

# A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades in England 2006-2009

Statistics Report Series No. 14

Joanne L. Emery

January 2010

Research Division – Statistics Group  
Assessment, Research and Development  
Cambridge Assessment  
1 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1GG

## Indices to tables

<b>Part 1) Overall results</b>	<b>p10</b>
Table 1: Population estimates and A-level candidate numbers for 18 year olds in England - - - - -	p10
Table 2.i: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken - - -	p10
Table 2.ii: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results - - - -	p10
Table 3.i: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades - - - -	p11
Table 3.ii: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results - - - -	p11
Table 4.i: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades -	p11
Table 4.ii: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results - - -	p11
Table 5.i : A-level results by grade - - - - -	p12
Table 5.ii: A-level results by grade, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking	p12

**Part 2) Results by gender** **p13**

Table 6:	Population estimates and A-level candidate numbers for 18 year olds in England - - - - - a: Females b: Males	p13
Table 7:	Percentage of A-level candidature belonging to each gender - -	p13
Table 8.i:	A-level candidature by number of examinations taken - - - a: Females b: Males	p14
Table 8.ii:	A-level candidature by number of examinations taken, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results - - - - a: Females b: Males	p15
Table 9.i:	A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades - - - - a: Females b: Males c: Percentages, by gender, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades	p15
Table 9.ii:	A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results - - - - a: Females b: Males c: Percentages, by gender, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results	p16
Table 10.i:	A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades - a: Females b: Males	p17

Table 10.ii:	A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results	-	-	-					p17
	a: Females								
	b: Males								
Table 11.i:	A-level results by grade	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	p18
	a: Females								
	b: Males								
Table 11.ii:	A-level results by grade, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking								p18
	a: Females								
	b: Males								

**Part 3) Results by school type**

**p19**

Table 12:	Percentage of A-level candidature belonging to each school type	-	-	-	-	p19
Table 13.i:	A-level candidature by number of examinations taken	-	-	-	-	p19
	a: Comprehensive					
	b: FE college					
	c: Grammar					
	d: Independent					
	e: Sixth form college					
	f: Tertiary college					
	g: Other / unidentified					
Table 13.ii:	A-level candidature by number of examinations taken, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results	-	-	-	-	p21
	a: Comprehensive					
	b: FE college					
	c: Grammar					
	d: Independent					
	e: Sixth form college					
	f: Tertiary college					
	g: Other / unidentified					
Table 14.i:	A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades	-	-	-	-	p22
	a: Comprehensive					
	b: FE college					
	c: Grammar					
	d: Independent					
	e: Sixth form college					
	f: Tertiary college					
	g: Other / unidentified					
	h: Percentages, by school type, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades					

Table 14.ii:	<p>A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results                    -           -           -           -           p24</p> <p>a: Comprehensive</p> <p>b: FE college</p> <p>c: Grammar</p> <p>d: Independent</p> <p>e: Sixth form college</p> <p>f: Tertiary college</p> <p>g: Other / unidentified</p> <p>h: Percentages, by school type, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results</p>
Table 15.i:	<p>A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades           -           p26</p> <p>a: Comprehensive</p> <p>b: FE college</p> <p>c: Grammar</p> <p>d: Independent</p> <p>e: Sixth form college</p> <p>f: Tertiary college</p> <p>g: Other / unidentified</p>
Table 15.ii:	<p>A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results           -           -           p28</p> <p>a: Comprehensive</p> <p>b: FE college</p> <p>c: Grammar</p> <p>d: Independent</p> <p>e: Sixth form college</p> <p>f: Tertiary college</p> <p>g: Other / unidentified</p>

Table 16.i: A-level results by grade - - - - - - - - p29  
a: Comprehensive  
b: FE college  
c: Grammar  
d: Independent  
e: Sixth form college  
f: Tertiary college  
g: Other / unidentified

Table 16.ii: A-level results by grade, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking p31  
a: Comprehensive  
b: FE college  
c: Grammar  
d: Independent  
e: Sixth form college  
f: Tertiary college  
g: Other / unidentified

## **Aims, data and methods**

This report investigates trends in the numbers and percentages of A-level candidates in England attaining three or more 'A' grades over the years 2006 to 2009. It is an update and extension of Statistics Report Series No. 6, which compares the two examination years 1996 and 2006.

Results are presented in three parts: 1) overall, 2) by gender, 3) by school type. Numbers are also expressed as a percentage of the estimated population of that age in England where possible. Population estimates for 2009 are not available at the time of writing.

In each part of the results, tables are presented on the following:

The numbers and percentages of candidates taking 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5+ A-level examinations.

The numbers and percentages of candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades:

- out of all A-level candidates,
- out of candidates with 3 or more A-level examination results.

The numbers and percentages of A-level grades awarded that are 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' and 'U'.

For each of the above, two tables are given based on two datasets. Tables labelled \*.i are based on a dataset that included results for all A-level subjects. Those labelled \*.ii are based on a dataset where General Studies and Critical Thinking results were deleted. These two subjects are disregarded for university entrance by some institutions (although not usually for all courses).

A-level data was extracted from the National Pupil Database (NPD), compiled by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), for examination years 2006 to 2009 (academic years 2005/6 to 2008/9). This data is supplied to the DCSF by the awarding bodies and contains individual attainment records and candidate-level information (e.g. month and year of birth, gender, school identification number) for all candidates in schools within England. Each annual dataset contains candidates who had their 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> birthday in that academic year. The majority of candidates (i.e. the expected age group) had their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in that academic year and the data used in this report was restricted to that age group.



School type information was obtained from a database of school types maintained by the OCR awarding body. It was matched to the NPD using the centre number of the school that the candidate attended. Population estimates of 18 year olds in England (rounded to the nearest hundred) were obtained from Office for National Statistics (ONS) website:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15106>

Data merging and analyses were carried out in SAS (Version 9.1). Multiple incidences of the same subject examination for a candidate (i.e. where resits had occurred) were deleted to leave the only the highest grade attained. Any duplicate records of candidates were also deleted (each candidate has a unique reference number).

## **Some notes on the results**

Throughout this report the term 'A-level' is used to refer to A2-level (second year of A-level) candidates and results. It does not include AS-level (first year of A-level) candidates or results.

The data used for generating this report was restricted to candidates in the expected age group (i.e. those who turned 18 in that academic year). Initial analyses of the entire dataset by age group showed that those younger than expected tended to be taking a low number of A-level examinations. It is also possible that those outside the expected age range may be atypical in terms of their attainment. Restricting the data to the expected age cohort also permits the data to be expressed as a percentage of the estimated numbers of that age in the population.

## Part 1) Overall results

**Table 1: Population estimates and A-level candidate numbers for 18 year olds in England**

Year	cohort population*	A-level candidates	% of cohort
2006	675800	221269	32.74
2007	669900	220732	32.95
2008	675100	226360	33.53
2009	-	233705	-

\*Source: Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates (rounded to the nearest 100). Population estimates for 2009 are not yet available.

Around one third of the estimated age cohort took at least one A-level examination over these years. Despite a small dip in candidate numbers in 2007 there was a rise in terms of the age cohort percentage.

**Table 2.i: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	21759	9.83	21186	9.60	21436	9.47	23298	9.97
2	32017	14.47	32351	14.66	33386	14.75	35174	15.05
3	108554	49.06	108679	49.24	113271	50.04	119193	51.00
4	53223	24.05	52644	23.85	51959	22.95	49760	21.29
5+	5716	2.58	5872	2.66	6308	2.79	6280	2.69
total candidates	221269	100	220732	100	226360	100	233705	100

In 2006, 167493 candidates (24.78% of the age cohort) sat at least three A-level examinations, compared with 167195 candidates (24.96% of the age cohort) in 2007, 171538 candidates (25.41% of the age cohort) in 2008 and 175233 candidates in 2009.

**Table 2.ii: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	23729	10.78	23066	10.49	23043	10.22	25001	10.74
2	37681	17.11	37881	17.23	38817	17.22	39997	17.18
3	140332	63.74	139852	63.63	143290	63.58	146737	63.02
4	17357	7.88	17786	8.09	18912	8.39	19739	8.48
5+	1072	0.49	1207	0.55	1321	0.59	1386	0.60
total candidates	220171	100	219792	100	225383	100	232860	100

A comparison of Tables 2.i and 2.ii shows that the exclusion of General Studies and Critical Thinking results greatly reduces the proportion of candidates with four or more A-level results from around 25% to around 9%.

**Table 3.i: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	25456	11.50	27687	12.54	28871	12.75	30595	13.09
no	195813	88.50	193045	87.46	197489	87.25	203110	86.91
total candidates	221269	100	220732	100	226360	100	233705	100

**Table 3.ii: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	24045	10.92	26228	11.93	27420	12.17	29278	12.57
no	196126	89.08	193564	88.07	197963	87.83	203582	87.43
total candidates	220171	100	219792	100	225838	100	232860	100

**Table 4.i: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	25456	15.20	27687	16.56	28871	16.83	30595	17.46
no	142037	84.80	139508	83.44	142667	83.17	144638	82.57
total candidates	169493	100	167195	100	171538	100	175233	100

**Table 4.ii: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	24045	15.15	26228	16.51	27420	16.77	29278	17.44
no	134716	84.85	132617	83.49	136103	83.23	138584	82.56
total candidates	158761	100	158845	100	163523	100	167862	100

There has been a steady rise in both the numbers and percentages of A-level candidates attaining three or more 'A' grades between 2006 and 2009. Calculated out of those taking three or more A-level examinations (i.e. typical university applicants), the figure for 2009 stands at 17.46% (30595 candidates), up from 15.2% (25456 candidates) in 2006. Statistics Report No. 6 gives an equivalent figure of only 8.84% (12656 candidates) for 1996. Calculated out of the whole A-level candidature, the figure for 2009 equals 13.09%, up from 11.5% in 2006 (6.95% in 1996). The ONS population estimates imply that 4.28% of the entire 18 year old age cohort of England attained three or more 'A' grades in 2008 (4.06% excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results). The exclusion of General and Studies and Critical Thinking results makes little difference to the numbers attaining three or more 'A' grades, suggesting that these subjects constitute a candidate's third 'A' grade only in a minority of cases.

**Table 5.i: A-level results by grade**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	159366	24.39	168936	25.90	177332	26.55	186914	27.40
B	156508	23.96	159108	24.39	166342	24.91	172485	25.28
C	152523	23.35	149290	22.89	153742	23.02	156565	22.95
D	108349	16.59	104105	15.96	103474	15.49	102479	15.02
E	56305	8.62	52633	8.07	50242	7.52	48365	7.09
U	20238	3.10	18213	2.79	16767	2.51	15361	2.25
total results	653289	100	652285	100	667899	100	682169	100

**Table 5.ii: A-level results by grade, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	152376	25.61	161791	27.16	170213	27.77	180045	28.52
B	146879	24.69	149467	25.09	156707	25.57	163285	25.87
C	139387	23.43	136395	22.90	141214	23.04	144690	22.92
D	94939	15.96	91359	15.34	91065	14.86	91069	14.43
E	46438	7.81	43214	7.25	41357	6.75	40416	6.40
U	14946	2.51	13467	2.26	12360	2.02	11708	1.85
total results	594965	100	595693	100	612916	100	631213	100

Trends in A-level results from 2006 to 2009 show a gradual increase in the percentages of results graded 'A' and 'B' and a gradual decrease in those graded below 'C'. The percentage of results graded 'C' has remained fairly stable. The exclusion of General Studies and Critical Thinking results increases the percentages of 'A' and 'B' grades and decreases those below 'C'.

## Part 2) Results by gender

**Table 6: Population estimates and A-level candidate numbers for 18 year olds in England**

### a: Females

Year	cohort population*	A-level candidates	% of cohort
2006	327100	120870	36.95
2007	325000	121255	37.31
2008	328100	124034	37.80
2009	-	127830	-

### b: Males

Year	cohort population*	A-level candidates	% of cohort
2006	348700	100399	28.79
2007	344900	99477	28.84
2008	347000	102326	29.49
2009	-	105875	-

\*Source: Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates (rounded to the nearest 100). Population estimates for 2009 are not yet available.

A notably higher proportion of the estimated female than male age cohort took at least one A-level examination over these years. Despite a small dip in male candidate numbers in 2007 there was a steady rise in terms of age cohort percentages for both genders over these years.

**Table 7: Percentage of A-level candidature belonging to each gender**

Gender	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
female	120870	54.63	121255	54.93	124034	54.80	127830	54.70
male	100399	45.37	99477	45.07	102326	45.20	105875	45.30
total candidates	221269	100	220732	100	226360	100	233705	100

Females accounted for a stable 55% of the A-level candidature despite comprising only around 48.5% of the age cohort over these years.

**Table 8.i: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken****a: Females**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	11672	9.66	11523	9.50	11597	9.35	12482	9.76
2	16991	14.06	17530	14.46	18172	14.65	19139	14.97
3	61013	50.48	61438	50.67	63573	51.25	66664	52.15
4	28505	23.58	28042	23.13	27763	22.38	26651	20.85
5+	2689	2.22	2722	2.24	2929	2.36	2894	2.26
total candidates	120870	100	121255	100	124034	100	127830	100

**b: Males**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	10087	10.05	9663	9.71	9839	9.62	10816	10.22
2	15026	14.97	14821	14.90	15214	14.87	16035	15.15
3	47541	47.35	47241	47.49	49698	48.57	52529	49.61
4	24718	24.62	24602	24.73	24196	23.65	23109	21.83
5+	3027	3.01	3150	3.17	3379	3.30	3386	3.20
total candidates	100399	100	99477	100	102326	100	105875	100

Table 8.i shows that there has been a yearly increase in the total number of female A-level candidates between 2006 and 2009, although the numbers taking three or more A-level examinations showed no increase from 2006 to 2007. Numbers of female candidates with three or more A-level results were 92207 (28.19% of the female age cohort) in 2006, compared with 92202 (28.37% of the female age cohort) in 2007, 94265 (28.73% of the female age cohort) in 2008 and 96209 in 2009.

Numbers of male candidates with three or more A-level results were 75286 (21.59% of the male age cohort) in 2006, compared with 74993 (21.74% of the male age cohort) in 2007, 77273 (22.27% of the male age cohort) in 2008 and 79024 in 2009. Distributions of the number of A-level examinations taken by males and females appear similar, although males have a slightly higher proportion of candidates in the distribution tails.

**Table 8.ii: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

**a: Females**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	12804	10.64	12549	10.39	12462	10.09	13437	10.55
2	19749	16.41	20280	16.79	20960	16.97	21566	16.93
3	78998	65.65	78718	65.18	80247	64.97	82120	64.45
4	8376	6.96	8774	7.26	9352	7.57	9780	7.67
5+	400	0.33	451	0.37	497	0.40	515	0.40
total candidates	120327	100	120772	100	123518	100	127418	100

**b: Males**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	10925	10.94	10517	10.62	10581	10.39	11564	10.97
2	17932	17.96	17601	17.78	17857	17.53	18431	17.48
3	61334	61.43	61134	61.74	63043	61.89	64617	61.28
4	8981	9.00	9012	9.10	9560	9.38	9959	9.44
5+	672	0.67	756	0.76	824	0.81	871	0.83
total candidates	99844	100	99020	100	101865	100	105442	100

A comparison of Table 8.i with Table 8.ii shows that the exclusion of General Studies and Critical Thinking results similarly affects the distributions of the number of A-level examinations taken by males and females, reducing their proportions with four or more A-level results to a roughly equal degree.

**Table 9.i: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

**a: Females**

Attained 3+ 'A' grades	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	13952	11.54	15149	12.49	15675	12.64	16564	12.96
no	106918	88.46	106106	87.51	108359	87.36	111266	87.04
total candidates	120870	100	121255	100	124034	100	127830	100

**b: Males**

Attained 3+ 'A' grades	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	11504	11.46	12538	12.60	13196	12.90	14031	13.25
no	88895	88.54	86939	87.40	89130	87.10	91844	86.75
total candidates	100399	100	99477	100	102326	100	105875	100

**c: Percentages, by gender, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

Attained 3+ 'A' grades	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
female	13952	54.81	15149	54.72	15675	54.29	16564	54.14
male	11504	45.19	12538	45.28	13196	45.71	14031	45.86
total candidates	25456	100	27687	100	28871	100	30595	100



**Table 9.ii: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

**a: Females**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	13139	10.92	14266	11.81	14807	11.99	15788	12.39
no	107188	89.08	106506	88.19	108711	88.01	111630	87.61
total candidates	120327	100	120772	100	123518	100	127418	100

**b: Males**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	10906	10.92	11962	12.08	12613	12.38	13490	12.79
no	88939	89.08	87058	87.92	89252	87.62	91952	87.21
total candidates	99844	100	99020	100	101865	100	105442	100

**c: Percentages, by gender, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
female	13139	54.64	14266	54.39	14807	54.00	15788	53.92
male	10906	45.36	11962	45.61	12613	46.00	13490	46.08
total candidates	24045	100	26228	100	27420	100	29278	100

In line with their proportion of the A-level cohort, females constitute around a steady 55% of the A-level candidates attaining three or more 'A' grades over these years and around 54% if General Studies and Critical Thinking results are excluded (Tables 9.i and 9.ii (c)). However, a slightly higher percentage of the male A-level candidature than the female A-level candidature attained three or more 'A' grades from 2007 onwards (Tables 9.i and 9.ii (a and b)).

In terms of the estimated 18 year old male and female populations of England, 4.27% of the female age cohort attained three or more 'A' grades in 2006, compared with 4.66% in 2007 and 4.78% in 2008. For males, 3.3% of the age cohort attained three or more 'A' grades in 2006, compared with 3.64% in 2007 and 3.8% in 2008. Excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results, 4.02% of the female age cohort attained three or more 'A' grades in 2006, compared with 4.39% in 2007 and 4.51% in 2008. For males, 3.13% of the age cohort attained three or more 'A' grades in 2006, compared with 3.47% in 2007 and 3.63% in 2008.

**Table 10.i: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades****a: Females**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	13952	15.13	15149	16.43	15675	16.63	16564	17.22
no	78255	84.87	77053	83.57	78590	83.37	79645	82.78
total candidates	92207	100	92202	100	94265	100	96209	100

**b: Males**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	11504	15.28	12538	16.72	13196	17.08	14031	17.76
no	63782	84.72	62455	83.28	64077	82.92	64993	82.24
total candidates	75286	100	74993	100	77273	44.91	79024	100

**Table 10.ii: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results****a: Females**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	13139	14.97	14266	16.22	14807	16.43	15788	17.08
no	74635	85.03	73677	83.78	75289	83.57	76627	82.92
total candidates	87774	100	87943	100	90096	100	92415	100

**b: Males**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
Attained 3+ 'A' grades								
yes	10906	15.36	11962	16.87	12613	17.18	13490	17.88
no	60081	84.64	58940	83.13	60814	82.82	61957	82.12
total candidates	70987	100	70902	100	73427	100	75447	100

Tables 10.i and 10.ii show that, as a percentage of those taking three or more A-level examinations, a slightly higher percentage of the male candidates than the female candidates attained three or more 'A' grades in all these years.

**Table 11.i: A-level results by grade****a: Females**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	90153	25.30	95662	26.81	99763	27.37	104434	28.07
B	89679	25.17	91405	25.62	95323	26.15	98512	26.48
C	84589	23.74	82268	23.06	84817	23.27	86628	23.29
D	56293	15.80	54251	15.20	53687	14.73	53055	14.26
E	26690	7.49	25274	7.08	23707	6.50	22744	6.11
U	8876	2.49	7943	2.23	7245	1.99	6636	1.78
total results	356280	100	356803	100	364542	100	372009	100

**b: Males**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	69213	23.30	73274	24.80	77569	25.57	82480	26.59
B	66829	22.50	67703	22.91	71019	23.41	73973	23.85
C	67934	22.87	67022	22.68	68925	22.72	69937	22.55
D	52056	17.53	49854	16.87	49787	16.41	49424	15.93
E	29615	9.97	27359	9.26	26535	8.75	25621	8.26
U	11362	3.83	10270	3.48	9522	3.14	8725	2.81
total results	297009	100	295482	100	303357	100	310160	100

**Table 11.ii: A-level results by grade, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking****a: Females**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	86328	26.58	91718	28.08	95725	28.57	100600	29.19
B	84210	25.92	86021	26.33	89817	26.81	93286	27.07
C	77291	23.79	75211	23.03	77774	23.21	80046	23.22
D	49004	15.09	47538	14.55	47120	14.06	47073	13.66
E	21602	6.65	20473	6.27	19315	5.76	18691	5.42
U	6393	1.97	5687	1.74	5308	1.58	4967	1.44
total results	324828	100	326648	100	335059	100	344663	100

**b: Males**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	66048	24.45	70073	26.05	74488	26.81	79445	27.72
B	62669	23.20	63446	23.58	66890	24.07	69999	24.43
C	62096	22.99	61184	22.74	63440	22.83	64644	22.56
D	45935	17.00	43821	16.29	43945	15.82	43996	15.35
E	24836	9.19	22741	8.45	22042	7.93	21725	7.58
U	8553	3.17	7780	2.89	7052	2.54	6741	2.35
total results	270137	100	269045	100	277857	100	286550	100

The distributions of A-level grades for males and females show that females have a higher proportion of their results graded 'A', 'B' and 'C' across these years whereas males have a higher proportion of their results graded 'D', 'E' and 'U'. This contrasts with the finding that a slightly higher proportion of the male candidates attained three or more 'A' grades.

### Part 3) Results by school type

**Table 12: Percentage of A-level candidature belonging to each school type**

School type	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
comprehensive	103806	46.91	102226	46.31	105426	46.57	108036	46.23
FE college	10311	4.66	9703	4.40	9335	4.12	9352	4.00
grammar	19417	8.78	19915	9.02	20536	9.07	20474	8.76
independent	29390	13.28	29111	13.19	29907	13.21	30998	13.26
sixth form college	44742	20.22	46182	20.92	47170	20.84	50264	21.51
tertiary college	9583	4.33	9586	4.34	9904	4.38	9885	4.23
other / unidentified	4020	1.82	4009	1.82	4082	1.80	4696	2.01
total candidates	221269	100	220732	100	226360	100	233705	100

**Table 13.i: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken**

#### a: Comprehensive

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	11760	11.33	11454	11.20	11974	11.36	12522	11.59
2	18791	18.10	18880	18.47	19514	18.51	20151	18.65
3	51026	49.16	50095	49.00	52638	49.93	54857	50.78
4	20385	19.64	19975	19.54	19434	18.43	18720	17.33
5+	1844	1.78	1822	1.78	1866	1.77	1786	1.65
total candidates	103806	100	102226	100	105426	100	108036	100

#### b: FE college

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	2318	22.48	1878	19.35	1771	18.97	1791	19.15
2	2417	23.44	2237	23.05	2208	23.65	2139	22.87
3	4646	45.06	4728	48.73	4508	48.29	4570	48.87
4	877	8.51	814	8.39	805	8.62	801	8.57
5+	53	0.51	46	0.47	43	0.46	51	0.55
total candidates	10311	100	9703	100	9335	100	9352	100

#### c: Grammar

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	229	1.18	265	1.33	238	1.16	292	1.43
2	688	3.54	658	3.30	721	3.51	779	3.80
3	7745	39.89	8275	41.55	8604	41.90	9007	43.99
4	9366	48.24	9207	46.23	9342	45.49	8745	42.71
5+	1389	7.15	1510	7.58	1631	7.94	1651	8.06
total candidates	19417	100	19915	100	20536	100	20474	100

**d: Independent**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	1063	3.62	993	3.41	875	2.93	1181	3.81
2	1357	4.62	1292	4.44	1359	4.54	1410	4.55
3	19081	64.92	19188	65.91	20195	67.53	20870	67.33
4	6919	23.54	6693	22.99	6479	21.66	6564	21.18
5+	970	3.30	945	3.25	999	3.34	973	3.14
total candidates	29390	100	29111	100	29907	100	30998	100

**e: Sixth form college**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	4365	9.76	4517	9.78	4497	9.53	5072	10.09
2	6233	13.93	6598	14.29	6869	14.56	7707	15.33
3	19320	43.18	19750	42.77	20389	43.22	22408	44.58
4	13502	30.18	13889	30.07	13810	29.28	13410	26.68
5+	1322	2.95	1428	3.09	1605	3.40	1667	3.32
total candidates	44742	100	46182	100	47170	100	50264	100

**f: Tertiary college**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	1251	13.05	1188	12.39	1114	11.25	1172	11.86
2	1633	17.04	1802	18.80	1838	18.56	1987	20.10
3	4903	51.16	4950	51.64	5217	52.68	5596	56.61
4	1713	17.88	1565	16.33	1609	16.25	1032	10.44
5+	83	0.87	81	0.84	126	1.27	98	0.99
total candidates	9583	100	9586	100	9904	100	9885	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	773	19.23	891	22.22	967	23.69	1268	27.00
2	898	22.34	884	22.05	877	21.48	1001	21.32
3	1833	45.60	1693	42.23	1720	42.14	1885	40.14
4	461	11.47	501	12.50	480	11.76	488	10.39
5+	55	1.37	40	1.00	38	0.93	54	1.15
total candidates	4020	100	4009	100	4082	100	4696	100

Table 13.i shows that relatively low proportions of grammar and independent school candidates took only one or two A-level examinations whereas this proportion was relatively high for FE college candidates. Across all these years the modal number of A-level examinations taken was three for candidates of all school types other than grammar schools (where the modal number was four between 2006 and 2008). Grammar school candidates had the highest proportion taking five or more A-level examinations. It is a possibility that some of the 18 year old candidates taking low numbers of A-level examinations have taken a year out of education (or re-sat a year) and intend to sit additional A-level examinations in the following year. This may plausibly differ between school types.

**Table 13.ii: A-level candidature by number of examinations taken, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

**a: Comprehensive**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	12960	12.56	12524	12.31	12910	12.31	13497	12.54
2	21957	21.29	22079	21.71	22531	21.48	22841	21.23
3	62300	60.40	61063	60.04	62933	60.00	64467	59.92
4	5714	5.54	5774	5.68	6184	5.90	6436	5.98
5+	223	0.22	259	0.25	323	0.31	348	0.32
total candidates	103154	100	101699	100	104881	100	107589	100

**b: FE college**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	2362	22.99	1926	19.89	1790	19.25	1802	19.37
2	2579	25.10	2385	24.63	2344	25.20	2307	24.80
3	4871	47.42	4949	51.12	4720	50.75	4758	51.14
4	448	4.36	403	4.16	430	4.62	420	4.51
5+	13	0.13	19	0.20	16	0.17	16	0.17
total candidates	10273	100	9682	100	9300	100	9303	100

**c: Grammar**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	299	1.54	319	1.60	291	1.42	344	1.68
2	1279	6.59	1164	5.85	1252	6.11	1201	5.87
3	15032	77.49	15316	77.03	15479	75.51	15336	74.98
4	2604	13.42	2869	14.43	3224	15.73	3346	16.36
5+	185	0.95	216	1.09	254	1.24	227	1.11
total candidates	19399	100	19884	100	20500	100	20454	100

**d: Independent**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	1067	3.63	1002	3.44	881	2.95	1182	3.81
2	1462	4.98	1377	4.73	1468	4.91	1497	4.83
3	22082	75.16	21812	74.95	22573	75.50	22993	74.20
4	4278	14.56	4392	15.09	4473	14.96	4751	15.33
5+	492	1.67	521	1.79	504	1.69	564	1.82
total candidates	29381	100	29104	100	29899	100	30987	100

**e: Sixth form college**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	4932	11.10	5170	11.26	5036	10.73	5683	11.36
2	7614	17.14	7950	17.32	8244	17.57	8972	17.94
3	28398	63.92	29286	63.80	29848	63.62	31377	62.74
4	3370	7.59	3344	7.28	3609	7.69	3806	7.61
5+	115	0.26	153	0.33	177	0.38	174	0.35
total candidates	44429	100	45903	100	46914	100	50012	100

**f: Tertiary college**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	1281	13.41	1213	12.70	1136	11.54	1204	12.22
2	1855	19.42	1984	20.78	2047	20.79	2102	21.33
3	5672	59.37	5557	58.20	5851	59.44	5771	58.57
4	721	7.55	769	8.05	775	7.87	737	7.48
5+	25	0.26	25	0.26	35	0.36	39	0.40
total candidates	9554	100	9548	100	9844	100	9853	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

Number taken	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
1	828	20.80	912	22.96	999	24.70	1289	27.65
2	935	23.49	942	23.72	931	23.02	1077	23.10
3	1977	49.66	1869	47.05	1886	46.63	2035	43.65
4	222	5.58	235	5.92	217	5.36	243	5.21
5+	19	0.48	14	0.35	12	0.30	18	0.39
total candidates	3981	100	3972	100	4045	100	4662	100

Table 13.ii shows that if General Studies and Critical Thinking results are excluded then independent school candidates (rather than grammar school candidates) have the highest proportion taking five or more A-level examinations. Candidates of all school types other than grammar and independent have less than 10% taking more than three A-level examinations. The exclusion of these subjects appears to have the greatest effect on the distributions for grammar and sixth form candidates in terms of reducing their proportions taking four A-level examinations.

**Table 14.i: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

**a: Comprehensive**

Attained 3+ 'A' grades	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	7158	6.90	7831	7.66	8257	7.83	8878	8.22
no	96648	93.10	94395	92.34	97169	92.17	99158	91.78
total candidates	103806	100	102226	100	105426	100	108036	100

**b: FE college**

Attained 3+ 'A' grades	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	290	2.81	289	2.98	288	3.09	286	3.06
no	10021	97.19	9414	97.02	9047	96.91	9066	96.94
total candidates	10311	100	9703	100	9335	100	9352	100

**c: Grammar**

Attained 3+ 'A' grades	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	4476	23.05	4921	24.71	5299	25.80	5338	26.07
no	14941	76.95	14994	75.29	15237	74.20	15136	73.93
total candidates	19417	100	19915	100	20536	100	20474	100

**d: Independent**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	8686	29.55	9280	31.88	9469	31.66	10233	33.01
no	20704	70.45	19831	68.12	20438	68.34	20765	66.99
total candidates	29390	100	29111	100	29907	100	30998	100

**e: Sixth form college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	3990	8.92	4527	9.80	4634	9.82	4972	9.89
no	40752	91.08	41655	90.20	42536	90.18	45292	90.11
total candidates	44742	100	46182	100	47170	100	50264	100

**f: Tertiary college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	637	6.65	620	6.47	691	6.98	672	6.80
no	8946	93.35	8966	93.53	9213	93.02	9213	93.20
total candidates	9583	100	9586	100	9904	100	9885	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	219	5.45	219	5.46	233	5.71	216	4.60
no	3801	94.55	3790	94.54	3849	94.29	4480	95.40
total candidates	4020	100	4009	100	4082	100	4696	100

Table 14.i shows that, calculated out of all their A-level candidates, independent and grammar schools have the highest proportions attaining three or more 'A' grades in these years, with around one third of all independent school candidates attaining this criterion in 2009. For candidates of all other school types the figure is less than 10%. FE college candidates have the lowest proportion, at only around 3%. For all school types other than 'other/unidentified', the proportion of candidates attaining three or more 'A' grades rose between 2006 and 2009.

**h: Percentages, by school type, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
comprehensive	7158	28.12	7831	28.28	8257	28.60	8878	29.02
FE college	290	1.14	289	1.04	288	1.00	286	0.93
grammar	4476	17.58	4921	17.77	5299	18.35	5338	17.45
independent	8686	34.12	9280	33.52	9469	32.80	10233	33.45
sixth form college	3990	15.67	4527	16.35	4634	16.05	4972	16.25
tertiary college	637	2.50	620	2.24	691	2.39	672	2.20
other / unidentified	219	0.86	219	0.79	233	0.81	216	0.71
total candidates	25456	100	27687	100	28871	100	30595	100

A comparison of the table above with Table 12 shows that comprehensive schools account for almost half of the A-level candidature but less than one third of the three 'A' grades candidates. Around 13% of



the A-level candidature comes from independent schools, compared with around 33% of the three 'A' grades candidates. Around 9% of the A-level candidature comes from grammar schools, compared with around 18% of the three 'A' grades candidates.

Between 2006 and 2009, the already small proportion of the three 'A' grade candidates coming from FE colleges and tertiary colleges declined. The proportion coming from comprehensive schools rose slightly each year. That for grammar schools rose between 2006 and 2008 then declined in 2009. That for independent schools showed the opposite pattern, declining between 2006 and 2008 then rising again in 2009.

**Table 14.ii: A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

**a: Comprehensive**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	6677	6.47	7349	7.23	7770	7.41	8416	7.82
no	96477	93.53	94350	92.77	97111	92.59	99173	92.18
total candidates	103154	100	101699	100	104881	100	107589	100

**b: FE college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	274	2.67	283	2.92	278	2.99	282	3.03
no	9999	97.33	9399	97.08	9022	97.01	9021	96.97
total candidates	10273	100	9682	100	9300	100	9303	100

**c: Grammar**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	4124	21.26	4558	22.92	4911	23.96	5001	24.45
no	15275	78.74	15326	77.08	15589	76.04	15453	75.55
total candidates	19399	100	19884	100	20500	100	20454	100

**d: Independent**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	8447	28.75	9089	31.23	9308	31.13	10066	32.48
no	20934	71.25	20015	68.77	20591	68.87	20921	67.52
total candidates	29381	100	29104	100	29899	100	30987	100

**e: Sixth form college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	3700	8.33	4144	9.03	4269	9.10	4647	9.29
no	40729	91.67	41759	90.97	42645	90.90	45365	90.71
total candidates	44429	100	45903	100	46914	100	50012	100

**f: Tertiary college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	618	6.47	600	6.28	664	6.75	661	6.71
no	8936	93.53	8948	93.72	9180	93.25	9192	93.29
total candidates	9554	100	9548	100	9844	100	9853	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	205	5.15	205	5.16	220	5.44	205	4.40
no	3776	94.85	3767	94.84	3825	94.56	4457	95.60
total candidates	3981	100	3972	100	4045	100	4662	100

Table 14.ii shows that the exclusion of General Studies and Critical Thinking results has only a minimal effect on reducing the percentages of candidates attaining three or more 'A' grades at each school type. Grammar schools are more affected than independent schools by this exclusion.

**h: Percentages, by school type, of A-level candidates attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
comprehensive	6677	28.01	7349	28.24	7770	28.57	8416	28.75
FE College	274	1.15	283	1.09	278	1.02	282	0.96
grammar	4124	17.30	4558	17.52	4911	18.06	5001	17.08
independent	8447	35.43	9089	34.93	9308	34.22	10066	34.38
sixth form college	3700	15.52	4144	15.92	4269	15.69	4647	15.87
tertiary college	618	2.59	600	2.31	664	2.44	661	2.26
other / unidentified	205	0.86	205	0.79	220	0.81	205	0.70
total candidates	23840	100	26023	100	27200	100	29278	100

The exclusion of General Studies and Critical Thinking results slightly reduces the percentage of the three 'A' grades candidates belonging to grammar schools and sixth form colleges. It slightly increases the percentage belonging to independent schools so that they constitute over a third of this group.

**Table 15.i: A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades**

**a: Comprehensive**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	7158	9.77	7831	10.89	8257	11.17	8878	11.78
no	66097	90.23	64061	89.11	65681	88.83	66485	88.22
total candidates	73255	100	71892	100	73938	100	75363	100

**b: FE college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	290	5.20	289	5.17	288	5.38	286	5.27
no	5286	94.80	5299	94.83	5068	94.62	5136	94.73
total candidates	5576	100	5588	100	5356	100	5422	100

**c: Grammar**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	4476	24.19	4921	25.91	5299	27.07	5338	27.51
no	14024	75.81	14071	74.09	14278	72.93	14065	72.49
total candidates	18500	100	18992	100	19577	100	19403	100

**d: Independent**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	8686	32.21	9280	34.59	9469	34.22	10233	36.02
no	18284	67.79	17546	65.41	18204	65.78	18174	63.98
total candidates	26970	100	26826	100	27673	100	28407	100

**e: Sixth form college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	3990	11.69	4527	12.91	4634	12.94	4972	13.26
no	30154	88.31	30540	87.09	31170	87.06	32513	86.74
total candidates	34144	100	35067	100	35804	100	37485	100

**f: Tertiary college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	637	9.51	620	9.40	691	9.94	672	9.99
no	6062	90.49	5976	90.60	6261	90.06	6054	90.01
total candidates	6699	100	6596	100	6952	100	6726	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	219	9.32	219	9.80	233	10.41	216	8.90
no	2130	90.68	2015	90.20	2005	89.59	2211	91.10
total candidates	2349	100	2234	100	2238	100	2427	100

Table 15.i (when compared to Table 14.i) shows the differential effect on each school type of reducing its denominator values to the candidates who took three or more A-level examinations. This results in the

least apparent increase, between the two sets of tables, in the percentage of grammar school candidates attaining three or more 'A' grades. It results in the greatest apparent increase in the percentages of comprehensive, FE college and tertiary college candidates attaining three or more 'A' grades. This is because relatively small numbers of grammar school candidates took less than three A-level examinations in these years whereas relatively high numbers of comprehensive, FE college and tertiary college candidates did (Table 13.i). This highlights the need to be aware of denominator values when making such school type comparisons.

**Table 15.ii: Percentage of A-level candidates with 3 or more results attaining 3 or more 'A' grades, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking results**

**a: Comprehensive**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	6677	9.79	7349	10.95	7770	11.19	8416	11.81
no	61560	90.21	59747	89.05	61670	88.81	62835	88.19
total candidates	68237	100	67096	100	69440	100	71251	100

**b: FE college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	274	5.14	283	5.27	278	5.38	282	5.43
no	5058	94.86	5088	94.73	4888	94.62	4912	94.57
total candidates	5332	100	5371	100	5166	100	5194	100

**c: Grammar**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	4124	23.14	4558	24.77	4911	25.91	5001	26.45
no	13697	76.86	13843	75.23	14046	74.09	13908	73.55
total candidates	17821	100	18401	100	18957	100	18909	100

**d: Independent**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	8447	31.46	9089	34.01	9308	33.79	10066	35.56
no	18405	68.54	17636	65.99	18242	66.21	18242	64.44
total candidates	26852	100	26725	100	27550	100	28308	100

**e: Sixth form college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	3700	11.60	4144	12.64	4269	12.69	4647	13.14
no	28183	88.40	28639	87.36	29365	87.31	30710	86.86
total candidates	31883	100	32783	100	33634	100	35357	100

**f: Tertiary college**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	618	9.63	600	9.45	664	9.97	661	10.10
no	5800	90.37	5751	90.55	5997	90.03	5886	89.90
total candidates	6418	100	6351	100	6661	100	6547	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
Attained 3+ 'A' grades	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%	candidates	%
yes	205	9.24	205	9.68	220	10.40	205	8.93
no	2013	90.76	1913	90.32	1895	89.60	2091	91.07
total candidates	2218	100	2118	100	2115	100	2296	100

**Table 16.i: A-level results by grade**

**a: Comprehensive**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	53059	18.09	56182	19.47	59735	20.17	63434	21.05
B	66314	22.61	67350	23.34	70740	23.89	74227	24.63
C	73946	25.21	71759	24.86	74591	25.19	75788	25.15
D	56943	19.42	54070	18.73	54220	18.31	53147	17.64
E	31075	10.60	28825	9.99	27330	9.23	25983	8.62
U	11954	4.08	10421	3.61	9493	3.21	8744	2.90
total results	293291	100	288607	100	296109	100	301323	100

**b: FE college**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	2828	11.37	2910	12.11	2842	12.28	2894	12.45
B	5182	20.84	5005	20.83	5181	22.38	5179	22.28
C	6859	27.59	6543	27.24	6441	27.83	6671	28.70
D	5711	22.97	5530	23.02	5088	21.98	5207	22.40
E	3110	12.51	2911	12.12	2660	11.49	2463	10.60
U	1173	4.72	1125	4.68	936	4.04	827	3.56
total results	24863	100	24024	100	23148	100	23241	100

**c: Grammar**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	24664	35.56	26645	37.57	28399	38.82	28699	39.72
B	18739	27.02	19209	27.09	19704	26.93	19779	27.37
C	13838	19.95	13346	18.82	13567	18.55	13310	18.42
D	7716	11.12	7462	10.52	7465	10.20	6835	9.46
E	3341	4.82	3213	4.53	3007	4.11	2835	3.92
U	1062	1.53	1041	1.47	1012	1.38	798	1.10
total results	69360	100	70916	100	73154	100	72256	100

**d: Independent**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	44935	47.99	46662	50.31	48221	50.64	51199	52.33
B	24512	26.18	23969	25.84	24864	26.11	24817	25.37
C	14204	15.17	13127	14.15	13335	14.00	13154	13.44
D	6654	7.11	5994	6.46	5900	6.20	5790	5.92
E	2551	2.72	2282	2.46	2170	2.28	2186	2.23
U	782	0.84	718	0.77	729	0.77	691	0.71
total results	93638	100	92752	100	95219	100	97837	100

**e: Sixth form college**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	27485	20.29	29985	21.46	31063	21.76	33455	22.33
B	33280	24.57	34852	24.94	36519	25.58	38770	25.88
C	34130	25.20	35003	25.05	35958	25.19	37557	25.07
D	24177	17.85	24233	17.34	23941	16.77	24788	16.55
E	12547	9.26	11986	8.58	11739	8.22	11826	7.89
U	3828	2.83	3672	2.63	3543	2.48	3401	2.27
total results	135447	100	139731	100	142763	100	149797	100

**f: Tertiary college**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	4687	17.69	4810	18.28	5296	19.25	5237	19.72
B	6281	23.71	6433	24.45	7049	25.62	6999	26.35
C	6994	26.40	6957	26.44	7298	26.53	7260	27.33
D	5093	19.22	4928	18.73	4872	17.71	4576	17.23
E	2528	9.54	2416	9.18	2303	8.37	1981	7.46
U	913	3.45	767	2.92	693	2.52	508	1.91
total results	26496	100	26311	100	27511	100	26561	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	1708	16.75	1742	17.52	1776	17.77	1996	17.89
B	2200	21.58	2290	23.03	2285	22.86	2714	24.33
C	2552	25.03	2555	25.69	2552	25.53	2825	25.33
D	2055	20.16	1888	18.99	1988	19.89	2136	19.15
E	1153	11.31	1000	10.06	1033	10.34	1091	9.78
U	526	5.16	469	4.72	361	3.61	392	3.51
total results	10194	100	9944	100	9995	100	11154	100

A comparison of the grade distributions between the different school types shows that 'C' is the modal grade awarded for comprehensive, FE college and tertiary college candidates in all these years, and also for sixth form college candidates in 2006 to 2007 (narrowly becoming a grade 'B' in 2008 to 2009). For independent and grammar school candidates, the modal grade awarded is an 'A' and the distributions are highly positively skewed. Around 50% of A-level examinations for independent school candidates are awarded an 'A' grade over these years, compared with around 35 to 40% for grammar school candidates, around 20% for comprehensive, sixth form college and tertiary college candidates, and around 12% for FE college candidates. However, in terms of raw numbers, comprehensive school candidates account for a higher proportion of all the 'A' grades awarded than do independent school candidates each year. This contrasts with the finding (Table 14.i(h)) that independent school candidates constitute a higher proportion of the three 'A' grades group than do comprehensive school candidates each year. The percentages of examinations awarded grades 'E' and 'U' are lowest for independent school candidates (at around 3%) and highest for FE college candidates (at around 14 to 17%).

The trends in grade distributions over time show a gradual increase in the percentages of results graded 'A' for all school types. This percentage increase is greatest for grammar and independent school candidates. Trends in the percentages of results graded 'E' and 'U' show a gradual decrease for candidates of all school types. The percentage of 'B' grades has increased over time for all but grammar and independent school candidates, where it has remained more stable. The percentage of 'C' grades has declined for grammar and independent school candidates over this period whilst it has remained more stable for candidates of other school types (and has risen slightly for FE college candidates). The percentage of 'D' grades has declined for candidates of all school types other than FE colleges, where it has remained more stable over this period.

**Table 16.ii: A-level results by grade, excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking**

**a: Comprehensive**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	50818	18.98	53908	20.40	57485	21.05	61310	21.89
B	62696	23.41	63615	24.07	67185	24.60	70790	25.28
C	68358	25.53	66306	25.09	69354	25.39	70877	25.31
D	50681	18.93	48222	18.25	48671	17.82	48020	17.15
E	26127	9.76	24266	9.18	23152	8.48	22244	7.94
U	9086	3.39	7965	3.01	7303	2.67	6836	2.44
total results	267766	100	264282	100	273150	100	280077	100

**b: FE college**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	2778	11.58	2871	12.35	2799	12.47	2840	12.65
B	5077	21.16	4914	21.13	5102	22.74	5071	22.58
C	6672	27.81	6383	27.45	6275	27.96	6477	28.85
D	5471	22.81	5299	22.79	4884	21.76	5015	22.34
E	2892	12.06	2735	11.76	2507	11.17	2282	10.16
U	1100	4.59	1049	4.51	873	3.89	768	3.42
total results	23990	100	23251	100	22440	100	22453	100

**c: Grammar**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	22776	38.41	24636	40.27	26352	41.56	26744	42.25
B	16466	27.77	17092	27.94	17481	27.57	17693	27.95
C	11365	19.16	11040	18.05	11339	17.88	11186	17.67
D	5792	9.77	5710	9.33	5687	8.97	5270	8.33
E	2299	3.88	2120	3.47	2024	3.19	1942	3.07
U	603	1.02	575	0.94	530	0.84	457	0.72
total results	59301	100	61173	100	63413	100	63292	100



**d: Independent**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	43711	48.64	45555	50.93	47173	51.27	50181	52.80
B	23596	26.26	23188	25.93	24069	26.16	24101	25.36
C	13467	14.99	12442	13.91	12715	13.82	12653	13.31
D	6140	6.83	5576	6.23	5508	5.99	5464	5.75
E	2303	2.56	2061	2.30	1946	2.12	2022	2.13
U	644	0.72	616	0.69	598	0.65	617	0.65
total results	89861	100	89438	100	92009	100	95038	100

**e: Sixth form college**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	26047	21.81	28390	23.07	29523	23.36	31887	23.82
B	30838	25.82	32184	26.15	33856	26.79	36109	26.97
C	30421	25.48	31117	25.28	32135	25.42	33730	25.20
D	20210	16.92	20206	16.42	19970	15.80	20881	15.60
E	9546	7.99	8963	7.28	8769	6.94	9027	6.74
U	2350	1.97	2220	1.80	2144	1.70	2238	1.67
total results	119412	100	123080	100	126397	100	133872	100

**f: Tertiary college**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	4591	18.35	4743	18.93	5169	19.84	5159	19.94
B	6087	24.33	6284	25.08	6824	26.19	6902	26.68
C	6661	26.63	6686	26.69	6981	26.79	7085	27.39
D	4721	18.87	4579	18.28	4485	17.21	4391	16.98
E	2241	8.96	2147	8.57	2015	7.73	1883	7.28
U	716	2.86	616	2.46	584	2.24	447	1.73
total results	25017	100	25055	100	26058	100	25867	100

**g: Other / unidentified**

Grade	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
A	1655	17.21	1688	17.93	1712	18.12	1924	18.13
B	2119	22.03	2190	23.26	2190	23.18	2619	24.67
C	2443	25.40	2421	25.72	2415	25.56	2682	25.27
D	1924	20.00	1767	18.77	1860	19.68	2028	19.11
E	1030	10.71	922	9.79	944	9.99	1016	9.57
U	447	4.65	426	4.53	328	3.47	345	3.25
total results	9618	100	9414	100	9449	100	10614	100

The exclusion of General Studies and Critical Thinking results appears to make the greatest difference to the grade distributions of grammar school candidates (resulting in the greatest relative increase in the percentage of their results awarded 'A' grades and the greatest relative decrease in the percentage of their results awarded grades below 'C'). The grade distributions of comprehensive school candidates and FE college candidates appear to be affected least by this exclusion.