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**A LEVEL AND OTHER LEVEL 3 RESULTS IN ENGLAND,  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2012 TO 2013 (REVISED)**

*This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides revised information on the overall achievements of young people in advanced level examinations (A levels and other level 3 qualifications). Provisional figures for 2012/13 were published by the department in October 2013. This information has now been checked by schools and colleges and revised figures are shown in this SFR.*

**HEADLINES**

**More students entering exams**

More students entered for at least one substantial level 3 qualification in 2012/13, up from 384,017 in 2011/12 to 395,397, the highest number ever.

**Drop in proportion of students achieving two qualifications**

There was a drop of 1.3 percentage points to 92.3 per cent in 2012/13, continuing a decreasing trend since 2007/08. In addition, the average point score per student, also an indicator of volume of programme achieved, dropped again from its peak in 2010/11.

**A level pass rate remains high**

98.7 per cent of A level entries in 2012/13 resulted in A\* to E grades, compared to 98.6 per cent in 2011/12.

**Top grades dip for second year in a row**

The proportion of A\*/A grades has dropped over the past two years by 0.5 percentage points to 26.7 per cent. In the previous decade, from 2000/01 to 2009/10, there had been an increase of over eight percentage points.

**Females continue to achieve higher scores on average across all qualifications**

In 2012/13, the average point score for all level 3 qualifications achieved by females was 740.3 compared to 706.4 for males. The average point score per entry was also higher 217.4 (C+) for females compared to 209.6 (C) for males.

**Males attain more A\*/A grades in three A levels**

For A level students, 13.0 per cent of males achieved three A\* or A grades compared to 12.1 per cent of females.

### **What does this statistical release cover?**

The figures in this release are based on students at academic age 16 to 18 (i.e. aged 16 to 18 as at the 31 August 2012, the start of the academic year). Tables 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 12a, 12b, 16, and 17 refer to students at the end of their final year of study in schools and colleges in England. The remaining tables cover achievements in A and AS level qualifications in 2012/13 regardless of whether a student has reached the end of their study (often referred to as 'being at the end of key stage 5' or KS5).

The information is based on data collated for the 2013 School and College Performance Tables and covers achievements in all level 3 qualifications approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act (2000).

### **Which qualifications are included?**

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is the national credit transfer system for education qualifications in England, which applies a difficulty level to each qualification. This SFR includes qualifications classified as level 3 under this framework. 'Substantial' qualifications are referenced throughout the SFR. These are defined as qualifications which are at least the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year).

### **Which institutions are included?**

The data in this SFR covers students in local authority maintained mainstream and special schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges, non-maintained special schools, independent schools, sixth form colleges and other further education colleges.

### **What are facilitating subjects?**

There are two A level indicators which reference facilitating subjects. These reflect new indicators that were included in the 2012 16 to 18 performance tables. Facilitating subjects are those most commonly required for entry to degree courses at Russell Group universities and include biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, geography, history, English literature, modern and classical languages. You can find more information on subject choice and entry requirements at Russell Group universities at: <http://russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices/>

### **What's new in this SFR?**

In addition to presenting overall achievement for students across all level 3 qualifications, the 2012/13 SFR presents achievements separately for three cohorts of students following programmes of differing qualification types: 'A level', 'academic' (includes A level students), and 'vocational'.

To be included in a cohort, a student needs to have taken at least one substantial qualification in one or more of the qualification types: A level, academic and/or vocational. Students following programmes of mixed qualification types may belong to more than one cohort, therefore full-time equivalent (FTE) figures are provided alongside student numbers. FTE figures take account of the proportion of time a student spends in each cohort based on the size of the qualification. For more information, please see the technical notes.

### **How does this SFR relate to the 16 to 18 performance tables?**

The 2013 16 to 18 performance tables are published alongside this SFR and report indicators for the same student cohorts that are included in this release: A level, academic and vocational. The new indicators have been introduced to the performance tables to recognise vocational performance distinct from academic performance and to take account of students that are on mixed programmes. In order to improve data transparency, underlying data for the 16 to 18 performance tables will also be published on the performance tables website: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/)

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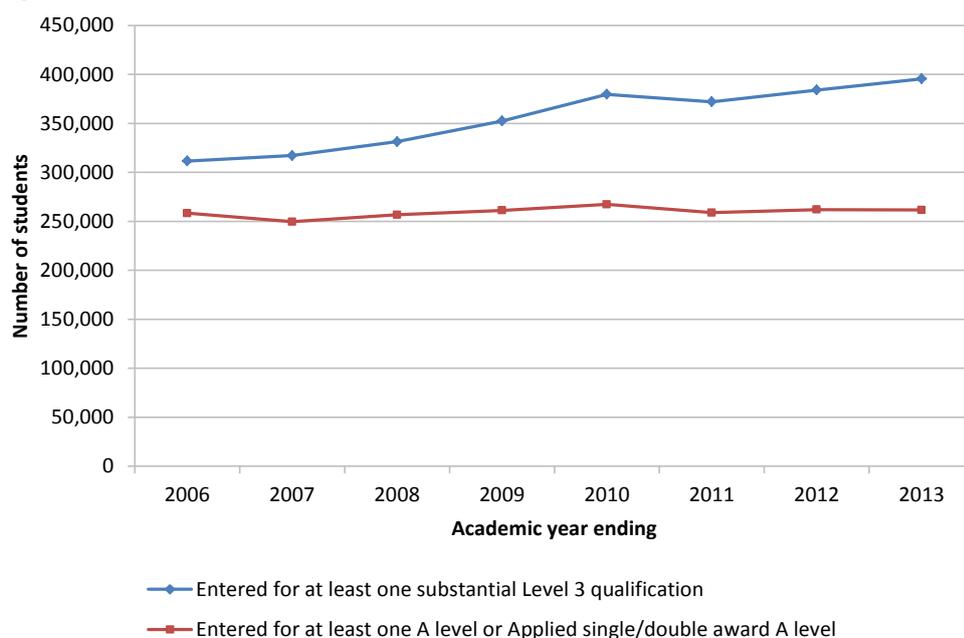
## 1. KEY STATISTICS

This section provides an overview of the key messages and statistics for 2012/13 compared to final<sup>1</sup> 2011/12 figures with longer trends where appropriate.

### Entries in substantial level 3 qualifications

- Overall by the end of KS5 more students entered for at least one substantial<sup>2</sup> level 3 qualification (**Figure 1** and **Table 1b**):
  - 3.0 per cent more students entered for at least one substantial level 3 qualification by the end of KS5 in 2012/13; 395,397 compared to 384,017 in 2011/12
- However, fewer students entered for at least one A level:
  - 0.2 per cent fewer students entered for at least one A level, applied or double applied A level in 2012/13; 261,513 compared to 262,003 in 2011/12

**Figure 1: Number of students at end of KS5 entered for at least one substantial level 3 qualification and those entered for at least one A level, in all schools and colleges in England, 2005/06 to 2012/13**



### Attainment

- Drop in proportion of students attaining two substantial qualifications and in average point score per student<sup>3</sup> (**Figure 2** and **Table 1b**):
  - 92.3 per cent of students achieved at least two substantial level 3 qualifications by the end of KS5 compared with 93.6 per cent in 2011/12 with a peak of 95.3 in 2007/08
  - The average point score per student entered for at least one substantial level 3 qualification decreased for the second year running to 724.3 compared with 733.3 in 2011/12. This contrasts with a broadly increasing trend in the six years up to 2010/11

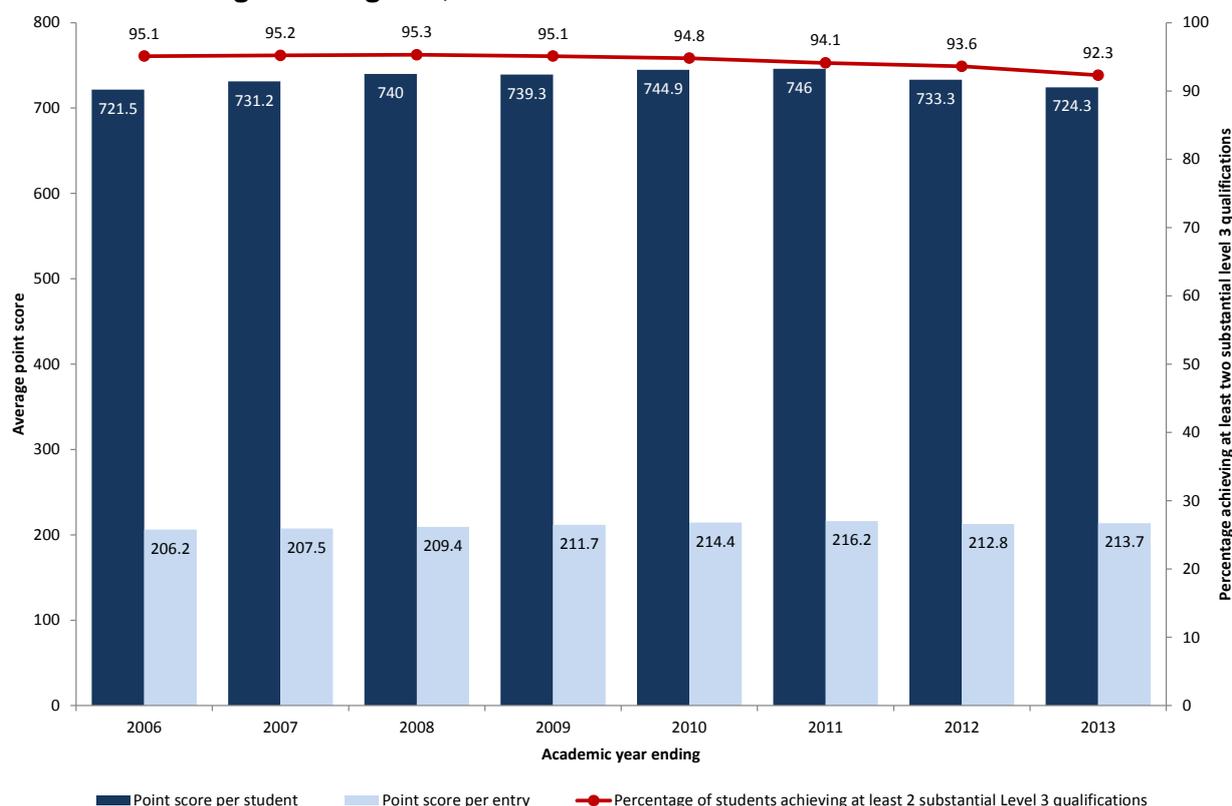
<sup>1</sup> These figures are referred to as 'final' because they are based on the final KS5 data for the reporting year, which is not subject to any further change. The final data has been amended by schools and colleges via the school and college checking exercise, and includes any additional data supplied by awarding organisations. This data is published in the 16 to 18 performance tables.

<sup>2</sup> A 'substantial' level 3 academic or vocational qualification is a qualification that is the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year).

<sup>3</sup> See the 'Academic and vocational performance' section in 'Areas of Interest' for further discussion on how this differs for the academic and vocational cohorts.

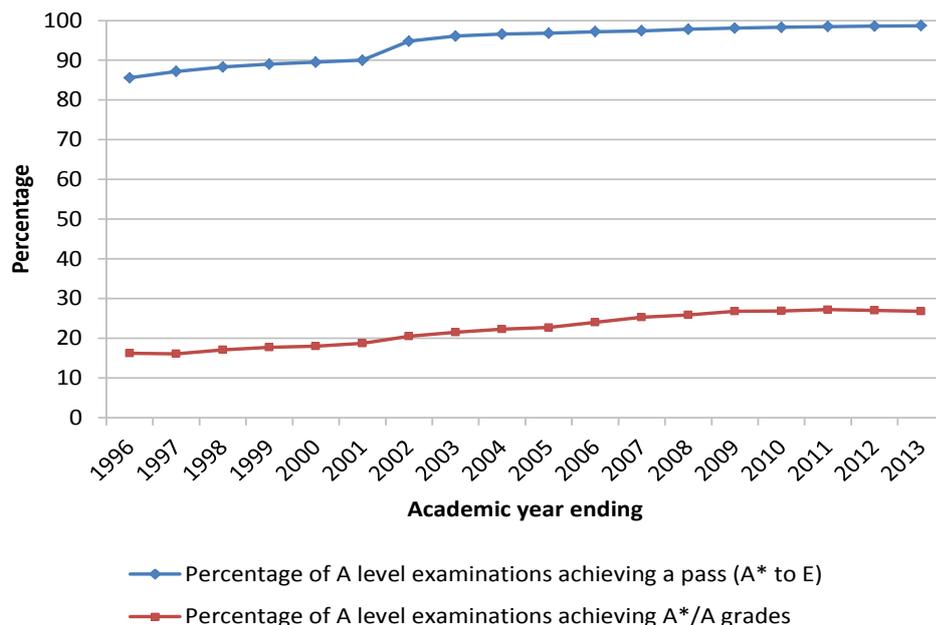
- However, there was a rise in the scores achieved per exam entry:
  - The average level 3 point score per entry increased to 213.7 compared to 212.8 in 2011/12

**Figure 2: Average point score for all level 3 qualifications per student and per entry and the percentage of students achieving at least two substantial level 3 qualifications in all schools and colleges in England, 2005/06 to 2012/13**



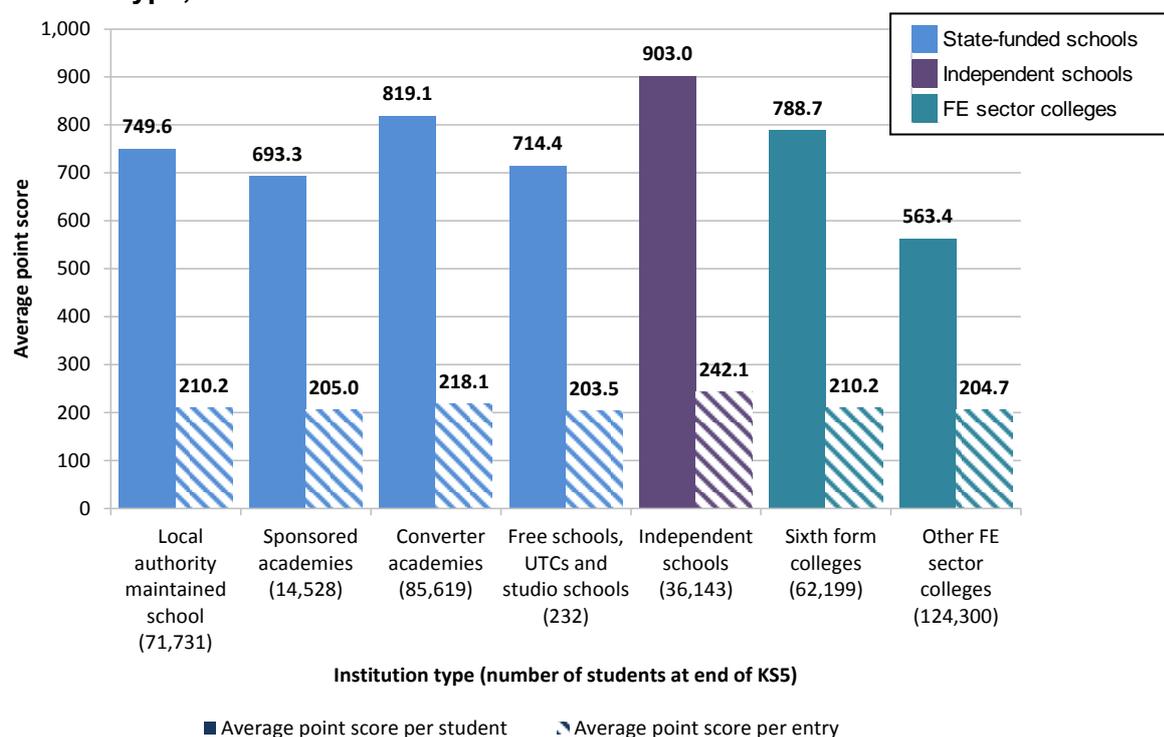
- Overall the A level pass rate remained high (**Table 14** and **Figure 3**):
  - 98.7 per cent of A level entries in 2012/13 resulted in a pass (grades A\* to E) compared to 98.6 per cent in 2011/12
- However, there was a slight dip in achievement of top grades, including across three A levels:
  - The proportion of A\*/A grades has dropped over the past two years by 0.5 percentage points to 26.7 per cent. In the previous decade from 2000/01 to 2009/10 there had been an increase of over eight percentage points (**Table 14** and **Figure 3**)
  - The proportion of students at the end of KS5 achieving A\*/A grades in three A levels also dropped for the second year to 12.5 per cent, from a peak of 13.1 per cent in 2010/11 (**Table 1b**)
- Females achieved higher scores on average across all qualifications (**Table 1a**):
  - In 2012/13, the average point score per student achieved by females by the end of KS5 was 740.3 compared to 706.4 for males
  - In addition, the average point score per entry by the end of KS5 was 217.4 for females compared to 209.6 for males
- However, males attained more top grades at A level:
  - 13.0 per cent of males achieved three A\* or A grades by the end of KS5 compared to 12.1 per cent of females

**Figure 3: A level examination results in all schools and colleges in England, 1995/96 to 2012/13**



- The average point score per student and entry was higher for independent schools compared to all other institution types (**Table 1a** and **Figure 4**):
  - Independent schools achieved an average point score per student of 903.0 and average point score per entry of 242.1
  - Of state-funded schools, converter academies achieved the highest average point scores and sixth form colleges outperformed other FE colleges
  - There were only a small number of students at the end of KS5 in free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs), or studio schools, therefore comparisons between institution types should be interpreted with caution

**Figure 4: Average point score for all Level 3 qualifications per student and entry by institution type, 2012/13**



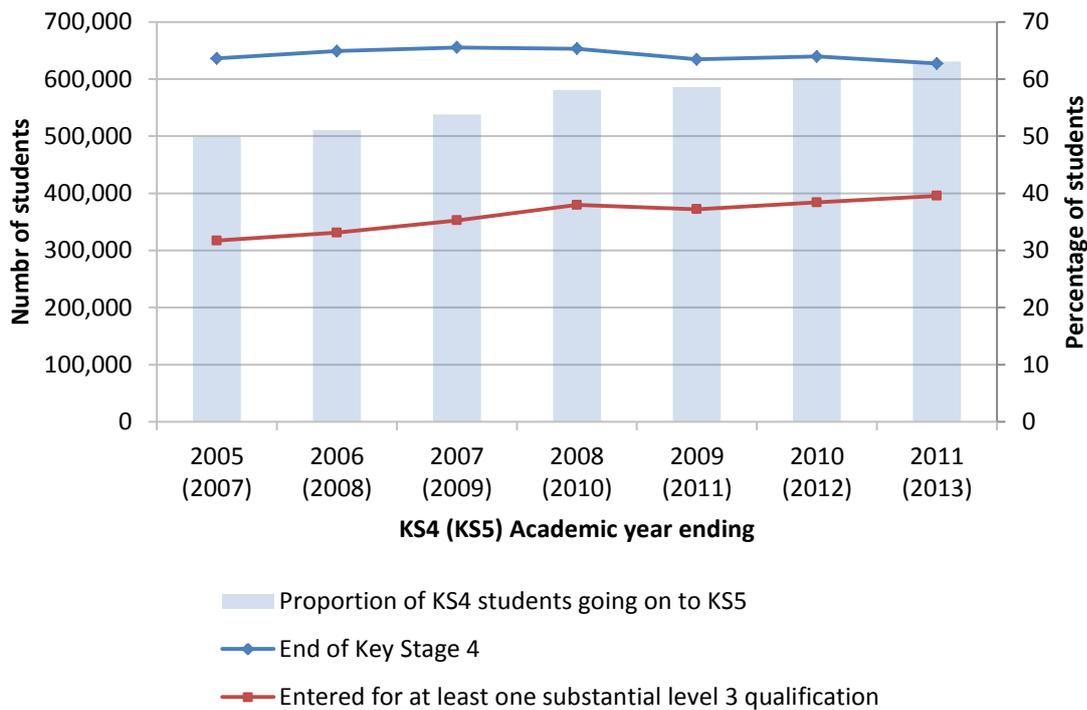
## 2. AREAS OF INTEREST

### 2.1 Entry trends

*Has there been an increase in the number of students choosing to continue their education at academic age 16 to 18?*

There are more students entering for at least one substantial level 3 qualification than ever before and the gap between the number of students finishing key stage 4 (KS4) and those entering a level 3 qualification at academic age 16 to 18 has narrowed over the last six years<sup>4</sup>. In 2004/05, 50 per cent of students who finished KS4 went on to enter for at least one substantial level 3 qualification by 2006/07. In 2012/13, this figure had increased to 63 per cent (**Figure 5**). This suggests that student participation at KS5 has increased and that this is not just down to population changes.

**Figure 5: Number of students finishing key stage 4 (KS4) and number of students entered for at least one substantial level 3 qualification (two years later at KS5), in all schools and colleges in England, 2004/05 to 2012/13**



<sup>4</sup> Source: Key stage 4 attainment data 2012/13.

## 2.2 Academic and vocational performance

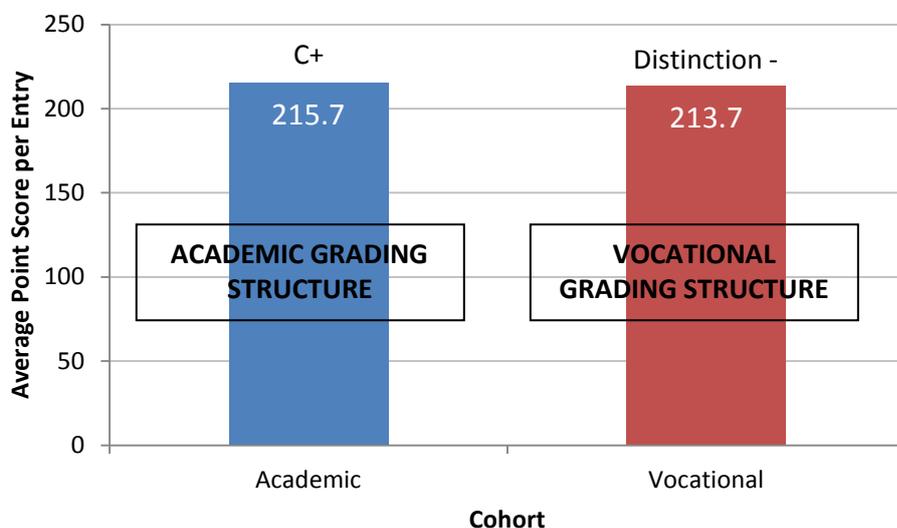
*Why is it important to treat the academic and vocational cohorts separately?*

To be included in a cohort, a student needs to have taken at least one substantial qualification<sup>5</sup> in one or more of the qualification types: A level, academic and/or vocational<sup>6</sup>. Students following programmes of mixed qualification types may belong to more than one cohort, therefore full-time equivalent (FTE) figures are provided alongside student numbers. FTE figures take account of the proportion of time a student spends in each cohort based on the size of the qualification.

It is more meaningful to compare performance within rather than across cohorts due to differences in the nature of academic and vocational qualifications. For example, academic qualifications typically focus on acquisition of knowledge and theory, whilst vocational qualifications confirm attainment of occupational standards and/or knowledge and understanding of an industry sector.

All cohorts have similar performance per examination entry. The academic cohort achieved an average point score per entry of just over 215 points, the minimum for a C+ grade on the academic grading structure. The vocational cohort achieved an average point score per entry equivalent to a distinction minus on the vocational grading structure<sup>7</sup> (**Figure 6**). This is in contrast to the average total points per full-time equivalent student (APS per FTE student) which is substantially lower in the vocational cohort compared to the academic cohort (**Figure 7**). The A level cohort has not been shown separately below as it is a subset of the academic cohort and performance is similar.

**Figure 6: Average point score per entry in all schools and colleges in England, by cohort, 2012/13**

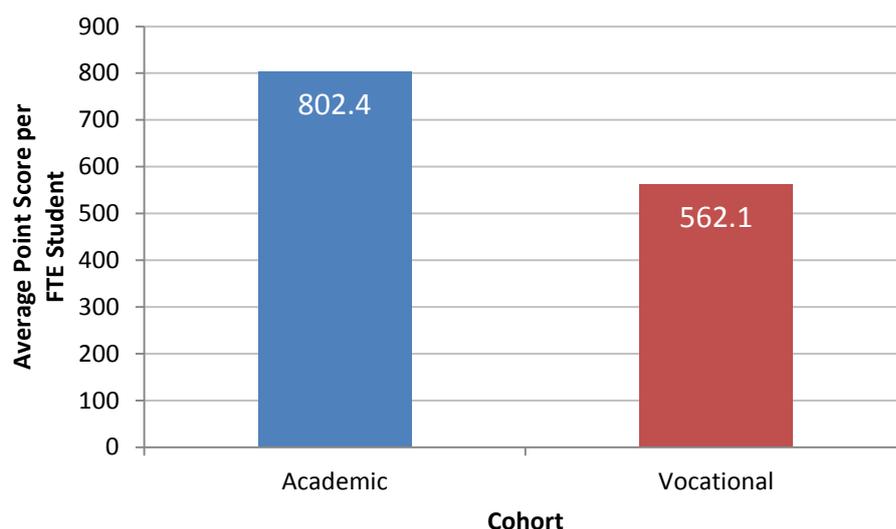


<sup>5</sup> A 'substantial' level 3 academic or vocational qualification is a qualification that is the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year).

<sup>6</sup> Qualifications of all sizes are included in a student's average point score as long as they have entered for at least one substantial qualification.

<sup>7</sup> See average grade calculation in the technical notes and Annex B for average point score band ranges for academic and vocational grades.

**Figure 7: Average point score per full time equivalent (FTE) student in all schools and colleges in England, by cohort, 2012/13**



There are a number of possible explanations why students in the vocational cohort achieve lower average point scores (FTE):

- Some students studying academic and vocational qualifications are considered full-time vocational students:** to be included in both the academic and vocational cohorts a student must have taken at least one academic and one vocational qualification that are each the size of an A level. These students are considered to be on a mixed programme. Students that have studied multiple AS level qualifications alongside a 'substantial' vocational qualification will not be considered to be on a mixed programme. These students are counted as full time vocational students despite spending a proportion of their time studying academic qualifications. If this time was taken into account in the full-time equivalent calculation, a student's total point score would increase (see technical notes for further information on FTE calculation).

Analysis of the impact of this shows that while the inclusion of smaller qualifications within the FTE calculation improves the average total performance per vocational student and decreases performance per academic student, there is still a substantial gap that exists suggesting other factors play a role.

- Different grading system:** performance points are awarded for both academic and vocational exams but they relate to different grading structures. There is a finer grading structure for academic entries with a maximum score of 300 (A\*) and six grades available (A\* to E). This compares to a maximum point score of 270 (Distinction\*) and four grades available for vocational entries (Distinction\*, Distinction, Merit and Pass). Some vocational qualifications only have a two grade structure (Pass/Fail) and maximum score of 210 (Pass). Given that it is not possible to achieve a maximum score of 300 for a vocational qualification; this could have an impact on average vocational point scores (FTE).
- Characteristics of the vocational pathway:** analysis shows that there is a higher proportion of students in the vocational cohort studying a small volume of qualifications. For example, excluding those on a mixed programme, 23.8 per cent of students in the vocational cohort studied less than two substantial qualifications at level 3, compared to 0.6 per cent of students in the academic cohort.

  - Vocational performance does not capture work-based training qualifications:** students on a vocational pathway may be more likely to study a smaller number of qualifications because they are also doing an apprenticeship or another type of work based training. Data shows that approximately 7,000 students a year at

academic age 16 to 18 complete an advanced level apprenticeship<sup>8</sup>.

- **Qualifications below level 3:** In addition, level 2 qualifications are not in the scope of this SFR so achievements below level 3 are not recognised in the outcomes highlighted above. This may reduce the volume of level 3 achievements reported for students on a vocational pathway because they may be more likely to re-take level 2 qualifications alongside their level 3 study. Data shows that a large number of students, approximately 135,200, who do not achieve level 2 (five A\* to C grades) by academic age 15 go on to do so by academic age 18<sup>9</sup>.
- **Part-time students:** the average vocational point scores (FTE) should not include part-time students. For schools it is possible to identify and remove part-time students from the data, whereas for further education colleges there is no marker in the data and we rely on these colleges to remove part-time students during the checking exercise<sup>10</sup>. The majority (89 per cent) of colleges submitted changes and/or confirmed their information through the checking exercise. It is possible, however, that some part-time students have not been removed from FE college data. The inclusion of part-time students would lower the average vocational point scores per student (FTE) and have a greater impact on the vocational performance because the majority (74 per cent) of vocational students attend FE colleges.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Individualised Learner Record, 2012/13 (Final).

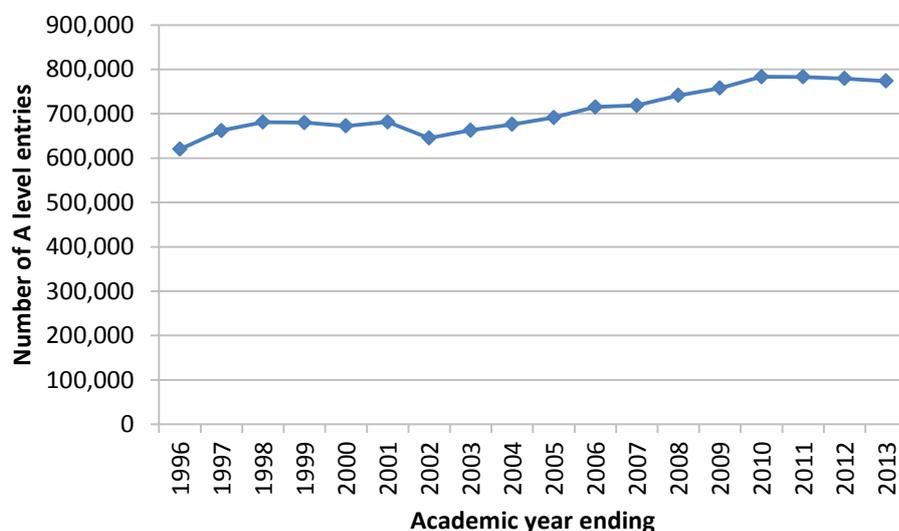
<sup>9</sup> Source: DfE matched administrative data 2011/12. Note that the definition of level 2 is different from the KS4 performance tables measure, specifically it excludes some small vocational qualifications. Therefore the number should be treated as a minimum.

<sup>10</sup> The checking exercise allows schools and colleges to check information about their students and make any necessary amendments with appropriate evidence.

### 2.3 Comparison of A level entries by subject

In 2012/13 there was a total of 773,651 A level entries, a drop of 0.7 per cent compared to 2011/12, continuing a decreasing trend since the peak in A level entries in 2009/10 (**Figure 8** and **Table 14**). In contrast, entries for biological sciences were up 2.5 per cent, chemistry by 5.8 per cent and physics by 3.8 per cent compared to 2011/12. However, entries in French were down 9.1 per cent and German by 10.3 per cent but entries in Spanish were up 5.1 per cent from 2011/12.

**Figure 8: Number of A level entries in all schools and colleges in England, 1995/96 to 2012/13**



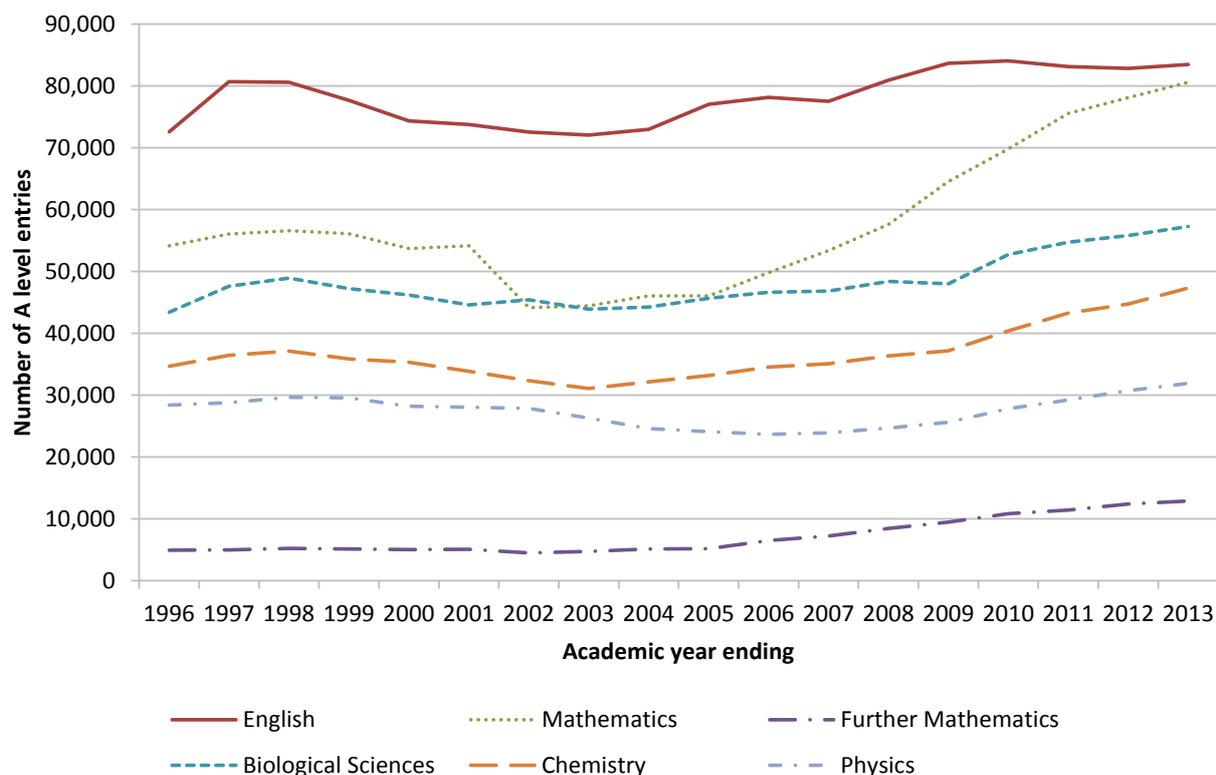
Overall, there has been an increasing trend in A level entries over the past decade which is reflected in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science subjects (**Figure 9** and **Table 14**). Mathematics, for example, has seen year on year increases since 2001/02, and at a rate in which it has nearly caught up with English entries which have remained stable over the past five years. This is likely to reflect changes to the mathematics curriculum and initiatives building the importance of mathematics into careers such as science and engineering. Entries for further mathematics have also been rising and have nearly doubled from 2005/06 to 2012/13. This could be due to the founding of the Further Maths Network in 2004 which became the Further Maths Support Programme in 2009.

For science subjects, biological sciences remains the most popular ahead of chemistry and physics but all have been increasing since 2008/09, and chemistry since 2002/03. There have been a number of initiatives involving Government, industry, learned societies and charitable foundations over the past ten years to address declining uptake of science subjects. For example, bursaries and subject knowledge enhancement courses to increase the number of specialist science teachers and triple science support programme to increase the number of schools offering GCSEs in all three science subjects. The Stimulating Physics Network was introduced to improve progression rates to physics A level and there have been initiatives such as Big Bang Science and Engineering Fair.

In addition, in 2007, the performance tables started to report the proportion of students achieving at least two good science GCSEs, and as a result this may have had an impact on the number of students that decided to continue with science subjects at academic age 16 to 18. In 2010, this was replaced by the proportion of students that attain the English Baccalaureate<sup>11</sup>. This measure ensures the inclusion of at least two science subjects and as a result could have an impact on the uptake of science subjects in students at academic age 16 to 18.

<sup>11</sup> GCSEs at grades A\*-C in English, mathematics, sciences, a language and a humanities subject.

**Figure 9: Number of A level entries in all schools and colleges in England, by subject, 1995/96 to 2012/13**

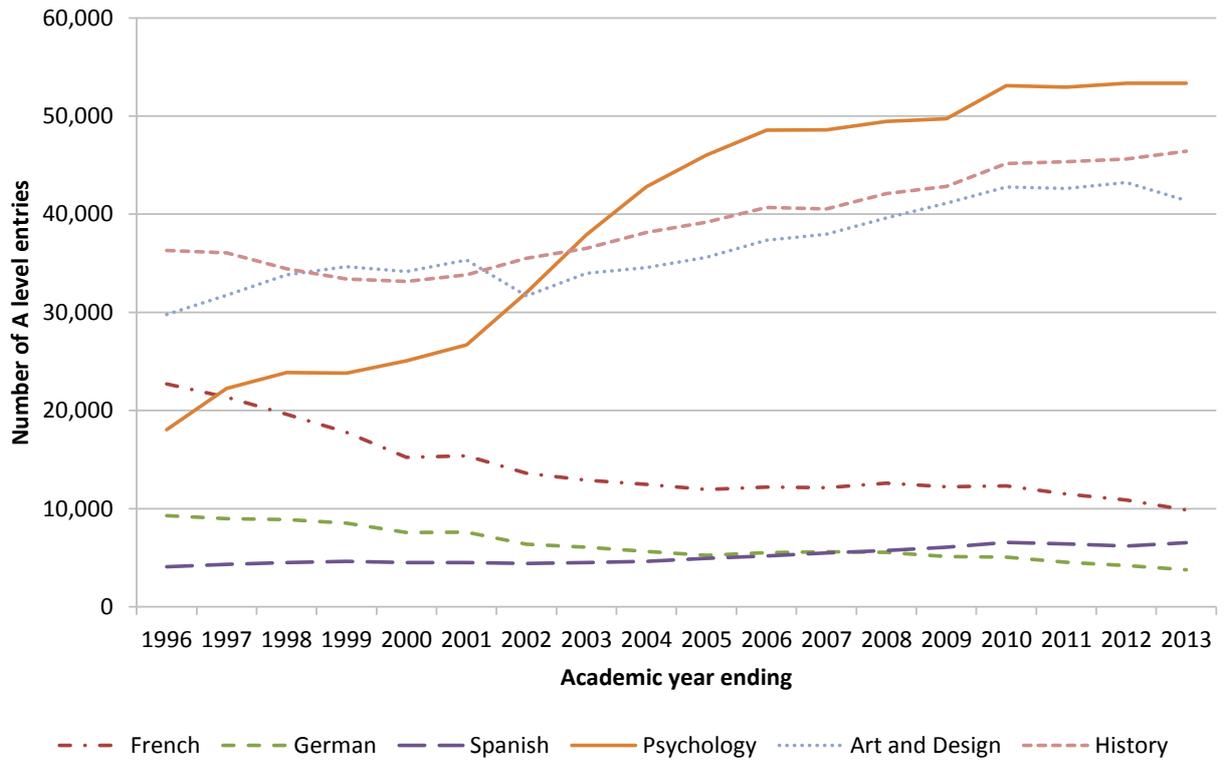


It is not the case, however, that all subjects have seen increases in entries in the past 15 years. French and German entries have halved over this time while entries for Spanish and other modern languages have been steadily increasing (**Figure 10** and **Table 14**). These trends tend to follow uptake of languages at GCSE and the overall decline could be partly due to GCSE languages ceasing to be compulsory at KS4 from 2004. The introduction of the English Baccalaureate in 2010 at KS4 has not yet had an impact on the uptake of languages in students at academic age 16 to 18. However, it has had an impact on the uptake at GCSE, with 19.0 per cent more students studying a language in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12.

One of the largest increases in the volume of students entering for a subject is psychology. Other high volume entries that have also been increasing over the past decade are history and art and design, although the latter did see a 4.3 per cent decrease in 2012/13 (**Figure 10** and **Table 14**). Some of the increases in these A levels may reflect a student's choice of study/progression at the end of KS5. For example, data shows that the number of applications to study psychology at undergraduate level has increased from approximately 12,000 in 2004 to over 15,000 in 2010. Similarly to A level entries, since 2010 the number of undergraduate applications has also remained stable<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Source: UCAS Annual Data Files: <http://www.ucas.com/data-analysis/data-resources>

**Figure 10: Number of A level entries in all schools and colleges in England, by subject, 1995/96 to 2012/13**



### 3. TABLE LIST

These tables show information for England and are available from DfE at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-a-as-levels-key-stage-5](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-a-as-levels-key-stage-5)

#### National level

**Table 1a:** GCE (General Certificate of Education) A level and Level 3 results of students aged 16 to 18 by institution type and gender, 2012/13

**Table 1b:** Time series of GCE A level and Level 3 results of students aged 16 to 18 by gender, 2005/06 to 2012/13

**Table 1c:** GCE A level and Level 3 results of state-funded school students aged 16 to 18 by admission basis and gender, 2012/13

**Table 1d:** Level 3 results of students aged 16 to 18 by institution type, cohort and gender

**Table 2:** GCE A level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 2m:** GCE A level examination results of male students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 2f:** GCE A level examination results of female students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 3:** GCE AS level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 3m:** GCE AS level examination results of male students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 3f:** GCE AS level examination results of female students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 4:** 2012 GCE AS level examination results of current Year 13 students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 4m:** 2012 GCE AS level examination results of current Year 13 male students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 4f:** 2012 GCE AS level examination results of current Year 13 female students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 5:** GCE Applied Single A level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by gender, subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 6:** GCE Applied Single AS level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by gender, subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 7:** GCE Applied Double Award A level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by gender, subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 8:** GCE Applied Double Award AS level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by gender, subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 9:** GCE A level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by institution type, gender and grade, 2012/13

**Table 10:** GCE A level examination results of state-funded school students aged 16 to 18 by admission basis, gender and grade, 2012/13

**Table 11a:** GCE A level examination results of state-funded school students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 11b:** GCE A level examination results of independent school students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 11c:** GCE A level examination results of all further education sector college students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Table 11d:** GCE A level examination results of sixth form college students aged 16 to 18 by subject and grade, 2012/13

**Local Authority/Regional level: state-funded institutions only**

**Table 12a:** GCE A level and Level 3 results of all state-funded students aged 16 to 18 by gender, local authority and region, 2012/13

**Table 12b:** GCE A level and Level 3 results of state-funded school students aged 16 to 18 by gender, local authority and region, 2012/13

**Table 13a:** Number of GCE A level examination entries by all state-funded students aged 16 to 18 by subject, local authority and region, 2012/13

**Table 13b:** Number of GCE A level A-A\* grades achieved by all state-funded students aged 16 to 18 by subject, local authority and region, 2012/13

**Table 13c:** Number of GCE A level A\*-E grades achieved by all state-funded students aged 16 to 18 by subject, local authority and region, 2012/13

**Time series**

**Table 14:** GCE A level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by subject, grade and gender, 1995/96 to 2012/13

**Table 15:** GCE AS level examination results of students aged 16 to 18 by subject, grade and gender, 2000/01 to 2012/13

## Local area statistics

**Table 16:** GCE (General Certificate of Education) A level and Level 3 results of students aged 16 to 18 by degree of rurality of school location and region, 2012/13

**Table 17:** GCE (General Certificate of Education) A level and Level 3 results of students aged 16 to 18 by local authority district of school location and region, 2012/13

## 4. TECHNICAL NOTES

### 4.1 Coverage

#### 4.1.1 What students are included?

This release includes 16 to 18 year old students at the end of their final year of study typically lasting two years (often referred to as 'being at the end of key stage 5' or KS5) in schools and colleges in England. The information is based on data collated for the 2013 School and College Performance Tables and covers achievements in all level 3 qualifications approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act (2000).

Results achieved by students in the two most recent academic years are included in the 16 to 18 performance tables, giving a cumulative picture of achievement by the reporting year. However, to avoid double counting results, qualification discounting is applied where, for example, if a student achieves an AS en route to achieving an A level in the same subject, only the A level pass is included.

Students will be eligible to be reported in the 2013 16 to 18 performance tables if they satisfy the following criteria:

1. Were aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2012
2. Were on roll in January 2013
3. Were in, or deemed to be in, Year 13
4. Completed their advanced studies in the 2012/13 academic year
5. Entered for at least one substantial<sup>13</sup> level 3 qualification

A student's results will be reported in a cohort if they meet the following criteria:

1. A level cohort: entered in the 2012/13 academic year for at least one A level<sup>14</sup>; and/or
2. Academic cohort: entered in the 2012/13 academic year for at least one A level or substantial level 3 academic qualification<sup>15</sup>; and/or
3. Vocational cohort: entered in the 2012/13 academic year for at least one substantial level 3 vocational qualification<sup>16</sup>.

A similar set of 'inclusion' criteria are also used in this SFR. Tables 1a-d; 12a; 12b; 16 and 17 show cumulative results obtained by students in the academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13.

#### 4.1.2 How does this release differ from exam results in August 2013?

The figures for A level, Applied A level and Double Award A Level examinations by subject and grade differ from those published by Awarding Organisations in August 2013. The Awarding Organisations' figures related to the outcome of the individual subject areas for all students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of their age. The figures published in this SFR focus on the overall performance of students aged 16, 17 or 18 taking these examinations in England only.

#### 4.1.3 Local Authorities

Local Authority and regional figures are published for state-funded institutions only: these are Local Authority maintained schools, city technology colleges, academies, free schools and Further Education Sector Colleges.

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<sup>13</sup> A 'substantial' level 3 academic or vocational qualification is a qualification that is the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year).

<sup>14</sup> A level results reported in the A level cohort include GCE A level, AS level, Double Award A level, and Applied A level.

<sup>15</sup> Level 3 academic qualifications include GCE A level, AS level, Free Standing Maths Qualifications, International Baccalaureate, Pre-U, Advanced Extension Awards, AQA Baccalaureate and Extended Projects.

<sup>16</sup> Level 3 vocational qualifications include all approved qualifications at level 3 that are not classed as advanced level academic qualifications.

#### 4.1.4 *Approved qualifications and performance table tariff*

The range of qualifications reported in this SFR covers all level 3 qualifications approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act (2000). In order to do so the performance table tariff for level 3 qualifications has been adopted in this SFR.

Annex A lists some common qualifications and their point scores based on the performance table tariff. For the purposes of calculating average level 3 point scores, level 3 qualifications are also assigned a "size" relative to an A level. General/Applied General AS level has a size of 0.5, whereas an Applied General Double Award has a size of 2 compared to an A level of size 1.

Other approved qualifications at Level 3 and their point scores can be found at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

#### 4.1.5 *School status*

For the purposes of this SFR, the date of 12 September 2012 has been used to determine the status of a school. Any schools which converted to an academy on or before this date have been published as an academy and those that have converted after this date have been treated as their predecessor school type. This is the same as the policy adopted in the 16 to 18 performance tables and in other school level releases.

#### 4.1.6 *Discounting and 'cashing in' of AS entries and results*

The AS (Advanced Subsidiary) can be studied as either a free standing qualification or as the first half of the full A level. At the end of the AS, students can either take the AS as the final qualification or continue to the (usually) second year and undertake the full A level by taking the A2. The A2 is not a separate qualification; the second half of the A level is designed to deepen the knowledge gained during the AS.

Where qualifications taken by a student are in the same subject area and similar in content, 'discounting' rules have been applied in this SFR, so that qualifications are not double counted. For example, where a student has gained an AS en route to an A level in the same subject, only the A level result will count (i.e. the AS is 'discounted' as it is part of the A level). However, if a student fails to obtain a pass grade at A level, the AS pass grade would be reported.

By applying discounting, the number of examination entries and results is underestimated for the reporting year in this SFR. In order to show the effect of AS discounting, this SFR shows two sets of AS tables, one with discounting applied (Table 3) and one which shows the discounted AS entries (Table 4).

In addition to discounting, the number of AS examination entries and results is also affected by whether an AS entry is claimed or 'cashed-in' on completion with the examination board. If an AS is not cashed-in then it will not appear in the figures presented in this SFR.

For this reason, entry data presented in Table 4 should not be taken as a measure of participation. The DfE SFR '*Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16 to 18 Year Olds in England*' should be consulted for participation data, the latest version of which can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-by-16-to-18-year-olds-in-england-end-2011](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-by-16-to-18-year-olds-in-england-end-2011)

A DfE analysis paper investigating the impact of discounting and 'cashing-in' was published with SFR27/2011 and is provided in the 'Additional text' document at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/provisional-gce-or-applied-gce-a-and-as-and-equivalent-examination-results-in-england-academic-year-2010-to-2011](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provisional-gce-or-applied-gce-a-and-as-and-equivalent-examination-results-in-england-academic-year-2010-to-2011)

## 4.2 Methodology

### 4.2.1 Change to number of students

This change relates to the number of students entered for GCE/Applied A level or Double Awards shown in Table 1a, and used in a small number of calculations such as the 'AAB' measures.

Previously this number was based on A level entries in the summer of the reporting year (for this SFR it would be summer 2013 entries). However, following changes for the 2013 16 to 18 performance tables and the introduction of academic and vocational cohorts, this number is now based on entries 'in the reporting year' (for this SFR, the reporting year is 2012/13).

The rationale for the change is to ensure that all results throughout the academic year are counted i.e. not just the summer period. Analysis of the impact of this change shows that it has a negligible impact on indicators which use this measure.

### 4.2.2 Calculating the AAB indicators

There are three 'AAB' indicators provided in this SFR (see tables 1a, 1c, 12a, 12b, 16 and 17):

1. The percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level or Applied single/double award A level = the number of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level or Applied single/double award A level / number of students entered for at least one A level or Applied single/double award A level.
2. The percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects = the number of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level of which at least two are in facilitating subjects / number of students entered for at least one A level or Applied single/double award A level.
3. The percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, all of which are in facilitating subjects = the number of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level all of which are facilitating subjects / number of students entered for at least one A level or Applied single/double award A level.

Facilitating subjects cover biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, further mathematics, geography, history, English literature, modern and classical languages.

A full list of facilitating subjects is available here:

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/16to18\\_12/KS5Facil.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/16to18_12/KS5Facil.pdf)

### 4.2.3 Calculating average point scores

This SFR reports new average point score indicators for the A level, academic and vocational cohorts: average point score per entry and average point score per full-time equivalent student.

#### Average point score per entry

The average point score (APS) per entry is calculated by dividing the total number of points achieved by students by the total number of entries made.

APS per A level entry	Total A level points/ Total A level entries
APS per academic entry	Total academic points/ Total academic entries
APS per vocational entry	Total vocational points/ Total vocational entries

#### Average point score per student and per full-time equivalent (FTE) student

The APS per student is calculated by dividing the total number of points achieved by students in all level 3 qualifications by the total number of students taking those qualifications.

An APS per student (FTE) reflects a methodology change that has been adopted in the 2013 16

to 18 performance tables. It is calculated by dividing the total number of points achieved by students in qualifications in a cohort by the total number of full-time equivalent students in that cohort.

The new FTE methodology recognises students undertaking a mix of academic and vocational qualifications by taking account of the time spent on each qualification type. For example, if a student is undertaking 1 A level and a BTEC qualification equivalent to 3 A levels, this approach results in this individual being counted as 0.25 of a student in the academic (and A level) cohort and 0.75 in the vocational cohort.

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students in each cohort is calculated by:

Number of A level FTE	Total size of A level qualifications taken by students in the A level cohort / Total size of all qualifications taken by students
Number of academic FTE	Total size of academic qualifications taken by students in the academic cohort / Total size of all qualifications taken by students
Number of vocational FTE	Total size of vocational qualifications taken by students in the vocational cohort / Total size of all qualifications taken by students

The APS per student (FTE) is then calculated by:

APS per A level student (FTE)	Total point score for all A level qualifications taken by students in the A level cohort / Number of A level FTE
APS per academic student (FTE)	Total point score for all academic qualifications taken by students in the academic cohort / Number of academic FTE
APS per vocational student (FTE)	Total point score for all vocational qualifications taken by students in the vocational cohort / Number of vocational FTE

#### Average grade calculation

The average point score per entry is assigned an indicative grade based on the average point score band rules set out in ANNEX B.

Average grade per A level and academic entry is reported in terms of grades A\* to E. Table B1 presents the relevant point score bands for A levels and academic qualifications.

Average grade per vocational entry is reported in terms of BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (Level 3) grades. Table B2 presents the relevant point score bands for vocational qualifications.

## 4.3 Code of Practice for Official Statistics

### 4.3.1 National Statistics Publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of statistical policies in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which are published at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-official-statistics-published-by-the-department-for-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-official-statistics-published-by-the-department-for-education)

### 4.3.2 Confidentiality

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the DfE protect confidentiality. The following suppression conventions have been used in this statistical release:

- Any numbers less than 3 (1 to 2 inclusive) have been suppressed and have been replaced by an 'x'.
- Percentages are displayed to one decimal place but where the numerator is between 1 and 2 inclusive, they have been suppressed.
- Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.
- A '.' represents data not applicable.

More information on the Code of Practice for Official Statistics is available here: [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html)

## 5. RELATED PUBLICATIONS

The DfE performance tables can be found at:

[www.education.gov.uk/performance-tables/](http://www.education.gov.uk/performance-tables/)

Earlier A level/Level 3 SFR publications are available here:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-a-as-levels-key-stage-5](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-a-as-levels-key-stage-5)

GCSE and equivalent results at key stage 4 for 2012/13 and earlier publications are available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4)

Phonics screening checks and national curriculum assessments at key stage 1 for 2012/13 and earlier publications are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-1>

The Welsh Government has published the results of external examinations taken by pupils aged 15 or 17 in 2012/13, available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>

The Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) have published AS and A level headline statistics for 2013, available at:

[www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/115-curriculum-and-assessment-qualifications-pg/a-and-as-level-headline-statistics-2013.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/115-curriculum-and-assessment-qualifications-pg/a-and-as-level-headline-statistics-2013.htm)

The publication, '*Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No. 3: 2013 Edition*', is published by the Scottish Government and is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/7503/0>

## 6. ENQUIRIES

Enquiries about the figures contained in this press release should be addressed to:

Schools Performance Data Unit  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 3BT  
Telephone Number: 0870 000 2288  
Email: [Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at:

Press Office Newsdesk,  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 3BT  
Telephone Number: 020 7783 8300

## ANNEX A

### EXAMPLE PERFORMANCE TABLES TARIFF POINTS

GCE/Applied A level		
Grade	Size	Points
A*	1	300
A	1	270
B	1	240
C	1	210
D	1	180
E	1	150

BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma (QCF)		
Grade	Size	Points
D*	1	270
D	1	225
M	1	195
P	1	165

International Baccalaureate Diploma		
Grade	Size	Points
45	5.5	1518
44	5.5	1485
43	5.5	1452
42	5.5	1419
41	5.5	1386
40	5.5	1353
39	5.5	1320
38	5.5	1287
37	5.5	1254
36	5.5	1221
35	5.5	1188
34	5.5	1155
33	5.5	1122
32	5.5	1089
31	5.5	1056
30	5.5	1023
29	5.5	990
28	5.5	957
27	5.5	924
26	5.5	891
25	5.5	858
24	5.5	825

GCE/Applied AS level		
Grade	Size	Points
A	0.5	135
B	0.5	120
C	0.5	105
D	0.5	90
E	0.5	75

BTEC Level 3 Diploma (QCF)		
Grade	Size	Points
D*D*	2	540
D*D	2	495
DD	2	450
DM	2	420
MM	2	390
MP	2	360
PP	2	330

GCE Applied Double Award		
Grade	Size	Points
A*A*	2	600
A*A	2	570
AA	2	540
AB	2	510
BB	2	480
BC	2	450
CC	2	420
CD	2	390
DD	2	360
DE	2	330
EE	2	300

BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (QCF)		
Grade	Size	Points
D*D*D*	3	810
D*D*D	3	765
D*DD	3	720
DDD	3	675
DDM	3	645
DMM	3	615
MMM	3	585
MMP	3	555
MPP	3	525
PPP	3	495

Advanced Free Standing Maths		
Grade	Size	Points
A	0.17	45
B	0.17	40
C	0.17	35
D	0.17	30
E	0.17	25

Advanced Extension Award		
Grade	Size	Points
D	0	27
M	0	23

Level 3 Key Skill		
Grade	Size	Points
P	0.3	63

## ANNEX B

### GRADING STRUCTURES USED FOR AVERAGE GRADE

**Table B1: Average grade per A level or other academic qualifications**

A level Grade	A level Point Score	APS Band	Fine Grade <sup>17</sup>
(for comparison only)			
A*	300	295-300	A*
		285-294.99	A*-
A	270	275-284.99	A+
		265-274.99	A
		255-264.99	A-
B	240	245-254.99	B+
		235-244.99	B
		225-234.99	B-
C	210	215-224.99	C+
		205-214.99	C
		195-204.99	C-
D	180	185-194.99	D+
		175-184.99	D
		165-174.99	D-
E	150	155-164.99	E+
		145-154.99	E
		135-144.99	E-
U	0	Below 135	U

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<sup>17</sup> Fine grades such as B-, B and B+ are assigned by evenly distributing the points and centring the points associated with the A level in the fine grading system e.g. A level B grade of 240 points is centred.

**Table B2: Average grade per vocational qualification**

BTEC Subsidiary Diploma Grade	BTEC Subsidiary Diploma Points	APS Band	Fine Grade <sup>18</sup>
<b>For comparison only</b>			
D*	270	260-270	D*
		245-259.99	D*-
D	225	230-244.99	D+
		220-229.99	D
		210-219.99	D-
M	195	200-209.99	M+
		190-199.99	M
		180-189.99	M-
P	165	170-179.99	P+
		160-169.99	P
		150-159.99	P-
U	0	Below 150	U

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<sup>18</sup> Fine grades for the vocational grade bands are centred around the points/grades for the BTEC Subsidiary Diploma.