

Press Release

12/08/2021

GCSE 2021 Results - ALL President Kim Bower Comments

“At the end of this exceptional year, I want to congratulate all language learners across the U.K. who are collecting their GCSE results today. I particularly want to acknowledge the increased workload this year for their teachers who have had to set and mark assessments while at the same time preparing lessons and supporting students both in the classroom and online. For language teachers, the listening and speaking elements of the GCSE have made this an especially demanding task, and in addition colleagues in England have been assessing learners for a new element in the GCSE, the Speaking Endorsement.

It is good to see that overall numbers taking a GCSE language have stabilised over the past couple of years. There has been a disappointing reduction in the number of those entered for German (a reduction of 4076) but an encouraging increase in the number entered for Spanish (an increase of 5201). It remains a concern that only around a half (50%) of students study a language as part of the EBacc whereas three-quarters (75%) study History or Geography.

Ofqual reviewed the grading of French and German GCSE and recommended bringing it into line with GCSE Spanish in June 2020 (although this is still well below that of History and Geography) but schools were required **not** to make the adjustment in their Centre Assessed grades (CAGs) last year with Ofqual planning to make the adjustment in their standardisation process. However, as we know, that process was abandoned and the unadjusted CAGs issued to students. For 2021, Ofqual told schools to use the 2017 to 2019 figures when marking work and did **not** say that there should be adjustments in GCSE French and German. As a result, severe grading in GCSE languages remains a serious issue and without urgent action to bring language GCSE grades into line with other EBacc subjects we fear that we will not see increased numbers opting to study a language at GCSE and beyond. We have been assured by Ofqual that this action will be taken next year”.

ENDS