

Post-16 GCSE English and maths Results briefing: August 2024

Summary

GCSE results were published [here](#) today (22 August). JCQ publish details of post-16 results for England (JCQ age descriptors 17, 18, 19 and 20+ correspond to what we generally term 16, 17, 18 and 19+) and the headline post-16 pass rates are summarized in the table on the next page of this briefing.

Key points

- This summer's results mean that nearly 100,000 post-16 'retake' students have achieved a grade 4 in GCSE English or maths this academic year. This is the highest number since the pandemic, and will improve the progression opportunities for even more post-16 students.
- This academic year, more post-16 students achieved a grade 4 or above in GCSE English or maths than last year: a 14% increase.
- More 16-18 year old students achieved a grade 4 this summer than last summer: 31,022 in English and 32,283 in maths.
- 16-18 GCSE entries this year were significantly higher than last year: 133,411 for English and 165,796 for maths.
- The vast majority of these 16-18 students will be college-based 'retake' students who had not achieved at grade 4 in Year 11.
- The 2023/24 academic year saw growing demand for post-16 retakes because of increased Year 11 cohort size and their lower grade 4+ pass rates in 2023 and this added to the staffing and capacity challenges faced by colleges. With demographic growth and Year 11 pass rates remaining fairly stable it is likely that demand for retakes will remain high.
- GCSE Grade 4+ pass rates for adult candidates have remained stable for maths but have fallen in English.

Background

This was the third summer series since the pandemic where students took externally set and marked public exams and the second year where the aim was for the grade profile to return to 'normal' (ie: 2019). Grade boundaries are set based on the performance of the Year 11 cohort and then applied to all candidates, including post-16.

The post-16 retake cohort is not typical or predictable and different colleges have different approaches to GCSE entries. What we know is that most of these candidates had not yet achieved a grade 4 or above, which is why they are retaking post-16 and over 90% of these candidates are college based.

Around a third of post-16 candidates choose to retake in November and those who achieve a grade 4 or above then will not generally retake in the summer. November results there need to be included in any overview.

2024 outcomes

JCQ has provided data for candidates aged 17, 18, 19 and 20+ for England which broadly corresponds to 16, 17, 18 and 19+. 2020 data are not available for the age breakdowns.

Results

All post-16	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English 4+	20.9%	25.9%	28.4%			30.3%
GCSE maths 4+	17.4%	18.7%	20.0%			21.2%

16-18 year olds	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English 4+	19.3%	23.0%	24.1%			27.4%
GCSE maths 4+	15.0%	13.3%	15.2%			17.4%

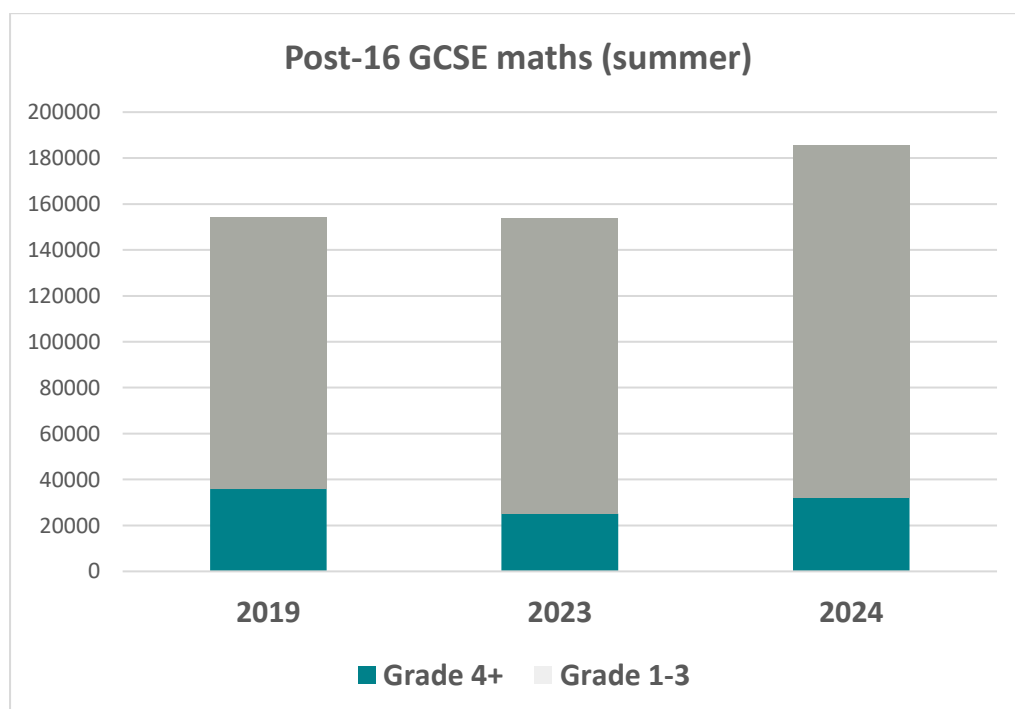
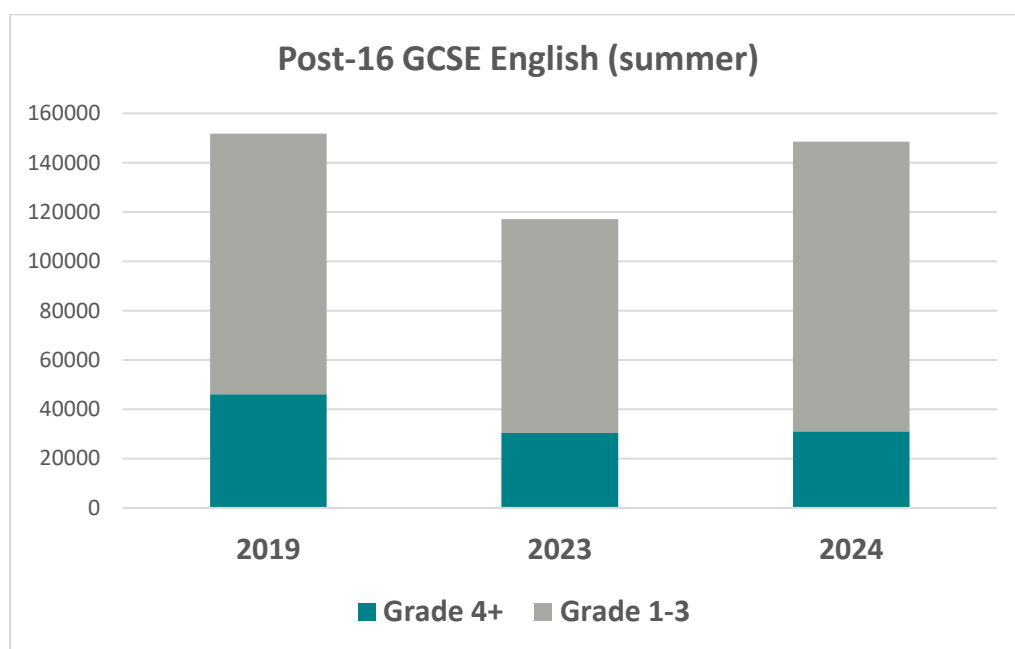
19+	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English 4+	34.8%	45.6%	51.4%			49.0%
GCSE maths 4+	37.2%	37.4%	47.2%			41.8%

For adults, GCSE pass rates have always been higher as these learners are not subject to the condition of funding. In maths these have returned to a higher level than in 2019 but are still lower in English.

Entries (all providers)

16-18 year olds	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English	133,411	101,980	87,639			131,128
GCSE maths	165,796	134,653	114,476			143,211

19+	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English	15,158	15,175	16,529			20,624
GCSE maths	19,931	19,370	20,411			26,191



This year, 16-18 entries have risen by over 30% for English and over 20% for maths and this put pressure on colleges' capacity to meet the need for retake classes – at a time when they faced teacher recruitment challenges.

Total number of post-16 students achieving grade 4+ (summer)

All post-16	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English	31,022	30,375	29,617			46,035
GCSE maths	32,283	25,153	27,034			35,867

This means that over 63,000 students achieved a grade 4+ in English or maths as a result of post-16 study in summer 2024; a 14% increase. Almost every one of these students is someone who was not able to achieve a grade 4 or above at school and was supported by a college to cross this crucial threshold and transform their progression opportunities.

Including November retakes

For a fuller picture of the retake position, November retake results should be included as they account for around a third of retake candidates. The majority of November entries are post-16 students and if they achieve a grade 4 in November they are unlikely to retake again, so the combined total number of achievers (November + June) is a fair estimate of the total number who have achieved a grade 4 or above post-16 that year.

Number of students achieving grade 4 or above in November (all ages)

November	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
GCSE English		22,627	15,781			16,618
GCSE maths		13,958	12,407			14,354

Total number of retake students achieving grade 4+

Taking the summer and November results together increases the total number of retake students achieving a grade 4 or above by academic year:

Academic year	23/24	22/23	21/22	...	...	18/19
GCSE English	53,649	46,126	45,108			
GCSE maths	46,241	41,183	38,645			

This means that nearly 100,000 post-16 candidates achieved a grade 4+ in GCSE English or maths as a result of post-16 studying the 2023/24 academic year, the highest since the pandemic. This is a calculated value, but gives a good sense of the overall impact of the post-16 GCSE retake system.

Likely post-16 retake numbers for 2024/25

The combination of a larger cohort of 16-year-olds and lower grade 4+ pass rates in 2023 led to a big increase in the number of retake students in colleges and substantial addition costs for teaching time and exam registration fees. This year is likely to see a further small increase – mainly for demographic reasons.

Y11 students <4	2023	2024	growth	%
GCSE English	172,434	181,681	+9,247	+5.4%
GCSE maths	167,764	175,898	+8,134	+4.8%

Results by provider type

The Ofqual analytics page shows results by provider type based on National Centre Numbers (NCN) which are not the same as the categories used in DfE Performance Tables. The data do provide some useful perspective and highlights the differences between different types of college cohort.

General FE colleges have over 10 times more retakers in than Sixth Form Colleges, and they will generally have a lower proportion of 'near miss' grade 3 achievers or A Level students with a high GCSE grade profile.

GCSE English 4+ pass rates by provider type

GCSE English grade 4+	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
FE establishment (306)	17.9%	22.9%	26.1%			27.3%
Sixth Form College (86)	28.5%	31.6%	31.6%			38.5%

GCSE maths 4+ pass rates by provide type

GCSE maths grade 4+	2024	2023	2022	...	...	2019
FE establishment (312)	15.0%	14.5%	18.3%			19.1%
Sixth Form College (85)	21.9%	18.8%	22.1%			23.7%

All data relate to England and are from:

JCQ post-16 English language and maths results [here](#).

Ofqual analytics [here](#).

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