

# Provisional Summer 2022 exam entries for Wales:

## GCSEs, AS, A levels and Skills Challenge Certificate



20 May 2022

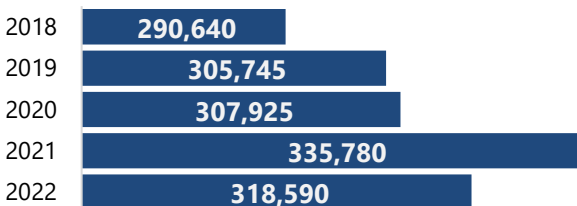
### About this release

This official statistics release provides information on the provisional number of exam entries in Wales for the summer 2022 series. The release covers GCSE, AS, A level and Skills Challenge Certificate entries for centres in Wales. The data was submitted to us by awarding bodies by 21 April ahead of the summer 2022 series.

There are several factors that can influence why entries for year groups might change over time. Further information on this can be found in the [background notes](#).

Summer 2022 is the first summer series in which learners will sit GCSE, AS and A level exams since 2019. In 2020 and 2021, grades were determined by centres. Entry figures in this release will have been affected by these different approaches to awarding grades, as well as by other disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Figure 1: Summer GCSE entries

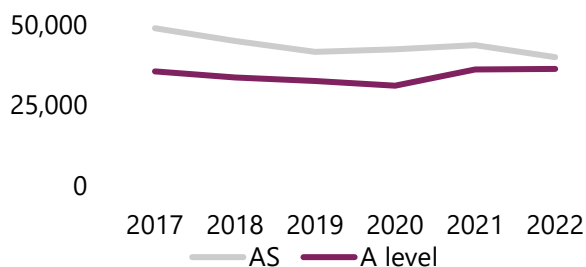


Total GCSE entries decreased by 5.1% in summer 2022 compared to summer 2021.

Summer 2022 entries are 4.2% higher than 2019, the last summer exams were sat.

Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

### Figure 2: Summer AS and A level entries



AS entries decreased by 8.5% in summer 2022 compared to summer 2021. A level entries increased by 0.5%.

AS entries are 4.0% lower than in 2019, the last summer exams were sat, whereas A level entries are 11.5% higher than in 2019.

Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

**Quick Links** [GCSE](#) [AS](#) [A level](#) [Skills Challenge Certificate](#) [Background Notes](#)

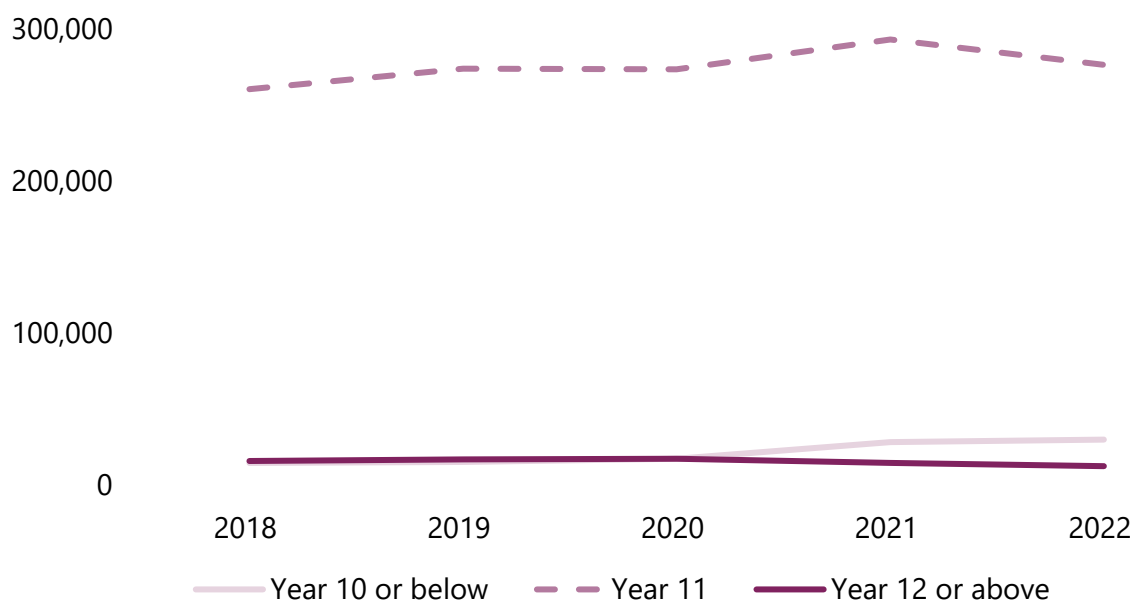
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# Statistics

## GCSE Entries

**Figure 3: GCSE total entries by year group**



*Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, 2018 and later - Qualifications Wales; 2017 - Ofqual*

- 318,590 GCSE entries were made for summer 2022. This is down by 5.1% compared to GCSE entries for summer 2021.
- When compared to 2019, the last summer that learners sat exams, the number of entries in 2022 has increased by 4.2%.
- Year 11 learners are the most likely to enter for GCSEs in the summer, accounting for 86.9% of total GCSE entries this summer. The number of Year 11 entries decreased by 5.7% this summer compared to summer 2021.
- There were 29,230 entries from Year 10 learners in summer 2022. This is an increase of 5.3% compared to last summer, when there were 27,750.
- Year 10 entries made up 9.2% of all GCSE entries this summer, up from 8.3% last summer and 5.3% in 2019.
- Year 12 or above entries decreased this summer, making up 3.8% of total GCSE entries.

## Approved GCSEs

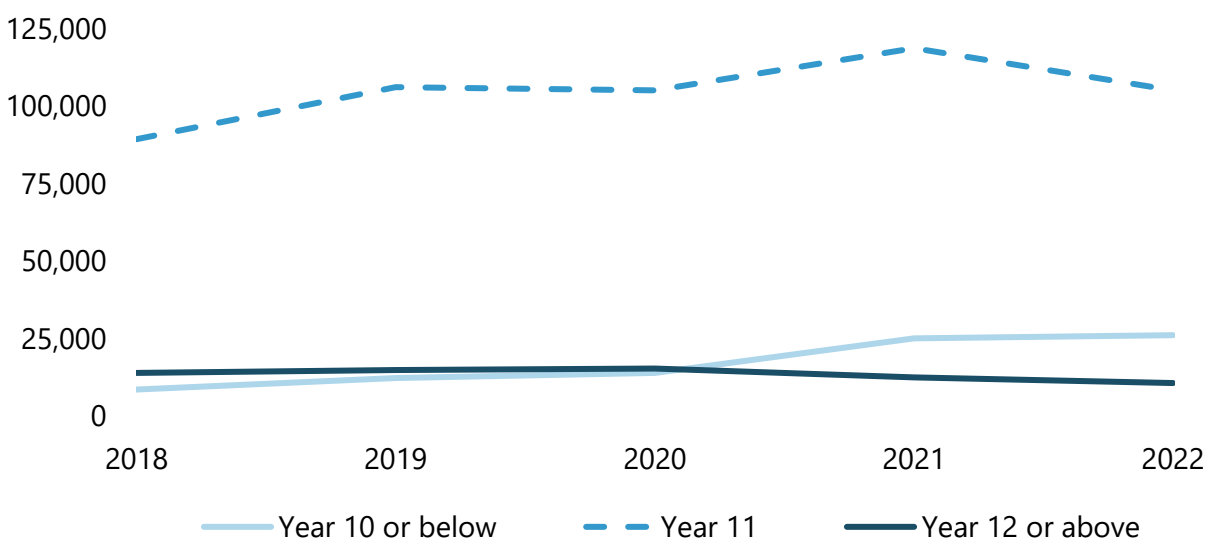
Approved GCSEs are qualifications offered by WJEC that were designed specifically for learners in Wales.

96.3% of the total summer 2022 GCSE entries were for approved GCSEs. The remainder of the GCSE entries this summer were for qualifications designed for use primarily in England, and some WJEC ICT GCSEs (see section on qualification reform in [Background Notes](#)).

## Phase 1 GCSEs

Approved phase 1 GCSE entries accounted for 44.6% of total GCSE entries for summer 2022.

**Figure 4: Approved phase 1 GCSE entries by year group**



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, 2018 and later - Qualifications Wales; 2017 - Ofqual

**Table 1: Approved phase 1 GCSE entries by subject**

Subject	2022	2021	2020	2019
English Language	35,690	38,190	37,665	36,270
English Literature	31,650	34,770	28,185	29,055
Mathematics	35,665	38,405	34,960	34,570
Mathematics - Numeracy	28,810	35,010	24,645	24,695
Welsh Language	5,910	5,925	5,430	5,220
Welsh Literature	4,290	4,195	3,735	3,695
<b>Total</b>	<b>142,020</b>	<b>156,500</b>	<b>134,615</b>	<b>133,500</b>

Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

Total entries for approved phase 1 GCSEs decreased by 9.3% to 142,020 entries in summer 2022. Compared to 2019, the last summer in which exams were sat, the total entries for approved phase 1 GCSEs has increased by 6.4%. Compared to Summer 2021 almost all phase 1 GCSEs saw a decrease in entries, with Welsh Literature alone showing a 2.3% increase. When compared to 2019, entries in all approved phase 1 subjects except English Language have increased.

Year 11 entries in approved phase 1 GCSEs have decreased in all subjects apart from Welsh Literature which has seen an increase of 2.4% compared to summer 2021. Year 12 entries have decreased in all subjects compared to summer 2021 and 2019. The decrease in entries from Year 12 and above may be due to [higher-than-usual outcomes in summer 2020 and summer 2021](#), leading to fewer learners re-sitting in post-16 education. Year-on-year changes for Year 11 entries are likely to be impacted by population increase (see [external influences](#)). Entry patterns for some of these qualifications may also have been affected by changes in entries for the [November exam series](#).

Further analysis for English, English Literature, Mathematics and Mathematics – Numeracy is included in the [larger entry GCSE subject breakdown](#).

### **Health and Social Care and Childcare**

Following our [review of Health and Social Care qualifications](#), new approved GCSEs in Health and Social Care and Childcare were awarded for the first time in summer 2021. There were 4,770 entries for the Single Award GCSE in summer 2022, an increase of 44.1%, and 260 entries for the Double Award, a decrease of 36.6%.

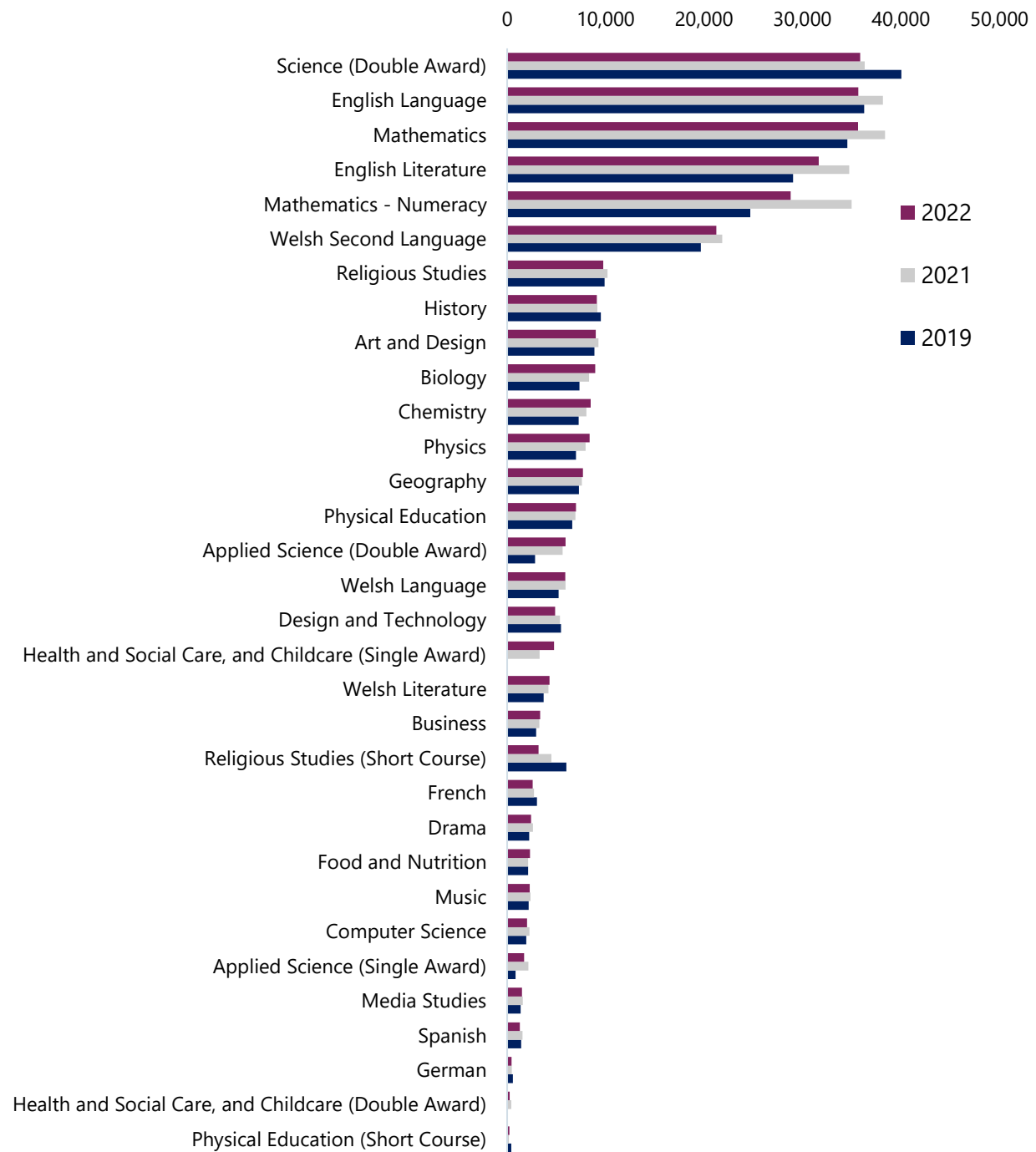
### **Built Environment**

Unit 1 of the new approved GCSE Built Environment is being assessed for the first time this summer, but the qualification will not be first awarded until summer 2023 and so is not included in this release.

## Approved GCSE entries by subject

Figure 5 compares total summer approved GCSE entries for 2022, 2021 and 2019 by subject.

**Figure 5: Summer 2022 GCSE total entries broken down by subject**



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

11 subjects saw increased entry in summer 2022 compared to summer 2021; 21 saw a decrease in entries. The largest decreases in terms of number of entries were in Mathematics - Numeracy with 6,195 fewer entries, and English Literature with 3,120 fewer entries. The largest proportional decreases were a 36.6% drop in entries for Health and Social Care, and Childcare (Double Award) and a 29.1% decrease in Religious Studies (Short Course) entries. The largest increases in terms of number of entries were in Health and Social Care, and Childcare (Single Award) with 1,460 more entries, and Biology with 600 more entries.

When compared to 2019, the last summer when exams were taken, 22 subjects saw an increase in entries while 10 saw a decrease. The largest decreases in terms of number of entries from 2019 were a decrease of 4,170 entries in Science (Double award) and a drop of 2,825 entries in Religious Studies (Short Course). The largest increases in terms of number of entries compared to 2019 were in Mathematics - Numeracy which increased by 4,115 entries and Applied Science (Double Award) with 3,095 more entries.

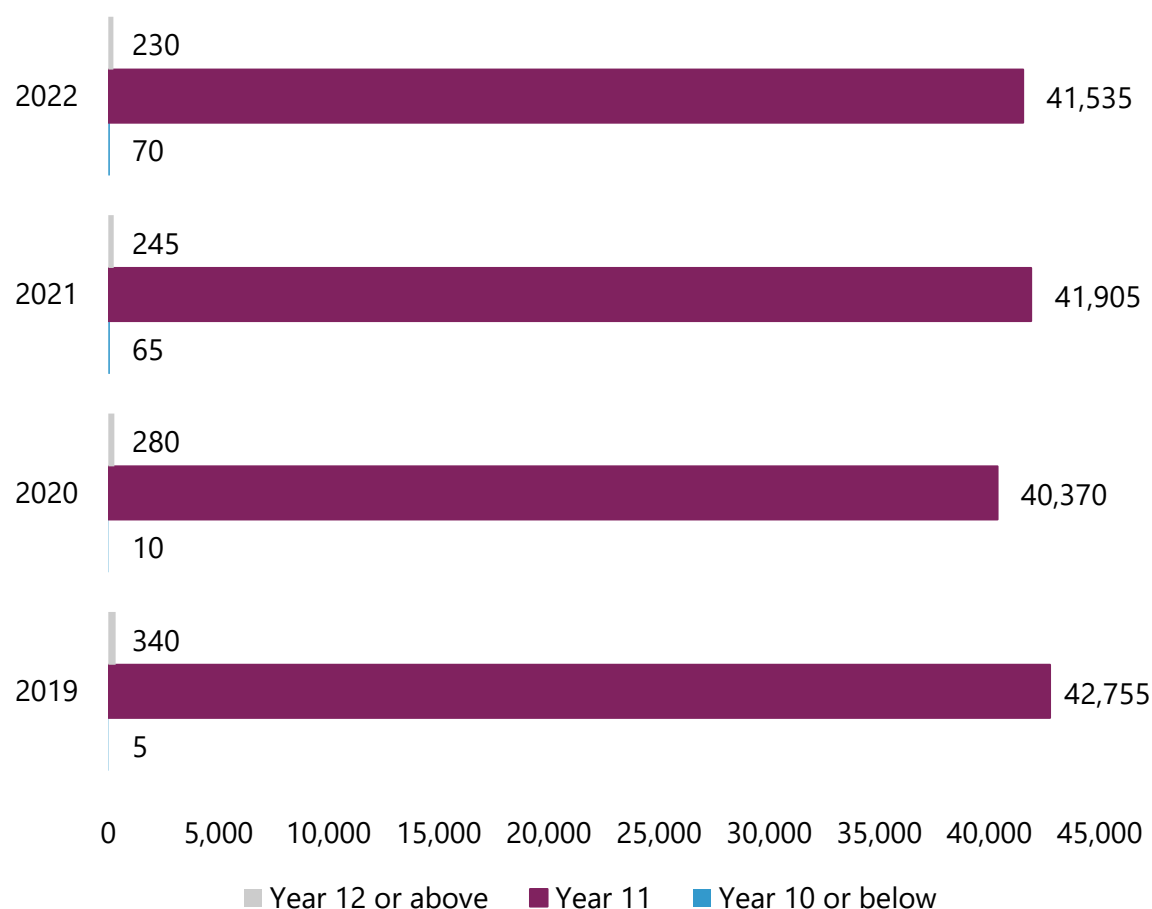
## Top 5 GCSE subject entries by year group

As shown in figure 5, the top five GCSE entry subjects in summer 2021 were Science: Double Award, English, Mathematics, English Literature, and Mathematics: Numeracy. This section takes a closer look at these subjects. Figures in this section include all GCSEs within the subject, not just the approved GCSE.

### Science: Double Award

Entries into Science: Double Award qualifications are counted as two entries in this release because the qualification size is equivalent to two GCSEs. This is consistent with how data for the 'Science: Double Award' subject group will be reported elsewhere.

**Figure 6: GCSE Science: Double Award entries by year group**



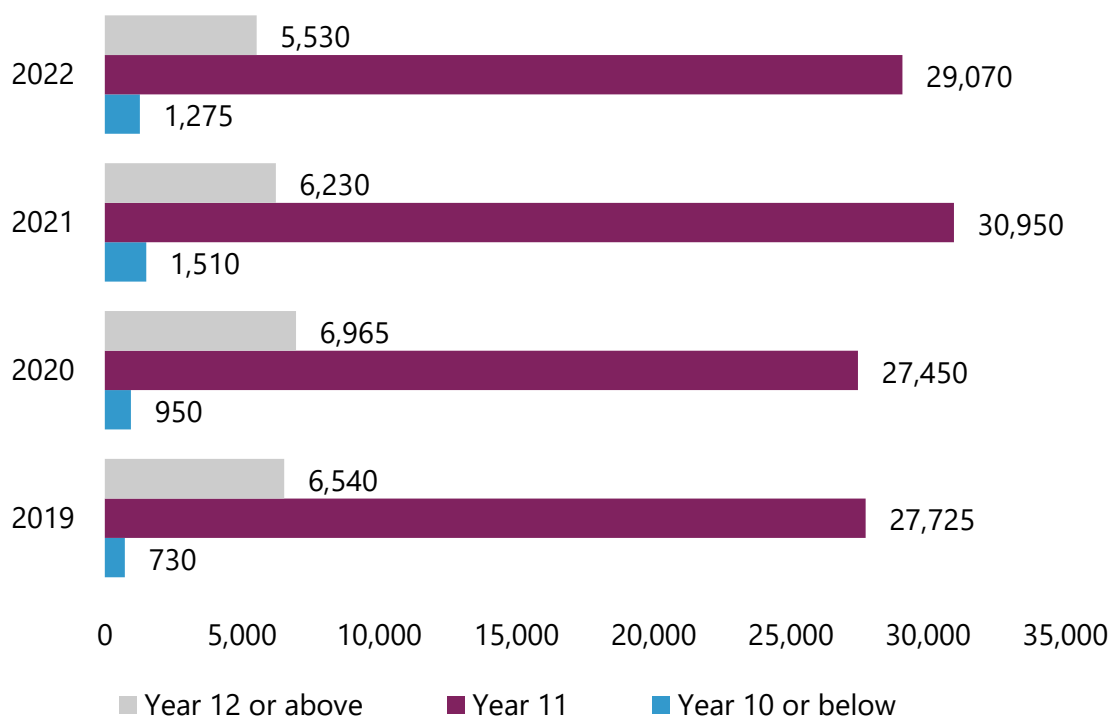
Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

GCSE Science: Double Award had 41,840 entries for summer 2022, 0.9% fewer than the previous summer and 2.9% fewer than in summer 2019. Entries from Year 11 learners continue to make up the majority (99.3%) of entries for Science: Double Award.

## GCSE Mathematics

GCSE Mathematics had the second largest number of provisional GCSE entries in summer 2022, with a total of 35,870 entries.

**Figure 7: GCSE Mathematics entries by year group**



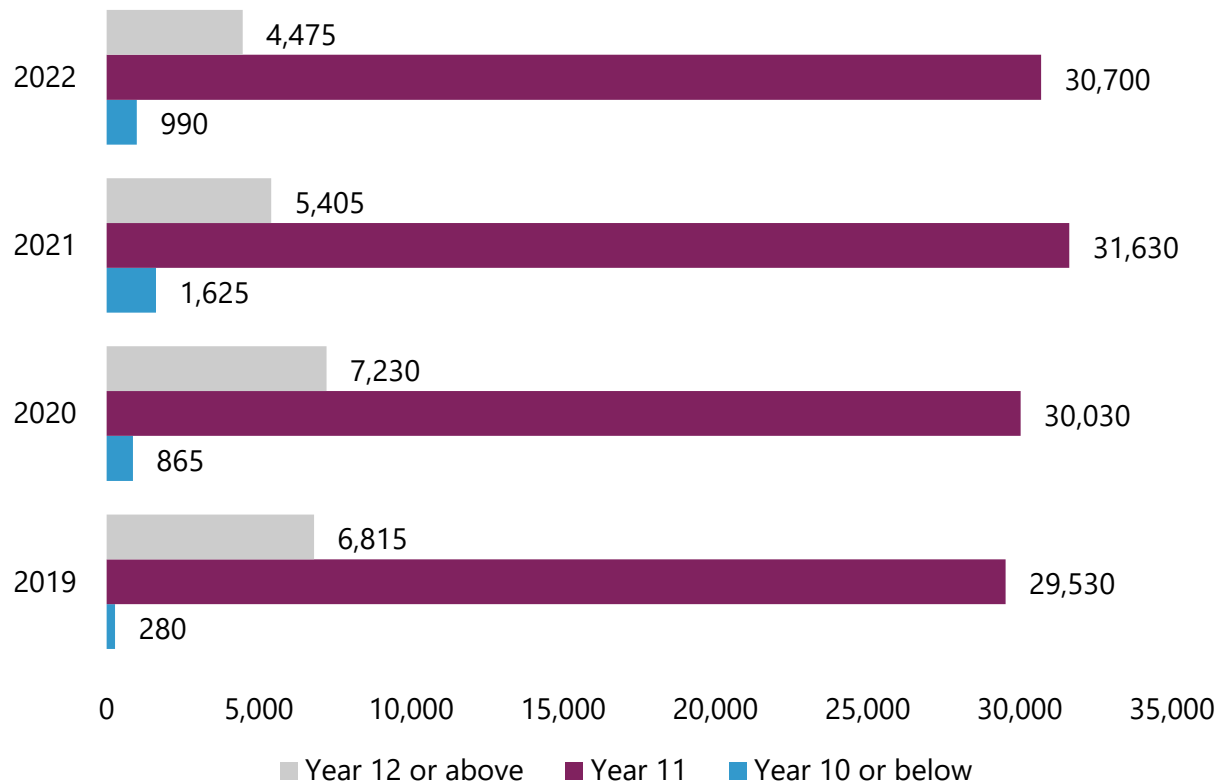
*Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales*

Total entries for GCSE Mathematics decreased in summer 2022 by 7.3% compared to summer 2021. Entries from learners in all year groups decreased, but when compared to 2019, the last summer exams were sat, Year 10 entries have increased by 78.2% and Year 11 entries by 4.8%. In 2022 entries from learners in Year 11 make up 81.0% of GCSE mathematics entries compared to 80.0% in 2021 and 79.2% in 2019.



## GCSE English

Figure 8: GCSE English entries by year group

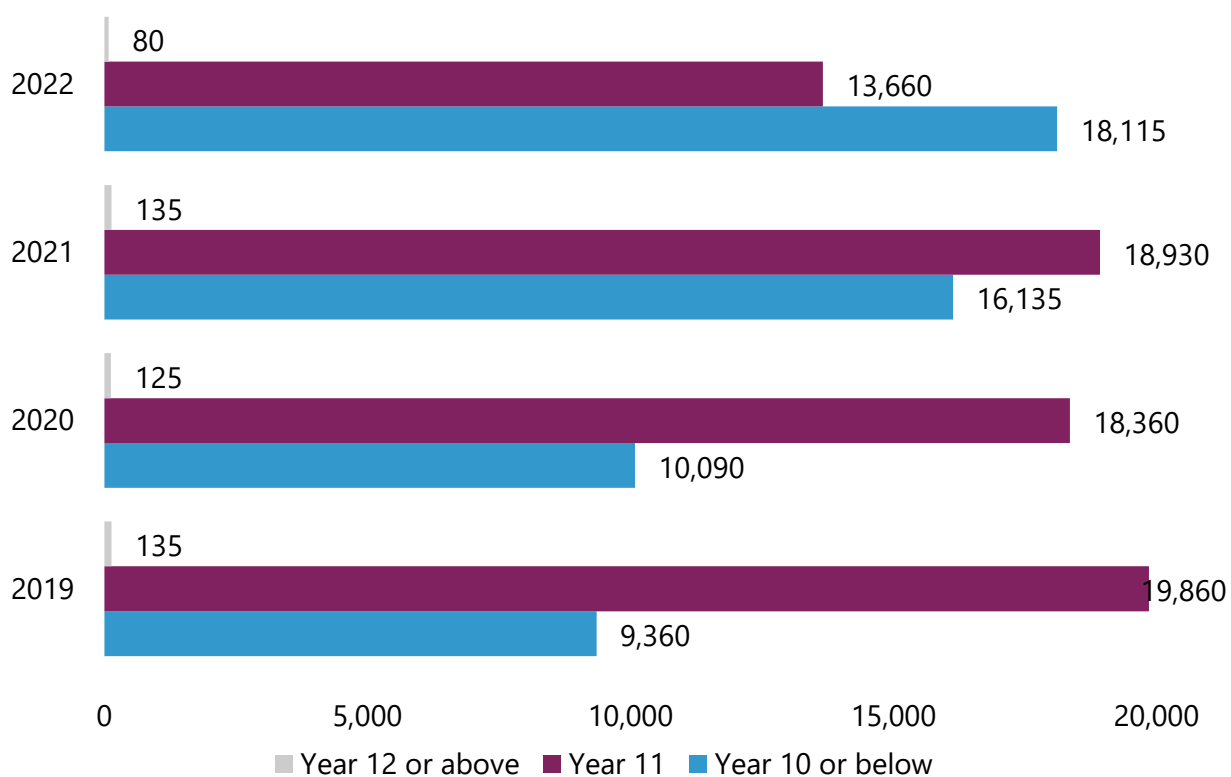


Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

There were 36,165 entries for GCSE English in summer 2022, a decrease of 6.5% compared to summer 2021. There were 39.4% fewer Year 10 entries this summer compared to 2021. However, there are still more than 3.5 times as many Year 10 entries in Summer 2022 than in 2019, the last summer that exams were sat. Year 11 entries make up 84.9% of the total entry this year compared to 81.8% last year.

## GCSE English Literature

Figure 9: GCSE English Literature entries by year group



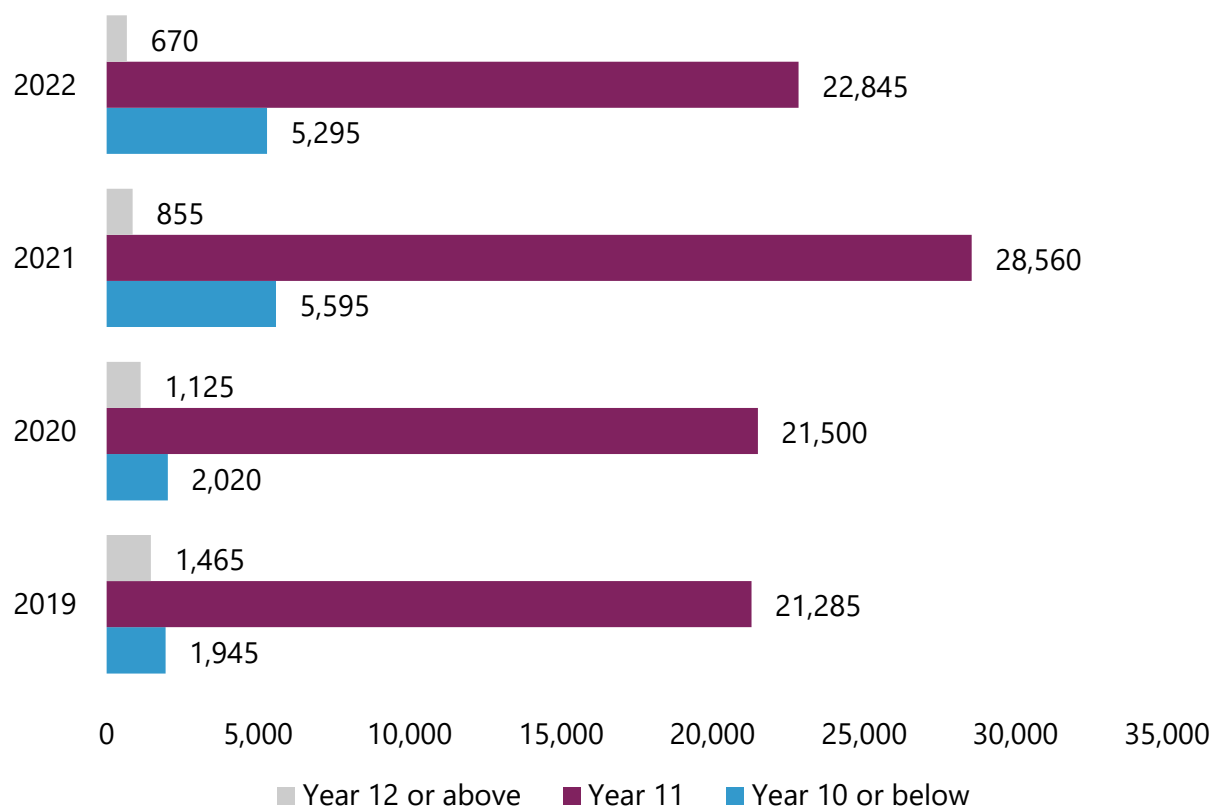
Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

The total number of entries for GCSE English Literature was 31,860, a decrease of 9.5% compared to summer 2021. This was due to decreases in all year groups apart from Year 10 entries, which increased by 12.5% this summer. Year 11 entries decreased by 27.8%. Combined with the larger Year 10 entry, this means that Year 11 share of total entries has reduced from 53.8% to 42.9%. Of all the top 5 GCSEs in summer 2022 this subject has the largest number of entries from learners in Year 10 and below.

## GCSE Mathematics: Numeracy

Mathematics: Numeracy had the fifth highest number of provisional entries with 28,810 entries.

**Figure 10: GCSE Mathematics Numeracy entries by year group**

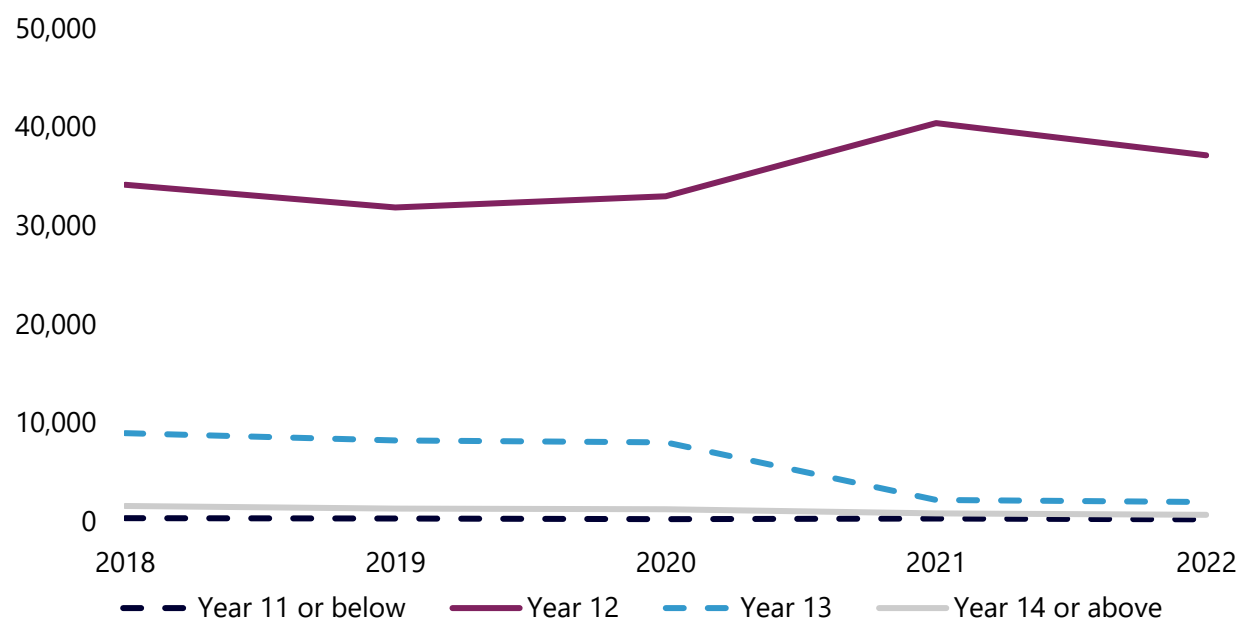


*Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales*

GCSE Mathematics: Numeracy entries decreased by 17.7% from 2021, as a result of a 20.0% decrease in Year 11 entries and a 21.6% decrease in Year 12 and above entries. Year 11 learners make up 79.3% of entries in this subject compared to 81.6% in 2021 and 86.2% in 2019, the last summer exams were sat. The proportion of entries from Year 10 and younger learners in 2022 is more than twice what it was in 2019.

## AS level entries

**Figure 11: AS level total entries by year group**



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

- There were 39,970 AS level entries in summer **2022** in Wales, 8.5% fewer than in summer 2021 and 4.0% fewer than in 2019, the last summer that exams were sat.
- Summer 2015 to summer 2019 was a period of consistent annual decrease in the number of AS level entries in Wales, down from [57,030 entries in summer 2015](#), but this trend has been reversing over the last two years. However, the COVID 19 pandemic makes comparison of more recent years to historical data less reliable as circumstances for learners are now very different and entry patterns have changed because of this.
- There were 37,150 entries from Year 12 learners, accounting for 92.9% of all entries. This is almost the same as the proportion in 2021, but a much larger share than in 2019 when 76.5% of entries were from Year 12 learners.
- AS entries from Year 12 learners in 2022 are lower than 2021 but higher than 2019. This may be related to higher-than-usual GCSE results in 2021 compared to the GCSE results of the AS cohort of 2019.
- Entries from Year 13 learners have continued to decrease, dropping by 10.1% between summer 2022 and summer 2021 and by 76.1% between summer 2022 and summer 2019. This may be due to higher-than-usual outcomes in summer 2020 and 2021, leading to fewer learners re-sitting in 2022.
- There are several factors that can play a role in year-on-year changes in entries (see [external influences](#)).

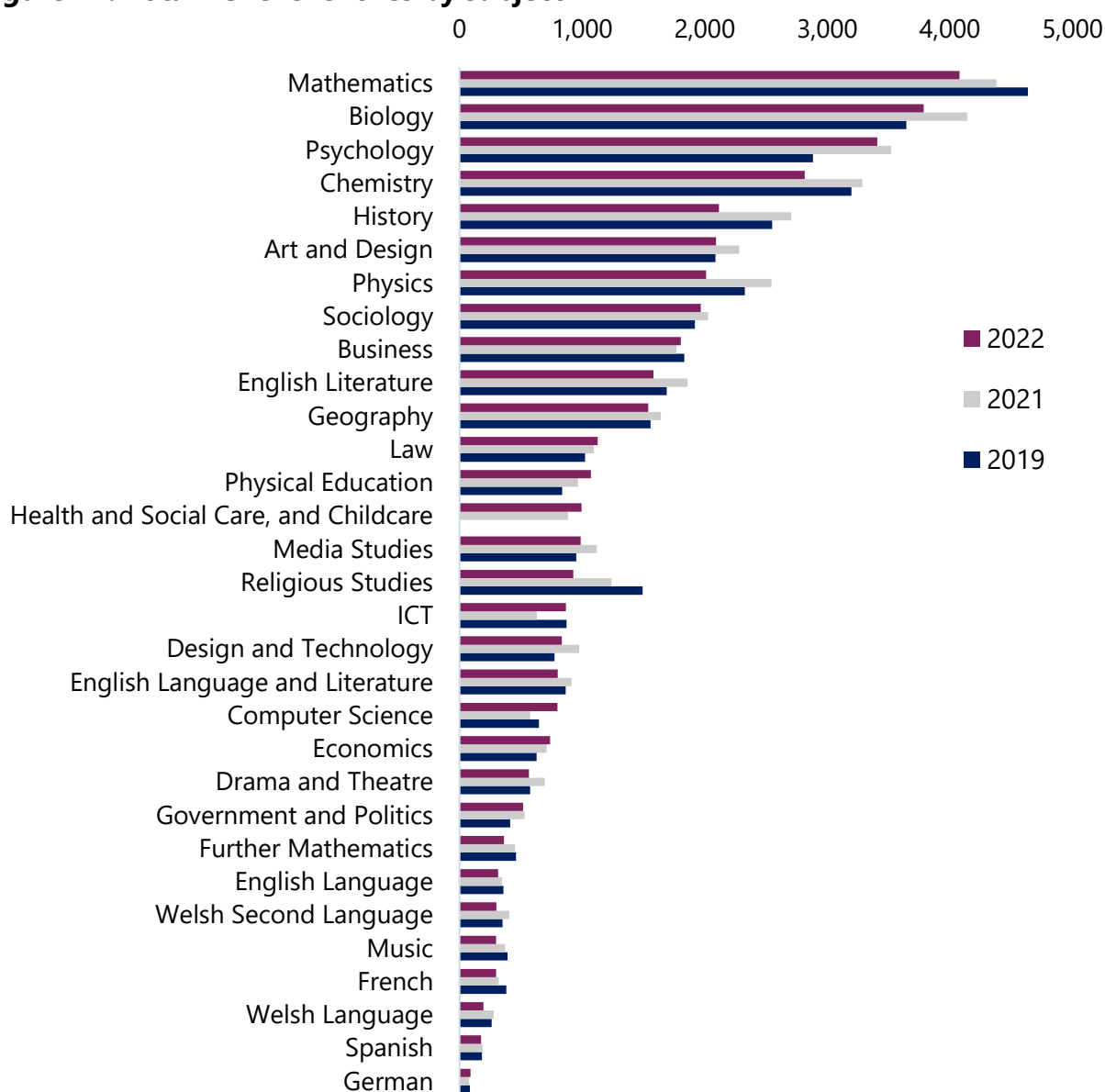
## Approved AS level

Approved AS levels are qualifications offered by WJEC that were designed specifically for learners in Wales. 98.7% of the total summer 2022 AS entries were for approved qualifications. This section does not include entries for AS levels that were developed for use primarily in England provided by other awarding bodies (see [qualification reforms](#)).

### Total approved AS level summer entries by subject

Figure 12 compares total summer approved AS entries for 2022, 2021 and 2019 by subject.

**Figure 12: Total AS level entries by subject**



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

Eight subjects saw an increased entry in summer 2022, while 23 saw a decrease in the number of entries compared to last year. When compared to 2019, the last year exams were sat, 13 subjects have more entries and 18 have fewer entries. The top five subjects in 2022 are the same as in 2021, with Mathematics in top position and Biology, Psychology, Chemistry and History in second to fifth places. The largest proportional increase in entries was in Computer Science with a 38.5% increase on 2021 figures. Welsh language has the largest proportional decrease of 30.2%, although as this is a relatively small entry subject this is a decrease of 85 entries in real terms. The largest decrease in the number of entries was in History, with 590 fewer entries.

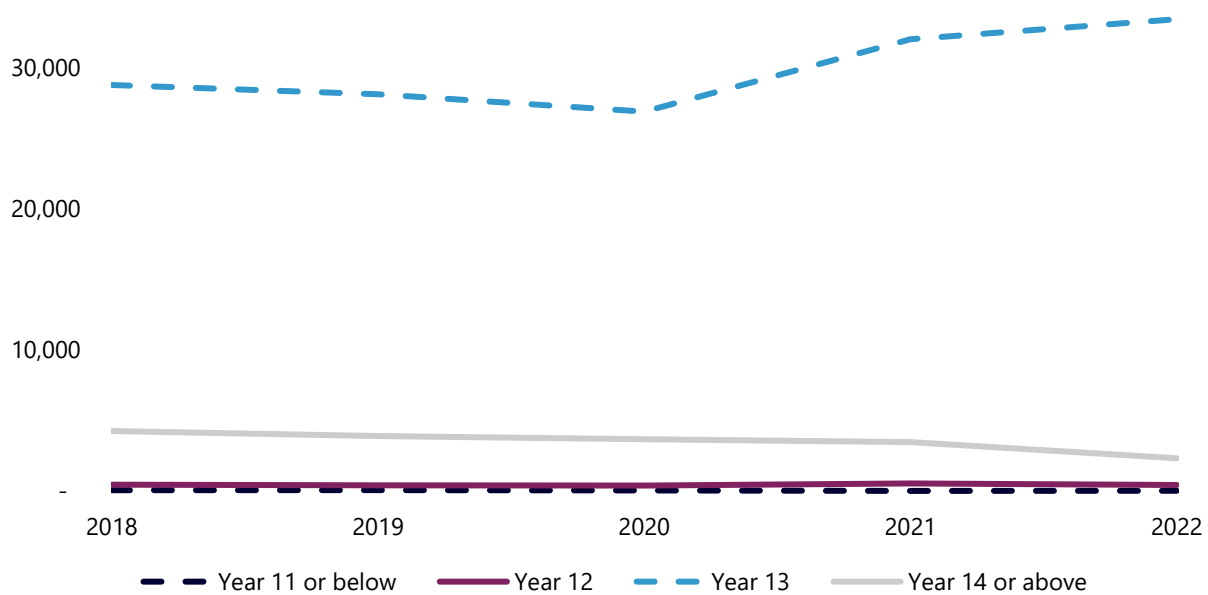
When compared to 2019, the last summer that exams were sat, the largest proportional decrease in entries was in Religious Studies with a 37.9% decrease. Physical Education has the largest proportional increase when compared to summer 2019, with an increase of 28.1%

### **Health and Social Care and Childcare**

Following our [review of Health and Social Care qualifications](#), a new approved AS level in Health and Social Care and Childcare was awarded for the first time in summer 2021. There were 995 entries for this qualification this summer compared to 885 entries in summer 2021. 83.8% percent of these entries were from Year 12 learners in Summer 2022.

## A level entries

Figure 13: A level total entries by year group



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

- There were 36,310 A level entries for summer 2022, 0.5% more than in summer 2021.
- This is the second year in a row where entries have increased, following several years of annual decreases and is the highest number of A level entries seen in Wales since 2016, when [Ofqual reported 37,640 entries in Wales](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on the experience of learners in education so this makes meaningful comparison of more recent years to historic data problematic.
- The majority of the increase was a result of entries from Year 13 learners, which increased by 4.4% compared to last summer, accounting for 92.2% of all A level entries this summer. This could be due to higher than usual AS level results in 2021.
- Year 14 and above entries have dropped by 32.8% between summer 2022 and summer 2021.
- When compared to the last summer exams were sat, 2019, entries have increased by 11.5%, driven by increases in Year 12 and Year 13 entries of 5.5% and 18.9% respectively. Entries for Year 11- and Year 14+ learners have decreased since 2019 by 46.7% and 40.2% respectively.
- There are several factors that can contribute towards these changes in entries (see [external influences](#)).

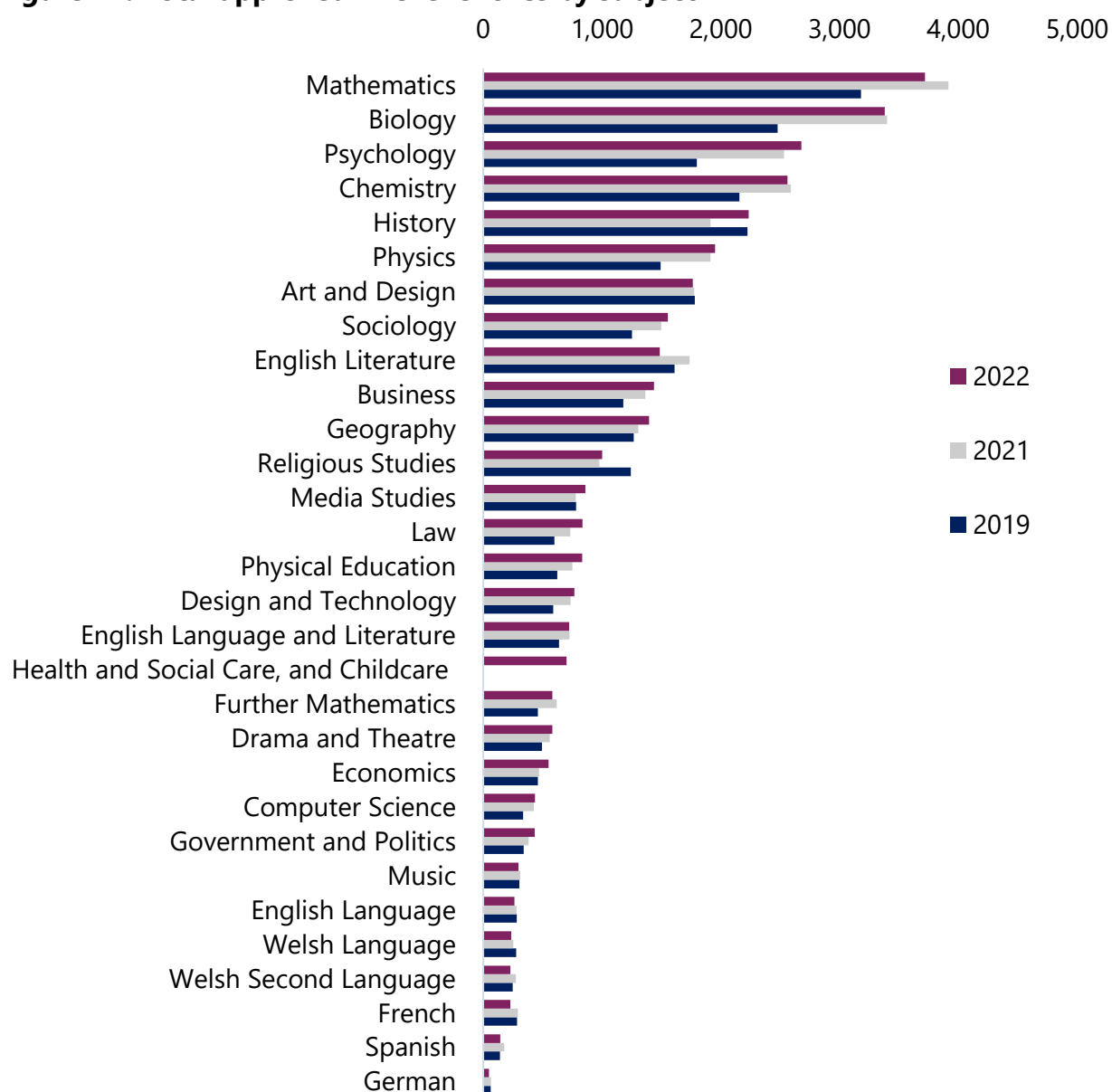
## Approved A level entries

Approved A levels are qualifications offered by WJEC that were designed specifically for learners in Wales. 93.4% of the total summer 2022 A level entries were for approved qualifications. This section does not include entries for A levels that were reformed for use primarily in England provided by other awarding bodies (see [qualification reforms](#)).

### Total approved A level summer entries by subject

Figure 14 compares total summer approved A level entries for 2022, 2021 and 2019 by subject.

**Figure 14: Total approved A level entries by subject**



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales



15 A level subjects saw an increase in entries in summer 2022 compared to last year. Entries decreased in 14 subject areas. The largest proportional increases are in History (16.8%), and Law (14.1%). The largest proportional decrease was in German (27.7%), Due to comparatively low entries in German, this large proportional decrease represents 20 actual entries. The largest decrease in number of entries was a 255 decrease in English Literature entries.

In summer 2022 the top five subjects at A level are Mathematics, Biology, Psychology, Chemistry and History. This matches the top five subjects from 2021 although Chemistry and Psychology have changed places. In 2019 Mathematics and Biology were in first and second place with History in third, Chemistry in fourth and Psychology in fifth.

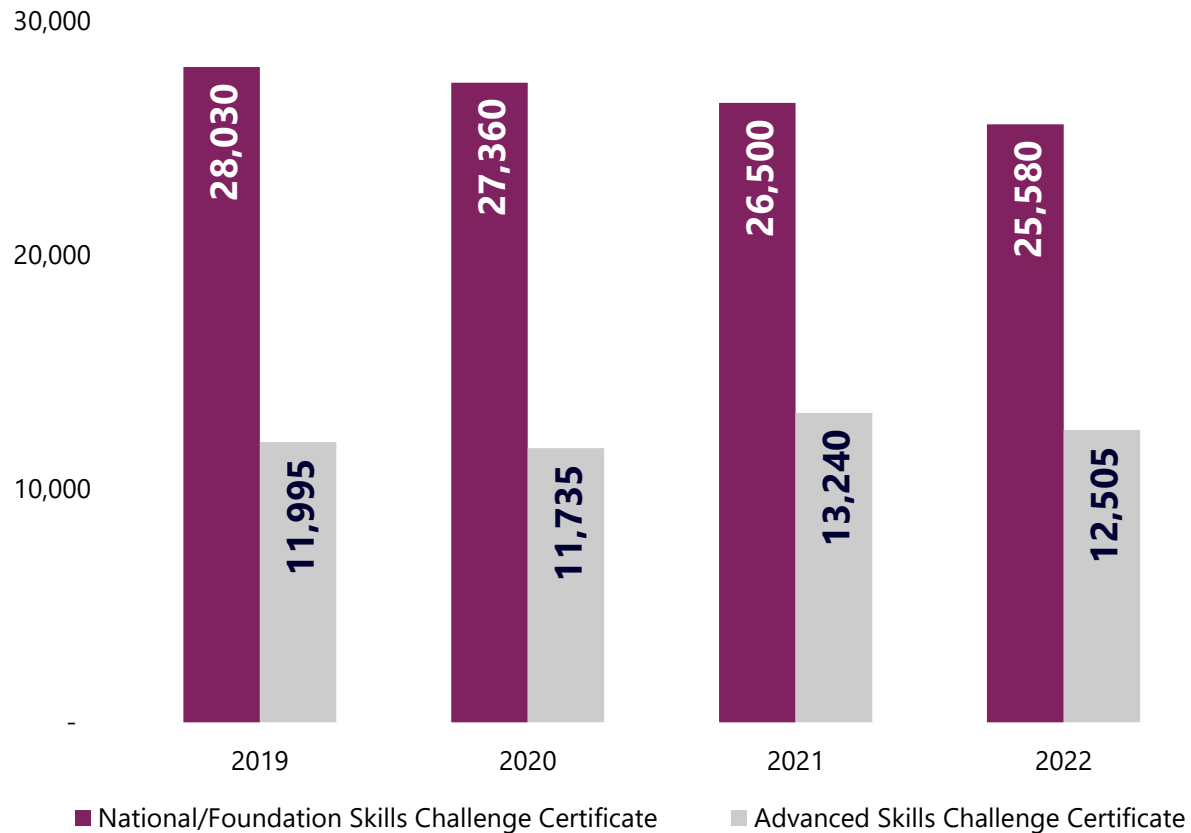
When comparing with 2019, the last summer exams were sat, the subject with the largest proportional increases were in Psychology (48.9%) and Law (39.8%). The largest proportional decreases were in German (25.4%) and French (20.0%).

### **Health and Social Care and Childcare**

Following our [review of Health and Social Care qualifications](#), a new approved A level in Health and Social Care and Childcare will be awarded for the first time in summer 2022. There were 700 entries for this qualification this summer and 90.9% percent of these entries were from Year 13 learners.

## Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate

Figure 15: Skills Challenge Certificate entries over time



Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, Qualifications Wales

- Total Skills Challenge Certificate entries decreased by 4.2% in summer 2022 compared to summer 2021.
- There were 25,580 entries for National/Foundation Skills Challenge Certificate (KS4) in summer 2022, down 3.5% compared to last summer and 8.7% compared to 2019. These account for 97.2% of all Skills Challenge Certificate entries in summer 2022 and 69.9% in 2019.
- The Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate saw 12,505 entries, down 5.6% compared to last summer but up 4.2% compared to summer 2019.

# Background Notes

Qualifications Wales is the regulator of qualifications, other than degrees, and the qualifications system in Wales.

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](#). Qualifications Wales operates in compliance with the UK Statistics Authority [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) and has published this statistical release as Official Statistics.

## Data Source

From summer 2018, we have collected and reported on data for Wales for general qualifications. Before summer 2018, data for Wales was collected and published by Ofqual, the qualifications regulator in England. Data in this release relating to summer 2017 were collected and published by Ofqual.

The awarding bodies that provide AS, A level, GCSEs and the Skills Challenge Certificate have submitted information to Qualifications Wales about the number of entries for each qualification available in summer 2022. The entries are only for centres located in Wales, regardless of the type of centre. This release covers the number of entries broken down by subject and age of students in Wales based on school year groups (year 11 is the academic year where students become 16 years old).

This release previously included data on Level 1/Level 2 certificates. The majority of this data was for the Level 1/Level 2 certificates offered by Cambridge International. These qualifications are no longer regulated by Qualifications Wales, so we are no longer including Level 1/Level 2 certificates in this release. Data relating to Level 1/Level 2 certificates still regulated by Qualifications Wales can be found in our Vocational Quarterly statistics.

## 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.

Data has been collected at an appropriate point when it is reasonably complete, this was 21 April 2022 for the summer 2022 series data in this release. However, schools can continue to make late entries right up to the data of the exam. For this reason, the title of this release refers to provisional entries.

### **Qualification reform**

Following the Welsh Government's [review of qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds](#) in 2012, a new set of reformed qualifications for GCSEs, AS, and A levels have been introduced in Wales. These reformed qualifications have been designed specifically to meet the needs of learners in Wales.

The reformed qualifications were introduced for first teaching in three phases. Phase 1 qualifications were taught from September 2015, Phase 2 from September 2016 and Phase 3 from September 2017. Information about these changes, and a list of the subjects included in each phase can be found [on our website](#).

In parallel to the reforms in Wales, new GCSEs, AS and A levels were also introduced for England. GCSE, AS and A level qualifications reformed for Wales and for England remain comparable, they are the same size and are accessible to the same range of learners. There are, however, some key design differences between them. GCSE qualifications reformed for Wales continue to be graded A\*-G, whereas GCSEs reformed for England have moved to a 9-1 grading system. Results from AS qualifications reformed for Wales contribute 40% towards an A level grade. Results for AS qualifications no longer count towards the new A levels designed for England.

In subjects where GCSEs, AS and A levels have been reformed for Wales, qualifications designed for England are not available for use in Wales on publicly funded courses. There are two main scenarios in which GCSEs, AS and A levels reformed for England could be taken by learners in Wales:

- GCSEs, AS and A levels offered in subjects that have not been reformed specifically for Wales are designated as eligible for use on publicly funded learning programmes.

- Where provision is not publicly funded, such as in independent schools, centres may choose to enter learners for qualifications that have been reformed for England even though there is a Welsh reformed equivalent qualification.

In this release the terms “approved GCSEs”, “approved AS levels”, and “approved A levels”, refer to the qualifications designed specifically for Wales, unless otherwise stated.

### **Performance measures**

In October 2017 changes were announced to how Welsh Government calculates performance measures. From summer 2019, only a learner’s first entry to a GCSE exam will count towards school performance measures. Previously the best grade achieved counted. The number of reserved slots for literacy, numeracy and science GCSEs was reduced from five to three, leaving six unreserved slots for other qualifications that are eligible for public funding in Wales. Performance measure in Wales are currently suspended until the end of the 2021/2022 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **External Influences**

There are a number of factors that can influence why entries for year groups might change over time, for example changes to:

- population size;
- entry behaviour e.g. when learners are entered for their GCSEs;
- the number of qualifications of each type being taken on average, for example, the number of AS levels being studied;
- the types of qualifications being taken in post-16.

### **Population changes**

The latest available official statistics on the Wales population aged 16, 17 or 18 years old are the [population projections published by the Welsh Government](#). These show a 1.7% increase in the population of 18-year-olds in 2022 compared to 2021, a 3.3% increase in 17-year-olds and a 3.8% increase in 16-year-olds. These changes might mean an upward influence from population on GCSE, AS and A level entries.

**Table A: Wales Population Changes**

<b>Year</b>	<b>16-year-olds</b>	<b>17-year-olds</b>	<b>18-year-olds</b>
2022	36,091	34,882	34,107
2021	34,771	33,755	33,535
Change (2022 - 2021)	1,320	1,127	572
Percentage change ((2022 - 2021) / 2021)	3.8%	3.3%	1.7%

Source: Welsh Government

As this release is based on counts of entries at qualification level it is not possible for us to quantify the impact of such factors. We have commented on factors influencing changes in entries only where we are confident that these factors are likely to be associated with a change.

### **Comparisons**

From 2017/18 awarding bodies submitted general qualifications data to Qualifications Wales rather than Ofqual. Comparisons to historical Ofqual data should be interpreted with caution.

### **Geographical coverage**

This release presents data on the number of entries for A levels, AS Levels, GCSEs and the Skills Challenge Certificate for centres located in Wales. This release does **not** include A levels, AS levels, GCSEs or the Skills Challenge Certificate taken outside of 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.

### **Completeness of the data**

Awarding bodies send Qualifications Wales entry data for all regulated qualifications classified as AS, A level, GCSE or the Skills Challenge Certificate. Qualifications Wales contacts 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 entry 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, Ofqual, awarding bodies, and the Welsh Government. We welcome feedback from users, so expect to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time. Qualifications Wales uses these statistics to inform understanding of entry patterns.

### **Related statistics and publications**

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

- [Our Provisional November GCSE and Level 1/Level 2 Certificates Entries for Wales release.](#)
- The annual '[Schools' census results' release](#), published by Welsh Government.
- [Entries for GCSE, AS and A level in England.](#)

### **Useful information**

A [glossary of terms](#) is available on our website to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the [Welsh Government website](#). The [QiW register](#) gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

### **Next update**

May 2023 (provisional).

### **User feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [statistics@qualificationswales.org](mailto:statistics@qualificationswales.org)

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