of subject entries by males achieving A\* - E grades, compared to 98.1% of entries by females. However, females continue to outperform males at most grade points, for A\*-A by 0.5 percentage points and A\*-C by 6.6 percentage points, although males outperform females by 1.2 percentage points at A\*.

#### **Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Results**

There were 41,440 cash-in entries for AS in Wales this year, an increase of 1.8% compared with 40,706 last year.

22.1% of all grades awarded were A in Wales this year. The percentage of candidates achieving A - E grades were 90.2%.

For AS, Mathematics remains the most popular subject. Similarly to A level entries, there has been an overall mixed entry pattern for AS compared with 2023, there has been a decrease in entries for Computing (-99), Psychology (-122) and Sociology (-128). However,

there has been an increase in entries for the following: Biology (+196), Chemistry (+284), History (+103), Mathematics (+217), Mathematics (Further) (+163) and Physics (+173).

Females continue to outperform males at all grade points, for A by 2.2 percentage points, for A-C by 7.6 percentage points and A-E by 4.0 percentage points.

**Jill Duffy, Chair of JCQ Board of Directors and Chief Executive of OCR, said:**

“Results day is the culmination of years of dedication from students, teachers, and parents and carers. With A level grades similar to last year, Gen Z students and their teachers will see some much needed continuity and stability after the disruptions of the pandemic.

“Whether going to university or into training or straight into a career, their qualifications help them move on to their next stage, and we wish them every success in the future.”

**Margaret Farragher, JCQ’s Chief Executive, said:**

“Huge congratulations to students on their achievements, spanning a range of vocational, technical and academic qualifications. While the pandemic is now behind us, we must acknowledge that this group of students faced disruption during their education and pay tribute to their resilience. I would also like to recognise and thank exams officers and teachers for supporting students with their assessments. They have once again helped to deliver a smooth and successful exam series, evident from today’s results.”

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

For information about the results in Wales, contact:

Jonathan Thomas, PR Manager, WJEC on 029 2026 5102 [jonathan.thomas@wjec.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.thomas@wjec.co.uk).

For information about the UK results, contact JCQ<sup>CIC</sup>’s press office on 020 7227 0671, or 07905 683816 or at [pressoffice@jcq.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@jcq.org.uk)

Further statistical details on the results for the UK, Wales, England and Northern Ireland may be found at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

**NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**General**

Detailed tabulations of the GCE AS and A-level are published with the STRICT EMBARGO of 09.30 THURSDAY 15 August 2024 and will be available on WJEC’s website from 09.30 on 15 August 2024 – [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)

Results provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ<sup>CIC</sup>), representing awarding organisations in the UK, and presented in Wales on behalf of JCQ<sup>CIC</sup> by WJEC. Results for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification are awarded by WJEC only.

The JCQ<sup>CIC</sup> comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK

The data provided in the main body of this media release represent the aggregate information for Wales across all awarding organisations, and are provisional, in the sense that they represent the position at the time that results are issued.

The qualifications framework is common across Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Comprehensive data for entries and results on a country-by-country basis are provided by

the Joint Council for Qualifications - [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk) - and may be accessed from 9:30 am on Thursday 15 August 2024.

Awarding organisations are regulated by Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales and CCEA (Northern Ireland). The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies' standards. Maintaining standards within and across all qualifications in order to ensure fairness to all candidates is the paramount concern of the awarding bodies.

In comparing the results of individual schools and colleges with any aggregate totals, it should be borne in mind that substantial variations are to be expected. A number of social, economic and educational factors have a bearing on the performance of pupils in examinations, of which the effectiveness of the school or college is only one.

### **GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level**

The A level examination is made up of two parts, the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the A2. The AS and the A2 combined in a single subject constitute the A level.

The standard set for the AS is that expected at the end of the first year of a two-year course. The AS covers the less demanding material in an A level course. The AS is not, therefore, of full Advanced level standard. The AS contributes 40% to the overall A level.

During the second year of the course, students develop greater understanding of the subjects they are studying, and the A2 covers the more demanding material in the specification.