



**Strictly Embargoed until 09.30 HRS on Thursday 24 August 2017**

## **Northern Ireland GCSE Results 2017**

- **Overall, continued strong performance for Northern Ireland candidates.**
- **Males improve outcomes, but females continue to widen the performance gap.**
- **GCSE English and Mathematics outcomes rise slightly.**
- **Continued growth in STEM entries.**
- **Comparison is less easy across jurisdictions, because of policy changes and exam reforms in England and Wales.**

Figures released by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ<sup>CIC</sup>) show that Northern Ireland students continue to make steady improvements in GCSE outcomes, with small rises across the grades in GCSE examinations.

### ***Slight Increase in Performance***

There has been a slight rise of 0.7 percentage points, for entries awarded the top A\* grade, rising to 10%. Entries awarded A\* - C grades<sup>1</sup> have improved slightly with a 0.4 percentage points increase to 79.5%.

GCSE entries in Northern Ireland have fallen by 3.2% from 161,975 to 156,806.

### ***English and Mathematics performance rises slightly***

In GCSE English, the percentage of entries achieving A\* - C grades<sup>1</sup> increased by 1.8 percentage points to 79.6%.

GCSE Mathematics outcomes have risen to 66.4% of entries achieving grades<sup>1</sup> A\* - C, returning performance to 2015 levels (66.6%).

### ***Females widen the gap, but males do improve performance***

Females continue to perform better than males in GCSE examinations, with 83.5% of all female entries gaining a grade<sup>1</sup> C/4 or above (up 0.6 percentage points on last

year). However, male entries achieving grades<sup>1</sup> A\* - C improved to 75.4%, up 0.1 percentage points on 2016. The gap between Female and Male performance at A\* - C grades<sup>1</sup> has widened by 0.5 percentage points to 8.1%.

### ***STEM popularity continues to grow***

Entries in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related subjects grew by 0.5%. STEM subjects here account for almost one-third (32.2%) of all GCSE entries.

The growth in STEM entries is being driven by growth in subjects such as Computing (+21.4 %) and Physics (+2.5%). There were decreases in the percentage of the overall entry taking Biology (-4.1%) and Chemistry (-4.0%).

### **Grade Changes**

This year's GCSE results include 9-1 graded qualifications for the first time. In Northern Ireland, the new scale applies to English Literature and Mathematics qualifications offered by AQA, OCR, Pearson and Eduqas. A little over 3% of students here will receive a numerical grade.

The 9-1 GCSEs have been developed to meet the requirements of Government in England, who wanted to enable the better differentiation of students, especially at the top grades.

The new grade scale can be compared with A\*-G at A/7; C/4; and G/1 (using cumulative figures). Consequentially, comparisons across years, subjects and jurisdictions, is possible at these anchor points only.

The A\*-G graded qualifications in Northern Ireland have not changed. The A\*-G grading will change in 2019, when the A\* Grade will be aligned to the 9 Grade.

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## Notes to Editors

<sup>1</sup> This year's results are a combined figure of A\* - C with 9-4 from the new numerical 9-1 grading. 9-1 grades were awarded to a little over 3% of students in Northern Ireland for two subjects – GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English Literature

99.2% of GCSE students in Northern Ireland sat A\* - C qualifications. Further information on the GCSE grade changes is available

[http://ccea.org.uk/regulation/gcse\\_grading](http://ccea.org.uk/regulation/gcse_grading)

The statistics below represent the provisional Northern Ireland GCSE results from five JCQ awarding organisations: - AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC

**Table 1: Northern Ireland GCSE entries and provisional results – all scales (A\*-G / 9-1)**

	2017	2016	2015
<b>Entries</b>	<b>156,806</b>	161,975	171,325
%A* - A/7	<b>29.5</b>	29.1	28.6
%A* - C/4	<b>79.5</b>	79.1	78.7
%A* - G/1	<b>99.0</b>	99.0	99.2

**Table 2: Northern Ireland GCSE provisional results by gender (combined A\*-G/9-1)**

2017 Provisional	Males		Females	
	2017	2016	2017	2016
%A* - A/7	<b>23.7</b>	24.1	<b>35.3</b>	34.0
%A* - C/4	<b>75.4</b>	75.3	<b>83.5</b>	82.9
%A* - G/1	<b>98.7</b>	98.8	<b>99.2</b>	99.3

1. The JCQCIC is a membership body and comprises AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, OCR, Pearson, SQA and WJEC – the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK.
2. Media contacts: The JCQ's press office can be contacted on: 020 7227 0671/020 7638 4132/07905 683 816

3. Detailed tabulations of the GCSE Full Course, GCSE Short Course, GCSE Double Award, Entry Level Certification, Level 1 and Level 2 Project are published separately, with the STRICT EMBARGO OF 09.30 HOURS THURSDAY 24 AUGUST 2017 and will be available on the JCQ website from 0930 on 24 August – [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)
4. These results are for qualifications taken by students across the UK but predominantly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
5. All awarding organisations are answerable to the regulatory authorities - Ofqual (England), Welsh Government (Wales) and CCEA (Northern Ireland) – for examinations standards. The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies' standards. In addition, the awarding organisations themselves conduct a number of comparability studies to compare standards. Maintaining standards within and across all qualifications in order to ensure fairness to all candidates is the paramount concern of the awarding bodies.