



# Summer 2023 Results Guide – GCSEs

August 2023



# Summer 2023 Results Guide: GCSE and Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate in Wales

This year, summer exams took place for the second time after they were cancelled in 2020 and 2021. Learners taking exams this academic year have had their education affected by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recognition of this, we took the decision to require WJEC to provide an additional level of support, as part of the transition back to pre-pandemic processes. This was provided in two ways - advance information which was published by WJEC in February, and a specific approach to grading for this summer's exams and assessments.

Due to the different awarding arrangements that took place, results in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 are not directly comparable to each other, or to results in previous years. It is important to remember this and take care when comparing this summer's results to previous years.

## Key Headlines:

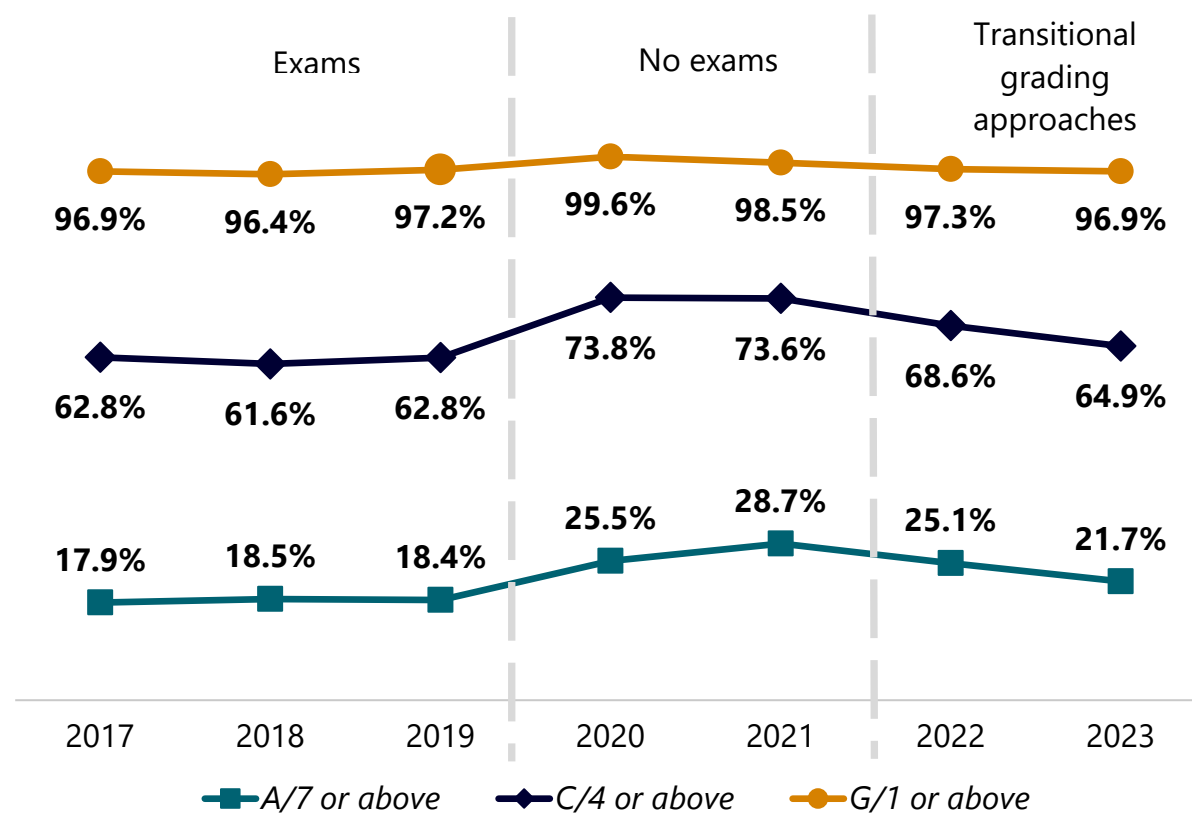
- results in 2023 were awarded broadly midway between 2019 and 2022
- 300,409 GCSE grades were awarded this summer. This is fewer than last summer, but more than in 2019. There were fewer entries from learners in year 10 and below this year, compared to last year, but more than in 2019
- 21.7% of GCSE grades issued were grade A/7 or above, 64.9% were grade C/4 or above and 96.9% were grade G/1 or above
- for 16-year-olds taking A\*-G GCSEs, 9.0% of grades issued were grade A\*, 22.0% were A\* to A and 65.6% were A\* to C
- these results are for exams that were sat this summer. They do not give a full picture of all the GCSEs that 16-year-olds in Wales have achieved, because they don't include any grades for GCSEs they may have achieved in previous exam series
- results published by JCQ for all learners include Wales A\*-G GCSEs and 9-1 GCSEs designed for use in England. As the grade scales do not directly align, results are published for key grades A/7, C/4 and G/1

## National GCSE results

- 21.7% of this year's GCSE results are grade A/7 or above. This is 3.3 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 3.4 pp lower than in 2022
- 64.9% of results are grade C/4 or above. This is 2.1 pp higher than in 2019 and 3.7 pp lower than in 2022
- 96.9% of results are grade G/1 or above. This is 0.3 pp lower than in 2019 and 0.4 pp lower than in 2022
- 300,409 GCSE grades were awarded this summer, up 1.6% compared to 2019 and down 3.4% compared to 2022
- grades were awarded to 56,660 learners in Wales in this summer, compared to 62,115 last summer
- results are published by JCQ. Entry figures for Double Award Science and Double Award Applied Science are counted twice to reflect the achievement of two grades in the subject

### GCSE results in Wales

*All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series*



Source: JCQ

## GCSE results in Wales (percentage of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series

Year	Number sat	A/7 or above	C/4 or above	G/1 or above
2023	300,409	21.7	64.9	96.9
2022	311,072	25.1	68.6	97.3
2021	328,658	28.7	73.6	98.5
2020	302,576	25.5	73.8	99.6
2019	295,690	18.4	62.8	97.2
2018	271,761	18.5	61.6	96.4

Source: JCQ

## GCSE results in Wales (number of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series

Year	A/7 or above	C/4 or above	G/1 or above
2023	65,085	194,891	291,013
2022	78,049	213,327	302,637
2021	94,449	241,935	323,669
2020	77,270	223,188	301,312
2019	54,327	185,634	287,430
2018	50,363	167,447	261,882

Source: JCQ

## GCSE results in Wales by gender (percentage of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series

Year	A/7 or above (Male)	A/7 or above (Female)	C/4 or above (Male)	C/4 or above (Female)	G/1 or above (Male)	G/1 or above (Female)
2023	18.1	25.2	61.4	68.3	96.5	97.2
2022	21.0	29.1	65.0	72.1	97.0	97.6
2021	23.3	34.0	69.5	77.6	98.3	98.7
2020	20.7	30.2	69.2	78.2	99.5	99.6
2019	14.6	22.0	57.8	67.6	96.7	97.7
2018	15.1	21.9	56.6	66.5	95.9	96.8

Source: JCQ

## How were results decided this summer?

Learners taking exams this summer were affected by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during previous years. In recognition of this, we decided that an additional level of support should be retained for learners as part of the transition back to pre-pandemic processes. In February, WJEC published advance information of the focus of the content of summer 2023 exams. In September 2022, we [announced](#) that the grading policy for summer 2023 would be that national subject outcomes should be broadly midway between those of 2019 and 2022.

Our grading policy for 2023 applied to approved GCSEs. These are qualifications which are designed for Wales, use the A\*-G grade scale and are offered by WJEC. Rules for awarding GCSEs offered by other awarding bodies were set by Ofqual.

The rules that we set for WJEC to achieve this policy aim were set out in our [data exchange procedures](#) for summer 2023. For each subject, WJEC had to use a statistical starting point as the primary source of evidence to guide the awarding process, and awarding had to rely on examiner judgement, supported by a range of other appropriate and available sources of evidence. The statistical starting points were based on outcomes for the main age group entering the qualification: 16-year-olds for most GCSEs. The statistical starting point was based on the average of results of 2022 and 2019 and applied to key grades A, C and F.

The approach to awarding grades this year is similar to the approach used in summer 2022, when statistical starting points were used to achieve results that were broadly midway between results in 2019 and 2021. Adaptations were also made to assessments in 2022. These adaptations were not in place this summer. The approach used this summer was put in place so that 2023 would continue the transition back to pre-pandemic arrangements whilst still supporting this year's cohort of learners in a unique year.

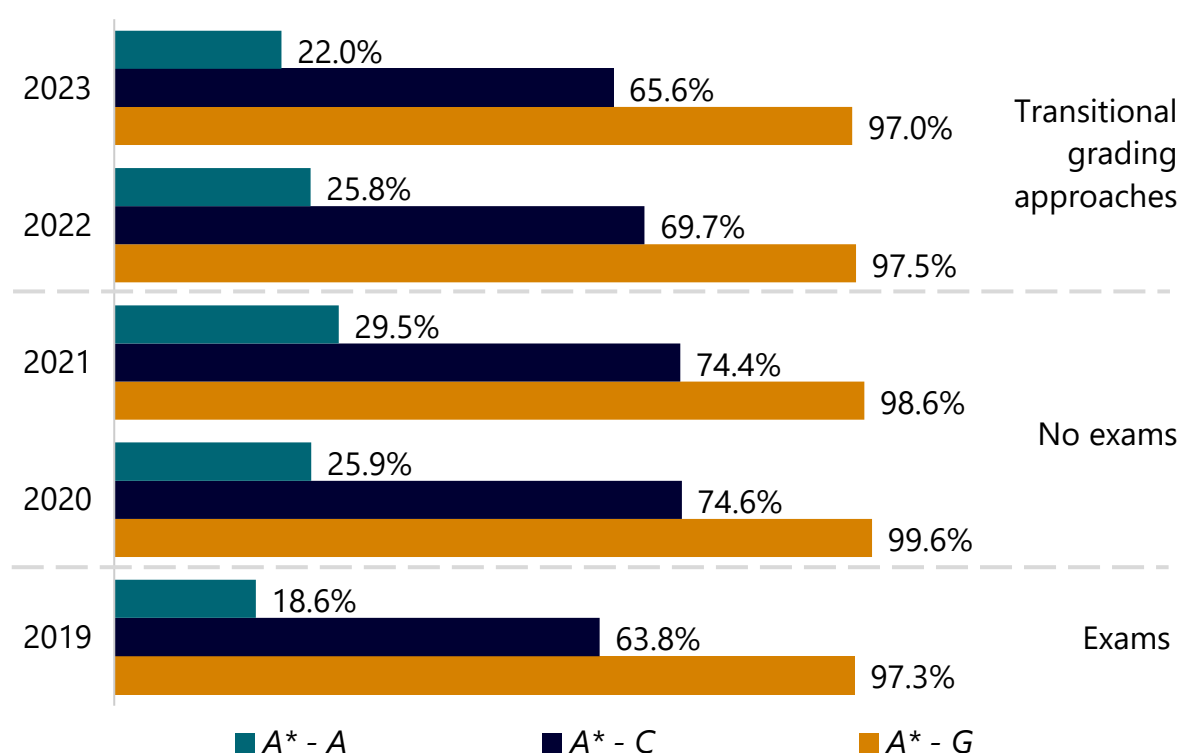
To understand how these rules have influenced results this summer, we need to look at results for just these WJEC qualifications and the age groups used to set the statistical starting point. All-subject results provide a useful picture, but it is important to remember that the statistical starting point was set for each subject separately, so we might expect the overall totals to look slightly different.

## Results for 16-year-olds taking A\*-G GCSEs

- 9.0% of results are A\* grades. This is 2.7 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 2.4 pp lower than in 2022
- 22.0% of results are A\* or A grades. This is 3.4 pp higher than in 2019 and 3.8 pp lower than in 2022
- 65.6% of results are grades A\* to C. This is 1.8 pp higher than in 2019 and 4.1 pp lower than in 2022
- 97.0% of results are grades A\* to G. This is 0.3 pp lower than in 2019 and 0.5 pp lower than in 2022

## A\*-G GCSE percentage results in Wales for 16-year-olds

16-year-olds in Wales, A\*-G full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series



Source: JCQ

## GCSE results in Wales (percentage of grades awarded)

16-year-olds in Wales, A\*-G full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series

Year	Number sat	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-G
2023	264,514	9.0	22.0	65.6	97.0
2022	266,552	11.4	25.8	69.7	97.5
2021	282,831	14.2	29.5	74.4	98.6
2020	263,881	11.3	25.9	74.6	99.6
2019	261,001	6.3	18.6	63.8	97.3
2018	242,034	6.2	18.6	62.8	96.5

Source: JCQ

## GCSE results in Wales (number of grades awarded)

16-year-olds in Wales, A\*-G full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series

Year	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-G
2023	23,839	58,145	173,628	256,678
2022	30,512	68,828	185,883	259,930
2021	40,218	83,405	210,529	278,920
2020	29,902	68,456	196,757	262,844
2019	16,536	48,633	166,626	253,968
2018	14,909	45,010	152,083	233,628

Source: JCQ

## Results for 16-year-olds taking English Language, Welsh Language, Mathematics and Mathematics – Numeracy

GCSE English Language, Welsh Language, Mathematics and Mathematics – Numeracy are also available in the November series, and can be taken by learners in Year 10. The results in this section are for exams that were sat by learners in the summer series of Year 11 only. They do not give a full picture of the results that 16-year-olds in Wales have achieved by the end of Year 11, because they don't include any grades achieved in previous exam series. Information on the best grade achieved by learners by the end of Year 11 is available on the [JCQ website](#).

## A\*-G GCSE English Language results (percentage of grades awarded)

16-year-olds in Wales, summer series

Year	Number sat	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-G
2023	31,128	4.9	17.3	63.7	97.8
2022	29,972	7.0	21.5	69.3	98.6
2021	31,120	8.8	24.7	73.7	98.9
2020	29,651	6.6	20.4	72.0	99.6
2019	29,136	2.7	12.5	58.4	98.5
2018	20,209	3.1	11.2	44.6	98.1
2017	30,737	3.2	14.0	64.5	98.6

Source: JCQ

### **A\*-G GCSE Welsh Language results (percentage of grades awarded)**

*16-year-olds in Wales, summer series*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number sat</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*-A</b>	<b>A*-C</b>	<b>A*-G</b>
2023	5,574	5.2	17.6	72.7	98.3
2022	5,426	7.6	22.2	76.3	98.4
2021	5,687	8.4	26.4	80.0	99.4
2020	5,296	8.7	22.7	80.2	99.8
2019	5,103	4.2	16.0	73.5	99.4
2018	4,572	4.1	14.8	71.0	99.4

Source: JCQ

### **A\*-G GCSE Mathematics results (percentage of grades awarded)**

*16-year-olds in Wales, summer series*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number sat</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*-A</b>	<b>A*-C</b>	<b>A*-G</b>
2023	28,237	8.4	16.5	57.0	94.8
2022	28,171	10.1	19.4	60.6	95.3
2021	30,577	14.0	24.6	68.4	98.3
2020	27,170	9.9	19.7	66.2	99.4
2019	27,032	6.7	14.7	54.9	94.7
2018	22,786	5.8	13.0	49.3	89.5

Source: JCQ

### **A\*-G GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy results (percentage of grades awarded)**

*16-year-olds in Wales, summer series*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number sat</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A*-A</b>	<b>A*-C</b>	<b>A*-G</b>
2023	20,206	6.3	14.8	54.6	94.1
2022	22,259	8.8	18.1	59.8	95.3
2021	28,319	12.1	22.1	65.5	97.1
2020	21,544	8.5	16.4	61.7	99.0
2019	20,971	3.9	10.6	50.1	94.0
2018	19,253	2.9	9.0	45.5	91.3

Source: JCQ

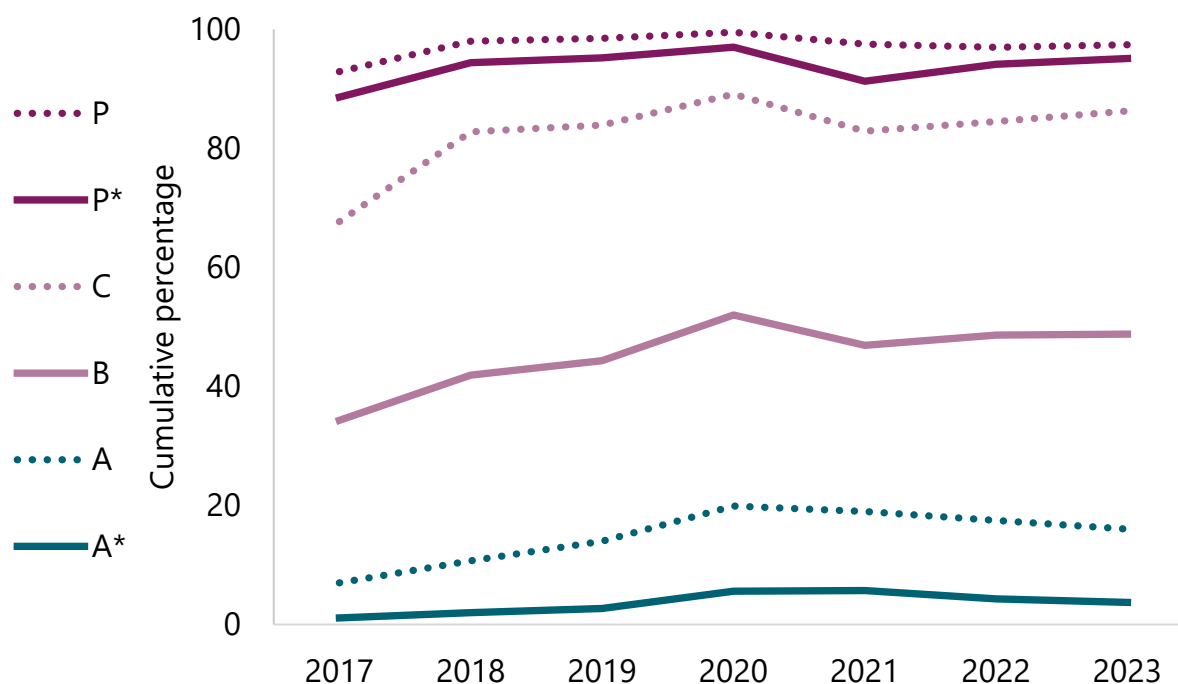


# National/Foundation (KS4) Skills Challenge Certificate

- 3.7% of results are A\* grades. This is 1.0 percentage point (pp) higher than in 2019 and 0.6 pp lower than in 2022
- 16.0% of results are A\* or A grades. This is 2.0 pp higher than in 2019 and 1.5 pp lower than in 2022
- 86.3% of results are grades A\* to C. This is 2.4 pp higher than in 2019 and 1.8 pp higher than in 2022
- 97.4% of results are a Pass or above. This is 1.1 pp lower than in 2019 and 0.4 pp higher than in 2022

## National/Foundation (KS4) SCC percentage results in Wales

All learners in Wales



Source: WJEC

Year	Total entries	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-Pass
2023	25,322	3.7	16.0	86.3	97.4
2022	25,211	4.3	17.5	84.5	97.0
2021	26,705	5.7	19.0	82.9	97.5
2020	28,377	5.6	19.9	89.1	99.5
2019	27,544	2.7	14.0	83.9	98.5
2018	26,962	2.0	10.7	82.8	98.0

Source: WJEC

## Results by centre type

This analysis groups schools and colleges into categories using agreed JCQ groups.

### GCSE

There were 256,165 entries in maintained centres, 3,160 in independent centres and 5,190 in all other centres.

Compared to 2022:

- independent centres saw a larger percentage point decrease in results at grades A\* and A\* to A than maintained centres
- maintained centres saw a larger percentage point decrease in results at grades A\* to C than independent centres

Compared to 2019:

- independent centres saw a larger percentage point increase in results at grades A\*, A\* to A and A\* to C than maintained centres

### GCSE results in Wales by centre type (percentage of grades awarded)

*16-year-olds in Wales, A\*-G full course GCSEs plus double award Science, summer series*

#### Number of grades awarded by centre type

Year	Maintained centres	Independent centres	Other centres
2023	256,165	3,160	5,190
2022	258,440	2,590	5,520
2021	273,915	2,910	6,030
2020	256,110	2,510	5,305
2019	253,030	2,065	5,940

Source: WJEC

#### A\* results by centre type (percentage of grades awarded)

Year	Maintained centres	Independent centres	Other centres
2023	8.8	35.6	4.2
2022	11.2	44.9	5.4
2021	14.0	45.0	9.8
2020	11.2	37.6	5.6
2019	6.3	30.0	2.5

Source: WJEC

### **A\*-A results by centre type (percentage of grades awarded)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Maintained centres</b>	<b>Independent centres</b>	<b>Other centres</b>
2023	21.7	58.1	11.7
2022	25.7	66.2	13.6
2021	29.3	66.5	19.5
2020	25.9	61.6	14.0
2019	18.7	53.7	9.1

Source: WJEC

### **A\*-C results by centre type (percentage of grades awarded)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Maintained centres</b>	<b>Independent centres</b>	<b>Other centres</b>
2023	65.7	90.2	47.4
2022	69.9	93.4	49.6
2021	74.6	95.2	58.9
2020	74.8	95.4	54.5
2019	64.4	88.1	45.1

Source: WJEC

## **What alternative arrangements were in place in 2020 and 2021?**

In summers 2020 and 2021, when exams did not go ahead, two different alternative approaches to awarding grades were used. In 2020, learners received the best of their 'centre assessment grade' (CAG) or their 'standardised grade'. At A level, learners could also receive the grade they achieved in their AS (in the same subject) if it was higher than the CAG or the 'standardised grade'. The CAG was a prediction by teachers of what the learner would have achieved had they sat their exams in summer 2020. The 'standardised grade' had been calculated using data.

In 2021, learners received 'centre determined grades' (CDGs), which were decided by schools and colleges based on a wide range of evidence.

Due to the very different awarding processes in these years, care should be taken when comparing results in 2020 and 2021 to other years.

## Where can I find more information about results?

- official results for GCSE for Wales, England and Northern Ireland are published by [JCQ](#)
- our overview of the summer 2023 exam series, along with more information about how qualifications were awarded this summer, can be found [on our website](#)
- we will publish more information about variation in centre results as official statistics on 21 September
- we will publish equalities analysis of results as official statistics on 19 October