



Summer 2023 Results Guide – AS and A levels

August 2023



Summer 2023 Results Guide: AS, A level and Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate in Wales

In 2023, 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
- 32,960 A level grades were awarded this summer
- 13.5% of A level grades issued were grade A*, 34.0% were A*-A and 97.5% were A*-E
- for 18-year-olds taking WJEC A levels, 13.2% of grades issued were grade A*, 33.7% were A*-A and 97.7% were A*-E
- 40,706 AS grades were awarded this summer
- 25.5% of AS grades issued were grade A and 90.9% were A-E
- for 17-year-olds taking WJEC AS levels, 25.7% of grades issued were grade A and 90.8% were A-E

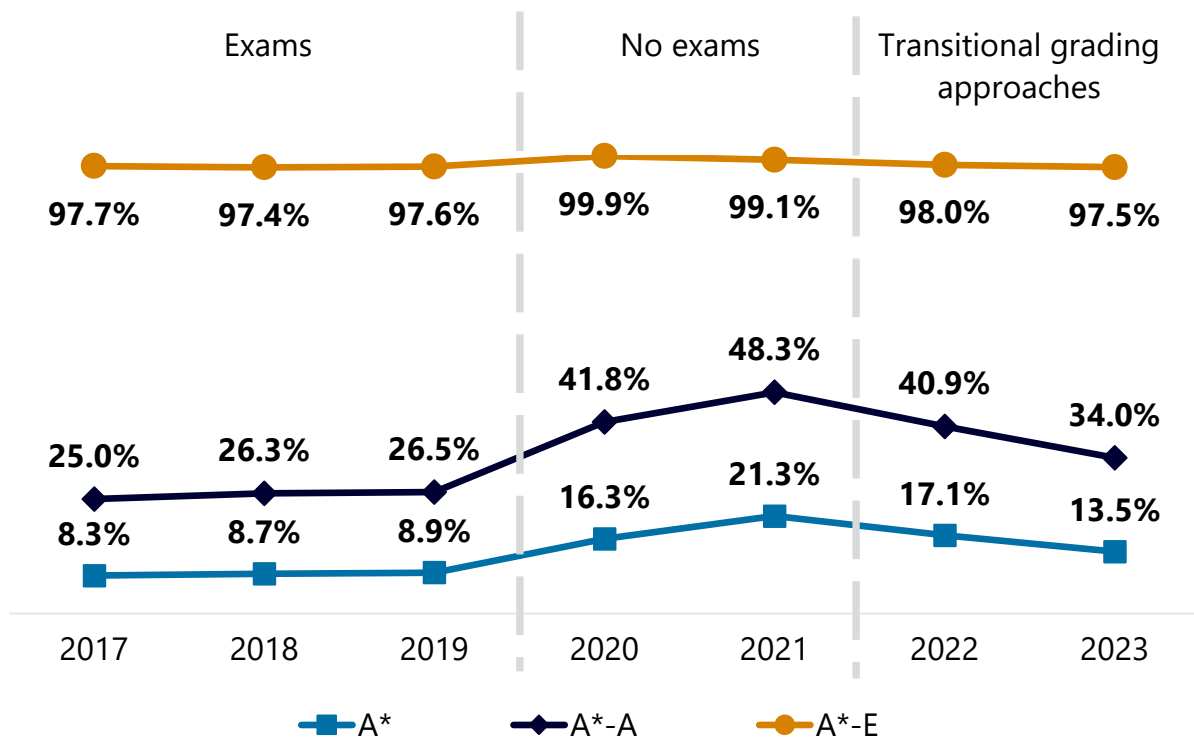
National results

A level

- 32,960 A level grades were awarded this summer - up 2.0% compared to 2019 and down 7.2% compared to 2022
- grades were awarded to 13,930 learners in Wales in this summer - compared to 14,640 last summer
- 13.5% of this year's A level results are A* grades - this is 4.6 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 3.6 pp lower than in 2022
- 34.0% of results are A* or A grades - this is 7.5 pp higher than in 2019 and 6.9 pp lower than in 2022
- 97.5% of results are grades A* to E - this is 0.1 pp lower than in 2019 and 0.5 pp lower than in 2022

A level results in Wales

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award A levels



Source: JCQ

A level results in Wales (percentage of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award A levels

	Number sat	A*	A*-A	A*-E
2023	32,960	13.5	34.0	97.5
2022	35,499	17.1	40.9	98.0
2021	35,867	21.3	48.3	99.1
2020	31,316	16.3	41.8	99.9
2019	32,320	8.9	26.5	97.6
2018	32,445	8.7	26.3	97.4

Source: JCQ

A level results in Wales (number of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award A levels

	A*	A*-A	A*-E
2023	4,460	11,200	32,131
2022	6,060	14,513	34,789
2021	7,644	17,318	35,551
2020	5,102	13,083	31,289
2019	2,879	8,575	31,540
2018	2,815	8,523	31,606

Source: JCQ

A level results in Wales by gender (percentage of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award A levels

Year	A*	A*	A*-A	A*-A	A*-E	A*-E
	(Male)	(Female)	(Male)	(Female)	(Male)	(Female)
2023	13.9	13.3	32.6	35.0	96.8	98.0
2022	18.1	16.3	40.6	41.1	97.6	98.3
2021	20.8	21.7	44.8	50.9	98.8	99.3
2020	16.7	16.0	39.9	43.2	99.9	99.9
2019	9.7	8.3	26.3	26.7	96.9	98.1
2018	9.4	8.1	26.6	26.0	96.7	98.0

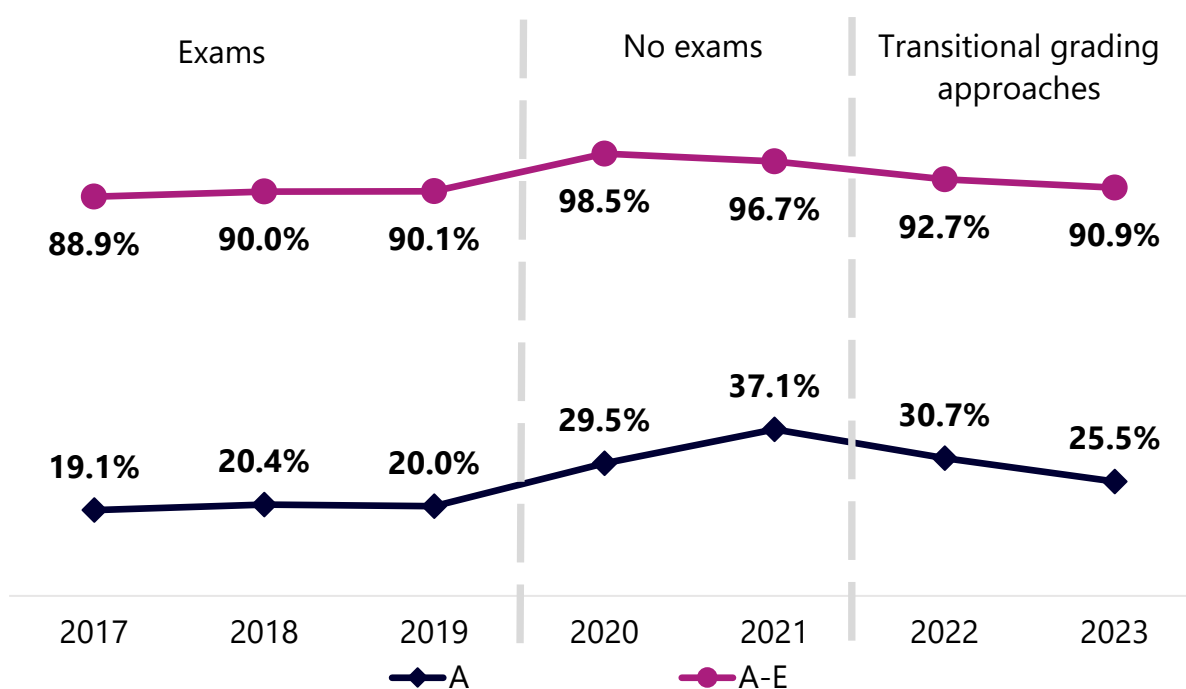
Source: JCQ

AS

- 40,706 AS level grades were awarded this summer - up 0.2% compared to 2019 and 6.8% compared to 2022
- grades were awarded to 17,040 learners in Wales in this summer - compared to 15,295 last summer
- 25.5% of this year's AS results are A grades - this is 5.5 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 5.2 pp lower than in 2022
- 90.9% of results are grades A to E - this is 0.8 pp higher than in 2019 and 1.8 pp lower than in 2022

AS percentage results in Wales

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award AS levels



Source: JCQ

AS results in Wales (percentage of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award AS levels

	Number sat	A	A-E
2023	40,706	25.5	90.9
2022	38,106	30.7	92.7
2021	42,820	37.1	96.7
2020	46,545	29.5	98.5
2019	40,614	20.0	90.1
2018	42,915	20.4	90.0

Source: JCQ

AS results in Wales (number of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award AS levels

	A	A-E
2023	10,381	36,992
2022	11,685	35,343
2021	15,879	41,417
2020	13,753	45,839
2019	8,127	36,592
2018	8,737	38,635

Source: JCQ

AS results in Wales by gender (percentage of grades awarded)

All learners in Wales, all awarding bodies, all single award AS levels

Year	A (Male)	A (Female)	A-E (Male)	A-E (Female)
2023	24.1	26.6	89.1	92.2
2022	28.9	32.0	91.5	93.7
2021	32.5	40.4	95.4	97.7
2020	26.8	31.6	98.1	98.8
2019	19.0	20.7	88.0	91.7
2018	19.6	21.0	87.7	91.9

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 AS and A levels, as well as ICT and Applied ICT. These are qualifications designed for Wales and offered by WJEC. Rules for awarding A levels 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: 17-year-olds for AS and 18-year-olds for A level. The statistical starting point was based on the average of results in 2022 and 2019 and applied to key grades *A* and *E*.

The approach to awarding grades this year is similar to the approach used last summer, 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.

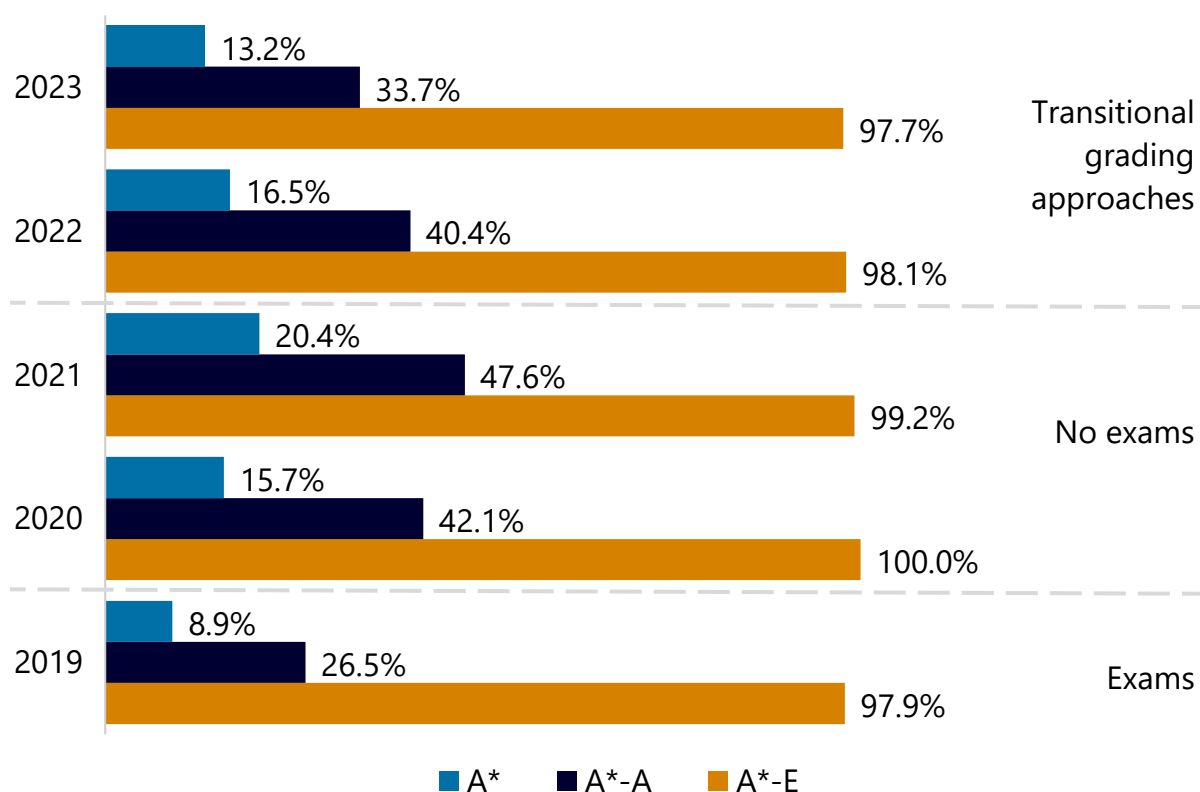
To understand how these rules have influenced results this summer, we need to look at results for approved qualifications only and the age groups used to set the statistical starting point. All-subject results provide a useful picture, but it is important to remember that the statistical starting point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

Results for 18-year-olds taking WJEC A levels

- 13.2% of results are A* grades - this is 4.3 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 3.3 pp lower than in 2022
- 33.7% of results are A* or A grades - this is 7.2 pp higher than in 2019 and 6.7 pp lower than in 2022
- 97.7% of results are grades A* to E - this is 0.2 pp lower than in 2019 and 0.4 pp lower than in 2022

A level percentage results in Wales for 18-year-olds

18-year-olds in Wales, WJEC, single award A levels, excluding Eduqas



Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

A level results in Wales

18-year-olds in Wales, WJEC, single award A levels, excluding Eduqas

Year	Number sat	A* (%)	A*-A (%)	A*-E (%)	A* (number)	A*-A (number)	A*-E (number)
2023	29,115	13.2	33.7	97.7	3,846	9,805	28,447
2022	31,539	16.5	40.4	98.1	5,200	12,753	30,929
2021	30,309	20.4	47.6	99.2	6,183	14,427	30,067
2020	25,406	15.7	42.1	100.0	3,989	10,696	25,406
2019	26,177	8.9	26.5	97.9	2,330	6,937	25,627

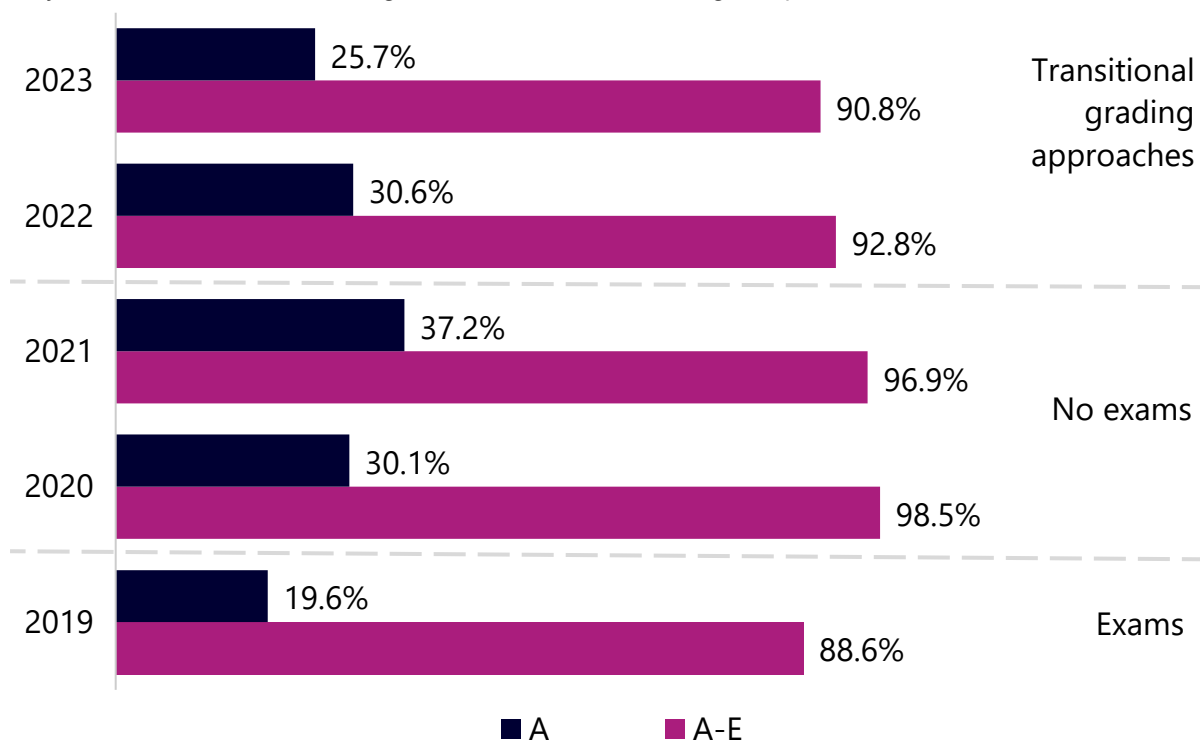
Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

Results for 17-year-olds taking WJEC AS levels

- 25.7% of results are A grades - this is 6.1 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 4.9 pp lower than in 2022
- 90.8% of results are grades A to E - this is 2.2 pp higher than in 2019 and 2.0 pp lower than in 2022

AS percentage results in Wales for 17-year-olds

17-year-olds in Wales, WJEC, single award AS levels, excluding Eduqas



Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

AS results in Wales

17-year-olds in Wales, WJEC, single award AS levels, excluding Eduqas

Year	Number sat	A (%)	A-E (%)	A (number)	A-E (number)
2023	34,835	25.7	90.8	8,969	31,647
2022	35,330	30.6	92.8	10,813	32,780
2021	39,574	37.2	96.9	14,722	38,347
2020	36,040	30.1	98.5	10,848	35,499
2019	30,681	19.6	88.6	6,013	27,183

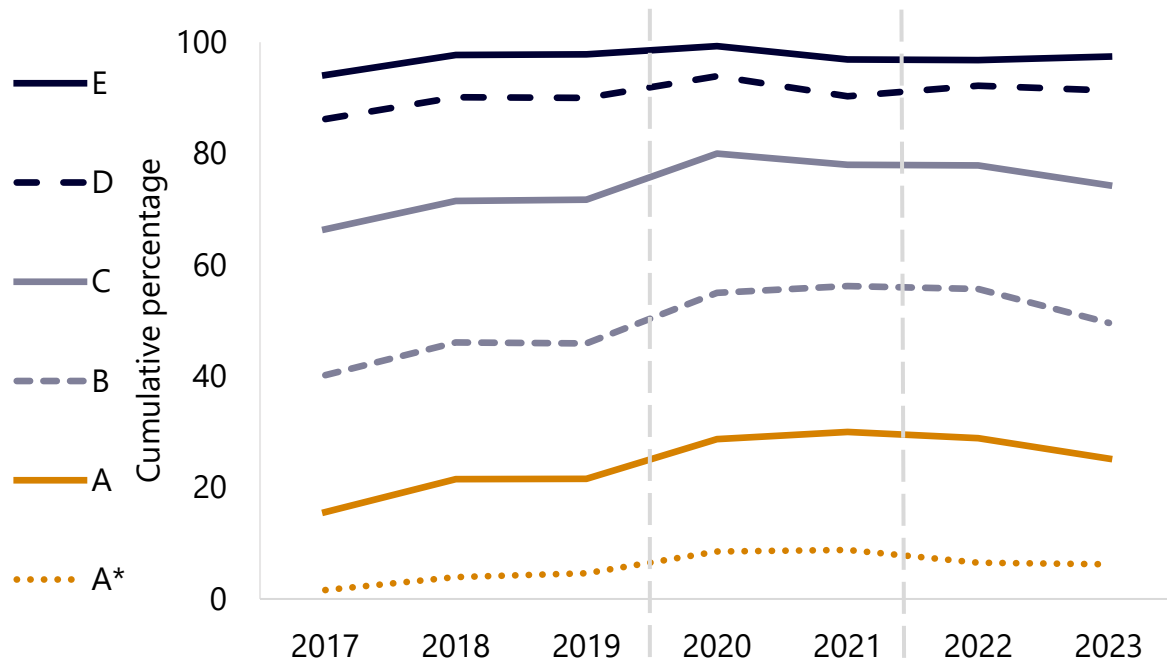
Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate

- 6.2% of results are A* grades- this is 1.6 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2019 and 0.3 pp lower than in 2022
- 25.2% of results are A* or A grades - this is 3.6 pp higher than in 2019 and 3.7 pp lower than in 2022
- 97.4% of results are grades A* to E - this is 0.4 pp lower than in 2019 and 0.6 pp higher than in 2022

Advanced SCC percentage results in Wales

All learners in Wales



Source: WJEC

Year	Total entries	A*	A*-A	A*-E
2023	11,793	6.2	25.2	97.4
2022	12,264	6.5	28.9	96.8
2021	12,772	8.8	30.0	96.9
2020	11,853	8.5	28.7	99.3
2019	11,918	4.6	21.6	97.8
2018	12,049	3.9	21.5	97.7
2017	11,332	1.6	15.6	94.1

Source: WJEC

Results by centre type

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

A level

There were 20,229 entries in maintained centres, 1,369 in independent centres and 7,360 in further education (FE) centres. The proportion of entries from independent and FE centres has increased compared to both 2019 and 2022.

Compared to 2022:

- independent centres saw the largest percentage point decrease in results at grade A*
- FE centres saw the largest percentage point decrease at grades A* to A

Compared to 2019:

- independent centres saw the largest percentage point increase in results at grade A*
- maintained centres saw the largest percentage point increase in results at grades A* to A

A level results in Wales by centre type

18-year-olds in Wales, WJEC, single award A levels, excluding Eduqas

Number of grades awarded by centre type

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	20,229	7,360	1,369
2022	22,518	7,623	1,245
2021	21,680	7,226	1,229
2020	18,450	5,875	964
2019	19,370	5,763	908

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

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

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	12.7	9.2	42.9
2022	15.9	12.9	48.6
2021	20.3	14.0	60.2
2020	14.6	13.3	51.1
2019	8.2	7.5	34.7

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

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

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	33.4	27.1	73.0
2022	40.2	35.6	75.1
2021	48.6	38.2	85.1
2020	41.3	38.2	80.5
2019	25.0	24.8	68.2

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

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

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	97.7	97.3	99.9
2022	98.1	97.8	99.8
2021	99.3	98.7	99.9
2020	100.0	100.0	100.0
2019	97.7	98.4	99.2

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

AS

There were 23,426 entries in maintained centres, 794 in independent centres and 10,438 in FE centres. The proportion of entries from FE centres has increased compared to both 2019 and 2022.

Compared to 2022:

- independent centres saw the largest percentage point decrease in results at grade A
- maintained centres saw the largest percentage point decrease in results at grades A to E

Compared to 2019:

- maintained centres saw the largest percentage point increase in results at grade A and at grades A to E

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

17-year-olds in Wales, WJEC, single award AS levels, excluding Eduqas

Number of grades awarded by centre type

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	23,426	10,438	794
2022	24,344	10,030	815
2021	28,212	9,936	1,251
2020	26,128	8,691	1,056
2019	21,847	8,021	809

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

A results by centre type (percentage of grades awarded)

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	25.9	22.5	64.5
2022	31.5	24.9	74.0
2021	38.8	27.2	79.2
2020	30.3	24.6	69.9
2019	18.3	18.5	64.2

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

A-E results by centre type (percentage of grades awarded)

Year	Maintained centres	FE centres	Independent centres
2023	90.8	90.3	98.2
2022	93.1	91.5	98.7
2021	97.3	95.1	100.0
2020	99.0	96.7	99.7
2019	88.0	89.4	97.9

Source: QW data collection from awarding bodies

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

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. 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 AS and A levels 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