



Media release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 09.30 HOURS
THURSDAY, 22 AUGUST 2024**

Overall outcomes return to pre-pandemic levels

Today, the Joint Council for Qualifications has published the 2024 Wales results for GCSEs, alongside the release of Level 1 and 2 vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs). 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.

Highlights:

- 316,588 total entries - up by 5.4% (16,179 entries) compared with 2023
- Overall outcomes are broadly similar to pre-pandemic levels
- 19.2% candidates awarded the top grades A*/9 – A/7
- Biology replaces Chemistry in top ten most popular subject choices – with 9,510 entries this year
- Food Preparation & Nutrition continues to rise in popularity, with entries up 12.4% to 2,588 compared with 2023. Entries in the subject have increased 21.6% since 2019

This year's results compared with 2019

- A*/9 - A/7 up by 0.8 percentage points (pp)
- A*/9 – C/4 down by 0.6pp
- A*/9 – G/1 down by 0.6pp

GCSE overall performance

The GCSE results for Wales show that 19.2% of candidates have been awarded the top grades A*/9- A/7, whilst 62.2% of candidates have been awarded a C/4 grade or above.

The total number of GCSE examination entries in Wales this year was 316,558, an increase of 5.4% (16,179 entries) on 2023.

Mathematics

In Wales, students have the opportunity to take either GCSE Mathematics or GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy, with the majority taking the opportunity to study both subjects.

This year's figures show that 13.1% of candidates achieved A*/9 – A/7 grades for GCSE Mathematics, whilst 48.8% of candidates have been awarded a grade C/4 or above.

Meanwhile, 13% of candidates achieved A*/9 – A/7 grades for GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy, whilst 52.3% of candidates have been awarded a grade C/4 or above.

For GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy, entries and outcomes are most appropriately reflected in the best outcome obtained by 16 year olds across both the November and summer series.

Figure 1: GCSE Mathematics – cumulative best grade all boards distributions for 16 year olds

| | 2018/19 | 2023/24 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Grade | | |
| A (7) | 18.7% | 18.3% |
| C (4) | 59.1% | 57.3% |
| G (1) | 95.5% | 93.9% |
| Entries | 30,704 | 33,688 |

Figure 2: GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy – cumulative best grade distributions for 16 year olds

| | 2018/19 | 2023/24 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Grade | | |
| A (7) | 16.1% | 16.5% |
| C (4) | 58.1% | 58.0% |
| G (1) | 95.2% | 95.7% |
| Entries | 30,073 | 32,758 |

English and English Literature

11.5% of all grades awarded to GCSE English Language candidates were A*/9 – A/7 this year, whilst 53.9% of candidates achieved a grade C/4 or above.

For GCSE English Literature, 19.1% of candidates achieved grades A*/9 – A/7, and 72.4% of candidates have been awarded a grade C/4 or above.

Similarly to GCSE Mathematics, for GCSE English and GCSE English Literature, entries and outcomes are most appropriately reflected in the best outcome obtained by 16 year olds across both the November and summer series.

Figure 3: GCSE English Language – cumulative best grade all boards distributions for 16 year olds

| | 2018/19 | 2023/24 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Grade | | |
| A (7) | 13.4% | 12.9% |
| C (4) | 59.6% | 58.2% |
| G (1) | 98.6% | 98.2% |
| Entries | 30,816 | 33,680 |

Figure 4: GCSE English Literature – cumulative best grade all boards distributions for 16 year olds

| | 2018/19 | 2023/24 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Grade | | |
| A (7) | 20.3% | 19.7% |
| C (4) | 74.9% | 72.5% |
| G (1) | 98.6% | 98.6% |
| Entries | 24,889 | 29,595 |

Welsh First Language and Welsh Second Language

14.6% of candidates achieved A*/9 – A/7 grades in GCSE Welsh First Language, whilst 70.4% of candidates have been awarded a grade C/4 or above.

Meanwhile, 21.5% of GCSE Welsh Second Language candidates have achieved A*/9 – A/7 grades, and 62.2% of candidates have been awarded a grade C/4 or above.

Entries and outcomes for GCSE Welsh (1st) Language are most appropriately reflected in the best outcome obtained by 16 year olds across the whole academic year.

Figure 5: GCSE Welsh (1st) Language – cumulative best grade distributions for 16 year olds

| | 2018/19 | 2023/24 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Grade | | |
| A (7) | 15.7% | 15.4% |
| C (4) | 73.7% | 72.8% |
| G (1) | 99.4% | 98.5% |
| Entries | 5,401 | 6,233 |

Separate sciences and double award

The proportion of candidates achieving A*/9 – A/7 in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics is 42.8%, 43.6% and 44.6%, respectively.

88.6% (Biology), 89.6% (Chemistry), and 89.7% (Physics) have achieved a grade C/4 or above.

For GCSE Science Double Award, 7.6% of candidates have been awarded A*/9 – A/7 grades, and 49.6% of candidates have achieved a grade C/4 or above.

The Double Award qualification and the separate science qualifications are of the same academic standard, however, the separate science subjects continue to attract the highest proportion of the most able students.

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

“What I love about this time of year is seeing the huge variety of qualifications that our young people are mastering, whether GCSE or Vocational and Technical Qualifications. Today’s results give them the basis for their next steps in education or training and I am sure this resilient generation will go on to even greater successes in the future.

“This year’s students have a lot to be proud about and I’d like to congratulate them all for what they have achieved. We’re seeing a record number of results issued today, and every one of them represents a student’s hard work, as well as that of their teachers, parents, and support staff.”

Margaret Farragher, JCQ’s Chief Executive, said:

“Well done to students across the UK receiving GCSE, vocational and technical qualification results today. These achievements are hard-earned and students should feel justly proud to have reached this important milestone in their educational journey. We wish them every success as they take their next steps.

“I speak for everyone at JCQ when I say how grateful we are to school and college leaders, teachers and exams officers who have supported students and worked tirelessly to deliver a smooth exam series this year.”

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the results in Wales, contact:

Jonathan Thomas, PR Manager, WJEC on 029 2026 5102 or jonathan.thomas@wjec.co.uk.

For information about the UK results, contact JCQ^{CIC}'s press office on 020 7227 0671, or 07905 683816 or at 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

NOTES FOR EDITORS

General

1. Detailed tabulations of the GCSE Full Course, GCSE Short Course, GCSE Double Award, Entry Level Certification, Level 1 and Level 2 Project, are published separately, also with the STRICT EMBARGO of 09.30 Thursday 22 August 2024 and will be available on the JCQ CIC website from 09.30 on 22 August 2024 www.jcq.org.uk.
2. These results are for qualifications taken by students across the UK but predominantly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

3. All awarding organisations are answerable to the regulatory authorities - Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales (Wales) and CCEA (Northern Ireland). The regulatory authorities monitor the standards of qualifications within their jurisdiction.
4. The JCQ CIC is a membership organisation, comprising AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the eight largest providers of qualifications in the UK.
5. JCQ enables member awarding bodies to act together in providing, where possible, common administrative arrangements for the schools and colleges and other providers which offer their qualifications, and to respond to proposals and initiatives in assessment and the curriculum.
6. Media contact: The JCQ's press office can be contacted on: 020 7227 0671/07399 870 337

Data Analysis

- There is a small number of candidates, mainly from the independent sector, who sit the reformed GCSE 9-1 examinations. Their overall outcomes are included in the headline figures, however, their outcomes are not included in the subject analysis which is A* - G only. Their data is available from the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk.