

Geography A-level and AS results 2013

Overview

A-level

Entries for geography A-level increased by 867 (2.7%) in the context of a 1.3% drop in entries for all A-levels (figure 1). Geography moved back into the top 10 subjects for entries moving to 9th place from 11th in 2012 (figure 5). The increase was gender biased with female entries increasing by 875 while male entries fell by 8 with the result that the gender imbalance reduced again to 49:51 (F : M) instead of 46:54 that was prevalent up until 2010 (figures 3a and 3b). This made geography the least gender imbalanced of all subjects (figure 4).

Performance at the top grades (A*/A) fell for the third year by 0.6% to 28.5% from a high of 30.2% in 2010 (figure 1). The fall in A*/A grades for all subjects was 0.3%. The overall pass rate (A-E) was 99.2%. The gender gap in performance remained at about 10% with 33.6% of females achieving A*/A grades compared to 23.5% of males (figures 3a and b). This was the 3rd largest gender imbalance of all subjects.

A-level entries were 72% of the 2012 AS entries.

AS level

Entries for geography AS increased by 1663 (1.4%) (figure 6) in the context of a 0.4% decrease in total AS entries and an increase in the cohort of 0.2%. This increase meant that geography retained 11th place in terms of subject entries. Again the increase was gender biased with a larger female (1276) than male (387) increase (figures 7a, b and c). Gender imbalance was therefore also reduced to 49:51 (F:M).

Performance at the top grade (A) fell by 0.3% to 23.6% while the overall pass rate (A-E) was 89.9% up 0.5% from 2012 (figure 3). The gender gap in performance decreased slightly to 9.4% (10.5% in 2012) with 19.0% (up 0.5%) of males achieving an A grade compared to 28.4% of females (down 0.6%) (figures 7a,b and c).

Other Subjects

Students continue to opt for A levels in the sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), which have seen continual increases in entries in recent years. This year, these subjects accounted for 17.8 per cent of all A levels taken compared with 17.0 per cent in 2012 and 15.0 per cent in 2009. Similar increases in the proportion of total entry can be seen in Mathematics and Further Mathematics, which together account for 12.0 per cent of all A levels taken (11.5 per cent in 2012 and 9.8 per cent in 2009).

Traditional Modern Foreign Languages continue to be a less popular choice for students. Although entries for Spanish increased 4.1 per cent compared with last year, entries for French and German have fallen 9.9 per cent and 11.1 per cent respectively. Collectively, these subjects have seen entries fall 6.0 per cent since 2012 and 17.8 per cent since 2008.

(JCQ, 2013b)

A-level geography entries

Key points 2012-2013

- Total geography entries increased by 867. This was the 5th largest increase in entries after Chemistry, Mathematics, Economics and Physics. This was the 8th largest percentage increase (2.71%).
- Geography is the 9th most popular A-level subject with 32872 entries in 2013. History is 5th with 52149 entries up 497 from 2012
- The A*-A geography pass rate dropped by 0.6% to 28.5% in 2013
- The A*-E geography pass stayed the same at 99.2%

Figure 1: Trends in A-level geography entry between 2006 and 2013

Year	Geography entries	Change	% of all entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-E	A*-A
2006	32522	4139	4.0		25.6	27.2	24.2	15.3	6.4	98.7	25.6
2007	31653	-869	3.9		27.3	27.5	23.7	14.4	5.8	98.7	27.3
2008	31714	61	3.8		28.6	27.7	23.7	13.7	5.1	98.8	28.6
2009	32227	513	3.8		27.3	27.5	23.7	14.4	5.8	98.7	27.3
2010	32063	-164	3.8	6.8	23.4	27.6	23.1	13.4	4.5	98.8	30.2
2011	31226	-837	3.6	7.1	23.0	27.9	23.6	13.3	4.1	99.0	30.1
2012	32005	779	3.7	6.3	22.8	29.0	24.6	12.6	3.9	99.2	29.1
2013	32872	867	3.9	5.6	22.9	29.4	24.5	12.7	4.1	99.2	28.5

Geography A-level trends 2006-13

- The overall number of A-level geography entries was relatively stable during this period after the increase in 2006. Annual fluctuations were less than ± 900 entries. The last two years (2012-2013) have seen an increase in entries.
- Fluctuations in the total number of A-level entries resulted in the share of geography entries varying between 3.6% and 4.0%.
- The A*-A pass rate increased from 25.6 to 30.1 in 2011 but dropped to 28.5% in 2013.
- The overall pass rate (A*-E) increased from 98.7% to 99.2% between 2006 and 2013.

Figure 2: Geography A-level entries by country

Year	England	Northern Ireland	Wales	UK (not Scotland)	Change England	Change NI	Change Wales	Change All
2008	28029	1915	1770	31714	274 0.9%	-200 -9.3%	-13 -0.7%	61 0.2%
2009	28360	2001	1866	32227	331 1.1%	86 4.0%	96 5.0%	513 1.5%
2010	28525	1806	1732	32063	165 0.5%	-195 -9.1%	-134 -7.0%	-164 -0.5%
2011	27604	1878	1744	31226	-921 -3.0%	72 3.3%	12 0.6%	-837 -2.4%
2012	28430	1868	1707	32005	826 2.7%	-10 -0.5%	-37 -1.9%	779 2.3%
2013	29126	2001	1745	32872	696 2.3%	133 6.2%	38 2.0%	867 2.5%

- All three countries had an increase in entries in 2013. England (696); Northern Ireland (133) and Wales (38).
- England with the largest population tends to dominate change patterns and have relatively smaller percentage fluctuations.

Gender: A-level

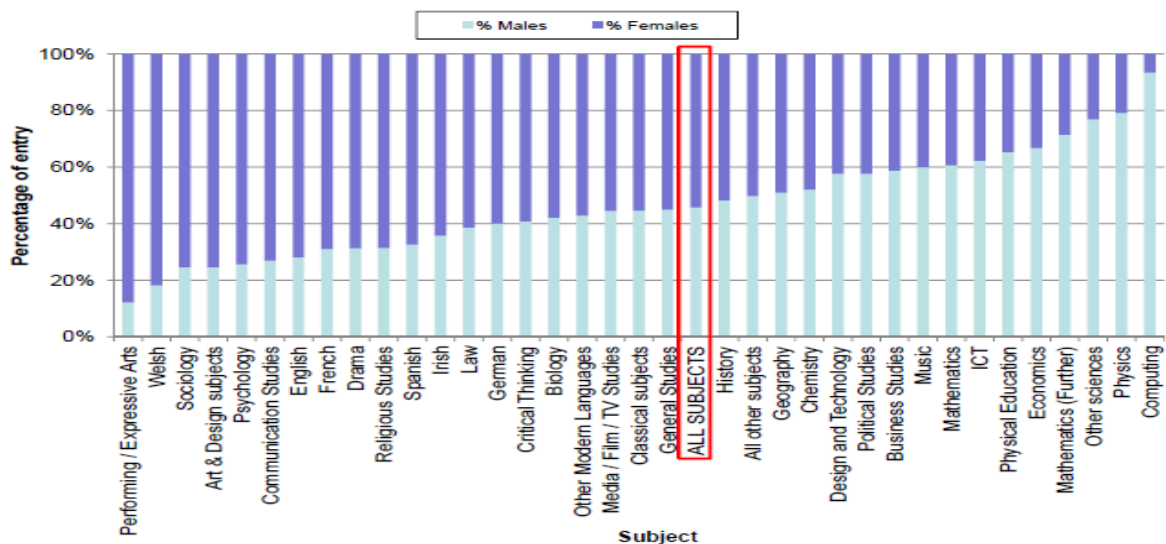
Figure 3a Male entries for geography 2007-2013

Year	Entries	% OF TOTAL ENTRY	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A-E	A*-A	% male
2007	17343	4.2	na	22.8	26.6	25.2	16.8	7	98.4	22.8	54.8
2008	17195	4.5	na	24.6	26.9	25.3	15.5	6.2	98.5	24.6	54.2
2009	17531	4.5	na	25.2	27.8	24.6	15.2	6.1	98.9	25.2	54.4
2010	17333	4.4	5.1	20.7	27.2	24.9	15.3	5.4	98.6	25.8	54.1
2011	16739	4.2	5.5	19.8	27.9	25.3	15.3	5	98.8	25.3	53.6
2012	16784	4.2	4.7	19.4	28.1	27.2	14.9	4.6	98.9	24.1	52.4
2013	16776	4.3	4.3	19.2	28.5	26.9	14.9	5.2	99	23.5	51.0

Figure 3b Female entries for geography 2007-2013

Year	Entries	% OF TOTAL ENTRY	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A-E	A*-A	% female
2007	14310	3.3	na	32.7	28.8	21.9	11.5	4.2	99.1	32.7	45.2
2008	14519	3.2	na	33.3	28.7	21.7	11.7	3.8	99.2	33.3	45.8
2009	14696	3.2	na	35.9	28.3	20.7	10.9	3.5	99.3	35.9	45.6
2010	14730	3.2	8.8	26.6	28.1	21	11.1	3.6	99.2	35.4	45.9
2011	14487	3.1	9	26.5	28.1	21.7	10.9	3.2	99.4	35.5	46.4
2012	15221	3.3	8.1	26.6	30	21.6	10.2	3	99.5	34.7	47.6
2013	16096	3.5	7.0	26.6	30.5	21.9	10.5	3.0	99.5	33.6	49.0

Figure 4: Differences between Boys and Girls A-level subject choices 2013



- Geography entries for girls were consistently lower (45-46%) until 2010 but since then have increased more rapidly so that 49.0% of entries were female in 2013, an increase of 2.6% on 2011. It should be noted that females accounted for 54.2% of all A-level entries in 2013.
- Geography was the least gender imbalanced subject in 2013 in terms of total entries.
- Girls consistently outperform boys in geography with 10%+ more A*-A grades
- The gender imbalance in performance in geography at A*/A grade was 10%, the third largest difference.

Other Subjects

Figure 5: Top ten A-level subjects in 2013

Ranking		Subject	% of total	Number of candidates
1	(1)	English	10.51	89442
2	(2)	Mathematics	10.35	88060
3	(3)	Biology	7.52	63939
4	(4)	Psychology	6.59	56088
5	(5)	History	6.13	52149
6	(6)	Chemistry	6.09	51818
7	(7)	Art and Design Subjects	5.18	44069
8	(9)	Physics	4.18	35569
9	(11)	Geography	3.86	32872
10	(8)	General Studies	3.71	31562

(2012 ranking in brackets)

- STEM subjects (Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry) all increased entries.
- History and Religious Studies had small increases in entries.
- Psychology and English had small decreases in entries
- PE, General Studies, MFL and Media Studies all had significant (> 10%) declines in entries

AS geography entries

Key points:

- There were 1663 more entries for geography AS level overall
- This was the 5th largest percentage increase (3.6%) for AS levels.
- Geography retained its position as the 11th largest AS subject
- The percentage obtaining A grades decreased by 0.3%.
- The share of total entries has increased 0.1% to 3.5 % of total AS levels sat
- Overall number of AS entries declined by 4836 (0.4%)

Figure 6: Trends in AS level geography entries between 2006 and 2013

Year	Geography entries	Change	% of all entries	A	B	C	D	E	A-E
2006	37031	-1115	3.4	22.6	19.8	20.0	16.9	11.5	90.8
2007	36777	-254	3.3	23.0	20.0	20.3	16.3	11.2	90.8
2008	37413	636	3.3	23.3	19.8	20.3	16.1	11.3	90.8
2009	38253	840	3.2	24.5	19.0	19.3	16.0	11.6	90.4
2010	36819	-1434	3.1	24.4	19.3	19.9	16.1	11.1	90.8
2011	45302	8483	3.7	23.7	19.5	20.0	16.1	10.6	89.4
2012	45923	621	3.8	23.9	19.7	20.1	15.6	10.6	89.4
2013	47586	1663	3.5	23.6	20.1	20.1	16.0	10.1	89.9

A historical note

The number of grades issued for AS increased by 17.9 per cent (1,197,490 in 2010 to 1,411,919 in 2011). The dramatic increase was expected and was explained by a change to the funding rules in England. Geography entries increased by 23.0% (8483).

Gender: AS-level

- Male entries in 2013 increased by 387 while female entries increased by 1276
- The gender ratios of entries have shifted to 51:49 (M:F) compared with 54:46 in 2010.
- The performance at A grade increased by 0.6% in favour of females M:F (19.0% - 29.4%)

Figure 7a: Entries by gender 2008-2013

Geography entries	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	Change 2012-2013
AS Males	24467	24080	24332	19842	20814	20362	387
AS Females	23119	21843	20970	16978	17439	17051	1276
AS Total	47586	45923	45302	36819	38253	37413	1663

Figure 7b: Performance - Male entries for geography 2012-2013

Year	Entries	Change	% OF TOTAL ENTRY	A	B	C	D	E	A-E	% male
2012	24080	-252	3.8	19.2	18.5	21.1	17.2	12.2	88.2	52.4
2013	24467	387	3.9	19.0	19.2	21.2	17.8	11.3	88.5	51.4

Figure 7c: Performance: Female entries for geography 2012-2013

Year	Entries	Change	% OF TOTAL ENTRY	A	B	C	D	E	A-E	% female
2012	21843	873	3	29.0	21.1	19.1	13.7	8.9	91.8	47.6
2013	23119	1276	3.2	28.4	21.1	19.0	14.0	8.8	91.3	48.6

Other Subjects

- *Economics, chemistry and physics had increases in entries similar to geography.*
- *Other subjects with significant decreases included PE, Media Studies, Performing Arts, Drama, ICT and Music.*
- *General Studies decreased by about 1000*

Figure 8: Top AS subjects in 2013

Ranking	Subject	% of total	Number of candidates
1 (1)	Mathematics	11.21	150787
2 (2)	English	8.90	119736
3 (3)	Biology	7.72	103905
4 (4)	Psychology	7.20	96908
5 (5)	Chemistry	6.36	85631
6 (6)	History	5.27	70910
7 (7)	Art and Design Subjects	4.78	64313
8 (8)	Physics	4.55	61176
9 (9)	General Studies	4.13	55573
10 (10)	Sociology	3.86	51981

(2012 ranking in brackets)

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