Notes for users of the JCQ results tables
GCSE June 2023 series

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These notes put the results in context and provide an explanation for some year-on-year changes in reporting and outcomes. The notes should be read before consulting the results tables.

The notes do not attempt to outline the detail of every change that may influence results or entries in some way. You should consult relevant regulatory and governmental websites for a more extensive overview of system changes.

Regulator links

England

https://gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

Northern Ireland

http://ccea.org.uk/regulation

Wales

https://qualificationswales.org/english/

https://cymwysterau.cymru/

Education Department links

England

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

Northern Ireland

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/

Wales

http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en

Interpretations by country

Each nation's respective governments and regulators determine education policy and regulatory arrangements.

It is important to note that GCSE qualifications differ in design and content between the nations. For example, in England, GCSEs are linear, with exams taken at the end of the course. In contrast, in Northern Ireland and Wales, some GCSEs are linear, and others are modular, meaning that students are entered for each unit separately, allowing them to take some units before the end of the course.

Changes in entries

UK entries for GCSEs increased 3.4% from 5,708,871 in summer 2022 to 5,905,000 in 2023. However, the individual picture across the nations differs. Whilst England and Northern Ireland saw a slight increase in entries, Wales saw a decrease.

According to ONS population estimates, the 16-year-old population increased by 2.1 % for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland combined. Entries from this age group account for 92.1% of all GCSE entries.

England

Last September, Ofqual set out its expectations for returning to pre-pandemic grading in England, with protection built into the grading process to recognise the disruption that students have faced. Therefore, comparisons to 2019 results will be most meaningful.

Senior examiners were asked to make allowances when recommending grade boundaries where national performance was weaker than before the pandemic. As in any year, grade boundaries may change to reflect differences in the demand of the assessments and might be higher or lower than in 2019. Senior examiners recommended the grade boundaries for each specification after reviewing the work produced by students and drawing on all the available evidence, including data.

Features of GCSEs in England

- All single award GCSE specifications are graded 9 to 1
- GCSE combined science (double award) is graded 9-9, 9-8, 8-8…. 2-1, 1-1. To retain these outcomes in the GCSE full course tables, we report outcomes at key grades 7-7, 4-4 and 1-1 as 7, 4, and 1. Each entry is counted twice to reflect the achievement of *two* grades in the subject
- GCSEs are linear qualifications, with all exams written at the end of the course.
- A November examination series is available for post-16 English language and maths resits.
- Students who do not achieve a GCSE grade 4 in English language and/or mathematics at age 16 must continue studying these subjects. This is a condition of 16-19 funding.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is on a journey back to pre-pandemic awarding arrangements, and this is reflected in this year's summer 2023 awards. CCEA expects to return to pre-pandemic standards across all subjects by the summer of 2024.

Students were provided with high level Advance Information for the majority of CCEA GCSE summer 2023 examinations to recognise the disruption students may have faced.

Features of GCSEs in Northern Ireland

- CCEA GCSE qualifications are graded on a nine lettered scale A* to G, including a C* grade.
- In Northern Ireland, there is an open qualifications market, which means that schools can choose to take GCSEs offered by awarding organisations other than CCEA, which are graded 9 to 1, provided they comply with Department of Education requirements.
- The majority of GCSE qualifications offered by CCEA are modular. There are a small number of GCSEs that are linear, where all assessments are taken at the end of the course.
- In addition to the summer series, GCSE mathematics and English language modules are available in December and science modules in November and March.

Wales

Qualifications Wales set out its approach to grading in Wales in September 2022. Grades would be awarded broadly mid-way between the 2019 and 2022 results. Qualification Wales expects to return to pre-pandemic arrangements in 2024.

Advance Information (excluding Art and Design) was provided for students to recognise the disruption they may have faced and to support the transition back to pre-pandemic arrangements. Examiners used the review of learner work along with other supporting evidence to set grade boundaries that take into account the context of the series.

Features of GCSEs in Wales

- GCSEs in Wales are graded A* to G. A few centres may offer 9 to 1 specifications. In Wales, this is confined to subjects in which no Wales-approved GCSE exists or to non-maintained centres.
- GCSE mathematics-numeracy is available alongside GCSE mathematics. Most students take both.
- GCSE mathematics, mathematics – numeracy, English language and Welsh language can be sat in November or the summer.

- The November series in Wales is open to all students and is not just a resit series.
- Overall, year-on-year results comparisons are based just on the summer series. Therefore, careful interpretation of these results is needed.
- GCSE Combined Science (Double Award) is graded A*A*, A*A, AA…. FG, GG. In order to retain these outcomes in the GCSE full course tables, we report outcomes at key grades AA, CC, and GG as A, C, and G.
- Some GCSEs are linear, with all exams taken at the end of the course; some are modular.

Data Presentation

A set of key tables has been made available in a machine-readable format, allowing comparison of overall results between 2019, 2022, and 2023. These are classified on the JCQ website as 'Main Results Tables.'

The established tables are available on the JCQ website under 'Other Results Information.' Tables showing comparisons to 2019 and 2022 are provided. Comparisons to 2020 and 2021 have not been provided due to different assessment arrangements because of the pandemic.

Confidentiality and Data Suppression

Every effort is made to protect student anonymity and ensure that data does not identify any individual student.

Where the total number of student entries for a subject is fewer than 10, then all rows for the subject have been suppressed.

Where the number of entries by either male or female students is fewer than 10, the separate rows for male and female have been suppressed, but the combined 'male & female' row has not been suppressed.

Quality Assurance and Limitations

JCQ carries out quality assurance checks to ensure that the data received is accurate to the best of its knowledge.

The results tables are provisional. Results are updated after this point to include changes such as appeals. Whilst provisional, we do not anticipate significant changes to outcomes will occur and will not publish any updates to these results tables.

The provisional results are only for the June 2023 series and do not include results for qualifications awarded earlier in the 2022/23 academic year.