

## Geography GCSE entries and results 2022

### Context and summary

In 2022 formal GCSE examinations resumed after two years of changes in assessment arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first summer examinations since 2019. They were taken in the context of ongoing disruption to students' education and a variety of special arrangements designed to support them such as changes to coursework, optional content or advance information about topics in the exams.

Overall, outcomes in 2022 were higher than in 2019, when students last sat exams, and lower than in 2021. The approaches to determining grades in 2020 and 2021 were significantly different, making 2019 the best year with which to draw comparisons with previous sets of results, although comparisons should still be made with caution. In England, Ofqual states that in 2022 'for all subjects, there has been lenient grading, reflecting a staging post between 2021 and 2019 grades'<sup>1</sup>.

The design of GCSE qualifications varies between England, Wales and Northern Ireland: together these three home nations make up the data for 'the UK' below. Comparing GCSE entries for the UK with 2021:

- the UK population of 16-year-olds reached a trough in 2018, then increased annually until 2022; it increased by 4.04% in 2021-2022, although entries declined by 0.6% to 5.71 million students
- there was no change in the rank order of the top ten highest entry subjects (and no change since 2020). Geography was again ranked sixth with an entry of 289,351 (5.1%)
- geography saw the second largest percentage growth in GCSE entries from 2021 (+2.7%) while business studies grew most (+4.6%)<sup>2</sup>.

Comparing GCSE outcomes, in 2022 the proportion of UK students achieving grade 7/A and above increased significantly from 2019. In all subjects:

Year	Entries	7/A	4/C	1/G
2022	<b>5,708,871</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>98.4%</b>
2021	5,745,945	28.9%	77.1%	99.0%
2019	5,547,447	20.8%	67.3%	98.3%
Change 2019-22	161,424	+5.5%	+5.9%	+0.1%

<sup>1</sup> Ofqual: Guide to GCSE results in England, summer 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guide-to-gcse-results-for-england-summer-2022>

<sup>2</sup> GCSE, Project, and Entry Level Trends - UK, 2022 <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GCSE-Project-and-Entry-Level-Trends-Summer-2022.pdf>

In geography:

- 30.8% of students achieved grades 7/A and above in 2022, compared with 24.9% in 2019 (+5.9%)
- 72.7% of students achieved grades 4/C and above in 2022, compared with 65.8% in 2019 (+6.9%).

Comparing UK outcomes for all subjects by gender, female students again out-performed males. Compared with (2019 results in brackets), the proportion of females achieving grades 7/A also increased more than males.

	<b>7/A</b>	<b>4/C</b>	<b>1/G</b>
<b>Female</b>	30.0 (24.1)	76.7 (71.7)	98.8 (98.8)
<b>Male</b>	22.6 (17.6)	69.8 (62.9)	98.0 (97.8)

## 1. Entries for geography

- Geography remained the **sixth most popular** GCSE subject in 2022.
- **Geography entries** increased from 2021 to 2022 by 7,610 (+2.7 %) to 289,351, the second highest percentage increase of the large entry (over 100,000 entries) subjects; business studies had the largest increase. This follows an increase in geography entries of +4.2% in 2021 and +1.9% in 2020.
- The **gender imbalance** for geography entries is unchanged from last year at 54:46 (M:F), compared with a 50:50 balance for all subjects. Looking at it another way, on a scale of 1 to 49, where 1 represents the most popular subject with females and 49 the most popular with males, geography ranked 37, compared with a mid-point of 26 for all subjects. History ranked 20, so was chosen proportionately by more females<sup>3</sup>.
- The number of **entries from students aged 15** and under was 1,396 (1% of the entry for aged 15 and under). The entry decreased by 35% since 2019 (compared with -5% for all subjects).
- The number of **entries from older student entries** aged 17+ was 2,892 (<1% of the total 17+ entry). The entry decreased by 8% since 2019 (compared with -22% for all subjects).

### Regional distribution

- In England, **geography entries are distributed relatively evenly across the major regions**. Looking at differences in subject choices between students in the North, Midlands and South, geography and art and design were the two subjects closest to 'all subjects' in their regional distribution; by comparison Irish, classical studies and economics showed the strongest orientation towards the South<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GCSE-Additional-Charts-Summer-2022.pdf>

- You can find an Ofqual map showing entries and grades by English county here: <https://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk/apps/GCSE/County/>.

### Popularity of geography at GCSE compared with other subjects

Top 10 GCSE subjects in 2022<sup>4</sup>

Ranking	Subject	% of total 2022 (2021)	Number of candidates
1 (1)	Science: Double award	15.8 (15.6)	904,012
2 (2)	Mathematics	13.7 (14.1)	782,783
3 (3)	English	13.3 (13.6)	756,462
4 (4)	English literature	10.8 (10.7)	615,328
5 (5)	History	5.1 (5.1)	292,199
6 (6)	Geography	5.1 (4.9)	289,351
7 (7)	Religious studies	4.3 (4.2)	243,252
8 (8)	Art and design subjects	3.6 (3.6)	205,657
9 (9)	Biology	3.3 (3.2)	186,445
10 (10)	Chemistry	3.1 (3.1)	177,925

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<sup>4</sup> GCSE, Project, and Entry Level Trends - UK, 2022 <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GCSE-Project-and-Entry-Level-Trends-Summer-2022.pdf>

## 2. Results for geography 2022

### Entry and cumulative grade profiles for the UK (England, Northern Ireland and Wales) in 2022 (and 2019)

The results issued by JVQ on 25 August 2022 for the UK were as follows; the numeric grading scale used in England compares with the alphabetical scales used in Wales and Northern Ireland at three anchor points: 7/A; 4/C and 1/G, where standards are the same.

#### All geography students: cumulative grades<sup>5</sup>

	Entry	7/A	4/C	1/G	U
All subjects 2022	5,708,871	26.3%	73.2%	98.4%	100%
<b>Geography 2022</b>	<b>289,351 (5.1%)</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>100%</b>
(Geography 2019)	265169 (4.8%)	(24.9%)	(65.8%)	(98.4%)	(100%)

#### Male

	Entry	7/A	4/C	1/G	U
All subjects 2022	2,861,171	22.6%	69.8%	98.0%	100%
<b>Geography 2022</b>	<b>156,439 (5.5%)</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>100%</b>
(Geography 2019)	142,816 (5.2%)	(21.4%)	(62.5%)	(97.8%)	(100%)

#### Female

	Entry	7/A	4/C	1/G	U
All subjects 2022	2,847,700	30.0%	76.7%	98.8%	100%
<b>Geography 2022</b>	<b>132,912 (4.7%)</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>99.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
(Geography 2019)	122,353 (4.4%)	(28.9%)	(69.7%)	(99.0%)	(100%)

<sup>5</sup> Source: JVQ results for June 22: Provisional full course results accessed 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

<https://www.icjg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GCSE-Full-Course-Results-Summer-2022.xlsx>

## Cumulative percentages by grade for each nation<sup>6</sup>.

### England

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
<b>Geography 2022</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>100</b>
Geography 2021	9.7	21.0	34.3	48.9	63.2	76.8	88.3	95.4	99.1	100
Geography 2019	4.8	13.0	24.5	38.6	52.6	65.2	81.6	92.4	98.3	100
All Subjects 2022	6.6	15.1	26.0	40.7	58.1	73.0	86.0	94.5	98.4	100

### Northern Ireland

	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E	F	G	U
<b>Geography 2022</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>100</b>
Geography 2021	18.4	49.8	69.9	80.6	91.0	96.0	98.3	99.2	99.6	100
Geography 2019	8.5	34.7	54.4	69.5	81.6	90.9	95.5	97.7	99.0	100
All Subjects 2022	12.6	37.8	61.9	79.4	89.8	94.9	97.0	98.6	99.4	100

### Wales

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
<b>Geography 2022</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>100</b>
Geography 2021	22.8	44.4	67.5	84.4	92.9	97.2	98.6	99.6	100
Geography 2019	9.2	27.4	50.3	72.3	86.0	94.1	97.8	99.4	100
All Subjects 2022	24.7	45.0	68.2	81.2	89.3	93.0	97.3	100	24.7

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.icq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GCSE-Full-Course-Results-Summer-2022.xlsx>

**Cumulative percentages by grade and gender 2022/2021 for each nation<sup>7</sup>**

<b>England</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>U</b>
Male	5.9	14.6	26.3	41.4	56.5	69.6	83.2	92.3	98.0	100.0
(Male 2021)	(7.6)	(17.5)	(30.3)	(45.1)	(60.2)	(74.8)	(87.3)	(95.0)	(99.0)	(100.0)
Female	10.1	21.8	35.0	49.7	63.3	75.0	87.0	94.8	99.0	100.0
(Female 2021)	(12.1)	(25.1)	(38.9)	(53.3)	(66.6)	(79.2)	(89.5)	(95.9)	(99.2)	(100.0)
<b>Male and female</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>
(M/F 2021)	(9.7)	(21.0)	(34.3)	(48.9)	(63.2)	(76.8)	(88.3)	(95.4)	(99.1)	(100.0)

<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C*</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>U</b>
Male	10.4	37.1	63.7	80.3	89.7	94.7	97.2	98.6	99.5	100.0
(Male 2021)	(12.1)	(40.7)	(62.3)	(75.7)	(88.6)	(95.3)	(98.2)	(99.2)	(99.6)	(100.0)
Female	20.9	51.9	75.4	87.6	93.9	97.3	99.1	99.6	99.8	100.0
(Female 2021)	(26.0)	(60.7)	(78.9)	(86.4)	(93.9)	(96.9)	(98.5)	(99.3)	(99.7)	(100.0)
<b>Male and female</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
(M/F 2021)	(18.4)	(49.8)	(69.9)	(80.6)	(91.0)	(96.0)	(98.3)	(99.2)	(99.6)	(100.0)

<sup>7</sup> GCSE FC Cat 3 9-1-England-All Ages; GCSE FC Cat 4 NI A-G-Northern Ireland-All Ages; GCSE FC Cat 2 A-G-Wales-All Ages

<b>Wales</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>U</b>
Male	13.2	32.6	54.9	75.4	87.3	93.8	98.0	99.8	100.0
(Male 2021)	(16.4)	(36.9)	(61.8)	(81.1)	(91.6)	(96.5)	(98.4)	(99.5)	(100.0)
Female	22.7	45.2	66.5	83.4	91.7	96.1	98.7	99.7	100.0
(Female 2021)	(31.2)	(54.3)	(74.9)	(88.8)	(94.6)	(98.0)	(98.9)	(99.8)	(100.0)
<b>Male and female</b>	17.2	37.9	59.8	78.8	89.1	94.8	98.3	99.7	100.0
(M/F 2021)	(22.8)	(44.4)	(67.5)	(84.4)	(92.9)	(97.2)	(98.6)	(99.6)	(100.0)

#### 4. Links

JCQ 2022 results <https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/> (accessed 28<sup>th</sup> August 2022)

Ofqual: [Guide to GCSE results for England](#); [Ofqual analytics visualisations](#)

Qualifications Wales: [Summer 2022 results](#)

CCEA: [Results statistics](#)

## 5. Historic results for geography 2013-2022 (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)<sup>8</sup>

### All students

Year	Total Entry	Change	% Change	A* -A / 9-7	B-C / 6-4	D-G / 3-1	U	A*-C / 9-4
2014	225,149	2,297	1.0	26.5%	42.5%	30.2%	0.8%	69.0%
2015	228,075	2,926	1.3	26.9%	42.2%	30.1%	0.8%	69.1%
2016	244,033	15,958	7.0	24.6%	41.7%	32.5%	1.2%	66.3%
2017	245,964	1,931	0.8	23.6%	41.2%	33.9%	1.3%	64.8%
2018	256,420	10,456	4.3	24.2%	41.0%	33.2%	1.6%	65.2%
2019	265,169	8,749	3.4	24.9%	40.9%	32.6%	1.6%	65.8%
2020	270,311	5,142	1.9	30.7%	45.5%	23.3%	0.5%	76.2%
Year	Entry	Change	% change	7/A	4/C	1/G	U	
2021	281,741	11,430	4.2%	35.0%	77.4%	99.1%	100%	
2022	289,351	7610	2.7%	30.8%	72.7%	98.5%	100%	

<sup>8</sup> Source: Paul Weeden for the GA to 2020, based on JVQ tables



**Male**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Entry</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>A* -A / 9-7</b>	<b>B-C / 6-4</b>	<b>D-G / 3-1</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A*-C / 9-4</b>
2013	119,887	16,106	15.5	22.4%	42.5%	34.1%	1.0%	64.9%
2014	121,580	1,693	1.4	22.0%	43.2%	33.8%	1.0%	65.2%
2015	122,774	1,194	1.0	22.4%	42.9%	33.7%	1.0%	65.3%
2016	129,496	6,722	5.5	19.9%	42.4%	36.2%	1.5%	62.3%
2017	130,565	1,069	0.8	19.4%	41.5%	37.5%	1.6%	60.9%
2018	137,071	6,506	5.0	20.9%	41.1%	35.8%	2.2%	62.0%
2019	142,816	5,745	4.2	21.4%	41.1%	35.3%	2.2%	62.5%
2020	145,541	2,725	1.9	27.0%	46.4%	26.4%	1.2%	73.4%

<b>Year</b>	<b>Entry</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>7/A</b>	<b>4/C</b>	<b>1/G</b>	<b>U</b>
2021	151820	6279	4.3	30.8%	75.4%	99.0%	100%
2022	156,439	4619	3.0	26.7%	70.2%	98.1%	100%

**Female**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Entry</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>A* -A / 9-7</b>	<b>B-C / 6-4</b>	<b>D-G / 3-1</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A*-C / 9-4</b>
2013	102,965	19,724	23.7	32.4%	41.5%	25.5%	0.6%	73.9%
2014	103,569	604	0.6	31.8%	41.7%	25.9%	0.6%	73.5%
2015	105,301	1,732	1.7	32.1%	41.4%	25.9%	0.6%	73.5%
2016	114,537	9,236	8.8	29.9%	41.0%	28.3%	0.8%	70.9%
2017	115,399	862	0.8	28.4%	40.7%	30.0%	0.9%	69.1%
2018	119,349	3,950	3.4	28.0%	40.9%	30.2%	0.9%	68.9%
2019	122,353	3,004	2.5	28.9%	40.8%	29.3%	1.0%	69.7%
2020	124,770	2,417	2.0	35.0%	44.4%	20.3%	0.3%	79.4%

<b>Year</b>	<b>Entry</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>7/A</b>	<b>4/C</b>	<b>1/G</b>	<b>U</b>
2021	129,921	5,151	4.1	39.8%	79.8%	99.2%	100%
2022	132,912	2,991	2.3	35.7%	75.6%	99.0%	100%

Written by John Hopkin, member of the GA's Assessment and Examination Special Interest Group (AESIG), August 2022