

Hundreds of thousands of students receive GCSE and vocational results

Hundreds of thousands of students receive GCSE and vocational results today (25 August). It is the first time in three years that students have sat summer GCSE examinations as the country returns to normality post-Covid.

Students collecting results today will progress to one of a number of high-quality options including A levels, T Levels or an apprenticeship. From September there will be 16 [T Levels](#) available for young people to study, in subjects including digital, health, accounting, engineering and construction, offered at over 175 schools and colleges across England.

Just over three-quarters (75.3%) of GCSE grades for 16-year-olds in England are at grade 4 or above, up from 69.9% in 2019 when formal exams last took place and down from 79.1% in 2021, in line with the policy intent set out last year.

Top grades for 16 year olds in England have also increased on 2019 as intended, with 27% of entries achieving a grade 7 and above, up by 5.2 percentage points compared to 2019, and 3 percentage points lower than 2021.

In line with the plans announced last autumn, and as part of the transition back to pre-pandemic grading levels, overall grades today are higher than in 2019 – recognising the unprecedented disruption students have faced – but lower than in 2021 when exceptional steps were taken to ensure progression.

Students were supported with a range of adaptations this year including advance information on the content of some exams, formula sheets and content optionality for GCSE students while some students doing vocational and technical qualifications were given longer assessment windows.

This is alongside continued support from our National Tutoring Programme, through which the government is offering up to 6 million tutoring courses over the lifetime of the programme. So far over 2 million courses have started. In AY22/23, government will provide £349 million direct to schools to subsidise the cost of tutoring.

In recognition of the greater gaps in older pupils' learning and the lower amount of time those pupils have left in education, the government is investing over £800m to increase time in schools and colleges at 16-19 around 40 hours a year from September for all students.

The additional funding schools receive to support pupils' recovery will also nearly double for secondary schools from September 2022, with a typical secondary school set to receive £60,000 for evidence-based activities such as extra support with English and maths, attendance initiatives and summer schools, as part of the £1 billion recovery premium.

Education Secretary James Cleverly said:

Students receiving their results today should be extremely proud, and I want to congratulate them all. The teaching profession has worked incredibly hard and these results are a testament to the resilience of both our students and staff.

We have the most exciting range of post-16 options for students to choose from now, whether that's one of our exciting new T Levels, an apprenticeship or A levels. There is an option for everyone.

I wish students the very best of luck, no matter what those next steps are.

Statistics published today also show:

- Entries at grade 4 or above for 16-year-olds in England were 77.2% for GCSE English and 75.1% for GCSE maths
- Attainment gap between boys and girls narrowed compared to 2021 at the top grades
- The proportion of geography and history entries are up by 10.1% and 5.7% respectively compared to 2019, bringing entries into EBacc subjects to nearly 4 million
- The proportion of grades at 7 and above in independent schools in England has dropped by 8.3 percentage points on 2021, compared to 2.4 percentage points in academies, narrowing the gap between the two groups at this grade
- 369,220 certificates across 141 qualifications have been awarded since March 2022, 96% of which are Technical Awards taken alongside GCSEs.

There are a wide range of [apprenticeship opportunities](#) available to young people, offering them the chance to earn while they learn and gain the skills needed to secure exciting careers in anything from space engineering, teaching, cyber security, nursing, social care or film and TV.

The government is investing nearly £5 billion to support students' recovery from the impact of the pandemic, including £1.5 billion for tutoring programmes.

Separate funding is also being targeted at the areas of the country where outcomes are weakest through the Government's 55 Education Investment Areas, including investment to attract and retain the best teachers through bursaries and funding to increase the number of schools that can benefit from the support of a strong trust.

[Guide to GCSE results for England,](#)

summer 2022

Students sitting GCSE exams and formal assessments this summer have shown incredible resilience, and today we celebrate their success. To recognise the disruption that they have experienced, due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Ofqual made arrangements with the Department for Education and exam boards to put in place an [unprecedented package of support](#) for students.

This support included some changes to coursework to reflect public health restrictions in place at the time students were doing their assessments, a choice of content in some subjects, and formulae and equation sheets were provided in maths and science. Exam boards also published advance information in February which gave information about some of the topics that would be in the exams. This was intended to help students to focus their revision and make the exams feel less daunting.

For all subjects, there has been lenient grading, reflecting a staging post between 2021 and 2019 grades.

Dr Jo Saxton, Chief Regulator, said:

Students collecting GCSE results today can be so proud of their achievements – a testament to their hard work and resilience over the past 2 years. I know, from visiting schools and colleges across England since September, that students and teachers welcome the return of exams and formal assessments. Students told me that they wanted the chance to prove themselves in this tried and tested way.

As with A level results, today's GCSE results are higher overall than those of 2019, and – as we have always said – lower than in 2021, when there was a different method of assessment. It makes sense to compare this year's results with those of 2019 when exams were last sat. I felt strongly that it would not have been right to go straight back to pre-pandemic grading in one go but accept that we do need to continue to take steps back to normality. These results overall, coming as they do broadly midway between 2021 and 2019, represent a staging post on that journey.

Key points

1. This is the first summer exam series since 2019. Today's results should not be compared to 2020 or 2021, because of the different methods of assessment.
2. Overall GCSE results are higher than in 2019. Outcomes at grade 7 and above are 26.0% compared with 20.6% in 2019, and outcomes at grade 4 and

above are 73.0% compared with 67.0% in 2019.

3. The results for GCSE French and German reflect [the adjustments we required exam boards to make](#), following our [announcement that we would aim to better align grade standards with Spanish](#)

Today (25 August 2022) we are publishing:

As in a typical year, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has [published results in England for GCSE](#), overall and by subject. These results are also shown in our [interactive visualisation](#).

Centre type results

Ofqual has updated its [interactive visualisation](#) to show GCSE results for different types of school and college compared to previous years, overall and by subject. The centre type categories are based on the [national centre number \(NCN\) register](#) and are self-reported by centres.

Overall results for all types of schools and colleges are higher than in 2019 at grade 7 and above. The extent to which outcomes have changed relative to 2019 is likely, in part, to reflect longstanding differences in the pattern of results for different centre types. This summer results will also reflect any differential impact of the pandemic.

Cumulative percentage outcomes by centre type – grade 7 and above

| Centre type | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| Academies | 20.7 | 28.0 | 25.6 |
| Free schools | 20.6 | 29.2 | 25.5 |
| FE establishment | 1.0 | 2.2 | 1.5 |
| Independent | 47.0 | 61.2 | 53.0 |
| Other | 7.2 | 12.7 | 10.3 |
| Secondary comprehensive | 18.5 | 26.0 | 23.3 |
| Secondary modern | 13.6 | 20.0 | 16.7 |
| Secondary selective | 58.1 | 68.5 | 66.2 |
| Sixth form college | 1.4 | 3.3 | 2.4 |
| Tertiary college | 1.9 | 3.5 | 2.9 |

At grade 4 and above results for different types of school and college vary relative to 2019. This is likely to reflect the changing cohort in some types of centre. For example, there is a much smaller post-16 cohort this summer, and these learners typically make up the majority of the entries in further education establishments and colleges.

Cumulative percentage outcomes by centre type – grade 4 and above

| Centre type | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------|------|------|------|
|-------------|------|------|------|

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| Academies | 69.2 | 78.2 | 74.5 |
| Free schools | 69.2 | 78.7 | 73.9 |
| FE establishment | 24.0 | 37.9 | 23.4 |
| Independent | 90.1 | 95.5 | 92.5 |
| Other | 37.3 | 54.2 | 43.2 |
| Secondary comprehensive | 67.6 | 77.3 | 73.3 |
| Secondary modern | 61.7 | 71.6 | 67.5 |
| Secondary selective | 96.9 | 98.8 | 97.9 |
| Sixth form college | 31.2 | 47.6 | 27.4 |
| Tertiary college | 27.0 | 42.1 | 25.4 |

Centre variability

Ofqual's [interactive visualisation](#) shows the level of variation in schools' and colleges' GCSE results compared to 2019. We know that, in any year, individual schools and colleges may see variation in the proportion of students achieving particular grades compared to previous years. This can be due to many different factors, including differences in the mix of students entered for particular qualifications, different teaching approaches, changes in teaching staff or teaching time, and changes to qualifications. This year, the approach to grading is also more lenient than pre-pandemic.

In general, there is slightly more variation in centres' results. This is not surprising, given that comparisons are being made over a longer time period (3 years). Our interactive visualisation allows users to explore variation in centres' results for different age groups and sizes of centres.

Equalities analyses

Now that results have been issued, Ofqual will be repeating the equalities analyses we published in 2020 and 2021. It was not possible for us to complete this analysis ahead of results being issued, because final data from exams is only available very close to results days. We will publish this as soon as we can, in the autumn.

In 2020 and 2021, this analysis considered whether the gaps between the results for different groups of students, which are observed in years when exams go ahead, had changed. This summer the same assessment arrangements have applied to all students. Any changes in the differences in outcomes for students with different protected characteristics are likely due to other factors, such as the impact of the pandemic.

Grade boundaries

Exam boards have set grade boundaries this summer based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence. As in previous years when exams took place, there has been an important role for examiner judgement in reviewing the quality of students' work.

In general, grade boundaries are lower this summer than in 2019. This is not surprising given the lenient approach to grading. Not all grade boundaries are lower than 2019 though, since the position of the boundaries also reflects the difficulty of the assessment. The assessment arrangements in a number of GCSE subjects were also different this summer – for example, there was a choice of content in some subjects. For these specifications, direct comparisons between grade boundaries this summer and in 2019 cannot be made.

GCSE French and German

In 2019 we announced that we would seek [to align grade standards in GCSE French and German with Spanish](#), following the conclusion of our inter-subject comparability work. This summer we required exam boards to make an upward adjustment in both French and German at grades 9, 7 and 4. This was taken into account during awarding and is reflected in the outcomes. We will review this and consider whether any further adjustments are required in future series.

[Guide to the 2022 Level 1, Level 1/2 and Level 2 qualification results for VTQs in England](#)

This year has seen a return to all exams and formal assessments across vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs). Over 360,000 certificates have been awarded across over 140 Level 1, Level 1/2 and Level 2 performance table qualifications (PTQs) since March 2022.

Technical Awards, such as BTEC Tech Awards and Cambridge Nationals, are Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications that equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills not usually acquired through general education. They are typically taken alongside other general qualifications such as GCSEs.

Technical Certificates are Level 2 qualifications which equip post-16 students with the knowledge and skills they need for skilled employment or for further technical study.

Technical Awards and Technical Certificates are PTQs which are approved for reporting in the DfE's performance tables.

Students, and all who have supported them, have demonstrated incredible resilience and commitment to learning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Ofqual asked awarding organisations (AOs) to consider how they could adapt their assessments to mitigate the effects of pandemic-related

disruption. More [information about these adaptations is available in our blog](#). The adaptations supported students to complete their assessments and freed up crucial time for teaching and learning.

The diversity of vocational qualifications meant that it was not possible to prescribe a single approach to adaptations, so AOs had flexibility to choose how to adapt their assessments. The adaptations included, for example, reduction in the number of assessments, and using alternative forms of assessment evidence.

Dr Jo Saxton, Chief Regulator, said:

Today's results are a testament to students' hard work and resilience. Since September I have visited dozens of colleges and schools up and down the country and the overwhelming message from students and college staff was that they wanted exams and formal assessments to take place. Students, in particular, told me they wanted a chance to prove themselves.

Students in 2022 can be so proud of what they have achieved. These students have acquired applied knowledge and practical skills during their course of study, which will help them progress into further education, an apprenticeship or skilled employment. I wish them all well in their next steps.

Vocational qualifications are often modular, and assessment typically happens throughout the course of study, which may span 1, 2 or more years. This means that in 2021 to 2022, final grades for VTQs taken in schools and colleges are based on student outcomes from a range of sources, including one or more of:

- results from exams or formal assessments, some of which may have been adapted by the AO
- results based on teacher assessed grades that were awarded in summer 2021
- results based on centre assessed grades from summer 2020

The combination of assessment methods means that it is not possible to compare results directly with previous years. The results this year represent a staging post towards normal assessment and grading. We have asked AOs to award overall grades that are right for this year, taking account of the expectations set for grading GCSEs.

Results this year have only been possible due to the hard work of everyone involved, not least students themselves. Together, they have done everything possible to help students achieve their qualifications and progress in their education or career.

2022 results

Today (25 August 2022) we are publishing:

Key points

Over 360,000 certificates across over 140 Level 1, Level 1/2 and Level 2 qualifications awarded since March 2022, 96% of which are Technical Awards.

While GCSE results are issued on a fixed day (25 August), there isn't a single results day for most vocational and technical qualifications, although awarding organisations tend to release results on or before GCSE results day.

The 3 Subject or Sector Areas with the most certificates issued against them are:

1. Leisure, Travel and Tourism: 86,485.
2. Arts, Media and Publishing: 86,440.
3. Health, Public Services and Care: 60,220.

We will publish equalities analyses in the autumn for PTQs. Our analysis will consider whether the gaps between the results of different groups of students, which are observed in normal years, have changed. It was not possible for us to complete this analysis ahead of results being issued as we did last year, because final data from exams is only available very close to results days.

Infographics

[Animal medicine seizure notice: Products shipped from the USA stopped at Belfast Depot](#)

News story

Details of seizure notice served following a parcel addressed to premises in County Down was stopped at a Belfast depot.



The following veterinary medicine was identified by a courier company based at a Belfast depot. The product was then detained and subsequently seized by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

This parcel was addressed to residential premises in County Down and was shipped from the USA. The parcel contained:

- 100 x Wormal Phenothiazine Dibutyltin Dialurate Piperazine dewormer tablets

This product was intended for use in poultry and is not an authorised veterinary medicine in GB or NI.

The medicine was seized under Regulation 25 (Importation of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

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[CMA unwinds Veolia / Suez merger in the UK](#)

The CMA has today required Veolia to sell 3 businesses after an in-depth merger investigation concluded the merger gives rise to competition concerns in a number of markets.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has concluded that Veolia must sell substantial parts of the merged business:

- Suez's UK waste management services businesses;
- Suez's UK industrial water operation and maintenance services business; and

- Veolia's European mobile water services business.

These businesses make up almost all of the overlap between Veolia's and Suez's competing operations in the UK.

In response to the provisional findings of the Phase 2 inquiry, Veolia said that it would sell the UK Suez waste business. The CMA will determine the conditions of the sale, as well as the sales of the 2 water services businesses.

The CMA will need to approve the purchasers of each business before the completion of each sale.

Veolia and Suez are both global players in waste and water management. In 2020, the companies generated approximately £2bn and £1bn in the UK respectively – roughly 10% and 7% of their annual global revenues.

Veolia and Suez are active across the full waste management supply chain. They collect waste from households and businesses, sort it for recycling and composting and dispose of the remaining waste – some of which is incinerated to produce electricity. Many local authorities in the UK rely heavily on either Veolia or Suez to meet their waste management needs. The companies also supply water and wastewater management services to industrial customers.

Throughout the investigation, the CMA heard from a number of councils and customers who were concerned about the potential impact of the merger on the cost and quality of the services they receive. Ultimately, taxpayers and businesses would have been left to cover any increase in cost.

Stuart McIntosh, Chair of the CMA inquiry group, said:

Local authority budgets are already under strain, and this deal is likely to lead to them paying more and receiving a lower-quality service. The negative impact would have ultimately fallen on taxpayers at a time when they are feeling the pressure of the cost of living crisis.

Given our concerns about the merger, we have concluded that Veolia must sell most of the operations it took over in the UK when it acquired Suez. We will now work with Veolia to ensure that appropriate buyers are found so that businesses, councils – and ultimately taxpayers – will not lose out.

The CMA's final report, published today, confirms its provisional findings issued in May. It rules that the merger would lead to competition concerns in 5 waste markets and 2 water treatment markets. In each of these markets, the merging businesses currently compete closely and would face limited competition after the merger. The CMA found that this would be likely to result in higher cost or lower quality services for councils, with knock-on effects for taxpayers, as well as businesses across the UK.

The CMA launched an investigation into the deal between Veolia and Suez in October 2021. The transaction was referred for an in-depth Phase 2 review, which is led by an independent inquiry group, in December 2021.

This deal has been reviewed by a number of competition authorities across the world. Major divestments were also required in the EU and in Australia.

For more information, visit the [Veolia / Suez merger inquiry page](#).

1. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.
2. The CMA found that the merger would lead to a Substantial Lessening of Competition (SLC) in the following areas:
 - Collection of non-hazardous waste for municipal customers;
 - Operation and maintenance of material recovery facilities (i.e. sorting of waste after collection) for municipal customers;
 - Operation and maintenance of Energy Recovery Facilities (i.e. incineration) for municipal customers;
 - Supply of incineration services to customers in 2 local areas;
 - Collection of non-hazardous waste for commercial and industrial customers;
 - Operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment facilities for industrial customers; and
 - Provision of mobile water services to industrial customers.