

Statistical Release

Entries and Late Entries for GCSE and A Level: 2012/13 Academic Year

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Published:
8th November 2013

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Key points

These statistics are currently designated as **experimental**. Experimental statistics are official statistics undergoing further development work and your feedback is welcomed.

This release provides information on the number of entries and late entries for GCSE and A level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during the 2012/13 academic year.

If schools and colleges register an entry after the agreed deadline it is late and may be subject to an additional charge.

Entries are made up of unitised and component entries, depending on whether the specification is unitised or linear.

The key findings for this release are as follows.

- The proportion of GCSE entries that were late fell from 7.8 per cent in the 2011/12 academic year to 6.6 per cent in 2012/13.
- The proportion of A level entries that were late also fell, from 6.7 per cent in the 2011/12 academic year to 4.1 per cent in 2012/13. However, this up slightly on the year before when 3.9 per cent of entries were late.
- This is in the context of a 10 per cent decrease in GCSE entries and a 0.5 per cent decrease in A level entries.

Introduction

This statistical release, published on behalf of the qualifications regulators for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, presents data on entries and late entries for GCSE and A level exams during the 2012/13 academic year. Six exam boards offer these qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- AQA
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) (Northern Ireland)
- International Curriculum & Assessment Agency (Examinations) (ICAA(E))
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Pearson
- WJEC.

Note that the figures within this commentary have been rounded to the nearest 100. Tables are in the appendix.

This is the first release to report on entries and late entries for GCSE and A level exams. Future releases will be reported annually, following the summer examination series.

These statistics are experimental, which means they are in testing phase and not yet fully developed. We have published them to:

- involve users and stakeholders in their development
- build in quality at an early stage
- deliver statistics that meet users' needs.

Your feedback is valued and further information on how to provide this is given in the section 'Your feedback'.

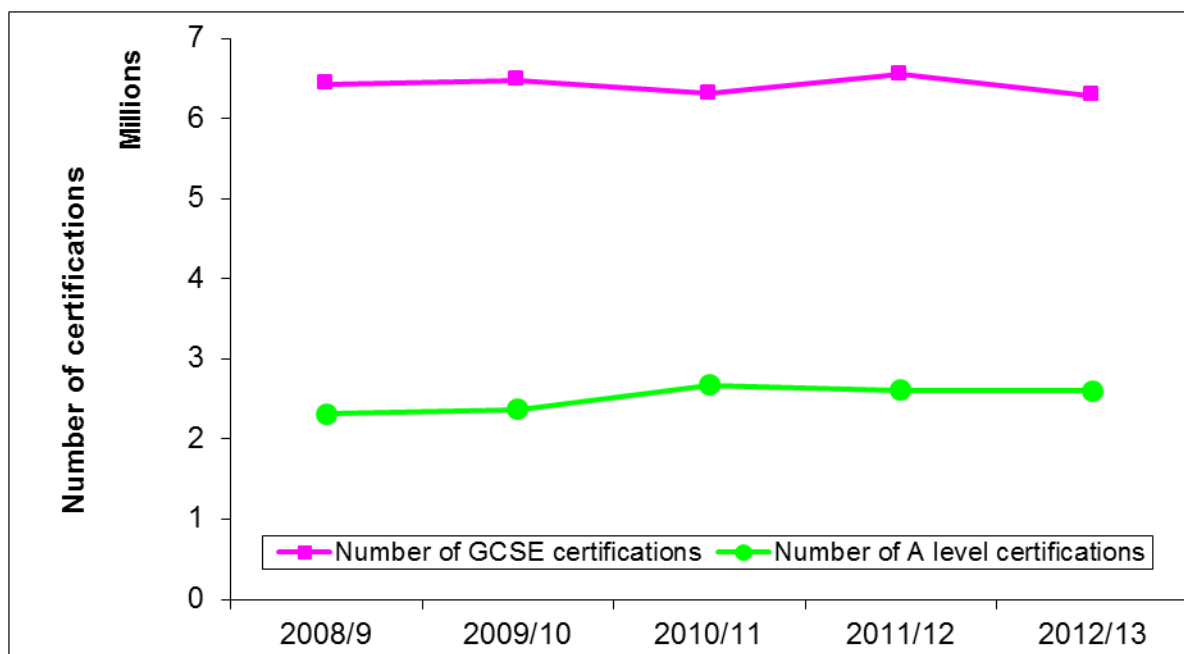
Key statistics

Certificates awarded

In the 2012/13 academic year, more than 2.6 million AS and A level certifications were awarded. More than 6 million GCSE certifications were awarded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during the same period.

The number of certifications for GCSEs and A levels has remained fairly constant over the last five years (see figure 1 and table 1). Changes in the number of certifications are likely to be affected by changes in the cohort size.

Figure 1: Number of certifications for GCSE and A level, academic years 2008/09 to 2012/13



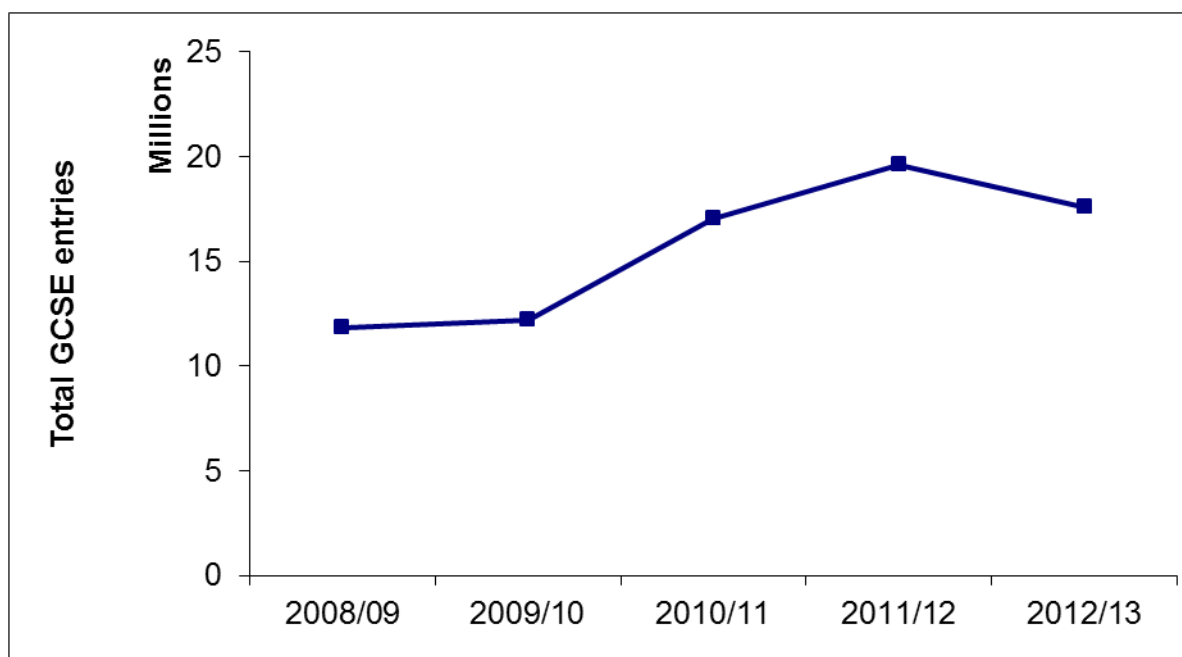
GCSE entries

Over the last five years there have been some significant changes to the structure of GCSE qualifications. The majority of GCSEs changed from linear, recorded as one entry, to a unitised structure where GCSEs are made up of a number of units and reported at unit level. As more GCSEs became unitised, the number of entries increased. We can see from figure 1, however, that the actual number of candidates certificating remained fairly stable.

We know that there was a significant increase in the number of candidates entered for units at a younger age from 2010/11 to 2011/12. This accounts for some of the increase in candidates certificating during this period.

The recent return to linear-structured GCSEs in England could have contributed to the 10 per cent decrease in entries seen in the last year (see figure 2 and table 2).

Figure 2: Total GCSE entries, academic years 2008/09 to 2012/13



Notes:

1. Entries are made up of unitised and component entries, depending on whether the specification is unitised or linear.

GCSE late entries

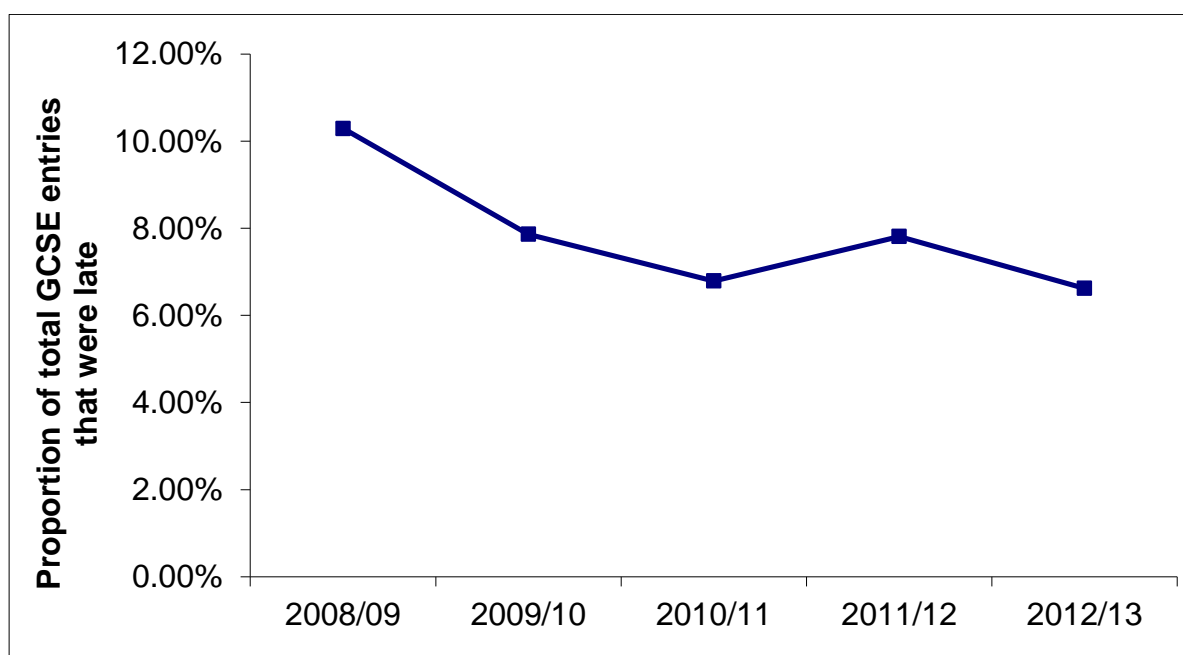
Schools and colleges submit entries on behalf of candidates to the relevant exam board. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publishes deadlines by which entries should be made.¹ This information is also available from exam boards.

If schools and colleges register an entry after the agreed deadline, it is late and may be subject to an additional charge.

The proportion of GCSE late entries has fallen from 7.8 per cent in the 2011/12 academic year to 6.6 per cent in 2012/13. This continues the downward trend seen over the last five years. This does not follow the same pattern as total entries, which saw an increase until 2011/12.

In 2008/09 10 per cent of all GCSE entries were late (see figure 3 and table 2). For a breakdown of entries and late entries by exam boards (see table 2).

Figure 3: Proportion of total GCSE entries that were late, academic years 2008/09 to 2012/13

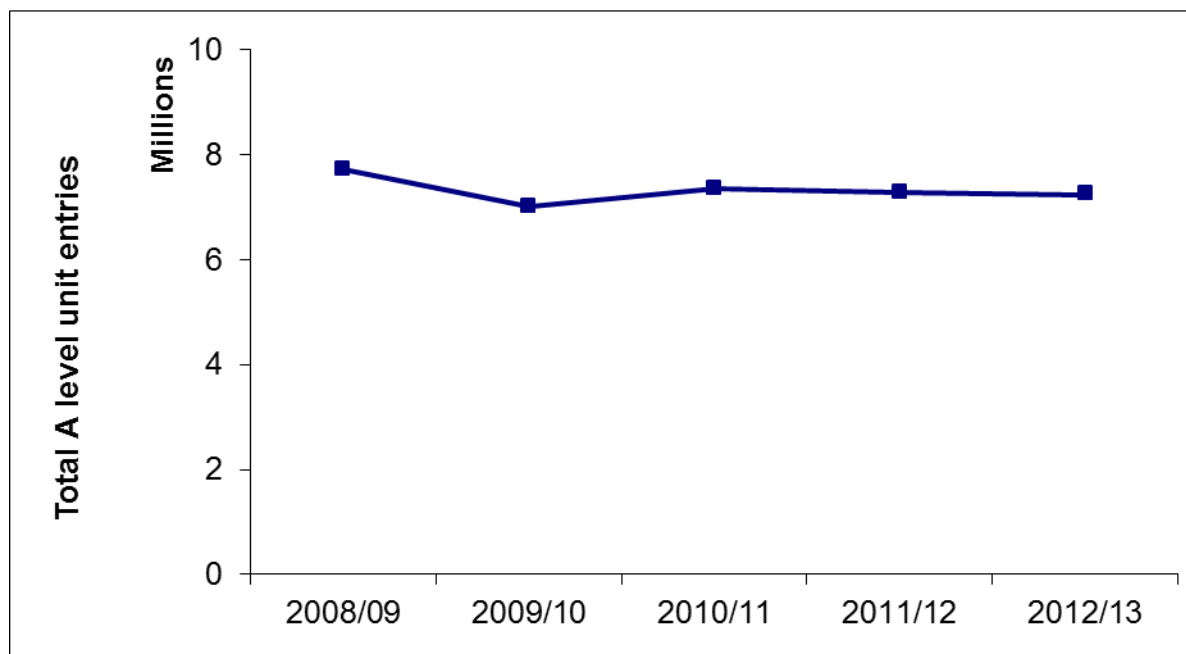


A level unit entries

The number of A level unit entries has remained fairly constant over the last five years, with a slight decrease from 2008/09 to 2009/10. This coincided with the point at which most A level qualifications were reduced from six to four units, likely one of the reasons for the decrease (see figure 4 and table 3).

¹ www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/key-dates-and-timetables/key-dates-in-the-examination-cycle-201314

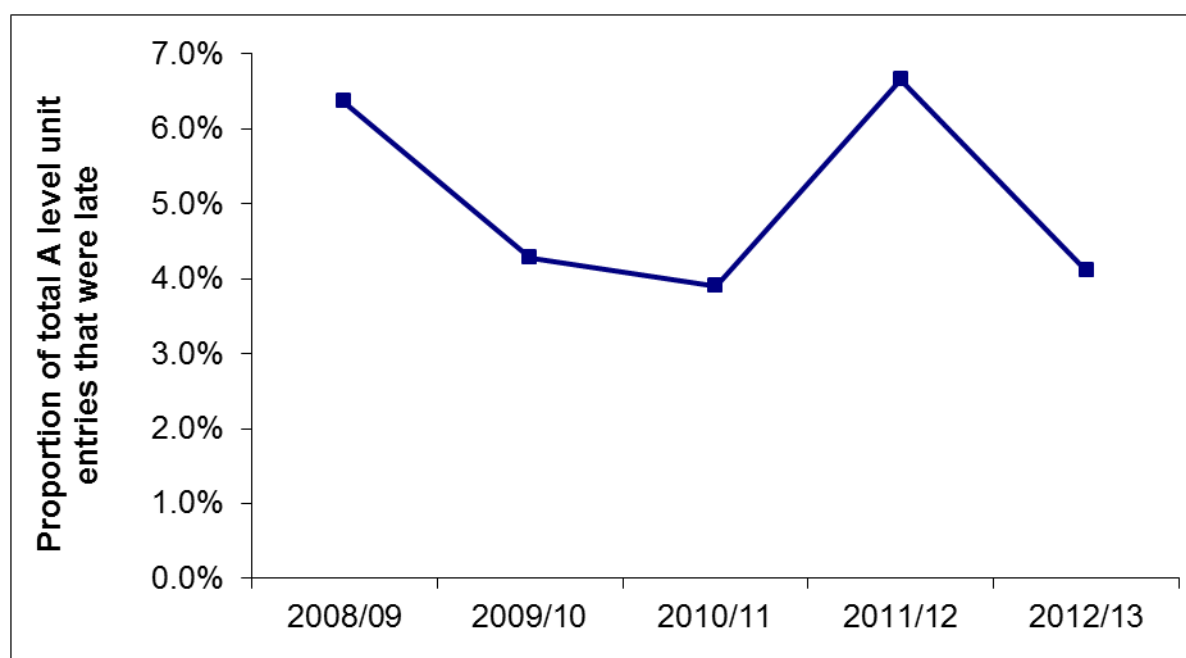
Figure 4: Total A level unit entries, academic years 2008/09 to 2012/13



A level late unit entries

The proportion of A level unit entries that were late has fallen from 6.7 per cent in the 2011/12 academic year to 4.1 per cent in 2012/13. However, this is up slightly on 3.9 per cent in 2010/11. There has been a general downward trend since 2008/09 with the exception of 2011/12 where we saw a significant increase (see figure 5 and table 3). For a breakdown of entries and late entries by exam boards see table 3.

Figure 5: Proportion of total A level unit entries that were late, academic years 2008/09 to 2012/13



Background notes

Qualification reform

There were four exam series available in each academic year in the period considered. GCSE and A level exams could be taken in the winter and summer exam series². Additionally, there were a further two exam series for a small range of GCSEs in November and March.

The Government set out its intention to reform GCSEs and A levels in *The Importance of Teaching – Schools White Paper 2010*.³ The changes mean that, for schools and colleges in England, there is no longer an opportunity to take GCSE and A level exams in the winter series.

The structure of GCSEs has also changed in England, with a return to linear assessments, which means exams must be taken at the end of the two-year period of study. Although this change comes in to force from summer 2014 onwards, it will have already had an impact on candidates taking GCSEs now. There will be a resit opportunity in the November series, but only for GCSEs English, English language and mathematics.

The Governments of Wales and Northern Ireland have retained the unitised structure of GCSEs, so their schools and colleges will still be able to enter candidates for exams in the winter exam series. However, this will not apply to A level exams. Candidates who started A level courses in 2012 will have one final opportunity to sit A level exams in the winter 2014 exam series. Thereafter the exams will only be available in the summer series.

Data source

Exam boards submit data to us for GCSEs and A levels they have awarded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Rounding

Figures in the commentary are rounded to the nearest 100.

² The winter exam series typically runs from January to February. The summer exam series runs from May to June.

³ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf

Glossary of terms

A level

Available as advanced level (A level) and advanced subsidiary (AS) qualifications. They are the qualifications that the majority of students use to gain entry to university. They are generally sat by 17- to 18-year-olds in schools and colleges, but are open to anyone who wishes to gain a qualification.

Certificate/certification

A formal acknowledgement of a student's achievement.

GCSE

General Certificates of Secondary Education are the main school-leaving qualification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are available in a range of subjects and can be studied alongside other qualifications. They are generally sat by 15- to 18-year-olds in schools and colleges, but are open to anyone who wishes to gain a qualification.

Your feedback

If you use our Statistical releases we would like to hear from you.

Users of these statistics

These statistics are designated as experimental. They are in testing phase and not yet fully developed. We welcome your feedback on any aspect of our statistical releases, including content, timing and format. We also would be particularly interested to know how you use or could use these statistics in your work.

Please send your comments to the Statistics team at statistics@ofqual.gov.uk .

Appendix

Table 1	Total number of certifications for GCSE and A level in each academic year, 2008/09 to 2012/13
Table 2	Total number of GCSE entries and late entries in each academic year, 2008/09 to 2012/13
Table 3	Total number of A level entries and late entries in each academic year, 2008/09 to 2012/13

Table 1: Total number of certifications for GCSE and A level in each academic year, 2008/09 to 2012/13

England, Wales & Northern Ireland

	Year	AQA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAA(E)	Total
GCSE certifications	2008/09	2,907,700	1,421,900	1,332,900	600,100	171,000		6,433,700
	2009/10	2,883,300	1,487,800	1,295,000	638,300	176,400		6,480,800
	2010/11	2,762,200	1,591,500	1,113,500	675,000	151,200	16,200	6,309,500
	2011/12	2,572,000	2,015,800	1,117,500	699,900	144,100	2,200	6,551,700
	2012/13	2,683,100	1,784,400	980,200	697,800	145,200	800	6,291,500
A level certifications	2008/09	955,700	541,700	595,200	161,400	59,700		2,313,700
	2009/10	998,200	498,700	628,400	188,000	61,500		2,374,800
	2010/11	1,094,400	645,700	663,700	205,200	63,500		2,672,400
	2011/12	1,064,700	655,900	621,500	203,300	67,300		2,612,700
	2012/13	1,069,900	660,400	603,800	204,200	68,700		2,607,000

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Data includes applied subjects, certifications from other UK regions and overseas.
2. Data is rounded to the nearest 100. Figures have been rounded independently so may not sum to the total.
3. ICAA(E) awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2010/11. In previous years, specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA. ICAA(E) do not offer A levels.

Table 2: Total number of GCSE entries and late entries in each academic year, 2008/09 to 2012/13

England, Wales & Northern Ireland

	Year	AQA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	ICAA(E)	Total
Number of ontime entries for GCSE	2008/09	4,438,100	2,821,200	3,037,100	175,000	131,800		10,603,100
	2009/10	4,608,600	3,152,800	3,074,500	252,300	147,900		11,236,100
	2010/11	6,474,100	4,483,800	3,675,100	936,200	271,300	16,400	15,856,800
	2011/12	7,643,000	4,566,900	3,348,700	2,131,400	370,200	2,200	18,062,400
	2012/13	7,123,400	3,852,500	2,754,200	2,207,400	456,700	1,000	16,395,100
Number of late entries for GCSE	2008/09	627,600	302,000	254,400	23,800	8,800		1,216,600
	2009/10	339,700	317,400	284,100	9,700	8,200		959,000
	2010/11	470,500	359,500	300,000	14,700	10,200	200	1,155,100
	2011/12	872,900	266,900	339,500	36,600	14,200	0	1,530,200
	2012/13	688,300	169,500	245,700	40,800	17,500	0	1,161,800
Total GCSE entries	2008/09	5,065,600	3,123,100	3,291,500	198,800	140,600		11,819,700
	2009/10	4,948,200	3,470,200	3,358,600	261,900	156,100		12,195,100
	2010/11	6,944,600	4,843,200	3,975,100	950,800	281,500	16,600	17,011,800
	2011/12	8,515,900	4,833,700	3,688,200	2,168,000	384,500	2,200	19,592,600
	2012/13	7,811,700	4,022,000	2,999,900	2,248,300	474,200	1,000	17,557,000
Proportion of total GCSE entries that were late	2008/09	12.39%	9.67%	7.73%	11.97%	6.26%		10.29%
	2009/10	6.87%	9.15%	8.46%	3.70%	5.25%		7.86%
	2010/11	6.78%	7.42%	7.55%	1.55%	3.62%	1.20%	6.79%
	2011/12	10.25%	5.52%	9.21%	1.69%	3.69%	0.00%	7.81%
	2012/13	8.81%	4.21%	8.19%	1.81%	3.69%	0.00%	6.62%

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Data includes applied subjects, entries from other UK regions and overseas.
2. Entries are made up of unutilised and linear entries.
3. ICAA(E) awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.
4. Data is rounded to the nearest 100. Figures have been rounded independently so may not sum to the total.

Table 3: Total number of A level entries and late entries in each academic year, 2008/09 to 2012/13

England, Wales & Northern Ireland							
	Year	AQA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	Total
Number of ontime entries for A level	2008/09	2,997,900	1,644,700	1,953,700	445,900	182,200	7,224,400
	2009/10	2,760,900	1,495,800	1,811,500	467,500	169,400	6,705,100
	2010/11	2,752,900	1,825,300	1,790,300	516,700	175,500	7,060,800
	2011/12	2,686,600	1,775,000	1,630,200	517,900	183,000	6,792,700
	2012/13	2,694,800	1,934,600	1,611,200	519,000	187,200	6,946,800
Number of late entries for A level	2008/09	123,000	204,800	114,200	45,800	2,400	490,200
	2009/10	78,600	83,800	101,000	33,800	1,800	299,100
	2010/11	80,700	112,900	87,300	3,100	2,600	286,400
	2011/12	99,300	221,200	155,800	4,500	3,400	484,200
	2012/13	88,800	70,700	127,000	6,900	3,400	296,700
Total A level entries	2008/09	3,120,900	1,849,500	2,067,800	491,700	184,600	7,714,600
	2009/10	2,839,500	1,579,600	1,912,500	501,300	171,300	7,004,100
	2010/11	2,833,500	1,938,200	1,877,600	519,800	178,100	7,347,200
	2011/12	2,785,900	1,996,300	1,786,000	522,400	186,400	7,276,900
	2012/13	2,783,700	2,005,200	1,738,200	525,900	190,500	7,243,500
Proportion of total A level entries that were late	2008/09	3.94%	11.07%	5.52%	9.31%	1.30%	6.35%
	2009/10	2.77%	5.31%	5.28%	6.74%	1.05%	4.27%
	2010/11	2.85%	5.82%	4.65%	0.60%	1.46%	3.90%
	2011/12	3.56%	11.08%	8.72%	0.86%	1.82%	6.65%
	2012/13	3.19%	3.53%	7.31%	1.31%	1.78%	4.10%

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Data includes applied subjects, entries from other UK regions and overseas.
2. Entries are made up of unitised and linear entries.
3. Data is rounded to the nearest 100. Figures have been rounded independently so may not sum to the total.

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First published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in 2013

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