

## **PRESS NOTICE**

**STRICT EMBARGO: 09.30 hours Thursday, 18 August 2011**

### **A-level results show no change at grade A, a rise in science and maths, and a boost to boys' performance**

Results published today show that the percentage of students achieving grade A or better at A-level remains unchanged at 27.0 per cent compared with 2010.

At A\*, boys close the gap with girls. The number of A\* grades issued to boys increases from 7.9 per cent to 8.2 per cent. Girls' performance dips slightly from 8.3 per cent to 8.2 per cent. In this, the second year of A\* being awarded at A-level, there is a marginal increase of 0.1 percentage points in the number of awards made at the highest grade, from 8.1 per cent to 8.2 per cent.

Overall, the cumulative percentage of A-level grades A\*-E increases very marginally by 0.2 percentage points, from 97.6 per cent to 97.8 per cent.

Between 2010 and 2011, the size of the 18-year-old cohort decreased slightly by 2.5 per cent. Despite this, the number of A-level grades issued is up 1.6 per cent (from 853,933 in 2010 to 867,317 in 2011).

The sciences and mathematics continue to see significant increases in entries. Mathematics (including Further Maths) increases by 7.4 per cent and Biology, Chemistry and Physics see increases of 7.2 per cent, 9.2 per cent and 6.1 per cent respectively. In these subjects, the rate of improvement for boys is greater than that for girls. The overall gap in performance between boys and girls at grade A in these subjects has reduced from 0.9 to 0.3 percentage points and at grade E from 0.9 to 0.7 percentage points.

Traditional modern foreign languages continue to decline. Entries for Spanish are down (0.2 per cent), halting a year on year increase since 2002. French and German continue their downward trend, down 4.7 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively.

## **AS**

The number of grades issued for AS increases by 17.9 per cent (1,197,490 in 2010 to 1,411,919 in 2011). The dramatic increase was expected and is explained by a change to the funding rules in England, which came into force this year.

Despite this overall increase, the number of grades issued for AS Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics rose by considerably more (25.2 per cent, 22.9 per cent, 28.4 per cent and 27.8 per cent respectively).

## **Extended Project**

Today's results show the number of grades issued for the Level 3 Extended Project increases by 51.0 per cent, from 15,958 in 2010 to 24,099 in 2011. This is the third year in which results for the Extended Project have been published. The cumulative percentage of grades A\*-E increases by 1.2 percentage points to 91.8.

## **Applied AS and A-level**

This is the fifth year in which Applied A-levels have been awarded and there continues to be a decline in entries. There is a 22.4 per cent drop in the number of students receiving grades for the Applied A-level Double Award (from 9,576 in 2010 to 7,434 in 2011) and a 5.7 per cent drop in the Applied A-level Single Award (from 36,810 in 2010 to 34,728 in 2011).

The number of grades issued for Applied AS Double Award rises by 3.2 per cent (from 8,565 in 2010 to 8,839 in 2011). The Applied AS Single Award also has an increase in entries of 8.5 per cent (from 50,766 in 2010 to 55,098 in 2011). These rises are probably also linked to funding issues.

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Commenting on the publication of this year's GCE results, Dr Jim Sinclair, Director, Joint Council for Qualifications, said:

"Students across the country can be proud of their achievements and should be congratulated. Today's results have been well-earned and are the product of many years' hard work and commitment to their education.

"The increase in the number of students taking maths and the sciences suggest that young people are listening to the repeated calls from industry for more people to study the STEM subjects."

### Notes for Editors

1. Detailed tabulations of the GCE AS and A-level, Applied GCE AS and A-level are published separately, also with the STRICT EMBARGO: 09.30 HOURS THURSDAY 18 AUGUST 2011 and will be available on the JCQ website from 09.30 on 18 August 2011 – [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)
2. These results are for qualifications taken by students across the UK but predominantly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
3. Change to AS funding rules. In March 2010 the Government announced that the success rate data collected from the 2010/11 academic year will be calculated according to the planned end date and that any AS levels that have a one year end date and are not cashed in will be treated as fails for future funding and success rate purposes.
4. The JCQ comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, Edexcel, OCR, SQA and WJEC – the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK, offering GCSE, GCE, AEA, Entry Level, Vocational and vocationally-related qualifications.
5. The JCQ was established in January 2004 and superseded the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ, 1998-2003). The JCQ was formed to enable member awarding bodies to act together in :
  - providing, wherever possible, common administrative arrangements for the schools and colleges and other providers which offer their qualifications; and
  - dealing with the regulators and responding to proposals and initiatives on assessment and the curriculum.

Media contacts:

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