

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.

[Business growth scheme open to next](#)

group of space entrepreneurs

A pioneering programme to help firms find their place in space has given a total of 31 businesses a £900,000 boost and created new jobs – and the search is now on to find the next group of entrepreneurs.

Twenty businesses will be supported on the next phase of the Leo Programme, a free six-month accelerator run by the UK Space Agency and powered by Entrepreneurial Spark, where they will get access to tailored, specialist online and in-person support from space industry and business growth experts.

The programme is open to businesses already in the space sector and those already exploring the possibilities presented by the industry. Firms working in a linked industry looking for a route into the space sector can also apply.

Portia Bircher, local growth manager at the UK Space Agency, said:

After a challenging time for every business, it's time to look forward. And as one of the UK's fastest growing sectors, trebling in size since 2010 and now generating some £16 billion annually, space is the place to be.

Whether your specialism is design, engineering, research, logistics or communications, space offers opportunities for businesses in every part of the UK.

With the private sector playing an increasingly crucial role growing the industry, we are committed to providing world-class advice and support for UK firms of all sizes who want to join us in exploring this new and lucrative frontier.

The experts involved in the scheme will help businesses look at their commercial goals and work with them to come up with a clear 90-day plan for the next steps.

Workshops will cover topics including business growth tools and how to change your mindset to adapt faster, take risks and improve as a leader. There will also be one-to-one access to leadership groups and industry specialists and the chance to join a thriving, supportive network of like-minded businesses.

Businesses who took part in the shorter, 10-week pilot project earlier this year said they found it insightful, inspirational and useful. Eight new jobs were created as a result of joining the scheme and the firms which took part raised £900,000 through equity funding and grants during the programme.

Thirteen secured new partnerships or substantial customers and 13 entrepreneurs who were introduced to the space sector through the programme have said they will remain there.

As well as those directly involved in space, businesses taking part came from sectors including mechanical engineering, textile manufacturing, cosmetics, bio-plastics and finance as well as university spin-outs working on technological developments based on research.

[Charity Commission announces statutory inquiry into the Olive Grove Foundation](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into the Olive Grove Foundation over concerns about the charity's governance and financial management.



The charity, which is headquartered in Bradford, West Yorkshire, has purposes to help people affected by poverty, wars or natural disasters anywhere in the world.

The regulator had previously engaged with the charity over concerns about its expenditure in high-risk areas of the world. In October 2019, the Commission provided formal regulatory advice, including requiring that the charity introduce strong financial audit systems, to ensure the trustees could better monitor how the charity's funds were being spent. After conducting a follow-up case to monitor compliance with these requirements, the Commission concluded that it was not satisfied the trustees had acted on previous advice and that serious regulatory concerns remained.

The concerns include, but are not limited to, poor governance, poor monitoring of charitable funds and the use of a personal bank account to transfer money overseas.

The inquiry will examine:

- The administration, governance, and management of the charity by the trustees
- The charity's financial controls, including the transfer of charitable funds to personal bank accounts
- The charity's activities and overseas partnerships
- Whether the trustees have fulfilled their duties and responsibilities as trustees under charity law
- Whether there has been misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity

In addition to opening the inquiry, the regulator has also exercised its legal powers to restrict the transactions the charity's trustees can enter into without the prior written consent of the regulator. This includes transferring funds overseas and withdrawing charitable funds in cash.

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional regulatory issues emerge.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries are available on GOV.UK.](#)

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Notes to Editors:

- The inquiry has been opened in line with Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011.
- The power to restrict what transactions the trustees can enter into was made under section 76(3)(f) of the Charities Act 2011.
- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

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UK's Chevening Scholarships awarded to 41 Malaysians

This includes one Malaysian who received a Chevening Fellowship to complete a short course at the Oxford Centre of Islamic Students.

The Chevening award is the UK Government's global scholarship programme,

funded and administered by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. This is complemented by generous sponsorships by Malaysian corporate partners including CIMB Group Holdings Berhad, Yayasan Khazanah and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation. British universities are also providing additional funding in support of the Chevening programme.

His Excellency Charles Hay MVO, British High Commissioner to Malaysia, hosted a virtual pre-departure session for the scholars today. He said:

A British education is undeniably world class and is very much sought after. I am pleased to see that the global pandemic did not stop 41 of Malaysia's brightest from their quest for academic excellence, as well as the valuable experience and exposure that comes with studying in the UK.

He assured the Chevening scholars and all Malaysian students planning to further their studies in the UK:

Universities are prepared to deliver high-quality teaching, in line with the government's guidance to ensure that all students are safe and supported. Many UK universities will adopt a 'hybrid approach' to teaching, with many classes taught in person but with some elements remaining online.

The High Commissioner also said that the new Chevening application cycle is now open. Malaysians who wish to get a scholarship to pursue a post-graduate degree in the UK should apply before the deadline on 3 November 2021. More information is available on the [Chevening website](#).

The current batch of scholars will be heading to the UK as early as September this year to pursue a wide range of postgraduate programmes at top UK universities, including subjects such as climate change, law, human rights, public policy, and public health.

Scholar Muaz Bin Mohd Hasnol who will be attending Imperial College London to study MSc Climate Change, Management & Finance said:

I am thrilled to be selected as a Chevening scholar as it allows me to be part of a global network dedicated to bringing impactful changes. The interdisciplinary nature of the course I chose will allow me to develop an in-depth understanding of the science, policies, climate finance and technologies required by businesses to combat climate change. Thanks to Chevening, I will have access to world class education at the Imperial College, taught by renowned climate scientists such as Dr Joeri Rogelj, the lead author of the IPCC 1.5C report! Moreover, I am excited to be in the UK at when the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 takes place in Glasgow, a summit I hope to attend and be a part of. With

the unique networking and learning opportunities available, it will no doubt add to my unique and exciting Chevening experience.

Sarawakian scholar Elizabeth Kay Nyigor said:

I am pursuing a Masters in Law in Technology, Media and Telecommunications at Queen Mary University of London because it'll help me better understand how laws, regulations and policies affect this rapidly evolving industry. I am a strong believer in the powerful impact technology and communications has on a country's progress. I am very grateful to have been awarded the prestigious Chevening scholarship which I am certain will unlock many doors. I pledge to encourage more young Malaysians to apply, especially young women from my home state of Sarawak because there are many potential leaders who will benefit from the Chevening platform.

Scholar Siva Nagappan Visvesvaran who will be attending the University of Cambridge to study MPhil in Engineering for Sustainable Development said:

It has always been a lifelong dream of mine to study at Cambridge University. The Chevening Scholarship has not only given me this opportunity to study at one of the prestigious university in the world, but it has connected me with professionals and academicians who were previous Cheveners. I hope that I can make use of the knowledge and experience to collaborate with people to come up with meaningful projects and initiatives to help Malaysians live sustainable lives.

Sabahan scholar Rebecca Marie Tanduba who will be attending Cardiff University to study MA Architectural Design said:

Being selected as a Chevening scholar still feels surreal to me, but I am so grateful to be given this opportunity to grow professionally. The added bonus of the scholarship's platform and broad community will doubtlessly make my academic journey all the more enriching. I look forward to endeavouring in the opportunities present in the UK that I can bring back to my home and support my ambition for a better urban landscape.

Malaysia is the second largest recipient of Chevening awards in ASEAN and there are already over 1,700 members of the Chevening alumni in Malaysia.

Facebook's takeover of Giphy raises competition concerns

The merger brings together Facebook, the largest provider of social media sites and display advertising in the UK, with Giphy, the largest provider of GIFs.

If the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) competition concerns are ultimately confirmed, it could require Facebook to unwind the deal and sell off Giphy in its entirety.

Impact on social media platforms

Following an in-depth investigation, the CMA has provisionally found that Facebook's takeover of Giphy will negatively impact competition between social media platforms.

Millions of posts every day on social media sites now include a GIF. Any reduction in the choice or quality of these GIFs could significantly affect how people use these sites and whether or not they switch to a different platform, such as Facebook. As most major social media sites that compete with Facebook use Giphy GIFs, and there is only one other large provider of GIFs – Google's Tenor – these platforms have very little choice.

The CMA provisionally found that Facebook's ownership of Giphy could lead it to deny other platforms access to its GIFs. Alternatively, it could change the terms of this access – for example, Facebook could require Giphy customers, such as TikTok, Twitter and Snapchat, to provide more user data in order to access Giphy GIFs. Such actions could increase Facebook's market power, which is already significant. The CMA's analysis suggests that Facebook's platforms – Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram – account for over 70% of the time people spend on social media and are accessed at least once a month by 80% of all internet users.

Impact on digital 'display' advertising

Before the merger, Giphy was offering innovative paid advertising in the US, which had the potential to compete with Facebook's own display advertising services. This allowed companies – including customers such as Dunkin' Donuts and Pepsi – to promote their brands through visual images and GIFs.

The CMA found that, prior to the deal, Giphy was considering expanding its advertising services to other countries, including the UK. This would have brought a new player into the advertising market and a potential challenger to Facebook. It would also have encouraged greater innovation from others in the market, including social media sites and advertisers. However, Facebook terminated Giphy's paid advertising partnerships following the deal, meaning an important source of potential competition has been lost.

This is particularly concerning given Facebook's existing market power in display advertising – as part of its assessment, the CMA found that [Facebook had a share of around 50% of the £5.5 billion display advertising market](#) in the UK.

Stuart McIntosh, chair of the independent inquiry group carrying out the phase 2 investigation, said:

Millions of people share GIFs every day with friends, family and colleagues, and this number continues to grow. Giphy's takeover could see Facebook withdrawing GIFs from competing platforms or requiring more user data in order to access them. It also removes a potential challenger to Facebook in the £5.5 billion display advertising market. None of this would be good news for customers.

While our investigation has shown serious competition concerns, these are provisional. We will now consult on our findings before completing our review. Should we conclude that the merger is detrimental to the market and social media users, we will take the necessary actions to make sure people are protected.

As well as being investigated by the CMA, the merger is also being reviewed by other competition authorities. The CMA has engaged with these agencies – and continues to do so – to help progress its investigation.

The CMA now welcomes responses from interested parties to its provisional findings by 2 September 2021 and its notice of possible remedies by 25 August 2021. These will be considered ahead of the CMA issuing its final report, which is due by 6 October 2021.

Further details are available on the [Facebook, Inc / Giphy, Inc inquiry page](#).

For media queries, please contact the press office on press@cma.gov.uk or on 020 3738 6460.