

# Geography A-level and AS results 2014

## Overview

### A-level

Entries for geography A-level increased by 135 (0.4%) in the context of a 2.1% drop in entries for all A-levels (figure 1). Geography stayed in 9<sup>th</sup> place in terms of entries (figure 4). The increase was again gender biased with female entries increasing by 422 while male entries fell by 287 with the result that the traditional gender imbalance that was prevalent up until 2010 no longer exists. The gender balance is now 50:50 (F:M) with 29 more entries from females (figures 3a and 3b). This should be seen in the context that overall entries for all subjects are weighted 54:46 (F:M)

Performance at the top grades (A\*/A) fell for the fourth year by 1.0% to 27.5% from a high of 30.2% in 2010 (figure 1). The fall in A\*/A grades for all subjects was 0.3% to 26.0% so performance in geography was still above the national average. The overall pass rate (A-E) stayed at 99.2%. The gender gap in performance at A\*/A grade increased slightly (0.5%) to 10.5% with 32.8% of females achieving A\*/A grades compared to 22.8% of males (figures 3a and b).

A-level entries were 69.3% of the 2013 AS entries. This is a fall of 3% compared to 2013.

### AS level

Entries for geography AS increased by 8091 (17.0%) (figure 5) in the context of a 5.0% increase in total AS entries. This was the third largest percentage increase and moved geography up to 9<sup>th</sup> place in terms of subject entries. Again the increase was gender biased with a larger female (4336) than male (3755) increase (figures 6a, b and c). Gender imbalance was therefore slightly reduced to 49.3:50.7 (F:M). *History had a larger total increase in entries of 10292 additional candidates.*

Performance at the top grade (A) fell by 0.3% to 23.3% while the overall pass rate (A-E) was 91.5% up 0.6% from 2012 (figure 3). The gender gap in performance in the top grades decreased slightly to 8.5% (9.4% in 2012) with 19.1% (up 0.1%) of males achieving an A grade compared to 27.6% of females (down 0.8%) (figures 6a,b and c).

### Other Subjects

*Provisional results for this year's A-level and AS qualifications... remain relatively stable at a national level, with the proportion of A\* grades awarded rising 0.6 percentage points to 8.2 per cent of all awards.*

*Students are increasingly choosing facilitating subjects, with entries rising in Biology, Chemistry and Physics by 2.0 per cent (combined), Mathematics 0.9 per cent; and Further Maths 1.5 per cent. English entries are down 4.6 per cent but greater decreases can be seen*

in non-facilitating subjects such as General Studies (down 24.3 per cent) and Political Studies (down 10.6 per cent).

Results for other facilitating subjects also remain relatively unchanged.

Commenting on the results Michael Turner, Director General of the Joint Council for Qualifications said:

“Although the system has undergone change, this year’s national results are very stable. As ever, students and teachers across the country have worked hard to achieve them and should be congratulated for their efforts and the fruits of their labours.

It is possible that due to the removal of the January series some schools and colleges may experience volatility in their results, depending on how they have adapted to the changes. But it is important to remember that standards have been maintained and, despite the changes, are comparable with previous years.”

(JCQ, 2014b)

## A-level geography entries

### Key points 2013-2014

- Total geography entries increased by 135. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> largest percentage increase (0.4%) in entries after RS, Chemistry, Mathematics, Economics and Physics.
- Geography is the 9<sup>th</sup> most popular A-level subject with 33007 entries in 2014. History is 6<sup>th</sup> with 52131 entries down 16 from 2013
- The A\*-A geography pass rate dropped by 1.0% to 27.5% in 2014
- The A\*-E geography pass stayed the same at 99.2%

**Figure 1: Trends in A-level geography entry between 2006 and 2014**

Year	Entries	% of total entry	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-E	A*/A	Change from previous year
2006	32522	4.0		25.6	27.2	24.2	15.3	6.4	98.7	25.6	4139
2007	31653	3.9		27.3	27.5	23.7	14.4	5.8	98.7	27.3	-869
2008	31714	3.8		28.6	27.7	23.7	13.7	5.1	98.8	28.6	61
2009	32227	3.8		27.3	27.5	23.7	14.4	5.8	98.7	27.3	513
2010	32063	3.8	6.8	23.4	27.6	23.1	13.4	4.5	98.8	30.2	-164
2011	31226	3.6	7.1	23.0	27.9	23.6	13.3	4.1	99.0	30.1	-837
2012	32005	3.7	6.3	22.8	29	24.6	12.6	3.9	99.2	29.1	779
2013	32872	3.9	5.6	22.9	29.4	24.5	12.7	4.1	99.2	28.5	867
2014	33007	4.0	6.3	21.2	29.3	24.9	13.1	4.4	99.2	27.5	135

### 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  $\pm 900$  entries. The last three years (2012-2014) have seen an increase in entries, at a time when total entries for A-level were falling.

- 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 27.5% in 2014.
- The overall pass rate (A\*-E) increased from 98.7% to 99.2% between 2006 and 2014. It has been stable since 2012

**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%
2014	29476	1896	1635	33007	350 1.2%	-105 -4.9%	-110 -5.7%	135 0.4%

- Only England had an increase in entries in 2014. England (350);
- Northern Ireland (-103) and Wales (-110) had decreases in entries.
- 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
2014	16489	4.3	4.8	17.5	28.3	27.4	15.5	5.4	98.9	22.3	50.0

**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
2014	16518	3.6	7.8	25.0	30.1	22.6	10.6	3.3	99.4	32.8	50.0

- Female entries have increased rapidly since 2010 which has decreased the gender imbalance in entries so that by 2014 there were equal entries from both genders. This is partly because total entries for A-level are skewed towards females (54:46)
- Females continue to perform better at the higher grades.

### Other Subjects

**Figure 4: Top ten A-level subjects in 2014**

Ranking	Subject	% of Total	Number of Candidates
<b>1 (2)</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>10.65</b>	<b>88816</b>
<b>2 (1)</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>10.23</b>	<b>85336</b>
<b>3 (3)</b>	<b>Biology</b>	<b>7.68</b>	<b>64070</b>
<b>4 (4)</b>	<b>Psychology</b>	<b>6.57</b>	<b>54818</b>
<b>5 (6)</b>	<b>Chemistry</b>	<b>6.42</b>	<b>53513</b>
<b>6 (5)</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>52131</b>
<b>7 (7)</b>	<b>Art and Design Subjects</b>	<b>5.39</b>	<b>44922</b>
<b>8 (8)</b>	<b>Physics</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>36701</b>
<b>9 (9)</b>	<b>Geography</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>33007</b>
<b>10 (11)</b>	<b>Sociology</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>30594</b>

### AS geography entries

#### Key points:

- There were 8091 more entries for geography AS level overall
- This was the 3rd largest percentage increase (17.0%) for AS levels.
- Geography improved its position to become the 9<sup>th</sup> largest AS subject
- The percentage obtaining A grades decreased by 0.3%.
- The share of total entries has increased 0.4% to 3.9 % of total AS levels sat
- Overall number of AS entries increased by 67425 (5.0%)

**Figure 5: 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
2014	55677	8091	3.9	23.3	20.1	20.6	16.0	10.5	90.5

**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 2014 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 6a: Entries by gender 2008-2013**

Geography entries	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	Change 2012-2013
AS Males	28222	24467	24080	24332	19842	20814	20362	387
AS Females	27455	23119	21843	20970	16978	17439	17051	1276
AS Total	55677	47586	45923	45302	36819	38253	37413	1663

**Figure 6b: 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
2014	28222	3755	4.3	19.1	19.4	21.3	17.6	11.9	10.7	50.7

**Figure 6c: 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
2014	27455	4336	3.6	27.6	20.9	19.8	14.4	9.1	91.8	49.3

### Other Subjects

- *History and English had increases in entries similar to geography.*
- *Subjects with significant decreases included General Studies and Critical Thinking*

**Figure 7: Top AS subjects in 2014**

Ranking	Subject	% of Total	Number of Candidates
1 (1)	Mathematics	11.45	161711
2 (2)	English	9.27	131018
3 (3)	Biology	7.45	105251
4 (4)	Psychology	7.21	101859
5 (5)	Chemistry	6.28	88673
6 (6)	History	5.74	81152
7 (7)	Art and Design Subjects	4.67	65960
8 (8)	Physics	4.59	64790
9 (9)	Geography	3.94	55677
10 (10)	Sociology	3.92	55440

### References

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