



Strictly Embargoed until 09.30 HRS on Thursday 18 August 2022

Northern Ireland GCE results in 2022

- Results reflect the return to summer examinations for the first time since 2019
- 44% of students received A* - A grades
- Outcomes at A* - E up 0.7 percentage points from 2019
- Significant support package put in place to take account of disruption
- Mathematics remained top A level choice

Today, over 25,000 students across Northern Ireland have received their results after successfully sitting the first full year of public examinations since 2019.

The provisional figures, released on behalf of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ^{CIC}), show that 44% of students received a grade A or above, compared to 29.4% in 2019, the last full exam year.

Many AS/A level students this year were sitting public examinations for the first time in circumstances very different to those of the pre-pandemic years.

A significant package of support, as set out by the Examinations Regulators and Education Departments, was provided by the Awarding Organisations to students, schools and colleges in recognition of the ongoing challenges they faced as a result of the pandemic. The approach to grading across all awarding bodies took account of the disruption experienced by students across three academic years.

To note, data comparisons¹ are made with 2019 as this was the last year of public examinations. This is the approach agreed by England, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure meaningful comparison of similar assessments. Evaluation of any previous years' results should be approached with caution due to the differing methods of assessments and circumstances.

A level

14.5% of students achieved the top A* grade, a 6.5 percentage point increase from 2019. The percentage of entries achieving A* - A increased to 44%, an increase of 14.6 percentage points. At grades A* - E there was a 0.7 percentage point increase to 99.1%.

Outcomes, in comparison to 2019, increased across grades A* to A this year for both males and females: by 13.8 percentage points for males, and 15.1 percentage points for females. The gap between genders, at the highest grades, is similar to previous years.

Entries for A levels in Northern Ireland increased by 1.2% compared to 2021, which is in line with school-age population.

Top five subject choices remain the same², with Mathematics continuing to be the subject with the most entries, accounting for just under 1 in 10 entries.

¹ With the exception of the entries comparison, which is year on year.

² See Table 3



Over one third of A level entries in Northern Ireland are in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), with the overall STEM entries increasing by 1 percentage point.

AS level

The number of AS level entries remain stable in Northern Ireland, following a decline in 2019 and 2020. The fall in AS entries was due to the decoupling of AS from A level qualifications in English Awarding Organisations.

Provisional AS outcomes show 98.2% of candidates achieving A-E grade, an increase of 2.5 percentage points from 2019.

ENDS

Media enquiries to:

For information about the results in Northern Ireland, contact

Ruth Hobson, CCEA, on 07718 424373 or email rhobson@ccea.org.uk

Joanne Schofield, CCEA on 07500 806237 or email jschofield@ccea.org.uk

For information about the UK results, contact the JCQ^{CIC}'s press office on 020 7227 0671, or 07399 870337 or at pressoffice@jcq.org.uk

Further statistical details on the results for the UK, Wales, England and Northern Ireland may be found at www.jcq.org.uk

Notes to Editors

There is an open qualifications market in Northern Ireland, which means that schools can choose to offer AS/A levels from awarding organisations other than CCEA, provided these comply with the Department of Education requirements. This includes AQA, OCR, Pearson Edexcel and WJEC.

Summer 2022: Assessment arrangements and adaptations

All Awarding Organisations were asked to implement a significant package of support for students taking exams this summer to take account of the ongoing disruption from the pandemic.

Further information on the assessment arrangements and adaptations is available below:

CCEA

Summer 2022 Assessment arrangements

www.ccea.org.uk/summer-2022

Key documents (graphic link)

[Assessment arrangements for CCEA Qualifications 2021/22](#)

[Student Guide to Assessment Arrangements, Optional Omissions and Contingencies for Summer 2022 Exams](#)

JCQ

[Summer 2022 arrangements](#)



Ofqual - www.gov.uk/ofqual
Package of support

Qualifications Wales - <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/assessment-arrangements-20212022/>

WJEC
[WJEC Summer 2022](#)

A / AS level provisional results 2022

The statistics* below represent the provisional Northern Ireland GCE results from five JCQ awarding organisations: AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC

To note, data comparisons³ are made with 2019 as this was the last year of public examinations. This is the approach agreed by England, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure meaningful comparison of similar assessments. Evaluation of any previous years' results should be approached with caution due to the differing methods of assessments and circumstances.

Table 1: Northern Ireland GCE A level entries and 2022 provisional results, compared to 2019:

	2022*	2019**
Entries	32506	31332
%A*	14.5	8.0
%A* - A	44.0	29.4
%A* - E	99.1	98.4

Table 2: Northern Ireland GCE A level entries and 2022 provisional results compared to 2021:

In 2021 when students received grades determined by teacher assessment, 50.8% of students achieved grade A or above.

As the means of determining grades in 2021 was different, it was anticipated that with the return to examinations assessment the overall distribution of grades in 2022 would be lower to that of 2021.

	2022*	2021*
Entries	32506	32111
%A*	14.5	15.8
%A* - A	44.0	50.8
%A* - E	99.1	99.4

³ With the exception of the entries comparison, which is year on year.



Table 3: Five most popular subjects at GCE A level in Northern Ireland

	OVERALL	MALES	FEMALES
1	Mathematics (9.6%)	Mathematics (13.2%)	Health & Social Care (single) (11.8%)
2	Biology (9.2%)	Business Studies (8.4%)	Biology (10.2%)
3	Health & Social Care (single) (8.0%)	History (7.8%)	Mathematics (7.2%)
4	Business Studies (6.4%)	Biology (7.6%)	English Literature (6.2%)
5	History (6.1%)	Physics (6.9%)	Chemistry (6.1%)

GCE Chemistry is now in the top 5 GCE subject choices for females.

Table 4: Northern Ireland GCE AS level entries and 2022 provisional results, compared to 2019

	2022*	2019 **
Entries	35328	41803
%A	38.8	26.4
%A - E	98.2	95.7

Table 5: Northern Ireland GCE AS level entries and 2022 provisional results, compared to 2021

As the means of determining grades in 2021 was different, it was anticipated that with the return to examinations assessment the overall distribution of grades in 2022 would be lower to that of 2021.

	2022*	2021
Entries	35328	35533
%A	38.8	45.5
%A - E	98.2	98.9

*** Note – prior to 2021 Health and Social Care (Single Award and Double Award) outcomes were not included in the JCQ provisional data sheets. The 2019 outcomes have also been revised to include the Health & Social Care outcomes.*

Detailed tabulations of the GCE AS and A-level, Applied GCE AS and A-level are published separately, also with **the STRICT EMBARGO of 09.30 Thursday 18 August 2022** and will be available on the JCQ website from 09.30 on 18 August 2022 at www.jcq.org.uk

All awarding organisations are answerable to the regulatory authorities Ofqual (England), Qualifications Wales (Wales) and CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) for examinations standards.

The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies' standards. In addition, the awarding organisations themselves conduct several comparability studies to compare standards.



Maintaining standards within and across all qualifications to ensure fairness to all candidates is the paramount concern of the awarding bodies.

The JCQ comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the eight largest providers of qualifications in the UK.

The JCQ^{CIC} is a membership organisation and enables member awarding bodies to act together in providing, where possible, common administrative arrangements for the schools and colleges and other providers which offer their qualifications; and responding to proposals and initiatives in assessment and the curriculum.