



By email to schools and colleges

5 December 2019

Dear Colleague

### **Overseeing the Winter 2019/20 GCSE exam series**

I wrote to you ahead of the November exams and hope that any exams you delivered went well. This letter provides information on the entries data for the November series and outlines how we have monitored WJEC's work during the series.

In the November session, more than 42,520 exams were sat. To date, the series is progressing well, with no reports of security breaches or question paper errors. I'd like to thank you, your colleagues and students for the part you all played in the success of the series.

### **November exam entries**

Provisional entry data collected by WJEC gave us an early indication of entry patterns for the session. We used this data to help us understand any changes to entries, compared to the previous series. This is important in ensuring that WJEC's planned approach to awarding will result in a fair award to students. It will also be important when interpreting the results.

We published official statistics on November entries at 9.30am on Thursday 5 December 2019. The statistics show that there were:

- 21,260 entries for GCSEs in November, down 1,195 (5.3%) from last November.
- Year 11 entries account for 17,745 entries (83.5% of all entries, up from 82.8% of all entries last November).

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- There were 3,380 November entries for GCSE English Language in 2019, an increase of 1.0%. Of those, 1,725 were from year 11 students, a reduction when compared to 1,760 last November.
- There were 6,750 entries for Mathematics, up 30 (0.4%) from last November. There were 10,825 entries for Mathematics – Numeracy, down 1,345 (11.0%). 77.3% of entries for GCSE Mathematics were for year 11 students, compared to 97.4% for GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy.

For further information please see our official statistics release<sup>1</sup>. The front-page summary from the release is in Annex A.

### Monitoring the exam series

After the exams, the papers are scanned and then marked online by examiners. You can find more out about the process [here](#). We monitored the examiners' conferences where examiners were trained to apply the mark schemes accurately and consistently. Marking is well under way and we are receiving regular marking progress updates from WJEC ahead of awarding.

Over the coming fortnight we will be monitoring the awarding meetings for these qualifications and meeting regularly with WJEC to closely scrutinise the awarding process and ensure that outcomes are fair for students.

Our priority is to ensure that appropriate standards are set and maintained over time. We have required WJEC to apply the established approach to ensure that standards are maintained from one series to another. Details of the approach used by WJEC for approved qualifications in Wales can be found on WJEC's [website](#). Senior examiners at WJEC set grade boundaries using both statistical information and examples of students' work to establish where key grade boundaries should be set for each qualification. Information about the grade setting process can also be found on our [website](#).

### January series

Exams are available in January 2020 for one unit of GCSE English Literature and one unit of GCSE Welsh Literature. There are also opportunities to sit exams in GCSE ICT and Health and Social Care. We will monitor and scrutinise WJEC's processes in the same way as for the November examinations. Individual components of the Key

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/our-work/research-and-statistics/research-and-statistics-publications/?page=1&perpage=10&categories=&sortBy=byDate&fromDate=&toDate=&query=&publicationTypes=>

Stage 4 and Advance Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificates can be submitted for moderation and award.

### Issuing results

November's GCSE results will be published and available to students on **Thursday 16 January 2020**. Schools and colleges will get the results the day before, on Wednesday 15 January 2020.

Students will get their results for January's GCSEs and units taken on **Thursday 5 March 2020**. Schools and colleges will get the results the day before, on Wednesday 4 March 2020.

Results are sent to centres the day before the official results day. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that results should not be shared with any person or organisation outside the centre until results day.

### Further Information

Please continue to engage with the Exams 360 section of our website and do let us know if there are any aspects of the exams system which you would find useful for us to include. We give regular updates to schools and colleges on GCSEs, A levels and the other qualifications we regulate through our 'Slate' newsletter. You can sign-up to receive this from our [website](#).

If you have any suggestions for information you would find useful in future, please get in touch at [enquiries@qualificationswales.org](mailto:enquiries@qualificationswales.org). I hope you find this letter helpful and I'd like to take the opportunity to wish you, your staff and your students a peaceful and happy Christmas.

Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

Yours sincerely



**Philip Blaker**

**Chief Executive**

**Annex A**

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

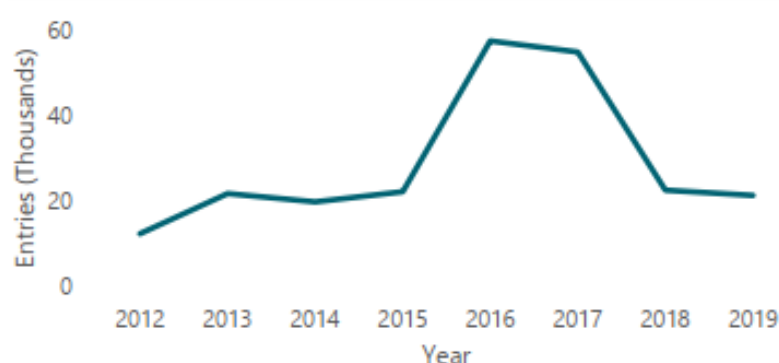
# Provisional November GCSE and Level 1/Level 2 Certificates Entries for Wales 2019



05 December 2019

## Highlights

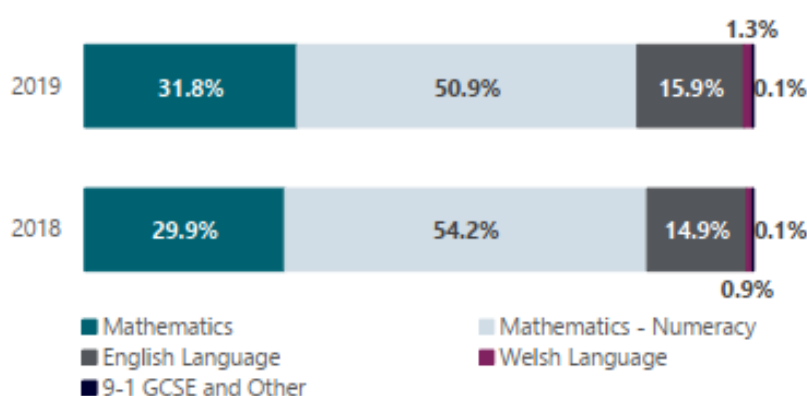
**Figure 1: November 2019 entries**



Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection, 2017 to 2019 Qualifications Wales; pre-2017 Ofqual

There were 21,260 entries in November 2019, down 1,195 (5.3%) from November 2018.

**Figure 2: November entries by subject**



Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection

Mathematics – Numeracy remains the largest November entry subject (50.9%), down from 54.2% in 2018.

## About this release

This statistical release provides information on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/Level 2 Certificates submitted to awarding bodies ahead of the November 2019 series. GCSE entries this November series were for: Mathematics, Mathematics – Numeracy, English Language and Welsh Language.

This release is based on data collected from awarding bodies, accurate to the 23 October 2019.

## Contents

- Introduction..... [2](#)
- Statistics..... [5](#)
- Glossary of terms..... [9](#)
- Background notes..... [11](#)