

Statistical Release

November GCSE and Level 1/ Level 2 Certificates (also known as IGCSE) Entries for England: Provisional Figures October 2014

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Published:

14th November 2014

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Key points

This release presents figures on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates (commonly known as IGCSEs) submitted to exam boards ahead of the November 2014 exam series. GCSEs are available in English, English language and mathematics for re-sit students, whereas Level 1/ Level 2 certificates are available in a range of subjects.

For GCSE, the figures represent the number of entries submitted by 24th October 2014. For Level 1/ Level 2 certificates, the figures represent the number of entries submitted by 10th October 2014.

The key findings for this release are:

- The overall entry for GCSEs in England in November 2014 is down in comparison with November 2013 from 282,000 to 59,000 – a decline of 79 per cent.
- The overall number of GCSE entries from students in Year 11 and below in November 2014 has decreased by 94 per cent from 233,000 in November 2013 to 13,000.
- Post-Year 11 students form the majority of the GCSE entry for this November at 78 per cent.

The most likely explanation for the significant decrease in GCSE entries is the limited number of subjects on offer, combined with the restriction that only those students who have previously taken the qualification can enter in November.

Introduction

Ofqual regulates qualifications, exams and assessments in England, and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Under the *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009*, one of our objectives is to improve public confidence in regulated qualifications and assessments by raising awareness and understanding of the qualifications we regulate.

In this release, we present data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates in England received by exam boards ahead of the November exam series. November 2014 is a re-sit only series in GCSE English, English language and mathematics. Level 1/ Level 2 certificates are available in a range of subjects. For GCSE, the figures represent the number of entries submitted by 24th October 2014. For Level 1/ Level 2 certificates, the figures represent the number of entries submitted by 10th October 2014. The figures for entries change daily up to the day of the exams.

Key statistics

The overall number of entries for GCSEs in England in November 2014 is down in comparison with November 2013 from 282,000 to 59,000 – a decline of 79 per cent.

The notable changes to GCSE and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates entry patterns in England are as follows:

- The overall number of GCSE entries from students in Year 11 and below in November 2014 has decreased by 94 per cent from 233,000 in November 2013 to 13,000.
- The majority of the November 2014 GCSE entry is post-Year 11 students, making up 78 per cent of the entry.
- The overall number of entries for GCSE English and GCSE English language in November 2014 has decreased by 86 per cent from 147,000 in November 2013 to 20,000. This decline is greatest for Year 11 students, where entries have gone from 127,000 in November 2013 to 4,000, a drop of 97 per cent.
- The Level 1/ Level 2 certificate English language entry for November 2014 is stable at 29,000, an increase of 5 per cent from November 2013 (28,000 entries).
- The overall number of entries for GCSE mathematics in November 2014 has declined by 71 per cent from 135,000 in November 2013 to 39,000. The decrease is greatest for Year 11 students, where entries have gone from 104,000 in November 2013 to 8,000, a drop of 92 per cent.

The most likely explanation for the significant decrease in GCSE entries is limitations on the number of subjects and restrictions on entry. In November 2014, GCSEs are offered only for those students resitting English, English language and mathematics. This is different from November 2013 where students could enter GCSEs for the first time.

The re-sit only rule in November does not apply to Level 1/ Level 2 certificates, so students may still enter for a Level 1/ Level 2 certificate for the first time in November.

The sharp decrease in the GCSE entry from students in Year 11 and below for this November is also likely to be a knock-on effect from the Department for Education announcement in September 2013 which stated that only a student's first result would count in school performance tables.¹ It was noted in summer 2014 that there

¹ www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-early-entry-at-gcse

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England: Provisional Figures October 2014*

were far fewer early entries (from students in Year 10 and below) which will have had an impact on the numbers of students eligible to re-sit in November 2014.

Glossary of terms

GCSEs

General Certificates of Secondary Education are the main school-leaving qualification in England. They are available in a range of subjects and can be studied alongside other qualifications. They are generally sat by 15–18 year olds in schools and colleges but are open to anyone who wants to gain a qualification.

Level 1/ Level 2 certificates

Also known as International General Certificates of Secondary Education (IGCSEs) are taken by students as alternatives to GCSEs. A number of these qualifications count towards school performance measures.

Linear

Linear qualifications are where students must take all of the units together in one exam series.

Modular

Modular qualifications are broken down into units which are tested individually throughout a course. They are also known as unitised qualifications.

Year 10

Students who are 15 by the end of the academic year.

Year 11

Students who are 16 by the end of the academic year.

Background notes

This document is in line with Ofqual Statistics Policies:

www.ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/statistics/policies-statistics and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk.

Data source

The exam boards that provide GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates have submitted information to us about the number of entries for each qualification available in November 2014. The entries are for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of the age of the student and the type of school or college. This release shows the number of entries broken down by awarding organisation, subject, country and age of students based on school year groups (Year 11 is the academic year where students become 16 years old).

Limitations of data

There is potential for error in the information provided by exam boards, therefore Ofqual cannot guarantee that the information received is correct. Ofqual compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues. Quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publication and the Data Audit Framework (www.ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/statistics/policies-statistics), to ensure the accuracy of the data and challenge or question it, where necessary. Ofqual continuously manages this process by:

- ensuring that data providers are clear about what is required of them; a process helped by ensuring that providers are fully consulted during the initial design and any subsequent change phases;
- reminding all providers (if appropriate) that, as a condition of them being regulated, all data must be completely accurate;
- being alert to unexpected changes in the data submitted by comparing individual returns over time from the same provider;
- actively challenging any unexpected results with the data providers;
- having a proportionate data-auditing framework in place, allowing for auditing of providers' information collection, collation and delivery processes as necessary, using a wide range of tools from questionnaires to on-site process audits.

The publication may be deferred if the statistics are not considered fit for purpose.

Data have been collected at an appropriate point when they are reasonably complete. For GCSE, this was 24th October 2014 and for Level 1/ Level 2 certificates, 10th October 2014. However, schools can continue to make late entries right up to the day of the exam, so the total entry numbers will change almost on a daily basis. We agreed these dates with the exam boards as the date when the majority of entries would have been submitted.

Entry data for 2012 and 2013 were collected as at 18th October and also as at 7th November. The data for 2012 and 2013 in this release represent the entries as at 7th November. Data were collected at this late stage as it became apparent that entry numbers were falling sharply. This was due to the Department for Education announcement in September 2013 that only a student's first result would count in school performance tables and we wanted to capture the extent of the change in entry. Although comparisons in this report are not strictly like-for-like based on the exact cut off dates, they should be reasonable as the data represent entries at a late stage in each case (after the close of late entries).

Geographical coverage

In this release Ofqual presents data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates for the November 2014 exam series in England. In Tables 2 and 3, we publish entry figures for Wales and Northern Ireland for comparison. However, this release does **not** include GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates taken everywhere, including outside the UK.

Revisions

Once published, data on the number of requests are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or correct an error.

In some cases, data may be amended to reflect the new categorisation:
www.ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/statistics/policies-statistics.

Completeness of the data

Exam boards send us entry data for all regulated qualifications classified as GCSEs and Level 1/ Level 2 certificates. We contact any exam board that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period, to make sure the data are as complete as possible. For this release, we received data from all the exam boards that were in a position to award qualifications.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality of the published accompanying data, all figures are rounded.

Rounding

In accordance with Ofqual's Rounding Policy,² all figures for the number of certificates issued are rounded. In the commentary, they are rounded to the nearest 1,000 to aid understanding. In the tables, they are rounded to the nearest 10. This is to ensure that the data does not reveal an individual candidate. All percentages within the commentary are based on figures from the tables.

Users of these statistics

These statistics are of particular interest to Ofqual, recognised exam boards and the Department for Education. Ofqual uses these statistics to inform understanding of entry patterns on awarding outcomes. Exam boards use these statistics to help create predictions for exam outcomes.

Related statistics and publications

A number of other statistical releases and publications relate to this one, including:

- The statistical publication on *Summer GCSE and IGCSE entries for England: April 2014*.³
- The statistical publication on *Entries and Late Entries for GCSE and A Level: 2013/14 Academic Year*.⁴
- *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2013*,⁵ published by the Department for Education.
- *Annual Qualifications Market Report 2013*.⁶

Useful information

A glossary of terms is available on page 4 to help you interpret this release.

You can find our publication schedule for the next releases on the Ofqual website.⁷

² www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/rounding-policy

³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/summer-gcse-igcse-entries-england

⁴ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/entries-and-late-entries-for-gcse-and-a-level

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2013

⁶ www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-09-13-annual-qualifications-market-report-2013-main-report.pdf

Ofqual's Statistical Publications Glossary is available on the Ofqual website.⁸

The Ofqual Register gives information on regulated qualifications and recognised awarding organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.⁹

User feedback

Ofqual is running a rolling series of online surveys to make sure its statistical releases meet your needs.

Ofqual would like to invite you to take part in the online survey for this release.

<http://surveys.ofqual.gov.uk/s3/gcse-and-level-1-level-2-certificate-entries-in-england-november-2014>

It will take about 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain entirely confidential in any reports published about the survey.

If you would like to take part in the survey, have any questions, or would prefer a paper or large-type copy, please contact us at: statistics@ofqual.gov.uk.

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www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&organisations%5B%5D=office-of-qualifications-and-examinations-regulation

⁸ www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2010-11-26-statistics-glossary.pdf

⁹ <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>

Appendix

<u>Table 1</u>	November GCSE entries for England, as at 24th October, 2014
<u>Table 2</u>	November GCSE entries for Northern Ireland, as at 24th October 2014
<u>Table 3</u>	November GCSE entries for Wales, as at 24th October 2014
<u>Table 4</u>	November Level 1/ Level 2 certificates entries for England, as at 10th October 2014

Table 1: November GCSE entries for England, as at 24th October, 2014

GCSE Subject	2014								2013							
	Total entry	% change (from 2013)	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Post year 11		Total entry	% change (from 2012)	Year 10 and earlier		Year 11		Post year 11	
			No. entries	% change (from 2013)	No. entries	% change (from 2013)	No. entries	% change (from 2013)			No. entries	% change (from 2012)	No. entries	% change (from 2012)	No. entries	% change (from 2012)
Mathematics	37,370	- 71.0	790	- 26.9	6,900	- 93.0	29,680	0.5	128,930	- 42.07	1,080	- 88.3	98,330	- 48.5	29,520	31.7
Linked pair mathematics	1,480	- 75.7	50	- 75.0	1,080	- 81.2	350	118.8	6,090	212.31	200	233.3	5,730	206.4	160	700.0
English	6,750	- 78.7	40	- 84.6	1,020	- 95.7	5,690	- 27.5	31,700	99.87	260	52.9	23,590	491.2	7,850	- 32.9
English language	13,300	- 88.5	40	- 84.0	2,930	- 97.2	10,330	- 14.0	115,550	297.49	250	78.6	103,290	1,030.1	12,010	- 39.3
Total	58,900	- 79.1	920	- 48.6	11,930	- 94.8	46,050	- 7.1	282,270	4.75	1,790	- 81.4	230,940	12.2	49,540	- 8.1

Table 2: November GCSE entries for Northern Ireland, as at 24th October, 2014

GCSE Subject	November 2014 entry		November 2013 entry		November 2012 entry
	Total entry	% change (from 2013)	Total entry	% change (from 2012)	Total entry
Mathematics	1,330	- 50.9	2,710	73.72	1,560
Linked pair mathematics	-		-		-
English	410	- 25.5	550	- 35.29	850
English language	170	88.9	90	800.00	10
Total	1,910	- 43.0	3,350	38.43	2,420

Table 3: November GCSE entries for Wales, as at 24th October, 2014

GCSE Subject	November 2014 entry		November 2013 entry		November 2012 entry
	Total entry	% change (from 2013)	Total entry	% change (from 2012)	Total entry
Mathematics	19,700	8.4	18,180	65.6	10,980
Linked pair mathematics	-		-		-
English	-		-		-
English language	-	100.0	3,460	172.4	1,270
Total	19,700	9.0	21,640	76.7	12,250

Table 4: November Level 1/ Level 2 certificate entries for England as at 10th October, 2014

Level 1/Level 2 Subject	November 2014 Total entry	November 2013 Total entry	% change November 2013 to November 2014
Art and design	10	10	0.0
Biology	60	110	-45.5
Business studies	50	40	25.0
Chemistry	50	50	0.0
English as a second language	580	90	544.4
Enterprise	0~	0	
English language	29,130	27,770	4.9
French	0~	10	
Geography	30	40	-25.0
History	30	10	200.0
ICT	30	30	0.0
English literature	610	240	154.2
Mathematics (no coursework)	560	230	143.5
Physics	50	30	66.7
Spanish	10	10	0.0
Total	31,200	28,670	8.8

¹⁰ Entries of less than 5 candidates have been rounded to zero and are represented by this symbol 0~

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Published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in 2014

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