

Spotlight on



Reformed AS and A level Qualifications 2018

This summer there are reformed AS qualifications available for the first time in six subjects:

- Design and technology
- Government and Politics
- Law
- Further Mathematics
- Mathematics
- Media Studies

And reformed A level qualifications available for the first time in 10 subjects:

- Drama
- French
- Geography
- German
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Welsh Second Language

What are the features of the new AS and A levels in Wales?

AS and A levels remain coupled - that is, the AS level still contributes towards an A level. The grading scale also remains the same: A to E for AS level and A* to E for A level. For these new qualifications, however, the AS level will contribute 40% towards the overall A level qualification, whereas previously it contributed 50%.

In England and Northern Ireland AS and A levels are also changing. We have worked with the regulators in those countries to produce an information leaflet to explain these changes.

Who's taking these qualifications this summer?

At both AS and A level, entries have decreased again this year. At AS level, overall entries have fallen by 8% compared to 2017. At A level, 2018 entries are 5% lower than 2017 entries.

These changes could mean that the AS and A level results this summer are different from previous years as the nature of the cohort sitting these examinations may have changed.

We have started to look in more detail at the entry data, to explore what may lie behind this continuing decrease in the overall total of entries. Our initial findings suggest that decreases in the population of 17- and 18-year-olds in Wales are an important factor in explaining the decrease in entries. For students studying these qualifications, the average number of A levels taken per student has remained relatively stable in recent years whilst the average number of AS qualifications taken by students appears to have decreased slightly. We will be talking in more detail about our work to understand the factors contributing to the decline in AS and A level entries in our blog, which we will be publishing soon.



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