

ENTRIES AND LATE ENTRIES FOR GCSE AND A LEVEL IN WALES: 2017-18 ACADEMIC YEAR

BACKGROUND NOTES

On 21 November 2017 the National Assembly for Wales approved the Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017 which named Qualifications Wales as one of the bodies that are in scope of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Whilst we transition to collect and publish our own data we are voluntarily complying with the Code of Practice. These statistics have 'experimental statistics' status. A statement of voluntary compliance has been published alongside this release.

Purpose

This statistical release presents data on entries and late entries for GCSE, AS and A level exams in Wales during the 2017-18 academic year. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) is a membership organisation comprising seven providers of qualifications in the UK, including those awarding GCSEs and A levels. JCQ publishes deadlines by which entries should be made on behalf of the exam boards. If an entry is made after the deadline it is classed as late and may be subject to an additional charge.

Description

Schools and colleges are responsible for submitting entries to exam boards for GCSEs and A levels on behalf of their students. Students are entered separately for each unit or component that makes up a qualification. An entry therefore is counted as a student being put forward for an individual assessment, whereas certifications refer to the overall qualification. For those GCSEs and A levels that are linear, entries are at the qualification level. A school or college submits entries to the relevant exam board on behalf of its students. We collect provisional data from exam boards at the point when it is reasonably complete, although final entry numbers may be slightly different from these. GCSEs and A levels have been undergoing major reform in Wales. The introduction of reformed AS qualifications started to be phased in from 2015 and from

2016 for A levels. Reformed GCSEs started to be phased in from 2015 with the first results issued for English language, English literature, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy, Welsh language and Welsh literature in 2017. Reformed GCSEs in other subjects were awarded over the following two years.

Data Source

Awarding bodies submit data to us for GCSEs, AS and A levels they have awarded in Wales as well as entries and late entries. Awarding bodies send data to us for each exam series. Any provider that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period is contacted to make sure the data are as complete as possible. For this release, we received data from all the awarding bodies.

Data was collected for AS and A level separately for the first time in 2016. Therefore, in this publication pre-2016 data are reported combined for AS and A level. From 2016 onwards where data is available, AS and A level numbers are reported separately within tables.

Limitations of data

There is potential error in the information provided by awarding bodies. Therefore, Qualifications Wales cannot guarantee that the information received is correct. Qualifications Wales compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues. Quality assurance procedures are carried out to ensure the accuracy of the data and challenge or question it, where necessary. Qualifications Wales continuously manages this process by:

- Ensuring that data providers are clear about what is required of them and are fully consulted during the initial design and any subsequent change phases;
- Reminding all providers (if appropriate) that, as a condition of them being regulated, all data must be completely accurate;
- Being alert to unexpected changes in the data submitted by comparing individual returns over time from the same provider;
- Actively challenging any unexpected results with the data providers.

The publication may be deferred if the statistics are not considered fit for purpose.

Comparisons

From November 2017 awarding bodies submitted data to Qualifications Wales rather than Ofqual. Comparisons to historical Ofqual data should be interpreted with caution.

The definition of a late entry for statistical purposes is an entry received after midnight on the closing date for each exam series. Data provided previously by WJEC did not use this definition. The data in this release uses corrected WJEC data which does use this definition. The definition of late entries used for statistical purposes does not mean that centres had to pay a fee to the awarding body for each of these late entries. Awarding bodies have different dates after which a late fee is charged and so the late entry statistics do not necessarily represent the number of entries for which a late fee was charged.

Geographical Coverage

This release presents data on the number of entries, late entries and certifications for GCSEs, AS and A levels in Wales.

Revisions

Once published, data on the number of entries is not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or correct an error. For this release several errors were discovered. These errors have been corrected and noted by the symbol (r) in the tables.

Completeness of the data

We contact any awarding body that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period, to make sure the data is as complete as possible.

Rounding and Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality, and in accordance with Qualifications Wales's interim statistical outputs policy, all figures are rounded. In the commentary and tables, they are rounded to the nearest 5. Figures fewer than 5 but greater than 0 are replaced with a *. This is to ensure that data does not reveal an individual candidate. All percentages within the commentary are based on actual figures. Figures have been rounded independently and therefore may not sum to the total.

Users of these statistics

These statistics are likely to be of interest to Qualifications Wales, awarding bodies, and the Welsh Government. We welcome feedback from users to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time.

Related statistics and publications

A number of statistical releases relate to this one, including:

- November entries, and summer entries statistical release for Wales¹ published by Qualifications Wales.
- Entries and late entries statistical release published by Ofqual².
- The annual 'Schools' census results' release, published by Welsh Government³.

Useful information

You can find information about future publications on the Welsh Government website⁴.

The QiW register⁵ gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

Next update

November 2019 (provisional).

User feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to statistics@qualificationswales.org.

© (2018) Permission is granted to reproduce provided reference is made to Qualifications Wales as the original source.

¹ <https://qualificationswales.org/english/our-work/research-and-statistics/research-and-statistics-publications/?page=1&perpage=20&categories=&sortBy=byDate&fromDate=&toDate=&query=&publicationTypes=4208>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics?departments%5B%5D=ofqual>

³ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/schools-census/?lang=en>

⁴ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?upcoming=true&lang=en>

⁵ <https://www.qiw.wales/>