

GCSE Geography results 2011

Geography GCSE entries were down by 13862 (-7.1%) compared with 2010. This is more than the fall in the overall cohort which is estimated to be down by 2.6% and more than the fall in total entries which is 4.2%. It is also higher than the loss experienced from 2008 to 2009 of 7844 (3.8%).

The major losses were in England (-13862). Northern Ireland boys gained 20 but overall the loss was -72; and Wales lost 2045. As a proportion of the cohort entries Northern Ireland had the smallest loss (-1.1%) while England lost 6.7% and Wales 16.6% (table A).

Boys entries fell by 7441 (-6.9%) while girls entries fell by 6421 (-7.4%). The losses were higher for girls than boys in England and Northern Ireland but were equal for Wales (table A).

The ratio of entries by gender stayed at about 55% boys / 45% girls for the UK as a whole. The ratio was about the same in England and Northern Ireland (55/45) but more extreme in Wales (58/42) (table A).

Table A: summary of total entries and changes: geography 2011

	Total entry 2011 (2010 in brackets)	Proportion of total entry for each country % (2010)	Change in entry 2010-2009	% change in entry 2010-2009
UK Boys	100353 (107794)	55.4 (55.4)	-7441 (-417)	-6.9 (-0.4)
UK Girls	80384 (86805)	44.6 (44.6)	-6421 (-1002)	-7.4 (-1.1)
UK Total	180737 (194599)	100.0 (100.0)	-13862 (-1419)	-7.1 (-0.7)
England Boys	90628 (96898)	55.4 (55.3)	-6270 (-118)	-6.5 (-0.1)
England Girls	72976 (78449)	44.6 (44.7)	-5473 (-569)	-7.0 (-0.7)
England Total	163604 (175347)	100.0 (100.0)	-11743 (-687)	-6.7 (-0.4)
Northern Ireland Boys	3727 (3707)	54.5 (53.7)	+20 (-208)	0.5 (-5.3)
Northern Ireland Girls	3108 (3202)	45.5 (46.3)	-94 (-72)	-2.2 (-2.2)
Northern Ireland Total	6835 (6909)	100.0 (100.0)	-74 (-280)	-1.1 (-3.9)
Wales Boys	5998 (7189)	58.2 (58.2)	-1191 (-91)	-16.6 (-1.3)
Wales Girls	4300 (5154)	41.8 (41.8)	-854 (-361)	-16.6 (-6.5)
Wales Total	10298 (12343)	100.0 (100.0)	-2045 (-452)	-16.6 (-3.5)

Overall geography performance for the UK (see table B) improved with:

- 28.6% of pupils achieving an A* or A grade, an increase of 0.4%, although A* grades were down 0.9%; (all subjects: 23.2%, up 0.6%)
- 70.1% achieving an A*-C, an increase of 0.6% (all subjects 69.8%, up 0.7%)
- 99.0% achieving A*-G, up 0.6% (all subjects 98.8%, up 0.1%)

Girls' performance for geography at the top end increased while boys went down so the gender imbalance has again increased

- A*-A Girls 34.4%, up 1.4%; Boys 23.9%, down 0.3%; differential 10.5%, increased by 1.7% (all subjects Girls 26.5%, up 1.0%; Boys 19.8%, up 0.3%; differential 6.7%, up 0.7%)
- A*-C Girls 75.1%, up 1.8%; Boys 66.0%, down 0.4%; differential 9.1%, increased by 2.5% (all subjects: Girls 73.5%, up 0.9%; Boys 66.0%, up 0.6%; differential 7.5%, up 0.3%)
- A*-G Girls 99.0%, up 0.4%; Boys 98.9%, up 0.7%; differential 0.1%, decreased by 0.3% (all subjects: Girls 99.1%, up 0.1%; Boys 98.6%, up 0.1%; differential static)

Table B: Geography results (UK) Total entries and cumulative percentages by grade

Subject	Gender	Number Sat	% of Total No. Sat	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES by Grade									
				A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	
Engineering	Male	1698 (0)	0.1 (0.0)	0.9 (0.0)	7.7 (0.0)	22.4 (0.0)	44.1 (0.0)	66.1 (0.0)	81.0 (0.0)	91.0 (0.0)	96.9 (0.0)	100.0 (0.0)	
	Female	152 (0)	0.0 (0.0)	12.5 (0.0)	30.9 (0.0)	52.0 (0.0)	73.0 (0.0)	85.5 (0.0)	93.4 (0.0)	96.1 (0.0)	98.7 (0.0)	100.0 (0.0)	
	Male & Female	1850 (0)	0.0 (0.0)	1.8 (0.0)	9.6 (0.0)	24.9 (0.0)	46.5 (0.0)	67.7 (0.0)	82.1 (0.0)	91.5 (0.0)	97.0 (0.0)	100.0 (0.0)	
English	Male	333434 (358585)	13.2 (13.5)	3.3 (3.0)	12.4 (11.7)	30.0 (29.2)	58.7 (57.9)	81.6 (80.5)	91.9 (91.2)	96.5 (96.1)	98.4 (98.3)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	316119 (346655)	12.1 (12.7)	6.2 (5.7)	21.4 (20.4)	44.5 (43.3)	72.5 (71.8)	89.8 (89.1)	95.9 (95.5)	98.0 (97.8)	99.0 (98.9)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	649553 (705240)	12.6 (13.1)	4.7 (4.3)	16.8 (16.0)	37.0 (36.1)	65.4 (64.7)	85.6 (84.7)	93.8 (93.3)	97.2 (96.9)	98.7 (98.6)	100.0 (100.0)	
English Literature	Male	231306 (243979)	9.1 (9.2)	4.3 (4.3)	19.1 (18.3)	45.6 (42.2)	72.3 (70.3)	87.9 (86.9)	94.6 (94.1)	97.2 (97.0)	98.4 (98.3)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	258750 (269544)	9.9 (9.9)	7.9 (7.3)	30.3 (28.3)	60.7 (56.3)	83.9 (81.8)	94.1 (93.1)	97.5 (97.1)	98.6 (98.4)	99.1 (99.0)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	490056 (513523)	9.5 (9.5)	6.2 (5.9)	25.0 (23.6)	53.6 (49.6)	78.4 (76.3)	91.2 (90.2)	96.1 (95.7)	97.9 (97.7)	98.7 (98.6)	100.0 (100.0)	
French	Male	63980 (75705)	2.5 (2.9)	8.0 (9.5)	22.1 (23.5)	42.1 (41.9)	66.7 (67.2)	84.9 (85.7)	94.2 (94.4)	98.2 (98.4)	99.6 (99.7)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	90241 (101913)	3.4 (3.7)	11.9 (11.9)	30.1 (29.0)	53.4 (50.5)	76.5 (75.4)	90.9 (90.6)	96.9 (96.8)	99.0 (99.1)	99.7 (99.9)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	154221 (177618)	3.0 (3.3)	10.2 (10.9)	26.8 (26.7)	48.7 (46.8)	72.5 (71.9)	88.4 (88.5)	95.8 (95.8)	98.7 (98.8)	99.7 (99.8)	100.0 (100.0)	
Geography	Male	100353 (107794)	4.0 (4.1)	7.9 (9.1)	23.9 (24.2)	43.3 (42.3)	66.0 (66.4)	82.8 (84.0)	91.6 (92.3)	96.4 (96.3)	98.9 (98.2)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	80384 (86805)	3.1 (3.2)	13.4 (14.0)	34.4 (33.0)	55.2 (51.8)	75.1 (73.3)	87.6 (87.4)	94.1 (93.8)	97.5 (97.1)	99.2 (98.6)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	180737 (194599)	3.5 (3.6)	10.4 (11.3)	28.6 (28.2)	48.6 (46.5)	70.1 (69.5)	84.9 (85.5)	92.7 (93.0)	96.9 (96.7)	99.0 (98.4)	100.0 (100.0)	

Source: JCO: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1589/GCSE%20RESULTS.pdf>

Table C: Geography results (England) Total entries and cumulative percentages by grade

The figures in brackets are the equivalent provisional figures for 2010.

Subject	Gender	Number Sat	% of Total No. Sat	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES by Grade									
				A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	
Engineering	Male	1310 (0)	0.1 (0.0)	1.0 (0.0)	6.9 (0.0)	19.8 (0.0)	41.5 (0.0)	64.4 (0.0)	79.4 (0.0)	90.2 (0.0)	96.5 (0.0)	100.0 (0.0)	
	Female	120 (0)	0.0 (0.0)	15.0 (0.0)	33.3 (0.0)	55.0 (0.0)	73.3 (0.0)	85.8 (0.0)	92.5 (0.0)	95.8 (0.0)	98.3 (0.0)	100.0 (0.0)	
	Male & Female	1430 (0)	0.0 (0.0)	2.2 (0.0)	9.1 (0.0)	22.8 (0.0)	44.1 (0.0)	66.2 (0.0)	80.5 (0.0)	90.6 (0.0)	96.6 (0.0)	100.0 (0.0)	
English	Male	303257 (327805)	13.1 (13.6)	3.4 (3.1)	12.6 (11.9)	30.2 (29.4)	58.9 (58.0)	81.7 (80.6)	92.0 (91.3)	96.5 (96.1)	98.4 (98.3)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	286534 (315496)	12.0 (12.7)	6.3 (5.8)	21.6 (20.5)	44.6 (43.3)	72.6 (71.8)	89.8 (89.2)	95.9 (95.5)	98.0 (97.8)	99.0 (98.9)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	589791 (643301)	12.6 (13.1)	4.8 (4.4)	17.0 (16.1)	37.2 (36.2)	65.5 (64.8)	85.7 (84.8)	93.9 (93.3)	97.2 (96.9)	98.7 (98.6)	100.0 (100.0)	
English Literature	Male	213891 (225670)	9.3 (9.3)	4.4 (4.3)	19.3 (18.5)	48.1 (42.5)	72.6 (70.4)	88.0 (86.9)	94.6 (94.0)	97.1 (96.9)	98.4 (98.2)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	238307 (247819)	10.0 (10.0)	7.9 (7.3)	30.5 (28.5)	61.3 (56.6)	84.2 (81.9)	94.2 (93.2)	97.5 (97.1)	98.6 (98.4)	99.1 (98.9)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	452198 (473489)	9.6 (9.7)	6.2 (5.9)	25.2 (23.8)	54.1 (49.9)	78.7 (76.4)	91.3 (90.2)	96.1 (95.6)	97.9 (97.7)	98.7 (98.6)	100.0 (100.0)	
French	Male	59016 (70061)	2.6 (2.9)	7.9 (9.5)	21.8 (23.5)	41.7 (41.6)	66.3 (67.0)	84.6 (85.5)	94.0 (94.3)	98.2 (98.4)	99.6 (99.7)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	82456 (93222)	3.5 (3.8)	11.7 (11.8)	29.7 (28.7)	52.9 (49.9)	76.2 (75.0)	90.7 (90.4)	96.9 (96.6)	99.0 (99.0)	99.7 (99.9)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	141472 (163283)	3.0 (3.3)	10.1 (10.8)	28.4 (26.4)	48.2 (46.3)	72.1 (71.6)	88.1 (88.3)	95.7 (95.6)	98.7 (98.8)	99.7 (99.8)	100.0 (100.0)	
Geography	Male	90628 (96898)	3.9 (4.0)	8.2 (9.4)	24.1 (24.5)	43.4 (42.6)	65.9 (66.4)	82.7 (84.0)	91.5 (92.3)	96.3 (96.3)	98.9 (98.2)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Female	72976 (78449)	3.1 (3.2)	13.6 (14.1)	34.6 (33.2)	55.1 (51.9)	75.0 (73.1)	87.5 (87.3)	94.0 (93.8)	97.5 (97.1)	99.2 (98.6)	100.0 (100.0)	
	Male & Female	163604 (175347)	3.5 (3.6)	10.6 (11.5)	28.8 (28.4)	48.6 (46.8)	70.0 (69.4)	84.8 (85.5)	92.6 (93.0)	96.8 (96.7)	99.0 (98.4)	100.0 (100.0)	

The national picture

Every year the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)¹ produces an overview and analysis of the examination results for GCSE. This is published the same day as the examination results and is available on the JCQ website. Their summary for 2011 was:

Significant increases in separate sciences and the gap between girls and boys reaches a new peak as overall improvements at GCSE slow down

This year's GCSE results show an increase in the number of students taking separate sciences. The entry for Physics is up 16.4%, Chemistry 16.2%, and Biology 14.2%, taking the subject totals to 140,183, 141,724, and 147,904 respectively. These figures build on the increases in previous years that were reflected in the surge in the separate sciences at A-level.

Girls are moving to these subjects at a faster rate than boys. And at the higher grades they are increasing their lead – a different pattern to A-levels in which boys are closing the achievement gap in the sciences. When looking at all GCSE subjects together, the gap between boys and girls at A*-A is at its widest at 6.7 percentage points (26.5% of girls achieving A*-A compared to 19.8% of boys) since the top grade was introduced in 1994.

The overall entry for GCSE is down 4.2% to 5.15 million and the cohort size for 16 year olds is also down, by 2.62%. Performance at GCSE improved by 0.6 percentage points at grades A*-A (from 22.6% in 2010 to 23.2% in 2011), which is down on last year's increase of 1 percentage point. Performance at grades A*-C increased by 0.8 percentage points (from 69.0% in 2010 to 69.8% in 2011), also down on last year's increase of 2 percentage points.

In English, the proportion of students achieving a grade A*-C has gone up by 0.7 percentage points (from 64.7% in 2010 to 65.4% in 2011). In Mathematics, it has increased by 0.4 percentage points (from 58.4% to 58.8%).

The shift in entry away from Modern Foreign Languages continues. The entry for French is down 13.2%, (from 177,618 in 2010 to 154,221 in 2011), down 13.2% in German (from 70,169 in 2010 to 60,887 in 2011) and down 2.5% in Spanish (from 67,707 in 2010 to 66,021 in 2011). Between 2009 and 2010 Spanish rose by 0.9%. This is the first reported decrease in Spanish since 2006. Between 2006 and 2010, entry for Spanish rose by 9%.

The number of students taking GCSEs in History and Geography declined in 2011, by 1.2% (from 221,281 in 2010 to 218,588 in 2011) and 7.1% (from 194,599 in 2010 to 180,737 in 2011) respectively.

Design and Technology (D&T) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) also saw declines in the number of entries. D&T saw a 11.8% drop (from 287,701 in 2010 to 253,624 in 2011) and ICT a 22.8% fall (from 61,022 in 2010 to 47,128 in 2011).

Entries in Religious Studies show a significant increase of 17.6%, with over 33,000 more students taking a GCSE Full Course making the total 221,974 in 2011. Part of this increase may be explained by movement from the GCSE Short Course to the Full Course.²

GCSE Short Course

The number of students taking a GCSE Short Course continues to fall. In 2010, 488,156 students took the qualification, compared to 425,422 in 2011, a drop of 12.9%. Last year there was a 4.1% decline. At grade A*-C, the Short Course results show a decline of 0.8 percentage points from 54.5% to 53.7%. At these grades, girls' performance stayed the same at 61.4% whereas that of boys declined 1.7 percentage points from 47.3% to 45.6%.

Religious Studies remains the most popular GCSE Short Course with 257,793 entries, although this a decrease of 7.9% compared with 2010. This decrease, however, is more than balanced by the increase in the entry for the Religious Studies Full Course.

GCSE Double Award

There has been acceleration in the rate at which students are moving away from the GCSE Double Award, even when taking into account the withdrawal of two subjects (Art and Construction). Figures for 2010 showed a decline of 20.6%. This year's statistics show a decline of 33.4% from 83,816 in 2010 to 55,820 in 2011. The performance in these qualifications at grades A*A*-CC increased by 3.7 percentage points from 56.3% in 2010 to 60.0% in 2011.

Source: JCQ 2011: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1593/PressNotice.pdf>

Geography has moved down the table of top ten subjects as the result of the losses sustained this year.

¹ The JCQ consists of AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, Edexcel, OCR, SQA and WJEC, the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK, offering GCSE, GCE, AEA, Entry Level, Vocational and vocationally-related qualifications.

² Although the short course drop was only 7000 entries

Table D: Top 10 GCSE full course subjects

Subject			2011	
(2010 ranking in brackets)			% of total	Number of candidates
1	(1)	Mathematics	15.00	772944 (762792)
2	(2)	English	12.61	649553 (705240)
3	(3)	English Literature	9.51	490056 (513523)
4	(4)	Science	7.88	405977 (449697)
5	(5)	Additional Science	5.95	306312 (352469)
6	(6)	Design & Technology	4.92	253624 (287701)
7	(9)	Religious Studies	4.31	221974 (188704)
8	(8)	History	4.24	218588 (221281)
9	(11)	Art	3.56	183236 (188193)
10	(9)	Geography	3.51	180737 (194599)

Source: JCQ 2011 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1594/Appendix%20-%20GCSE%20Tables.pdf>

Other Subjects

Increased entry

Religious Studies increased by 33274 (17.6%) and moved from 9th to 7th place in entries for GCSE.

Three Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) entries increased by between 18 and 20000.

Humanities increased by 2000 to 17279

Social Science up 4500 to 34905

Mathematics up 10000

New subjects were Citizenship (9000), Engineering (1850), Leisure and Tourism (4000) and Manufacturing (350)

Decreased entry

History decreased its entry by 2693.

Science and additional science entries declined by about 48000 probably because of the shift to 3 sciences

Modern Foreign Languages were down again: French lost 23000 and German 9000

Design Technology lost 34000 and ICT lost 14000

PE lost 19000 of their entry;

Business Studies lost 8000

Drama lost 6500

Media lost 1000

Music lost 3000

Paul Weeden, GA Assessment and Examinations Special Interest Group, August 2010