

Pupils celebrate GCSE results

Over half a million pupils are celebrating their GCSE results today (Thursday 12 August), with overall grades slightly up on last year.

Results show 79.1% of entries received a grade 4 or above – equivalent to a pass – increasing 0.3 percentage points (ppt) on last year. Similarly, 80.9% of pupils achieved 4 or above in English and 77.9 in maths, increasing by 0.7 and 0.8 ppt respectively, enabling them to move on to the next stage of education or training despite the disruption of the pandemic.

This year's GCSE grades were determined by those who know students best – their teachers – with students only assessed on what they had been taught, under plans to ensure fairness for young people.

The figures show 7.7% of entries are at grade 9, 30.0% at grade 7 or above – showing small increases of 1.1 percentage ppt and 2.4 ppts on 2020 respectively.

Ofqual reported earlier this week that the arrangements have also helped limit the widening of historic gaps between groups of students and types of school.

Students receiving results will have the opportunity to move on to a range of high-quality post-16 options, from A levels to vocational and technical qualifications. This is the second year that young people can move on to study T Levels, with seven new subject choices available from September, including Healthcare, Science and Onsite Construction.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Young people have worked hard despite the challenges of the last year and they should feel incredibly proud of their achievements today.

“Every young person can now look forward with excitement to taking their next steps, whether that is studying A levels or our new T Levels or taking one of the many other routes available, like an apprenticeship.

I also want to pay a special tribute to teachers and school leaders, who have gone above and beyond to support their students this year.

Statistics published today show:

- Comparison of grades between this year and last year showed broad stability in the historic differences between groups of students.
- 79.1% of entries receive a grade 4 or above, compared to 78.8% in 2020.

- Secondary selective schools had the highest proportion of grades above 7 (68.4%), followed by independent schools (61.2%). There was also a relative increase of 8.6% since 2020 in the proportion of grades at 7 and above in academies, compared with a 7.1% increase in independent schools.
- In real terms, this means there are 1.10 times more grades at 7 and above in academies, compared to 1.08 times more grades at 7 and above in independent schools, in 2021 compared to 2020.
- Small increases in maths and English GCSE at grade 4 and above, with pass rates now 77.9% and 80.9% respectively, with increases of 0.7 and 0.8 ppt.
- Entries into EBacc subjects rose by 2.4% overall with 78.4% of results at grade 4 and above.
- Over 520,000 certificates for vocational and technical qualifications at level 1/2 and level 2 have been issued.

This summer's GCSE grades were subject to quality assurance, with all grades being checked by schools or colleges – and one in five having a sample of their grades checked by exam boards – helping to give students, parents, colleges, universities and employers confidence in grades.

Today's GCSE and vocational and technical qualifications results follow [results for AS, A level and vocational technical qualifications](#) on Tuesday, which enabled more than 190,000 18-year-olds in England to take up their first choice university place.

Students receiving their results today can get advice about their next steps from the [National Careers Service](#). A wide range of post-16 options are available to this cohort, from the Government's new pioneering T levels which started last year to hundreds of high-quality apprenticeships and vocational qualifications.

The Government intends for GCSE and A level exams to go ahead next summer, and together with Ofqual recently ran a consultation on arrangements for the assessments to recognise the disruption to students' education during the pandemic. The proposals include choices about the topics students will be assessed on for some subjects, and giving schools and colleges advance information about the focus of content of the exams for other subjects.

The Government has committed to an ambitious, and long-term education recovery plan, including an investment to date of over £3bn and a significant expansion of our tutoring programme to support children and young people to make up for learning lost during the pandemic.