



MEDIA RELEASE

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THURSDAY, 21 AUGUST 2008**

GCSE

ENTRY LEVEL 2008

WELSH BACCALAUREATE QUALIFICATION
– INTERMEDIATE AND FOUNDATION DIPLOMAS 2008

WELSH GCSE RESULTS SHOW STEADY IMPROVEMENT

2008 GCSE results for Wales, which were issued today (Thursday 21 August), showed an improvement at Grade C on previous years, while outcomes at other grades were very similar to 2007. 65.0% of all students achieved Grades A*-C, compared with 63.0% last year. The percentage achieving A* was 6.1% compared with 6.3% last year, with 18.9% achieving A or A* (compared with 18.6% in 2007).

Overall standards in Wales were very similar to results achieved in the UK as a whole. 65.7% of students in the UK achieved Grades A* to C, and 6.8% gained the top grade, A*.

Derec Stockley, WJEC's Director of Examinations and Assessment, welcomed the results. "I am delighted that once again students have done extremely well," he said. "Both teachers and students work hard to achieve excellent results, they should be congratulated for their hard work. Students can be justly proud of their achievements and WJEC would like to wish them well for the future."

WJEC's GCSE entries across Wales and England

WJEC total entries for GCSE have increased by 5.8% to over 567,741 this year. The largest entries for WJEC come from English, English Literature, Religious Studies, Mathematics, Science and Welsh Second Language.

"The increase in WJEC entries again this year is a tribute to our staff and teams of examiners," commented Derec Stockley. "WJEC has worked hard to build a reputation as an accessible awarding body, as a result of this I believe that an increasing number of teachers are recognising the quality of service that WJEC can offer".

GCSE RESULTS IN WALES (All Awarding Bodies)

A summary of the main features of 2008 results in Wales for GCSE full courses (National Curriculum and a selection of other subjects) is given below. Comprehensive figures on a country-by country basis (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) are provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and may be accessed from 09.30 hrs. Thursday 21 August at www.jcq.org.uk

- The total number of subject entries with all awarding bodies for GCSE full courses in Wales in 2008 was 310,089. This represents a decrease of 5,039 (1.6%) compared with 2007, though the overall figure has remained fairly stable for the past 5 years.
- The overall pass rate (Grades A*-G) is 98.4%; this is the same as that for the UK as a whole, and a 0.4% increase on the corresponding figure for 2007.
- The percentage of candidates achieving Grades A*-C is 65.0%, representing a 2.0% increase on the corresponding figure for 2007. This is 0.7% lower than the 2008 figure for the UK.
- The percentage of candidates achieving the highest grades (A* and A) is 18.9%, representing a 0.3% increase on the corresponding figure for 2007. This is 1.8% lower than the 2008 figure for the UK.
- The examinations are based on the same subject specifications as 2007 except for Science, where changes to the science curriculum have affected entry patterns. The old Science Double Award has been replaced by two separate qualifications – Science and Additional Science in addition to the separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The unitised structure of these specifications allows for staged assessment and re-sits and provides flexible progression routes for candidates. It is not possible to make direct comparisons between Science or Additional Science and the previous Single and Double Awards; however, entries for the individual sciences are largely unchanged but show a significant improvement in performance.
- Against a slight decrease in entries across most subjects, there was significant growth in entries for Media Studies (+14%), Drama (+6%), Religious Studies (+5%). While entries for Spanish and German remained stable, there was a further drop (-5%) in entries for French.
- There was also a welcome increase in entries for both Welsh First Language (+5%) and Welsh Second Language (+6%).
- In terms of overall results, females continue to perform better than males at all grades. The percentage of females achieving Grades A*-A is 21.6% compared to males achieving 16.2%; for Grades A*-C the percentage of females gaining these grades is 68.6% whereas for males it is 61.4%. Of the total entry in Wales for GCSE full courses (310,089) there are about 6,000 more entries made by females. These patterns are very similar across England and Wales.
- The total number of entries for GCSE Short Courses was 37,326, compared with 35,895 in 2007, representing an increase of 4.0%.
- The total number of entries for Applied GCSEs was 5,701, compared with 6,264 in 2007. These are 'Double Award' GCSEs, although in this case each candidate entry is counted once. Among the thirteen subjects taken, the largest entries were for Applied Science (1,581), Health and Social Care (1,225) and Applied Business (1,036).

GCSE RESULTS: WALES – ALL AWARDING BODIES

Cumulative Percentages gaining Grades A*-C and A*-G

Subject	Entry		Grades A* - C %		Grades A* - G %	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Art	11,055	10,864	74.3	74.9	99.5	99.5
Business Studies	4,427	4,118	59.9	60.7	97.5	97.5
Design and Technology	13,616	13,002	59.9	60.3	97.3	97.8
Drama	4,182	4,453	72.1	74.9	99.1	99.2
English	39,213	38,737	61.0	62.4	98.8	98.8
English Literature	29,450	29,374	67.7	68.4	98.6	98.6
French	8,343	7,944	75.0	74.3	99.7	99.8
German	2,144	2,133	79.0	77.3	99.9	99.8
Spanish	1,644	1,630	74.5	75.2	99.5	99.9
Geography	14,279	13,692	66.1	66.7	98.5	98.8
History	13,018	12,751	68.0	66.2	97.6	97.2
ICT	10,876	10,016	66.6	67.9	97.2	97.7
Mathematics	39,431	39,158	51.8	52.1	95.7	96.6
Media/Film/TV Studies	2,874	3,288	67.6	70.4	98.0	98.5
Music	3,878	3,779	80.5	79.3	99.3	99.3
Physical Education	9,152	8,946	70.5	69.2	99.8	99.9
Religious Studies	5,630	5,891	70.1	71.3	98.4	98.6
Science (New Specification)	*1,491	30,466	53.8	58.6	97.7	98.4
Additional Science (New Specification)	-	24,432	-	62.1	-	98.9
Science: Biology	3,928	3,993	85.2	89.5	99.2	99.9
Science: Chemistry	3,710	3,791	86.9	90.9	99.4	99.8
Science: Physics	3,713	3,721	85.8	89.7	99.2	99.9
Welsh (First Language)	5,183	5,436	72.9	72.1	99.8	99.9
Welsh Literature	4,132	4,126	71.2	72.2	99.3	99.8
Welsh (2 nd Language)	9,629	10,044	70.4	70.2	99.2	99.3
Welsh (Second – Short)	10,486	11,235	47.3	44.5	97.5	96.8
Total (All Full Course Subjects)	315,128	310,089	63.0	65.0	98.0	98.4

*Year 10 entries only in 2007.

WJEC ENTRIES for GCSE

WJEC's examinations at GCSE are also taken by a significant number of schools and colleges in England; indeed the substantial growth in entries for some subjects derives very largely from increased take up of our specifications in England.

The total number of subject entries from all centres for the GCSE examination offered by WJEC in 2008 was 567,741. This represents a 5.8% increase on the corresponding figure for 2007.

The total number of subject entries from centres in Wales for the GCSE examination (including Short Courses and GCSEs in vocational subjects) offered by WJEC in 2008 was 278,576. This represents a 1.6% decrease on the corresponding figure for 2007.

ENTRY LEVEL CERTIFICATES

Entries for Entry Level examinations in Wales in 2008 were 13,501 compared with 14,139 in 2007.

The results, which are reported as Entry 1 (formerly 'Pass'), Entry 2 (formerly 'Merit'), Entry 3 (formerly 'Distinction') were as follows:

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>
Entry 3:	<i>37.8</i>	<i>37.4</i>
Entry 2:	<i>76.5</i>	<i>77.6</i>
Entry 1:	<i>94.9</i>	<i>96.1</i>

The total entry for Entry Level examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2008 was 120,762 compared with 125,620 in 2007, a decrease of 3.9%. Having pioneered the first specifications at this level, and offered a comprehensive set of courses over the past twenty years, WJEC continues to be the largest provider. Total entries with WJEC were 35,342 - a decrease of 280 (0.8%) compared with 2007. Together with entries in Northern Ireland – where CCEA ran specifications provided by WJEC - this represents about 30% of total UK entries.

WELSH BACCALAUREATE INTERMEDIATE AND FOUNDATION DIPLOMAS

WJEC is delighted to confirm the fifth August award for the Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma and the second award for the Foundation Diploma. The Intermediate level pre-16 and Foundation level 14-19 are part of the pilot funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, to be completed in August 2009. The Minister has recently announced that the Foundation level Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and provision in Key Stage 4 will be rolled out from September 2009.

This summer's results include the first results published for candidates in Key Stage 4 who have taken the Foundation or Intermediate Diploma over two years in school, or as part of a partnership between a school and a college. This is the second set of results for the Foundation Diploma and includes candidates who started their courses in September 2007.

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification was designed to provide learners with a rich and broad educational experience through their study of the core and subject options. The overarching nature of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification requires candidates to be successful in all of the different components. These results reflect the commitment of both the candidates and their teachers and lecturers when meeting the challenging requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Julie Griffiths, Head teacher at Tre-Gib Comprehensive School in Llandeilo, said, "Everyone associated with Ysgol Tre-Gib is very pleased that the hard work involved in piloting the Welsh Bac at Intermediate Level has paid off. There is no doubt that our GCSE students have benefited enormously from the Welsh Bac core programme, and this will provide an excellent platform for further success as these young people progress on to the next stage of their education."

The number of candidates entered at Intermediate level has more than doubled since 2007, reaching 1,309 and representing an increase of 136%. The number of candidates entered at Foundation Level was 1085, again representing a considerable increase on the 354 candidates entered in 2007. 603 learners achieved the Intermediate Diploma and 450 the Foundation Diploma, both representing a considerable increase on the figures for 2007. 735 candidates at Intermediate level and 626 candidates at Foundation level achieved the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Core Certificate. Candidates who have not yet achieved the Intermediate or Foundation Diplomas have benefited from the broad educational experiences provided by the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and achieved a range of key skills qualifications.

The cumulative nature of the Welsh Baccalaureate means that many candidates who have not yet achieved the whole Core Certificate or Diploma will be able to do so, providing they achieve the remaining parts of the qualification, in the coming academic year. These candidates may choose to enter again for the Foundation or the Intermediate Diploma in March or August 2009.

Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation Diploma	Summer 2008
Candidates entered (from 12 schools and 11 colleges)	1085
Candidates completing the programme	1013
Candidates awarded the Foundation Diploma (at least 4 GCSE D-G or equivalent plus 4 Key Skills at level 1 plus other Welsh Bac Core)	450
Candidates awarded the Core Certificate (achieved 4 Key Skills at level 1 plus other Welsh Bac Core)	626

Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma	Summer 2008
Candidates entered (from 21 schools and 11 colleges)	1309
Candidates completing the programme	1173
Candidates awarded the Intermediate Diploma (at least 4 GCSE A*-C or equivalent plus 4 Key Skills at levels 1 and 2 plus other Welsh Bac Core)	603
Candidates awarded the Core Certificate (achieved 4 Key Skills at levels 1 and 2 plus other Welsh Bac Core)	735

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Contextualising Examination Results

In comparing individual schools' or groups of schools' results with any aggregate totals, it should be borne in mind that substantial variations among schools are to be expected: there are a number of social, economic and educational factors which have a bearing on the performances of pupils in examinations, of which the effectiveness of the school is only one.

GCSE – General

The GCSE is part of a qualifications framework which is common across Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Comprehensive data for entries and results on a country-by-country basis are provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (www.jcq.org.uk) and may be accessed from 09.30 on Thursday 21 August.

GCSE Short Courses

A GCSE Short Course is equivalent to a half GCSE. The grading system is identical to that for GCSE Full Courses.

Applied GCSE

Applied GCSEs were first examined in 2004. These are 'Double Award' GCSEs counting as two subject entries and aiming to provide an introduction to a broad vocational area. They are graded on a 15 point scale (A*A*, A*A, AA, AB through to GG).

Entry Level

Until 2001 Entry Level examinations were called Certificate of Educational Achievement. They are aimed at students for whom GCSE is not deemed to be appropriate.

Welsh BaccaLaureate Qualification

The Welsh BaccaLaureate Qualification is an overarching qualification that is currently offered by WJEC, in association with Fforwm and the University of Bath, under contract from the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Welsh BaccaLaureate has been designed to give learners a richer and broader educational experience alongside their optional subjects. The programme of study is made up of a Core and Options. The Core has four components - Key Skills; Wales, Europe and the World; Work-related Education; and Personal and Social Education. The Options are the subjects and courses such as GCSE, VGCSE, NVQ and BTEC that make up a candidate's complete programme of study. Candidates who complete all parts of the Welsh BaccaLaureate (Core and Options) at the required standards are awarded the Welsh BaccaLaureate Diploma at the appropriate level.

The Welsh BaccaLaureate Intermediate Diploma is being piloted in the age range 14-16 from September 2006 to August 2009 with the Foundation Diploma being piloted in the age range 14-19, during the same period. The post-16 qualification at Advanced and Intermediate levels has already been the subject of roll-out, following a successful external evaluation report. This means that the Welsh BaccaLaureate has been available in 74 schools, colleges and training providers across Wales since September 2007. A further 27 schools, colleges and training providers will be offering the qualification from September 2008 and this autumn more will be invited by the Welsh Assembly Government to apply for the next stage of the roll-out (starting in Sept 2009).

Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma

This is the fifth year for the awarding of the Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma and the assessment requirements of this award are outlined below.

Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma	
Core	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four Key Skills, two at level 2 and two at level 1, including the 'first three' i.e. Communication, Application of Number and ICT. There must be evidence of having pursued all six Key Skills• Working with an Employer, Team Enterprise and Community Participation reports• Individual Investigation at level 2• Aspects of PSE and Wales, Europe and the World	Four A*-C at GCSE or NVQ level 2 or BTEC First at pass level or equivalent

Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation Diploma

The assessment requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation Diploma award are outlined below.

Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation Diploma	
Core	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four key skills at level 1, which must include one from the 'first three' i.e. Communication, Application of Number and ICT, and evidence of having pursued all six key skills.• Working with an Employer, Team Enterprise and Community Participation reports• Individual Investigation at level 1• Aspects of PSE and Wales, Europe and the World	Four D-G at GCSE or NVQ level 2 or BTEC Introductory Diploma at pass level or equivalent

The candidates for the Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate and Foundation Diploma in summer 2008 are from the following schools and colleges:

Centre No.	Centre Name	Intermediate	Foundation
68105	Ysgol Bryn Elian	X	X
68112	Deeside College	X	X
68138	Ysgol Dinas Bran		X
68154	Coleg Llandrillo	X	X
68159	Rhyl High School		
68163	Ysgol Rhiwabon	X	X
68165	Ysgol Brynhyfryd - Mod (3) only		
68184	Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	X	
68189	Yale College		X
68204	Penglais School	X	
68231	Ysgol Preseli	X	X
68239	Pembrokeshire College	X	X
68246	Ysgol Tre Gib	X	X
68250	Coleg Sir Gar	X	X
68306	Bassaleg School	X	
68329	Coleg Gwent - Crosskeys Campus	X	X
68339	Coleg Gwent - Ebbw Vale Campus	X	X
68357	Bettws High School	X	
68358	Duffryn High School	X	
68359	Hartridge High School	X	
68360	Lliswerry Comprehensive School	X	
68363	St Joseph's RC High School	X	
68364	St Julian's School	X	
68365	Coleg Gwent - Newport Campus	X	X
68375	Coleg Gwent - Pontypool Campus	X	X
68376	St Alban's RC High School		
68389	Coleg Gwent - Usk Campus	X	
68408	Coleg Menai	X	X
68483	Coleg Meirion Dwyfor		
68506	Coleg Morgannwg Aberdare	X	
68521	Bryntirion Comprehensive School	X	X
68524	Bridgend College	X	
68542	Coleg Morgannwg Rhondda	X	
68550	Pen Y Dre High School		
68568	Cardinal Newman RC High School		X
68570	Coleg Morgannwg Pontypridd	X	
68575	Porth County Community School	X	
68581	Archbishop McGrath Catholic Comp Sch	X	
68592	The College Ystrad Mynach		X
68615	Builth Wells High School	X	X
68705	Barry Comprehensive School	X	
68707	Barry College	X	X
68711	Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg	X	
68718	Cantonian High School		
68720	Cathays High School	X	X
68728	St David's College		X
68745	Coleg Glan Hafren	X	X
68751	Whitchurch High School	X	
68783	St Cyres School	X	X

68796	Ysgol Gyfun Plasmawr		
68830	Neath Port Talbot College	X	X
68845	Neath Port Talbot College (Margam Park)		X
68857	Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comp Sch	X	
68860	Swansea College		

Additional information on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification is available on the web site (www.wbq.org.uk).

WJEC

WJEC CBAC Ltd is the one awarding body with its headquarters in Wales.

In administering examinations across all levels the WJEC has this year

- appointed over 4,000 examiners and moderators to deal with its examinations work, the vast majority of whom are serving teachers with extensive professional experience
- received entries from all the schools and colleges in Wales, and approximately 3,000 centres in England
- set over 500 Welsh medium papers, accounting for over 25,000 subject entries
- offered 345 in-service training sessions (attended by over 12,000 teachers)
- provided extensively for candidates with special assessment needs.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE EXAMINATIONS SYSTEM

External Monitoring of Standards

Ultimately, all awarding bodies are answerable to the Regulatory Authorities – the QCA (England), DCELLS (Wales) and CCEA (Northern Ireland) – for the standards of the examinations. The regulatory authorities monitor the awarding bodies' standards.

In addition, the awarding bodies themselves conduct a number of comparability studies to compare standards.

Maintaining standards within and across all qualifications is the paramount concern of the awarding bodies.

How examinations are set and marked

Each examination paper is thoroughly vetted to make sure it is clear, represents a fair test of the specification and is pitched at the right level for the students. The setting of examination papers is subject to careful quality control and involves a team of experienced examiners and teachers and a rigorous moderation and checking process. The whole process follows rules laid down by the Regulatory Authorities.

Each awarding body has:

- one person who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the quality and standards of all its qualifications;
- a Chair of Examiners who is responsible for maintaining standards year on year across different specifications (syllabuses) in a subject;
- Chief Examiners for each specification;
- Principal Examiners who are responsible for the setting of an examination paper and standardising the marking.

Enquiries about Results and Appeals

An examination centre (school or college) which is concerned about the grade a student has been awarded can ask for the paper(s) to be re-checked and the marking to be reviewed. This is known as an enquiry about a result.

The review of marking involves a reassessment of the work by a Senior Examiner. Following the review, candidates' grades can be confirmed, lowered or raised.

The Awarding Body arranges for senior examiners to review the marking of papers according to the original mark scheme. A clerical check will also be conducted to ensure the marks were calculated and recorded correctly. The outcome of the enquiry is communicated in writing to the centre. If the centre is still unhappy following the review of marking, an appeal can be lodged.

Access to scripts

Over the past five years there has been a significant move towards increasing the openness and transparency of the public examination system. Since 2000, students have been able to ask to have marked examination scripts returned to them in all subjects so that they can see exactly how and where they earned their marks. This arrangement will continue in 2008.

Access and equality of opportunity

All awarding bodies promote access and equality of opportunity in the examination system by making provision for candidates with special requirements.

Similarly, the awarding bodies give special consideration to students who have suffered problems such as illness, injury or bereavement at the time of the examination. There are large numbers of requests for special consideration every summer and each one is treated individually.

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