

Updated 17-10-19

SQA results 2019: Education Scotland commentary

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English

National 4 English							2014-2019		2018-2019	
N4	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	19,244	20,076	17,784	15,724	14,451	13,914	-5,330	-27.7%	-537	-3.7%
Passes (A-C)	18,187	19,153	17,001	15,008	13,415	12,771	-5,416	-29.8%	-644	-4.8%
Pass Rate	94.5%	95.4%	95.6%	95.4%	92.8%	91.8%	-2.7pp	n/a	-1pp	n/a

- Falling numbers of entries could be explained by more appropriate presentation policies in schools and more candidates being presented at National 5.
- Negative perceptions of the value of National 4 *could be* a possible reasons for declining attainment at N4?

National 5 English							2014-2019		2018-2019	
N5	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	28,798	44,794	45,856	46,273	44,477	45,593	16,795	58.3%	1,116	2.5%
Passes (A-C)	25,091	38,950	39,813	40,354	37,701	39,345	14,254	56.8%	1,644	4.4%
Pass Rate	87.1%	87.0%	86.8%	87.2%	84.8%	86.3%	-0.8pp	n/a	1.5pp	n/a

- Increased entries 2014-19 could indicate that more candidates who would have previously been presented at N4 are now being presented for N5 (see corresponding drop in N4 entries).
- Dip in attainment in 2018 corresponds with a dip in attainment seen in 2016 SSLN survey results (the 2016 SSLN cohort would have been S4 in 2018).
- Rise in attainment in 2019 could indicate a return to form, as practitioners now feel very comfortable in presenting candidates for N5 English.

Higher English							2014-2019		2018-2019	
N5	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	31,582	35,354	36,356	35,716	36,185	35,461	3,879	12.3%	-724	-2.0%
Passes (A-C)	23,702	27,902	28,666	27,609	27,482	25,967	2,265	9.6%	-1,515	-5.5%
Pass Rate	75.0%	78.9%	78.8%	77.3%	75.9%	73.2%	-1.8pp	n/a	-2.7pp	n/a

- The modest rise in entries at Higher level, coupled with a small decline in the pass rate, over the five years, 2014-19 suggests that centres are consistent in their presentation policies but may still be presenting a small proportion of candidates inappropriately.
- Difficulty with the Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation (RUA) paper *may be* an explanation for the drop in the pass rate as last year's [principal assessor's report](#) for last year's National 5 English indicated that this cohort found the RUA paper challenging; a proportion of candidates tackling this year's Higher would fit into this group.

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N5	Advanced Higher English						2014-2019		2018-2019	
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change	%change	change	%change
Entries	1,716	1,750	2,303	2,627	2,485	2,347	631	36.8%	-138	-5.6%
Passes (A-C)	1,449	1,412	1,863	1,994	2,019	1,841	392	27.1%	-178	-8.8%
Pass Rate	84.4%	80.7%	80.9%	75.9%	81.2%	78.4%	-6pp	n/a	-2.8pp	n/a

- Advanced Higher English attracts smaller numbers of S6 candidates (compared to mathematics, biology and chemistry), although there has been a rise in numbers since 2014.
- The fluctuation in results 2015-19 and the decline in results between 2018-19 *may be* due to schools and English departments giving greater priority to other elements of the senior phase.

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Expressive Arts:

Art and Design, Dance, Drama, Music, Music Technology and Photography

Passes at 'A'

There is a decrease from 2018 in the percentage of A band passes at National 5 and Higher in Dance (10.9% and 21.7%), and Music Technology (12.1% and 17.3%). There is a decrease at Higher in Music (9.1%) and Photography (7.2%). There is an increase of 8.7% at Advanced Higher in Art and Design (Design). However, there is a decrease in Drama (9.1%), Music (6.6%) and Music Portfolio (10.1%).

Passes at 'A-C'

There is a decrease from 2018 in the percentage of A-C band passes at National 5 and Higher in Dance (4.8% and 8.9%), and at Higher in Music Technology (6.1%) and Photography (8.4%).

Possible reasons for drop in passes

Both the Dance and Photography courses now feature an exam, where there wasn't one before. The drop in Photography passes is a continuing trend. Music has a new externally-assessed assignment for composing skills (introduced in 2017-18). The reason for the drop in Music Technology and Music Portfolio passes is not apparent.

Percentage change to A-C passes from 2018 to 2019			
Subject	National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
Art and Design	-1.3	-3.4	+0.8
Dance	-4.8	-8.9	-
Drama	+1	-3.3	+0.3
Music	-0.9	-2.6	-1.9
Music Technology	-0.2	-6.1	-
Music Portfolio	-	-	-6.0
Photography	-	-8.4	-
Average across all subjects	+0.8	-2.0	-1.1

Number of entries

Music Technology (15.3%) and Photography (6.9%) have seen increases in entries at Higher. Photography (2473) now has almost as many entries as Drama (2884) at this level.

At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, only Art and Design (Design) has seen a decrease (6%) in entries. Dance (24.1%) and Music Technology (25.7%) have seen considerable increases, although overall numbers are still relatively small.

At National 4, Art and Design, Drama, and Music Technology have each seen a decrease of around 6%. This is a continuing pattern of decline in Art and Design. Music has arrested a pattern of decline in entries since 2014 to see an increase of 12.3% this year.

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Summary

While there are higher than average decreases in the pass rate at Higher for Art and Design, Drama, and Music, they are not particularly significant and the National 5 and Advanced Higher picture is better.

Dance is more concerning with significant drops at both National 5 and Higher. There were changes to the choreography section of the coursework and a new question paper was introduced this year.

There were also significant decreases in the pass rates for Higher Music Technology and the Advanced Higher Music Portfolio.

From data provided previously by Education Scotland's statistics team

Taking into account the recent changes to secondary school curriculum design, uptake across expressive arts subjects for national qualifications has remained relatively stable.

Overall, since 2013, the number of pupils taking art and design, drama and music at the equivalent of National 5 in S4 shows a decrease. However, an increasing percentage of pupils who achieved the equivalent of National 5 in S4 are going on to take the same expressive arts subject at Higher level in S5.

The decrease in uptake in S4 is greatest in art and design and music. The overall decrease in expressive arts subjects uptake at S4 may be due to young people now taking fewer national qualifications in S4.

Photography, taught mostly by art and design teachers at Higher level, has grown increasingly popular in schools from 2010 to 2018.

Overall, uptake for expressive arts subjects is notably higher for girls than for boys. The *Gender Action Plan: Interim Report¹ (February 2016)* published by the Scottish Funding Council, highlights that growth industries such as the Creative Industries have identified gender inequality at a subject level as a key factor in employment skills gaps.

1

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Corporate_publications_SFCCP022016_GenderActionPlanInterimreport/SFCCP022016_Gender_Action_Plan_Interim_report.pdf

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Gaelic**Gàidhlig**

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	6.6%	5.3%	An encouraging increase in entries this year and the biggest increase since 2016. Attainment is strong with an increased pass rate on 2018.
H	3.8%	4.2%	A steady increase in Higher entries with pass rates and attainment remaining positive. Data suggests not all 2018 N5 candidates followed through with Higher in 2019 which has been a trend since 2016.
AH	-3.3%	3.8%	A slight decrease in entries compared to last year, one young person. Not statistically significant due to such small numbers. Attainment remains broadly positive for A-C passes.

The percentage of pupils achieving no award has reduced in 2019 across the subject levels.

Gaelic (Learners)

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	26.2%	-11.7%	A very encouraging increase in entries on 2018. Decrease in pass rate may be due to a number of learners not being presented appropriately.
H	-18.7%	-11.3%	A decrease in the number of entries for 2019. Data suggests that around half of the candidates presented for N5 in 2018 did not follow through with Higher in 2019. This may be due to timetable pressures for small number classes and staffing issues.
AH	81.8%		An encouraging increase in presentations although the numbers remain low.

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There was decrease in the number of learners taking N4 2019, down by 54.3%. The increase in N5 entries, however, would suggest some of the candidates were presented this year at N5 rather than N4 which may not have been the most appropriate level given the decreased pass rate for N5 this year.

The percentage of no awards for N5 has increased by 7.6 percentage points which also signals inappropriate presentations.

The percentage of no awards for H and Adv H have both reduced for 2019 which would signal appropriate presentation.

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Health and Wellbeing

Analysis of results for 2019 of Fashion and Textile Technology, Health and Food Technology, Practical cake Craft, Practical Cookery and Physical Education

Fashion and Textile Technology

N5	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2018	444	12.3	34.3	64.2	14.9
2019	382	13.1	34.7	58.9	18.6

Higher	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2018	370	24.3	56.5	81.6	10.5
2019	215	8.8	43.7	74.4	8.8

Percentage change to A-C passes from 2018 to 2019			
Subject	National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
Fashion and Textile Technology	- 5.3	- 7.2	N/A

- Entries down in N5 and Higher and reduction in attainment in N5 and Higher. This may be a consequence of teacher shortage for this subject area across Scotland.
- Increase number of no award (N/A) at N5 .
- Fashion and Textile Technology now includes an exam, where there wasn't one before, moving from being wholly internally assessed to a combination of external assessment by SQA and some internal assessment by centres. Fashion and Textile Technology. Pass rate decreased by 7.2 percentage points between 2018 and 2019.

Health and Food Technology

Advanced Higher	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No award
2018	44	9.1	31.8	77.3	11.4
2019	22	4.5	22.7	77.3	18.2

Higher	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No award
2018	1,375	11.9	33.9	63	24.4
2019	1,191	10.7	32.4	60.1	17.4

N5	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2018	1,474	15.6	40.8	66.2	15.7

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2019	1,461	21.1	47.2	74.3	9.6
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Percentage change to A-C passes from 2018 to 2019			
Subject	National 5 Attainment	Higher	Advanced Higher
Health and Food Technology	+ 8.1	- 2.9	No change

- Entries down in Advanced Higher, Higher and N5 . This may be a consequence of teacher shortage for this subject area across Scotland
- No award is down at Higher and N5. This may be due to teaching staff developing understanding assessment standards and pupils being presented at the appropriate level . The drop in N/A suggests that teachers are entering suitable candidates at this level.
- Attainment in Advanced Higher remains the same as 2018.
- Attainment in Higher is down. This may be due to teaching staff who are not yet familiar with new assessment standards.
- Attainment in N5 is up significantly, This may be due to teaching staff becoming more familiar with new assessment standards and also pupils being presented at the appropriate level .

Practical Cake Craft

N5	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2018	1,394	12.5	37.3	62	17.5
2019	1,276	13.8	36	60.3	14.9

Percentage change to A-C passes from 2018 to 2019			
Subject	National 5 Attainment	Higher	Advanced Higher
Practical Cake craft	- 1.7	N / A	N / A

- Entries down in N5. This may be a consequence of teacher shortage for this subject area across Scotland.
- Attainment is down slightly at N5.
- There is an increase of pupils gaining an A at N5. This may be due to teaching staff developing a better understanding of assessment standards at this level.

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Practical Cookery

N5	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2018	5,035	6.6	32.9	65.5	13.1
2019	4,939	19.9	54.8	83.4	4.6

Percentage change to A-C passes from 2018 to 2019			
Subject	National 5 Attainment	Higher	Advanced Higher
Practical Cookery	+18.4	N / A	N / A

- Entries down in N5. This may be a consequence of teacher shortage for this subject area across Scotland.
- Attainment at N5 is up significantly. This may be due to teaching staff becoming more familiar with new assessment standards and also pupils being presented at the appropriate level .

Physical Education

N5	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Awards
2018	15,397	45.6	76.8	94.4	0.8
2019	16,771	45.9	77.0	93.9	1.1

Higher	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Awards
2018	10,090	25.1	58.7	86.9	6.0
2019	9896	27.5	60.1	87.9	2.3

Advanced Higher	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Awards
2018	430	21.4	49.8	74.4	13.5
2019	499	23.4	49.3	76.6	10.8

Percentage change to A-C passes from 2018 to 2019			
Subject	National 5 Attainment	Higher	Advanced Higher
Physical Education	- 0.5	+ 1.0	+ 2.2

- .
- Entries in Advanced Higher, Higher and N5 have increased.

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- Physical Education continues to attract a high number of entries at all levels. The picture in terms of entries and attainment has been stable for a number of years
- Attainment is down marginally at N5.
- Attainment is up at Higher.
- Attainment is up at Advanced Higher

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Mathematics

Summary of SQA Mathematics Results 2018-2019			
Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 No. of Passes	Comments:
N5	0% <i>(4 entries less in 2019)</i>	+ 1.3%	Number of entries consistent, with increase in pass rate of 0.8% to highest ever at 65.5%.
H	- 0.7%	- 3.5%	Decline in entries has continued. This is first decline in pass rate (-2.1% to 72.4%) since 2014, however pass rate still higher (0.3%) than the last pre-CfE Higher examination.
Note: This year saw the Higher paper extended by 20 marks to 150, and the removal of units.			
AH Mathematics	+ 0.6%	+ 1.6%	Encouraging increase in entries and passes, given drop in S6 cohort of 1.9%. Pass rate up 0.7% to 75.4%.
AH Mathematics of Mechanics	- 3.3%	- 7.0%	There is a slight decrease in entries and A-C passes, however this equates to a small number of candidates.
AH Statistics	+ 14.0%	+ 14.6%	There is an encouraging increase in both entries and A-C passes but as in the case of AH Mathematics of Mechanics this equates to a small number of candidates.
Note: Next year sees changes to the structure (introduction of a two paper model for assessment) of the Advanced Higher Mathematics paper and the removal of units. Paper 1 will be non-calculator (35 marks / 1 hour) and Paper 2 will be calculator (80 marks / 2 hours 30 minutes). The Advanced Higher Mathematics of Mechanics examination remains unchanged (100 marks / 3 hours). The Advanced Higher Statistics examination changes to a two paper model (Paper 1 - 30 marks / 1 hour, Paper 2 – 90 marks / 2 hours 45 minutes).			

Applications of Mathematics

Summary of SQA Applications of Mathematics Results 2018-2019			
Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 No. of Passes	Comments:
N5	+ 79.6%	+ 81.8%	Sharp increase in entries and passes, with pass rate up 0.7% to highest ever at 58.5%.

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SCQF Level 5 Mathematics (including Applications of Mathematics)

One of the [STEM Strategy Key Performance](#) Indicators is “Increase the number of passes at SCQF level 5 in Mathematics by 10% by 2022.” [Data Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority National Qualifications data]

2017 – 28166 (baseline)

2018 – 28328 (rise of 0.6% from 2017)

2019 – 29848 (rise of 6% from 2017)

2020 - TBC

2021 - TBC

2022 - TBC (Aim 30983 = 10% rise from baseline in 2017)

2018-2019 sees a rise in the number of SCQF Level 5 passes in Mathematics (including Applications of Mathematics).

Overall comments on Mathematics 2019

N5 Mathematics remained steady and a small increase in pass rate continued the trend of recent years. 19.9% of candidates gained no award, a reduction from 21.9% last year, suggesting that schools are beginning to address the problem of inappropriate presentation at this level, although there is still some way to go on this.

Higher Mathematics entries fell by 0.7% however this still represents a rise in the percentage of the S5/6 cohort as this fell by 1.2% between 2018 and 2019. The fall of 2.1% in the pass rate is within reasonable year on year fluctuations.

Entries in **Advanced Higher Mathematics** continued to grow, and Mathematics remains the Advanced Higher with the greatest number of entries. Entries increased by 0.6% against a fall in the S6 roll of 1.9%. A–C passes saw a small increase (0.7%) continuing the trend of recent years.

From last year, there is a slight decrease in entries and A-C passes at **Advanced Higher Mathematics of Mechanics** and an encouraging increase in entries and A-C passes in **Advanced Higher Statistics** but in both cases these changes equate to a small number of candidates.

The increase in **N5 Applications of Mathematics** along with an increase in **N4 Applications of Mathematics** (both entries and passes), may be a potential reason why National 4 entries have dipped slightly in Mathematics.

With the removal of RPA and the planned introduction of Higher Applications of Mathematics, schools may be adapting pathways and preparing pupils to take an Applications pathway through the Senior Phase, using evidence from the BGE as an indicator. There may be some thinking around entering students for Applications of Mathematics rather than Mathematics.

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The number of entries for 'Lifeskills Mathematics' (former name for Applications of Mathematics) were low at SCQF Level 5 at introductory stages of the qualification. Teachers now seem to be understanding the advantages of the qualification.

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Modern Languages**French**

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	- 3.35%	- 6.1%	Decline in uptake continues, but not as sharply as in previous years. N/A up by 1.3%
H	- 9.6%	- 9.7%	Decline in uptake continues.
AH	-5.5%	-16.0%	Reduction in entries not statistically significant given the small numbers. Reduction in passes and N/A up by 9.5% suggest that some candidates may have been presented without a strong enough Higher pass to support the shift to more independent learning at AH.

German

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	-2.9%	-4.1%	Decline in uptake continues, but not as sharply as in previous years.
H	-3.7%	-2.5%	53% of candidates achieved grade A, up by 4% on 2018. N/A down by 3%
AH	2.4%	6.1%	Attainment suggests learners who choose to continue with German are achieving well.

Spanish

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	3.7%	1%	Increase in entries for Spanish continues year on year and is a factor in the drop in entries for N5 French/ German. Although the pattern of entries is on a positive trajectory, attainment at N5 is not as positive as in 2018 : A down 5.1% A-B down 3.7% A-C down 2.4%

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			No award up 2.7%
H	9.3%	8.8%	Rise in attainment for the strongest candidates, little or no change in real terms for the other levels. The drop in N/A suggests that teachers are entering suitable candidates at this level.
AH	9.8%	7%	The steady increase in pupils studying Spanish over the past few years has resulted in the increased number of entries at AH. This suggests that where learners choose Spanish they stay with it.

Italian

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	-24.1%	-22.2%	At N5, H & AH levels : reduction in entries not statistically significant given the small numbers. Numbers taking Italian tend to show annual fluctuation, due to some large secondary schools offering Italian every second year to their S1 intakes. The number of teachers of Italian is small and there may be difficulties in making up viable NQ classes.
H	-12.3%	-14.7%	
AH	-25%	-32.4%	

Chinese Languages

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	32%	38%	Increase in entries not statistically significant, given the small numbers. Over 75% of candidates achieved grade A
H	13.8%	33.6%	96.5% of candidates achieved grade A. 87.2% of candidates passed at grades A-C, the second highest pass rate of all Higher languages (and second highest of all Higher courses)
AH	13%	38.6%	83% of candidates achieved grade A. Pass rate A-C is 100%

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NB A significant number of native speakers are presented for the Chinese Languages exams, of whom many may also attend Chinese complementary schools. Chinese still has a stronger base in independent schools than elsewhere.

Urdu

Level	2018-19 Entries	2018-19 Passes	Comments:
N5	3.4%	4.4%	Increase in entries not statistically significant, given the small numbers. 86.5% achieved grade A. Only N5 language (and subject) with zero N/A
H	-3.1%	-5.7%	Decrease in entries not statistically significant, given the small numbers. Higher Urdu has the highest pass rate of all Higher languages (and all Higher courses) at 97.8%

(Urdu does not have an AH level qualification)

NB A very significant number of native speakers are presented for the Urdu qualifications, of whom many may also attend Urdu complementary schools.

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Religious, Moral & Philosophical Studies, Psychology, Philosophy & Sociology**Top Lines**

- Psychology has shown year on year reduction in attainment and tops the list of SQA subjects at Higher level which have seen reductions in attainment 2018-2019 (-13%) [RMPS = -3.1%; Sociology = -1.7%; Philosophy = +1.7%]
- Attainment in N5 Psychology is in the top three of reductions in attainment 2018-2019 (- 6.7%). Philosophy at N5 is also in the top three of reductions in attainment 2018-2019 (-8.2%) [RMPS = -1.4%; Sociology = +3.3%]
- Comparatively low numbers in these subjects means that analysis should be treated with caution
- There have been improvements in attainment in Sociology, Philosophy and RMPS
- There has been a notable drop in attainment in Psychology Higher

Religious, Moral & Philosophical Studies**Descriptive analysis**

N3 (%)

	Entries	Attainment
2017	218	91.7
2018	577	93.6
2019	497	83.9

N4 (%)

	Entries	Attainment
2017	2,191	87.2
2018	2,547	88.8
2019	3,521	72.5

RMPS N5 (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	2,624	31.1	49.3	67.7	24.3
2018	2,309	34.0	53.4	69.8	15.3
2019	2,419	34.3	51.4	68.4	18.1

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RMPS H (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	3,782	25.8	48.3	70.3	19.4
2018	3,658	31.3	53.4	72.8	19.3
2019	3,598	28.8	50.3	69.1	16.8

RMPS AH (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	172	35.5	51.2	72.1	18.6
2018	157	22.3	40.6	67.5	24.2
2019	175	32.6	57.1	77.1	15.4

Evaluative analysis

- Entry levels generally stable
- Reductions in attainment in N3 and N4
- Normal level of variability at N5 and H
- Improved entry numbers and attainment at AH. Low entry numbers make detailed evaluative comment difficult. The course requires significant levels of independent study which centres must be able to support.
- RMPS shows general variability in results within acceptable parameters

Psychology**Descriptive analysis (NB no SQA courses from N1- N4, or AH in Psychology)**

N5 (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	622	36.2	55.5	70.4	23.3
2018	775	31.5	47.9	64.6	21.5
2019	992	24.5	40.5	58.0	25.8

H (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	3,666	15.8	38.1	63	27
2018	3,495	13.4	33.6	57.6	29.1

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2019		3,410	11.5	25.7	44.6	35.4
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Evaluative analysis

- Increase in entries at N5, decrease at H
- Attainment at both levels has shown reductions.
- Significant % of psychology candidates come from college sector where there are often large cohorts of students studying psychology. SQA achievement data does not distinguish between this and school data.
- Varying models of delivery of psychology can have varying effects on outcomes (e.g. 'traveling column' pupils, consortia approaches etc.)
- Psychology often seen as an attractive option by candidates, but this can lead to candidates underestimating the difficulty of the subject.
- The absence of N4 in psychology could lead to candidates being inappropriately presented at N5.
- The absence of explicit psychology study in the BGE may lead to centres having weaker prior attainment data upon which to select appropriate entry levels for candidates.
- Appropriately qualified psychology teachers are now more readily available since the introduction of the PGDE at Strathclyde University: However, levels of qualification and expertise across the system may still show variability.
- The teacher support network for psychology is strong with ATPS, BPS and the European Federation of Psychology Teaching Associations (EFPTA) all providing good levels of support. There is also a robust and supportive email network in place.

Philosophy

Descriptive analysis (NB no SQA courses from N1- N4, or AH in Philosophy)

N5 %

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	277	33.4	48.7	69.3	25.6
2018	270	35.9	52.2	68.5	18.1
2019	272	26.8	44.9	60.3	21.7

H (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	764	24.3	43.3	64.8	25.0

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2018		742	23.0	43.9	62.1	26.1
2019		656	27.3	46.6	63.9	19.2

Evaluative analysis

- Entry levels show normal variability.
- N5 has seen reductions in candidate performance, while H has seen improvements.
- Like Psychology, Philosophy is delivered through a variety of models across the system which may have year on year implications for entry and achievement patterns.
- The teacher support network for philosophy is relatively strong and is being improved through initiatives such as Edinburgh University's Open Scotland Philosophy Project.

Sociology Descriptive analysis (NB no SQA courses from N1- N4, or AH in Sociology)

N5 %

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	242	40.11	61.2	76.9	17.4
2018	206	26.7	47.6	66.0	20.4
2019	259	29.0	47.9	69.1	19.7

H (%)

	Entries	A	A-B	A-C	No Award
2017	1,024	19.2	44.8	67.7	23.8
2018	1,067	16.5	26.9	60.8	26.0
2019	927	20.3	39.1	59.1	24.8

Evaluative analysis

- Slight increase in entries at N5 and reduction at H.
- Low numbers have disproportionate implications for % figures.
- This year has seen improvements in attainment in the subject.
- Significant % of sociology candidates come from college sector. SQA achievement data does not distinguish between this and school data.
- Varying models of delivery of sociology can have varying effects on outcomes (e.g. 'traveling column' pupils, consortia approaches etc.)
- Sociology often seen as an attractive option by candidates, but this can lead to candidates underestimating the difficulty of the subject.

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- The absence of N4 in sociology could lead to candidates being inappropriately presented at N5.
- The absence of explicit sociology study in the BGE may lead to centres having weaker prior learning data upon which to select appropriate entry levels for candidates
- The teacher support network for sociology is less well-defined than for other subject areas

Sciences**Award programmes**

It is encouraging to see some positive movement in the entries for STEM-related Awards, Skills for Work courses, National Certificates and NPAs. This includes significant increase in Skills for Work entries for N5 Laboratory Science (+19.8%) which science teachers are increasingly recognising as a positive alternative to the traditional sciences for some learners.

National 5 Sciences (chemistry, physics and biology)

- The picture at National 5 is positive. Passes and entries are broadly stable or have increased across the sciences.

Higher Sciences (chemistry, physics, biology and human biology)

- total entries are up 2.6%, to 32,316 (2018 – 31,512)
- entries for the above subjects have all increased this year with Higher Biology (+5.2%), Higher Human Biology (+5.4%), Physics (+0.5%) and Chemistry (+0.6%)
- total passes are up 1.4%, to 23,762 (2018 – 23,435)
- passes for the above subjects have increased this year in Higher Biology (+4.2%) and Higher Human Biology (+4.8%) with small decreases in Higher Physics (-0.5%) and Higher Chemistry (-0.6%)
- Small decreases in pass rates between 2018 and 2019 in Higher Biology, Human Biology, Physics and Chemistry (down 0.7, down 0.4, down 0.8 and down 1.1 percentage points respectively).

Advanced Higher Sciences (Chemistry, Physics, Biology)

- There has been a significant drop in entries and passes in Advanced Higher physics and chemistry this year.
- Entries in Advanced Higher Physics have decreased by 13% and passes have decreased by 14.1%. The pass rate has fallen by 1.0%
- Entries and passes in Advanced Higher Chemistry have decreased by 5.4% and the pass rate has remained stable.

Commentary

Given the variety of factors involved, it is not possible to give a definitive explanation for the positive increase in entries and passes in the sciences this year at N5 and

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Higher level. However, the STEM Education and Training Strategy and the Developing the Young Workforce Programme have both increased the profile of STEM learning, pathways and careers significantly. This may have persuaded many young people and their families to continue with science subjects into the senior phase. There has also been over £1 million of investment in the RAiSE Programme and similar levels of investment in SSERC's Primary Science Cluster Programme which are both designed to build confidence of practitioners and engagement of learners in science. We also know many science departments are reviewing their BGE offer which will also be having an impact on progression into the senior phase. Similarly, the decline in entries in sciences may have stabilised as schools around Scotland settle on particular approaches to curriculum design in the senior phase.

In terms of the decreases in entries and passes for Advanced Higher Physics and Chemistry, it may be that schools are giving greater priority to other elements of the senior phase.

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Social Subjects

SG commentary

Issue: pass rate for Higher History has dropped from 82.6% to 72.8%, and a 14.6% drop in number of passes. Number of passes in Higher Modern Studies are also down by 7.1% and entries are down by 7.3%. Numbers of Modern Studies passes and entries at Higher seem to fluctuate from year to year with greater numbers every other year. This year seems to be a “low” year for Modern Studies.

- Entries and passes at National 5 level in the social subjects increased this year, compared to last, with numbers of passes in History at National 5 up from 11,260 to 11,679, for example. The number of passes in Modern Studies at National 5 are also up by 5.6% compared to last year – from 8,322 in 2018 to 8,785 in 2019 and the number of passes at National 5 in Geography rose from 6,934 in 2018 to 7,029 in 2019.
- Numbers of passes in Higher Modern Studies fluctuate from year to year. The number of passes at Higher in Modern studies is 30% greater than it was in 2007 – 6,577 in 2019 compared to 5,075 in 2007 and it is the similar as it was in 2013 (6,590)

ES commentary

N4

Entries show a little but not significant variation.

Passes also show a little but not significant variation.

N5

Entries across the area are fairly stable as compared to last year, with a slight rise in all cases except Economics. Economics entries have dropped by 3.2%.

The percentage of pupils achieving no award has mostly reduced across the area.

Economics has shown an almost 5% drop in A-C grades. However the small numbers involved can have a very significant effect on the results, and so variations should be treated with caution.

Modern Studies have an increase of 3% in A-C grades. This may be due to the exam bedding in and teachers becoming more comfortable with arrangements.

Higher

Entries across the area have dropped. Most significantly in Economics (-11.1%), Admin & IT (-7%) Geography (-6.3%) and Modern Studies (-7.3%).

The percentage of pupils achieving no award has been reduced across the curriculum area.

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History has shown a drop of almost 10% in A-C grades. ES is in discussion with subject networks to explore the reasons behind this.

Economics numbers are down significantly and now the A-C passes are down by almost 5%. Again numbers are very small and the data must be treated with caution. There is no subject association for Economics.

Politics has shown a significant improvement in A-C passes of over 10%. This tends to be taught in S6 to pupils who have been successful in another social studies subject in S5. Although there is a slight increase in uptake, this has steadied this year after several years of improvement.

Advanced Higher

Entries are down across the subject area with the exception of Accounting and Economics.

The percentage of pupils achieving A-C grades is slightly down in every subject. ES is in discussion with subject networks to explore the reasons behind this.

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Technologies**Nat 4**

SUBJECT	2019			2018		
	Attainment	%	Entries	Attainment	%	Entries
Computing Science	2,331	88.0%	2,650	2,571	91.2%	2,820
Design and Manufacture	1,145	75.5%	1,517	1,248	81.5%	1,531
Engineering Science	267	78.1%	342	320	86.0%	372
Graphic Communication	1,033	85.1%	1,214	1,065	87.9%	1,211
Practical Electronics	115	53.5%	215	114	69.1%	165
Practical Metalworking	104	73.2%	142	113	73.4%	154
Practical Woodworking	1,188	78.4%	1,515	1,271	82.2%	1,546
Totals	92,845	88.5%	104,866	96,613	91.1%	106,033

External assessment may be the reason for the drops.

Nat 5

SUBJECT	2019			2018			2017
	A - C		Entries	A - C		Entries	A - C
	No.	%		No.	%		%
Computing Science	4,740	74.7%	6,344	4,814	74.7%	6,442	82.1
Design and Manufacture	3,156	70.4%	4,481	2,603	56.6%	4,599	83.8
Engineering Science	1,379	83.8%	1,646	1,407	77.8%	1,808	79.4
Graphic Communication	3,905	72.2%	5,406	3,935	72.4%	5,434	85.0
Practical Electronics	181	86.6%	209	126	70.4%	179	77.6
Practical Metalworking	1,047	82.6%	1,267	1,023	81.3%	1,259	92.0
Practical Woodworking	4,554	86.0%	5,298	4,057	85.4%	4,748	92.6
Totals	225,594	78.2%	288,552	218,201	77.4%	281,785	

Significant improvement from last year but still below the 2017. This appears to be due to the move to external assessment.

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Higher

SUBJECT	2019			2018		
	A - C		Entries	A - C		Entries
	No.	%		No.	%	
Computing Science	2,064	63.9%	3,228	2,816	68.7%	4,099
Design and Manufacture	1,219	54.2%	2,248	1,723	61.1%	2,820
Engineering Science	725	65.3%	1,110	704	69.4%	1,014
Graphic Communication	2,609	74.6%	3,497	3,126	75.6%	4,134
Totals	138,972	74.8%	185,914	147,419	76.8%	191,951

This is the first year of external marking for Higher and may be the reason for the drop in attainment, which we saw last year with Nat 5.

Advanced Higher

SUBJECT	2019			2018		
	A - C		Entries	A - C		Entries
	No.	%		No.	%	
Computing Science	402	65.5%	614	454	71.4%	636
Design and Manufacture	51	64.6%	79	50	53.8%	93
Engineering Science	30	83.3%	36	40	67.8%	59
Graphic Communication	319	63.0%	506	348	66.3%	525
Totals	18,627	79.4%	23,460	19,585	80.5%	24,331

Overall comments re technologies area subjects:

Teachers of computing science courses are increasingly ensuring that they are preparing learners better from BGE using the refreshed Es and Os.

ES is in discussion with SQA re how to ensure that the craft, design, engineering and graphics qualifications take account of what FE, HE and industry are looking for.