

Official Statistics

Attainment Statistics (August) 2021 – Provisional Centre Type

Tuesday 21 September 2021

Correction: Monday 21 February 2022

Summary

Note that 2017-2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches. The above should be considered throughout this publication, where differences between years are presented and described for context.

- Entries, attainment volumes and rate patterns, have historically varied by centre type for all qualification levels, and this remains the case for 2021.
- National 5 entries for all centre types have decreased relative to 2020, with the exception of independent Schools which saw an increase on the previous year¹.
- Higher and Advanced Higher entries have increased for most centre types relative to 2020 – with the exception of Colleges, which saw a decrease in entries at both levels.
- At National 5, A-C attainment rates for all centre types have decreased on 2020, but remain higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2019 for most centre types. The exception are 'Other' centres, which achieved a higher A-C rate in 2018.
- At National 5, A attainment rates have increased on 2020 for Education Authority Schools and Independent Schools, but have decreased for Colleges and 'Other' centres. For most centre types, the 2021 A attainment rate is higher than rates achieved in the period 2017 to 2019. The exception are 'Other' centres, which achieved a higher A attainment rate in 2017.
- At Higher, A-C attainment rates for most centre types have decreased on 2020. The exception are 'Other' centres, which saw an increased A-C rate relative to 2020. Notably however, the 2021 A-C rates for all centre types are higher than those seen in each year in the period 2017 to 2019.

¹ During quality assurance checks of Attainment Statistics (December) Centre Type, an error was identified in the Attainment Statistics (August) Centre Type statistical summary, originally published 21 September 2021. The detail on entries was correct in the main report but the second summary bullet erroneously stated that National 5 entries had decreased relative to 2020 for every centre type. This has been corrected in this updated version of Attainment Statistics (August) Centre Type statistical summary, published 21 February 2022. The figures in the original published Excel tables remain correct.

- At Higher, A attainment rates for all centre types have increased on 2020. For most centre types, the 2021 A attainment rate is higher than rates achieved in the period 2017 to 2019. The exception are 'Other' centres, which achieved a higher A attainment rate in 2018.
- At Advanced Higher, A-C attainment rates for Education Authority Schools, Independent Schools and 'Other' centres² have decreased on 2020, whilst rates for Colleges have increased. For all centre types, the 2021 A-C rates are higher than those seen in each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- At Advanced Higher, A attainment rates for all centre types have increased on 2020; and for all centre types, are higher than A attainment rates achieved in the period 2017 to 2019.
- Individual Education Authorities show different entry, attainment volume and rate patterns from Education Authority Schools as a whole. For example, in 2021, the A-C attainment rate for National 5 ranged from 81.5% to 93.8% across Education Authorities; the A rate ranged from 36.7% to 62.8%.

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² During quality assurance checks of Attainment Statistics (December) Centre Type, an error was identified in the Attainment Statistics (August) Centre Type statistical summary, originally published 21 September 2021. The summary bullet on Advanced Higher A-C attainment rates erroneously stated that the A-C attainment rate for 'Other' centres had increased relative to 2020. This has been corrected in this updated version of Attainment Statistics (August) Centre Type statistical summary, published 21 February 2022. The figures in the original published Excel tables remain correct.

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1 Background

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) became an Official Statistics producer in [The Official Statistics \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2019](#).

Attainment Statistics (August – Provisional) published on 10 August 2021, detailed the main qualifications taken at school and college level by learners in Scotland: a mix of current National Courses (National 2 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) as well as Skills for Work, Awards, National Progression Awards, and National Certificates.

Attainment Statistics (August - Provisional) Centre Type Tables published on 21 September 2021 provides a breakdown of attainment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher by Education Authority schools, Independent schools, Colleges and Other centre types.

This Statistical Summary provides an overview of the Attainments Statistics (August – Provisional) Centre Type Tables for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

Further breakdowns of National Courses, Skills for Work, Awards, National Progression Awards and National Certifications are available in the corresponding Centre Type tables.

The purpose of National Courses, as well as Skills for Work, Awards, National Progression Awards and National Certifications, is to enable certification and recognition for the programmes of work that learners undertake in the senior phase of secondary education and in colleges.

The broad objectives of National Courses are to provide high standards, and breadth and depth of learning for individual learners. They are assessed by a combination of national exams, coursework and / or internally assessed components.

1.1 Important notes for these statistics

In 2021, the Scottish Government commissioned the SQA to develop an Alternative Certification Model (ACM 2021) for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher for 2021. This model was developed by the National Qualifications 2021 Group. The National Qualifications 2021 Group is represented by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), School Leaders Scotland (SLS), the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Government, National Parent Forum of Scotland, and the Scottish Youth Parliament. The model is based on teacher judgment, supported by assessment resources and quality assurance. More information on the [ACM 2021 methodology](#) can be found on our information page.

SQA implemented various modifications to reduce the assessment requirements for courses in 2021. This was in recognition of the disruption to learning arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, results were also derived differently. The Deputy First Minister directed SQA to issue grades, primarily on the basis of teacher estimates. 9,198 grades that had been adjusted upwards in an [earlier moderation process](#) were retained.

Prior to 2020 and 2021, the Scottish examination system had been in a period of change since the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

Revised National Qualification (RNQ) changes made to the assessment of National 5 courses in 2018, Higher courses in 2019 and Advanced Higher courses in 2020, meant units

and unit assessments were removed and each course assessment was adjusted accordingly.

In addition, grade D was extended from a notional 45–49% to a notional 40–49%, meaning grade D attainment (and No Award results) from:

- 2016/17 and previous years are not directly comparable for National 5
- 2017/18 and previous years are not directly comparable for Higher
- 2018/19 and previous years are not directly comparable for Advanced Higher

Users of these statistics should be mindful of the above information and the different approach to deriving results in 2021, particularly when commenting on 2021 results in the context of previous years. This includes commenting on 2021 figures in the context of 2020 results.

Note that percentage figures are calculated before rounding and published figures may not sum to 100%. For instance, 0.0% reflects a rounded figure and does not mean zero.

2 Centre type

Note that 2017-2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches. The above should be considered throughout this publication, where differences between years are presented and described for context.

Due to the small numbers entering for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher through Other centres, the attainment rate has been more variable historically. This is also the case for Advanced Higher for Colleges.

2.1 Overview

The Attainment Statistics (August) 2021 Centre Type Tables present attainment volumes and rates by centre type, level and subject in full. This summary document presents an overview of entries and attainment by centre type for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Further sections present statistics for Education Authority (EA)³, Independent schools, Colleges, and Other⁴ centres separately for these qualifications.

2.2 National 5

National 5 entries

The 2021 national picture for National 5 shows a fall in entries relative to 2020, but remains higher than recent historical years for most centre types. A notable exception was Colleges, where entries decreased in 2021 to below recent historical levels (2017-2020) (Table 1).

In another difference from the national picture, entries for Independent schools increased for National 5.

Table 1. National 5 entries by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Entries	293,220	281,785	288,552	300,639	297,973
EA Schools	270,862	259,364	266,486	278,526	276,328
College	3,785	3,719	3,679	3,689	2,778
Independent Schools	18,516	18,655	18,300	18,369	18,822
Other	57	47	87	55	45

³ Education Authority secondary schools cover all publicly funded Scottish Secondary schools, with the exception of Jordanhill School. Jordanhill School is classed as an Independent school in SQA administration systems.

⁴ "Other" centre types include Public and Private Sector Training Providers, Public and Private Employers, Voluntary Sector Organisations, Trade Associations, Armed Forces, HM Prisons, HE institutions, and primary schools amongst others.

National 5 A-C and A attainment by centre type

Attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) by centre type is presented in Table 2.

Similar to the national picture, all centre types demonstrated a fall in their A-C attainment rates in 2021 compared to 2020, but generally remained above recent historical levels (Chart 1).

Table 2. National 5 A-C attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National 5	79.5%	77.4%	78.2%	89.0%	85.8%
EA Schools	78.6%	76.3%	77.2%	88.5%	85.1%
College	70.9%	70.6%	67.6%	85.7%	74.9%
Independent Schools	94.5%	94.5%	94.8%	97.7%	96.8%
Other	82.5%	87.2%	82.8%	96.4%	84.4%

Table 3. National 5 A attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National 5	37.1%	35.1%	35.1%	42.3%	46.7%
EA Schools	35.0%	32.8%	32.9%	40.4%	44.8%
College	30.7%	27.7%	25.2%	34.9%	33.2%
Independent Schools	68.1%	69.0%	68.9%	72.9%	76.9%
Other	77.2%	57.4%	55.2%	65.5%	62.2%

Attainment of A results as a percentage of total entries (A attainment rate) by centre type is presented in Table 3. For A attainment rates, dissimilar to the national picture, Colleges and 'Other' centres showed a decrease in attainment for 2021 (Chart 2).

Historically, Education Authority and College A-C attainment rates for National 5 have been below Independent Schools' attainment rates. This pattern has been maintained in 2021.

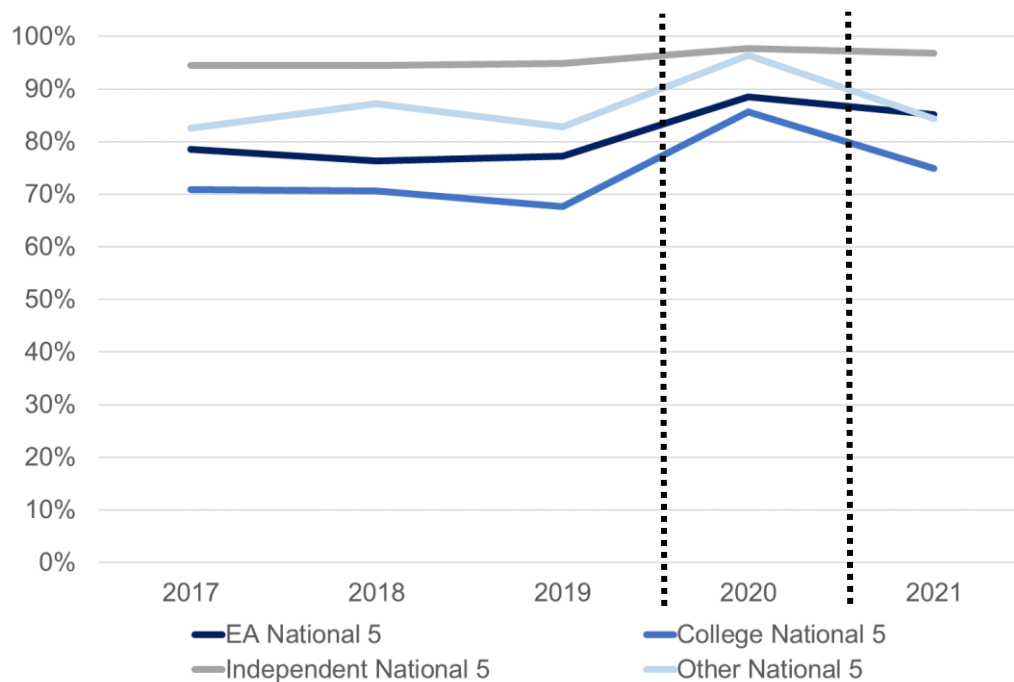
Similarly, A attainment rates have demonstrated the same pattern, with Education Authority Schools and College attaining lower A attainment rates than Independent Schools and Other centres.

In 2020 and 2021, the difference in national A-C attainment rates between Education Authority schools and Independent schools narrowed on recent historical differences (Chart 1). It is likely that part of the reason for this narrowing is due to a ceiling effect, with Independent Schools' historical attainment rates approaching 100%.

In 2017, 2018 and 2019, the difference in A-C attainment between the two centre types was 16, 18.1, and 17.6 percentage points respectively. In 2020 this difference was 9.3 percentage points and increased to 11.7 percentage points in 2021.

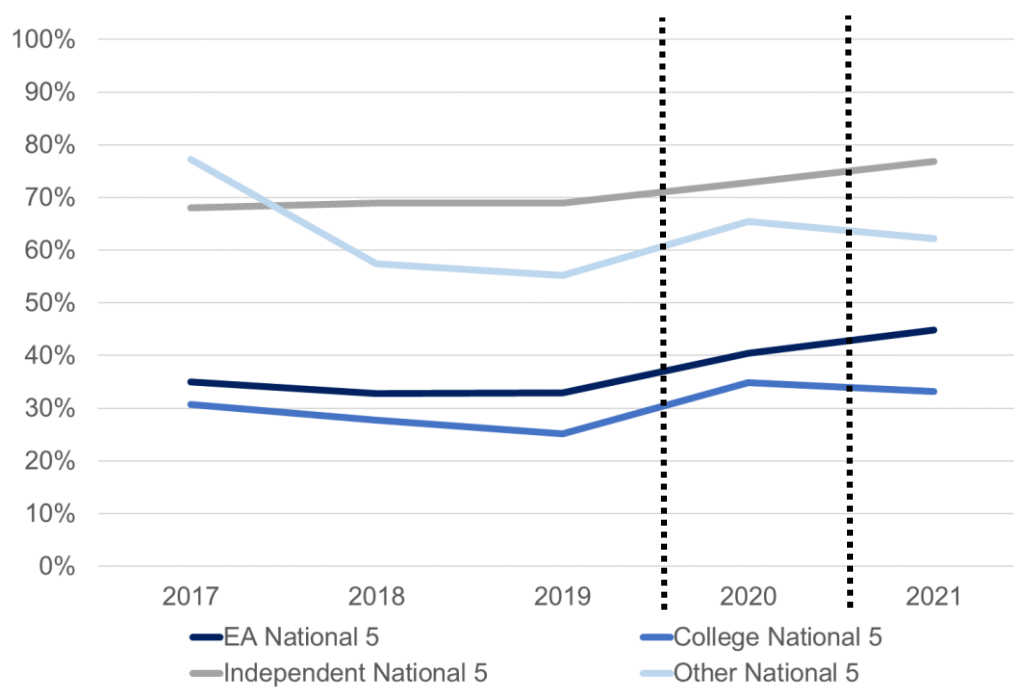
The difference between Education Authority and Independent schools' A attainment rates has been historically wider than that seen for A-C attainment rates (Chart 2).

Chart 1. National 5 A-C attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)



In 2017, 2018 and 2019, the difference was 33.0, 36.3 and 36.0 percentage points respectively. In 2020 and 2021, the difference was 32.5 and 32.1 percentage points respectively.

Chart 2. National 5 A attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)



Proportion of entries and proportion of attainment volumes by centre type

Another way to look at trends in entries and attainment by centre type is to compare the proportion of entries and attainment volumes (at A-C and A) by centre type (Table 4).

Table 4. National 5 entry and attainment proportions by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Entries	293,220	281,785	288,552	300,639	297,973
EA Schools	92.4%	92.0%	92.4%	92.6%	92.7%
College	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	0.9%
Independent Schools	6.3%	6.6%	6.3%	6.1%	6.3%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total A-C attainment	233,005	218,201	225,594	267,558	255,517
EA Schools	91.3%	90.7%	91.2%	92.1%	92.0%
College	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	0.8%
Independent Schools	7.5%	8.1%	7.7%	6.7%	7.1%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total A attainment	108,700	98,959	101,273	127,299	139,133
EA Schools	87.3%	85.9%	86.6%	88.4%	88.9%
College	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%
Independent Schools	11.6%	13.0%	12.5%	10.5%	10.4%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Independent Schools' proportion of A-C and A attainment volumes for National 5 are higher than their proportion of entries in the period considered.

The extent to which this is the case is changing over time. The proportion of A-C results for Independent Schools (of all National 5 A-C attainment) had been falling from 2018 to 2020. In 2021, this has increased but is below recent historical levels.

Education Authority Schools' proportion of A-C attainment increased from 2018 to 2020. In 2021, their proportion decreased on 2020 levels but remains above recent historical levels.

Education Authority Schools' proportion of A attainment (of all National 5 A attainment) remain below their proportion of entries but have been increasing since 2018. Independent Schools' proportion of A attainment has been decreasing since 2018 but remain above their proportion of entries.

2.3 Higher

Higher Entries

Table 5 below shows national Higher entries by centre type for each year in the period 2017 to 2021.

Table 5. Higher entries by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Entries	194,813	191,951	185,914	186,214	194,661
EA Schools	171,629	169,193	164,828	166,657	175,740
College	8,359	7,916	6,411	5,280	4,313
Independent Schools	14,673	14,716	14,574	14,164	14,464
Other	152	126	101	113	144

This shows an increase in entries in 2021 relative to recent historical years for most centre types. The notable exception are College entries, which decreased in 2021 to below recent historical levels (2017-2020).

Education Authority Schools' entries increased in 2021 to above recent historical levels whilst entries from Independent schools increased in 2021 but remain below recent historical levels.

Higher A-C and A attainment by centre type

In line with the national picture, Higher attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) showed a decrease on 2020 but remained high in relation to historical levels for all centre types except Other (Table 6). Due to the small numbers taking Higher through Other centres, the A-C attainment rate has been more variable historically.

Table 5. Higher A-C attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Higher A-C	77.0%	76.8%	74.8%	89.3%	87.3%
EA Schools	76.2%	76.1%	73.9%	88.8%	86.7%
College	66.6%	61.2%	56.3%	81.7%	79.2%
Independent Schools	92.6%	92.6%	92.8%	97.7%	97.2%
Other	65.1%	92.1%	80.2%	97.3%	97.9%

Table 7. Higher A attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Higher A	28.7%	28.4%	28.3%	40.0%	47.6%
EA Schools	27.0%	26.7%	26.1%	38.0%	45.6%
College	18.0%	15.3%	14.7%	28.7%	37.7%
Independent Schools	54.5%	54.8%	58.1%	67.0%	75.6%
Other	42.1%	69.8%	54.5%	59.3%	68.1%

In line with the national picture, attainment of A results as a percentage of total entries (A attainment rate) showed an increase over previous years for all centre types (Table 7).

Like National 5, from 2017 to 2020, Education Authority Schools' and Colleges' A-C attainment rates for Higher have been below Independent Schools' attainment rates. This pattern has been maintained in 2021.

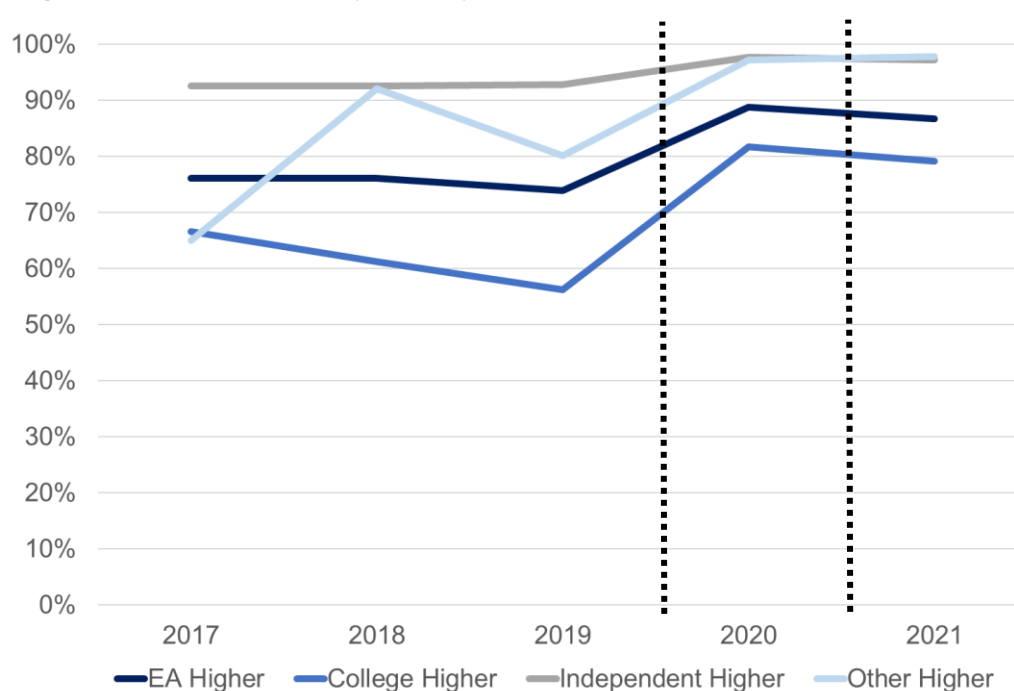
Due to the small numbers taking Highers through 'Other' centres, the A-C attainment rate has been more variable historically.

A attainment rates have demonstrated a same pattern to A-C attainment rates, with Education Authority Schools' and Colleges' attainment rates historically sitting below Independent Schools.

In 2020 and 2021, the difference in national A-C attainment rates between Education Authority schools and Independent schools decreased on recent historical differences (Chart 3). It is likely that part of the reason for this narrowing is due to a ceiling effect, with Independent Schools' historical attainment rates approaching 100%.

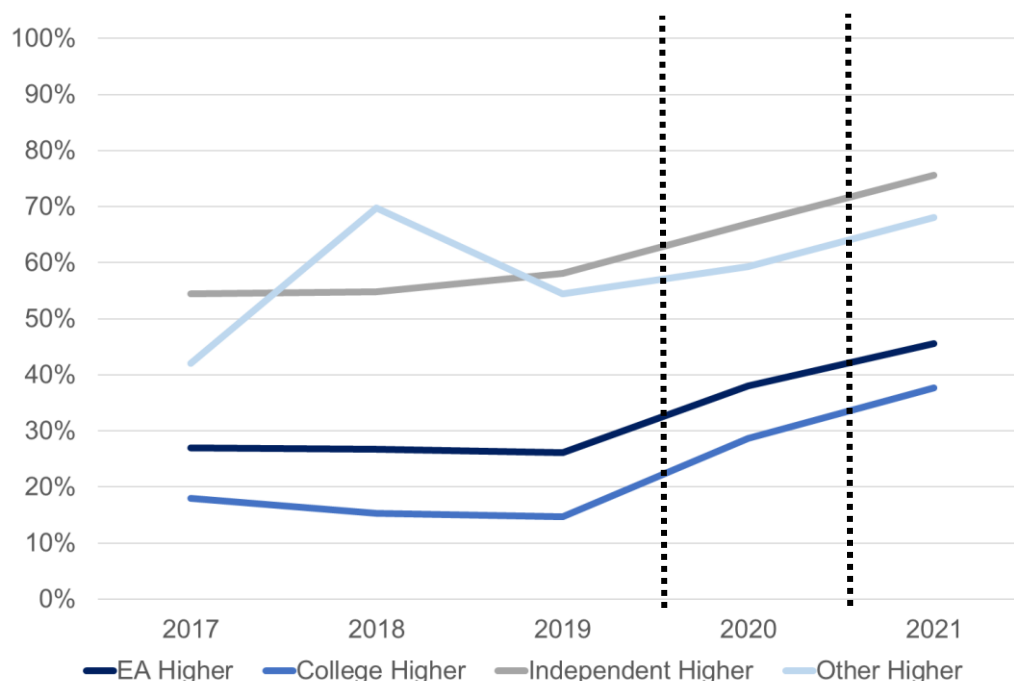
In 2020 the difference was 9.0 percentage points and in 2021, 10.5 percentage points. In 2017, 2018 and 2019, this was 16.4, 16.5, and 18.9 percentage points respectively.

Chart 3. Higher A-C attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)



The difference between Education Authority Schools and Independent Schools for A attainment rates has been historically wider than that seen for A-C attainment rates (Chart 4). In 2017, 2018 and 2018, the difference was 27.5, 28.1 and 32.0 percentage points respectively. In 2020 and 2021, the difference was 29.0 and 30.0 percentage points respectively.

Chart 4. Higher A attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)



Proportion of Higher entries and attainment volumes by centre type

As before, another way to look at volumes is to compare the proportion of entries and attainment volumes (at A-C and A) by centre type (Table 8).

Table 8. Higher entry and attainment proportions by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Entries	194,813	191,951	185,914	186,214	194,661
EA Schools	88.1%	88.1%	88.7%	89.5%	90.3%
College	4.3%	4.1%	3.4%	2.8%	2.2%
Independent Schools	7.5%	7.7%	7.8%	7.6%	7.4%
Other	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Total A-C attainment	150,010	147,419	138,972	166,208	169,989
EA Schools	87.2%	87.4%	87.6%	89.0%	89.6%
College	3.7%	3.3%	2.6%	2.6%	2.0%
Independent Schools	9.1%	9.2%	9.7%	8.3%	8.3%
Other	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Total A attainment	55,939	54,576	52,564	74,478	92,753
EA Schools	82.9%	82.8%	82.0%	85.1%	86.4%
College	2.7%	2.2%	1.8%	2.0%	1.8%
Independent Schools	14.3%	14.8%	16.1%	12.7%	11.8%
Other	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%

Like National 5, Independent Schools' proportion of A-C and A attainment volumes for Higher have been above their proportion of entries historically. This is also true for 2021.

Education Authority Schools' proportion of A-C attainment (of all Higher A-C attainment) has been increasing since 2017 in the period considered, and saw a further increase in 2021 over 2020 levels. Colleges' proportion of A-C attainment decreased relative to 2020. Independent Schools' proportion of A-C attainment has remained the same as in 2020.

Education Authority Schools' proportion of A attainment (of all Higher A attainment) remain below their proportion of entries but has been increasing since 2019. Independent School's proportion of A attainment has been decreasing since 2019 but still remain above their proportion of entries.

2.4 Advanced Higher

Advanced Higher Entries

Table 9 below shows Advanced Higher entries by centre type from 2017 to 2021.

Table 9. Advanced Higher entries by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Entries	24,112	24,331	23,460	23,570	26,795
EA Schools	19,873	20,054	19,319	19,087	22,246
College	73	77	94	78	50
Independent Schools	4,017	4,024	3,893	4,231	4,316
Other	149	176	154	174	183

With the exception of Colleges, all centre types show an increase in entries in 2021 relative to recent historical years, similar to the national picture.

Advanced Higher A-C and A attainment by centre type

For Education Authority Schools, Independent Schools, and 'Other' centres⁵, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of entries (A-C attainment rate) decreased on 2020 but remain high relative to historical levels (Table 10). The number of entries for Colleges and 'Other' centres are small, leading to more variability in percentages. Therefore, whilst Colleges showed an increase in A-C attainment rates in 2021 relative to 2020, caution should be exercised in interpreting these percentages.

Table 10. Advanced Higher A-C attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Adv Higher A-C	79.8%	80.4%	79.1%	92.8%	90.0%
EA Schools	77.4%	78.0%	76.9%	92.0%	88.8%
College	65.8%	63.6%	83.0%	88.5%	96.0%
Independent Schools	92.9%	93.1%	91.5%	97.9%	96.9%
Other	86.6%	79.0%	90.9%	99.4%	96.7%

Attainment of A results as a percentage of total entries (A attainment rate) showed an increase over previous years for all centre types (Table 11).

⁵ During quality assurance checks of Attainment Statistics (December) Centre Type statistical summary, an error was identified in Attainment Statistics (August) Centre Type statistical summary, originally published 21 September 2021. This affected Table 10 for Other centres' A-C attainment rates over time. The relevant percentage figures in Table 10 have been corrected in this updated version of Attainment Statistics (August) Centre Type statistical summary, published 21 February 2022, and the paragraph explaining the figures has also been corrected to reflect this information. The figures in the original published Excel tables remain correct.

Table 11. Advanced Higher A attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Adv Higher A	31.7%	32.3%	31.8%	46.3%	51.0%
EA Schools	27.6%	28.2%	27.3%	41.7%	46.7%
College	32.9%	27.3%	45.7%	51.3%	74.0%
Independent Schools	51.8%	52.8%	53.3%	66.8%	72.3%
Other	33.6%	33.0%	39.6%	50.0%	53.6%

Like National 5 and Higher, over the period considered, Education Authority Schools' attainment rates for Advanced Higher have been below Independent Schools' attainment rates. This pattern has been maintained in 2021.

Due to the small numbers taking Advanced Higher through Colleges and Other centres, the A-C attainment rate has been more variable historically.

Similarly, A attainment rates have demonstrated a similar pattern, with Education Authority Schools' attainment rates sitting below Independent Schools' attainment rates in each year in the period 2017 to 2020, and in 2021.

The difference in national A-C attainment rates at Advanced Higher between Education Authority schools and Independent schools had been decreasing year on year between 2017 and 2020 (Chart 5).

In 2017 this difference was 15.5 percentage points and in 2020, 5.9 percentage points. In 2021, this difference increased to 8.1 percentage points, but remained below 2017-2019 levels.

Chart 5. Advanced Higher A-C attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)

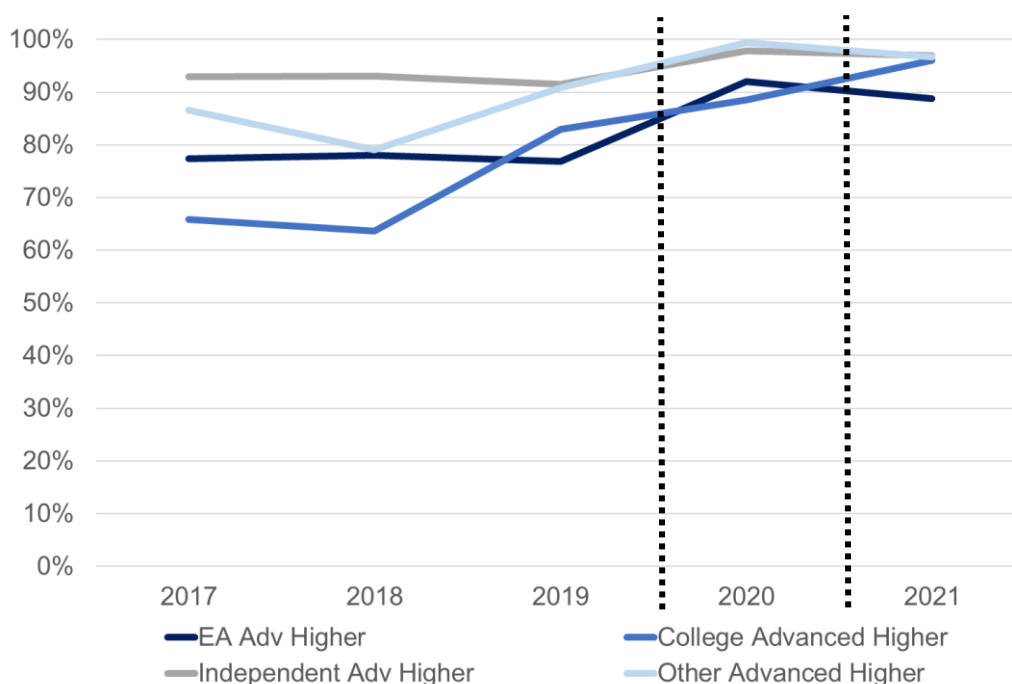
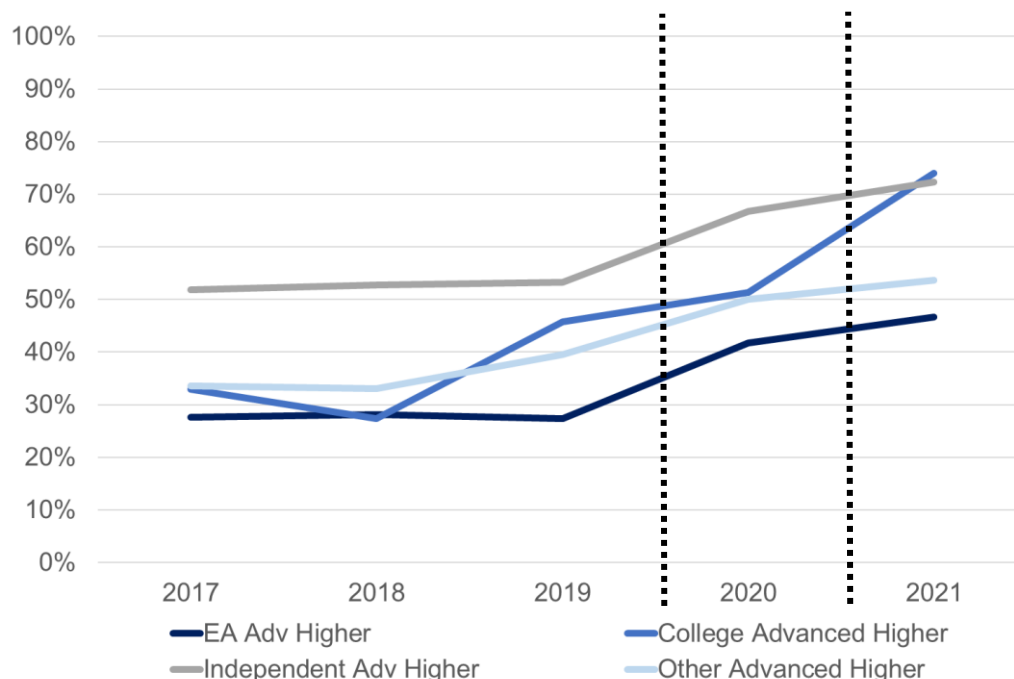


Chart 6. Advanced Higher A attainment rates by centre type (2017-2021)



The difference between Education Authority schools and Independent schools for A attainment rates at Advanced Higher has been historically wider than that seen for A-C attainment rates (Chart 6) and has not seen a narrowing, like A-C attainment rates.

Proportion of Advanced Higher entries and attainment volumes by centre type

Another way to assess trends by centre type over years is to compare the proportion of entries and attainment volumes (at A-C and A) by centre type (Table 12).

Table 12. Advanced Higher entry and attainment proportions by centre type (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Entries	24,112	24,331	23,460	23,570	26,795
EA Schools	82.4%	82.4%	82.3%	81.0%	83.0%
College	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
Independent Schools	16.7%	16.5%	16.6%	18.0%	16.1%
Other	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Total A-C attainment	19,253	19,562	18,568	21,872	24,126
EA Schools	79.9%	80.0%	80.0%	80.2%	81.9%
College	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
Independent Schools	19.4%	19.1%	19.2%	18.9%	17.3%
Other	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Total A attainment	7,643	7,865	7,458	10,919	13,654
EA Schools	71.8%	72.0%	70.8%	72.9%	76.2%
College	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%
Independent Schools	27.2%	27.0%	27.8%	25.9%	22.9%
Other	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%

Like National 5 and Higher, Independent Schools' proportion of A-C and A attainment volumes for Advanced Higher (of all Advanced Higher A-C attainment and A attainment respectively) have been above their proportion of entries from 2017 to 2020. This is also true for 2021. Education Authority Schools' proportion of A-C attainment has been below their proportion of entries but have been increasing year on year in the period considered.

Education Authority Schools' proportion of A attainment remain below their proportion of entries but have been increasing since 2019. Independent Schools' proportion of A attainment has been decreasing since 2019 but remain above their proportion of entries.

3 Education Authority (EA) Schools

Note that 2017-2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches. The above should be considered throughout this publication, where differences between years are presented and described for context.

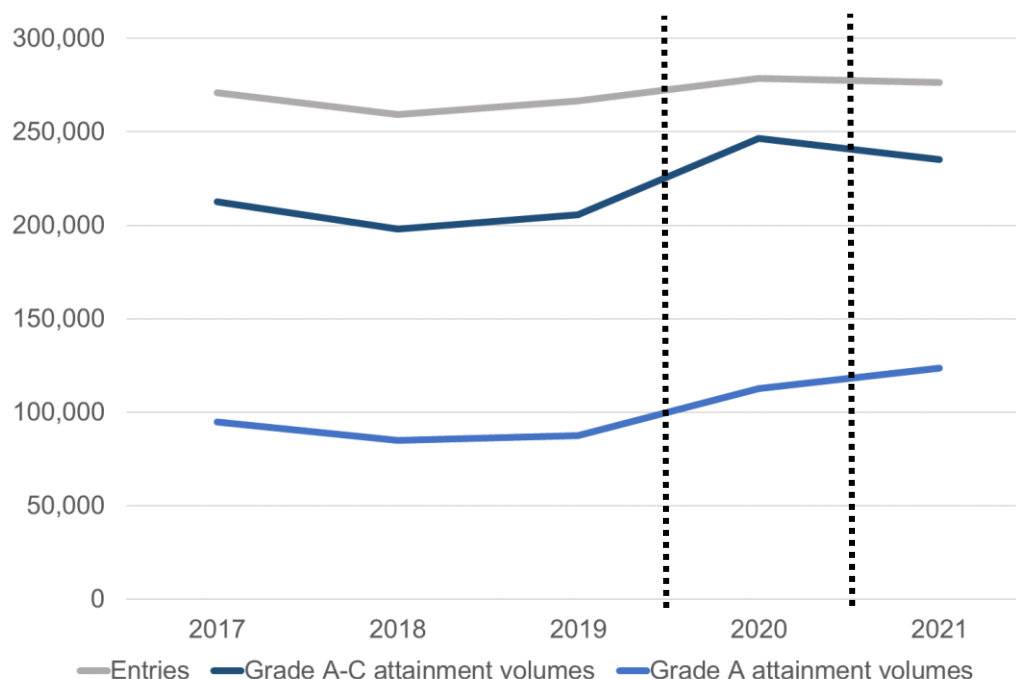
3.1 National 5

- There were **276,328** entries at **National 5 level** in 2021 (-2,198 from 2020)
- This year, entries have decreased compared to 2020 but remain above recent historical levels.
- In line with the national picture, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) showed a decrease on 2020 but is above each year in the period 2017 to 2020 (Table 13)
- In line with the national picture, attainment of A results as a percentage of total entries (A attainment rate) showed an increase over previous years.
- A-C and A attainment rates remain high in 2021 compared to recent historical levels.
- With an increase in entries on historical years, total National 5 attainment volumes at A-C, although lower than 2020, are up on each year in the period 2017 to 2019 (Chart 7).
- Attainment volumes at grade A are up on 2020 as well on each year in the period 2017 to 2019.

Table 13. Education Authority National 5 summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	270,862	259,364	266,486	278,526	276,328
Grade A-C attainment volumes	212,768	197,914	205,685	246,390	235,176
Grade A-C attainment rate	78.6%	76.3%	77.2%	88.5%	85.1%
Grade A attainment volumes	94,891	85,022	87,682	112,579	123,716
Grade A attainment rate	35.0%	32.8%	32.9%	40.4%	44.8%

Chart 7. Education Authority National 5 summary (2017-2021)



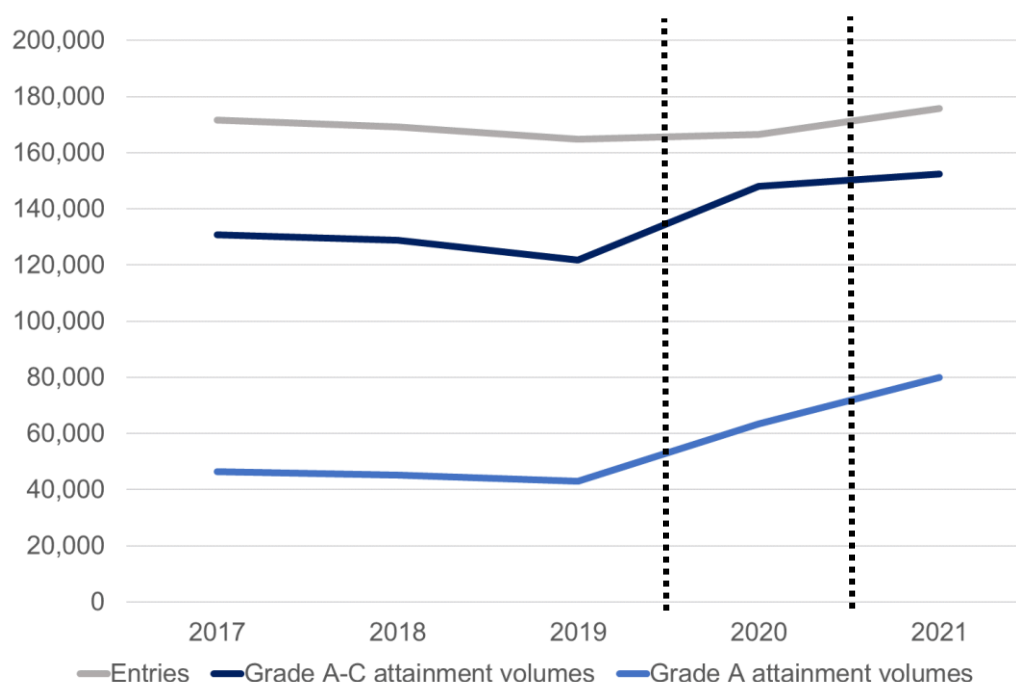
3.2 Higher

- There were **175,740** entries at **Higher level** in 2021 (+9,083 from 2020)
- Similar to the national picture, entries at Higher level had seen a consistent year on year decline from 2016, reaching a low in 2019. Entries at Higher saw an increase in 2021 to almost 2016 levels (Table 14).
- Similar to entry volumes, attainment of A-C as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) had seen a year-on-year decline historically in the period considered, reaching a low in 2019. The A-C attainment rate increased in 2020 over prior historical rates. In that year, the A-C attainment rate increased to 88.8% from 73.9% in 2019. In 2021, the attainment rate has decreased on 2020, but at 86.7%, remains higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- Similar to the national picture, whilst the A-C attainment rate for Higher fell slightly between 2020 and 2021, the increase in entries means that total volumes of A-C grades in 2021, at 152,374, are higher than A-C volumes in 2020 and in each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- With an increase in entries and an increase in the A attainment rate this year, the number of A grades at Higher are also at a high at 80,100 (Chart 8).

Table 14. EA Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	171,629	169,193	164,828	166,657	175,740
Grade A-C attainment volumes	130,752	128,827	121,763	147,941	152,374
Grade A-C attainment rate	76.2%	76.1%	73.9%	88.8%	86.7%
Grade A attainment volumes	46,369	45,211	43,099	63,404	80,100
Grade A attainment rate	27.0%	26.7%	26.1%	38.0%	45.6%

Chart 8. Education Authority Higher summary (2017-2021)



3.3 Advanced Higher

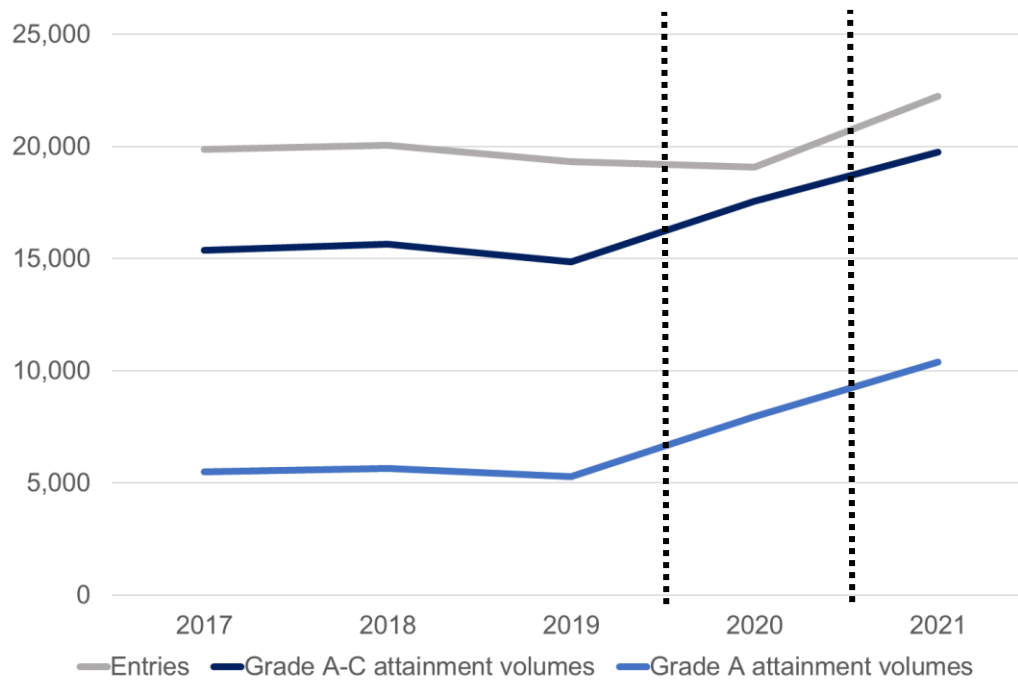
- There were **22,246** entries at Advanced **Higher level** in 2021 (+3,159 from 2020)
- Entries at Advanced Higher in 2021 at 22,246, are higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2020 (Table 15).
- Similar to the national picture, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) increased in 2020 over previous historical rates to 88.8%. In 2021, the A-C attainment rate has decreased on 2020, but remains higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2019 (Chart 9).
- Similar to Higher, whilst the A-C attainment rate decreased between 2020 and 2021 for Advanced Higher, the increase in entries in 2021 means that the total volume of A-C grades at 19,753 are higher than any year in the period 2017 to 2021.
- A attainment rates increased in 2021 on 2020, and on historical attainment rates.

- With an increase in entries, there has been a corresponding increase in overall A attainment volumes this year. Similar to National 5 and Higher, this year the number of A grades attained for Advanced Higher, at 10,399, are at a high in the period considered.

Table 15. EA Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	19,873	20,054	19,319	19,087	22,246
Grade A-C attainment volumes	15,376	15,652	14,847	17,552	19,753
Grade A-C attainment rate	77.4%	78.0%	76.9%	92.0%	88.8%
Grade A attainment volumes	5,489	5,663	5,278	7,965	10,399
Grade A attainment rate	27.6%	28.2%	27.3%	41.7%	46.7%

Chart 9. Education Authority Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)



4 Independent Schools

Note that 2017-2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches. The above should be considered throughout this publication, where differences between years are presented and described for context.

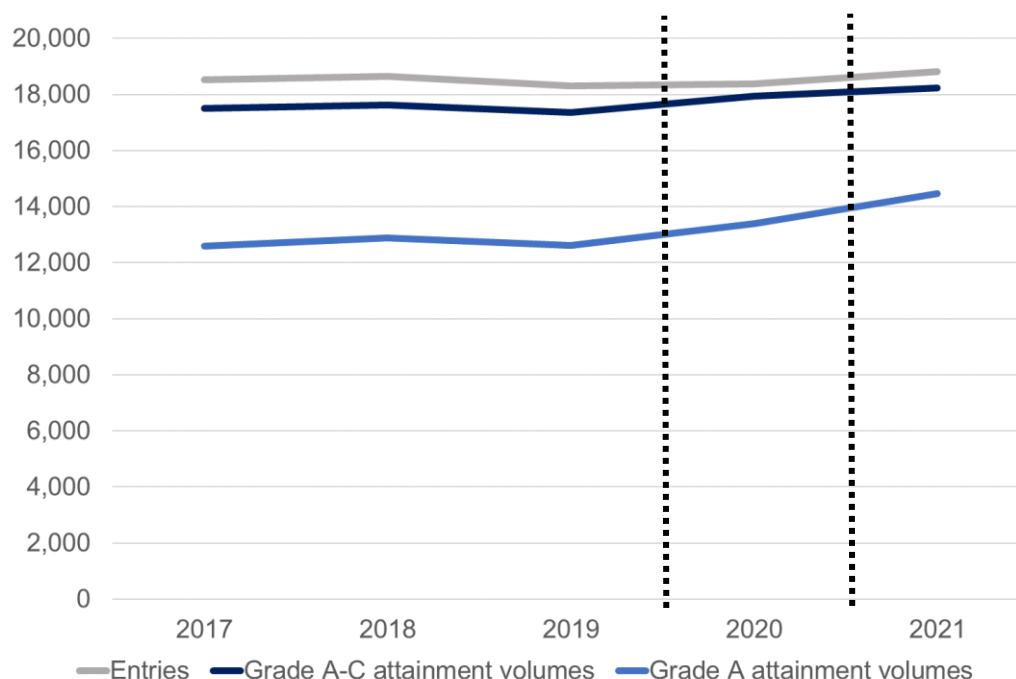
4.1 National 5

- There were **18,822** entries at **National 5 level** in 2021 (+453 from 2020)
- This year, entries have increased on 2020 and remain above recent historical levels (Table 16).
- In line with the national picture, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) showed a decrease on 2020 and attainment of A results as a percentage of total entries (A attainment rate) showed an increase over previous years. Attainment rates have historically been higher than seen at the national level. Similar to the national picture, both remain high in 2021 compared to recent levels (Chart 10).
- Similar to the national picture, attainment volumes at grade A are up on 2020 as well on each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- Unlike the national picture, despite a decrease in the A-C attainment rate on 2020, total National 5 attainment volumes at A-C are up on 2020.

Table 16. EA National 5 summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	18,516	18,655	18,300	18,369	18,822
Grade A-C attainment volumes	17,505	17,620	17,349	17,954	18,223
Grade A-C attainment rate	94.5%	94.5%	94.8%	97.7%	96.8%
Grade A attainment volumes	12,604	12,878	12,617	13,395	14,467
Grade A attainment rate	68.1%	69.0%	68.9%	72.9%	76.9%

Chart 10. Independent National 5 summary (2017-2021)



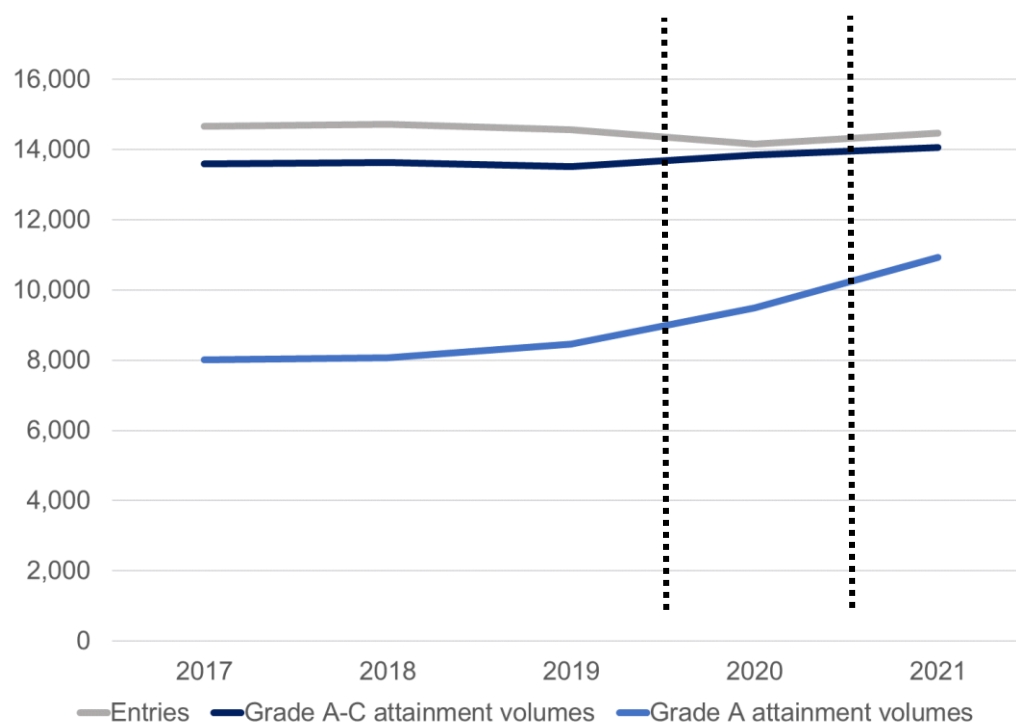
4.2 Higher

- Unlike the national picture, entries at Higher level for Independent Schools have not seen a consistent year on year decline from 2016, reaching a low in 2019. Entries in 2020 were a four year low in the period considered and entries in 2021 remain below 2017-2019 levels (Table 17).
- Unlike the national picture, attainment of A-C as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) had been between 92-93% between 2017-2019. Like the national picture, the A-C attainment rate increased in 2020 over prior historical rates. In that year, the A-C attainment rate increased to 97.7% from 92.8% in 2019. Like the national picture, in 2021 the attainment rate decreased on 2020. At 97.2%, this remains higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- Like the national picture, whilst the A-C attainment rate for Higher fell between 2020 and 2021, the increase in entries this year means that total volumes of A-C grades in 2021, at 14,058, are higher than A-C volumes in 2020 and in each year in the period 2017 to 2019 (Chart 11).
- Like the national picture, with an increase in entries and an increase in the A attainment rate this year, the number of A results at Higher are also at a high.

Table 17. Independent Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	14,673	14,716	14,574	14,164	14,464
Grade A-C attainment volumes	13,589	13,629	13,520	13,845	14,058
Grade A-C attainment rate	92.6%	92.6%	92.8%	97.7%	97.2%
Grade A attainment volumes	8,004	8,064	8,470	9,493	10,929
Grade A attainment rate	54.5%	54.8%	58.1%	67.0%	75.6%

Chart 11. Independent Higher summary (2017-2021)



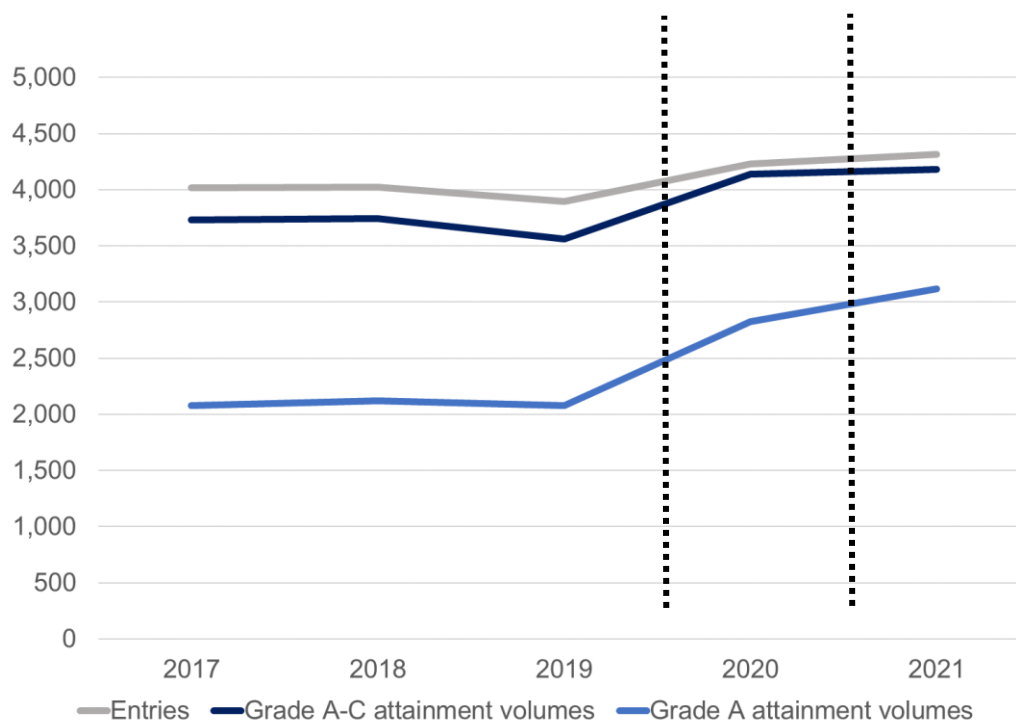
4.3 Advanced Higher

- Entries at Advanced Higher in 2021 are higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2020 (Table 18).
- Similar to the national picture, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) increased in 2020 over previous historical rates to 97.9%. In 2021, the A-C attainment rate has decreased on 2020, but remains higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- Similar to the national picture, whilst the A-C attainment rate decreased between 2020 and 2021 for Advanced Higher, the increase in entries in 2021 means that the volume of A-C grades at 4,184 are higher than any year in the period 2017 to 2021 (Chart 12).
- Similar to the national picture, A attainment rates increased in 2021 on 2020, and on historical attainment rates. With an increase in entries, there has been a corresponding increase in overall A attainment volumes this year. Like National 5 and Higher, the number of A grades attained, at 3,120, are at a high.

Table 18. EA Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	4,017	4,024	3,893	4,231	4,316
Grade A-C attainment volumes	3,730	3,745	3,562	4,141	4,184
Grade A-C attainment rate	92.9%	93.1%	91.5%	97.9%	96.9%
Grade A attainment volumes	2,080	2,123	2,076	2,827	3,120
Grade A attainment rate	51.8%	52.8%	53.3%	66.8%	72.3%

Chart 12. Independent Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)



5 Colleges

Note that 2017-2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches. The above should be considered throughout this publication, where differences between years are presented and described for context.

Due to the small numbers entering for Advanced Higher at College, the attainment rate has been more variable historically.

5.1 National 5

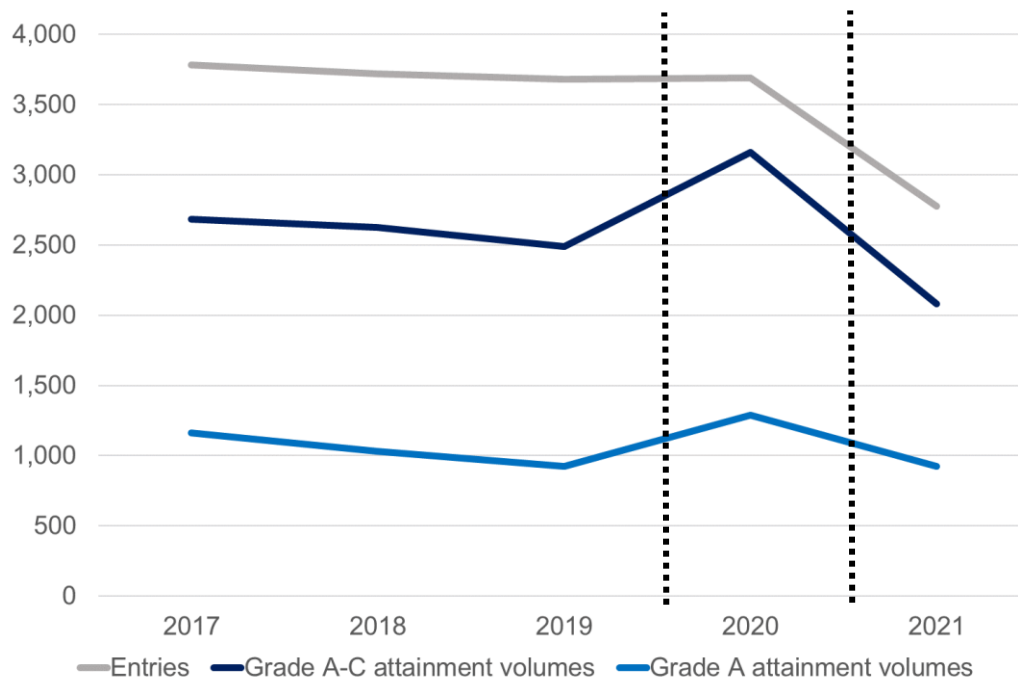
- There were **2,778** entries at **National 5 level** in 2021 (-911 from 2020)
- College National 5 entries decreased on 2020 but unlike the national picture, remain below recent historical levels.
- In line with the national picture, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) showed a decrease on 2020 (Table 19).
- Unlike the national picture, attainment of A results as a percentage of total entries (A attainment rate) showed a decrease on 2020.
- Similar to the national picture, both rates remain high in 2021 compared to recent historical levels.

- Like the national picture, with a decrease in entries and a decrease in the A-C attainment rate on 2020, total National 5 attainment volumes at A-C are down on 2020. Unlike the national picture, this level remains below recent historical years (Chart 13).
- Attainment volumes at grade A are down on 2020 as well on each year in the period 2017 to 2019.

Table 19. College National 5 summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	3,785	3,719	3,679	3,689	2,778
Grade A-C attainment volumes	2,685	2,626	2,488	3,161	2,080
Grade A-C attainment rate	70.9%	70.6%	67.6%	85.7%	74.9%
Grade A attainment volumes	1,161	1,032	926	1,289	922
Grade A attainment rate	30.7%	27.7%	25.2%	34.9%	33.2%

Chart 13. College National 5 summary (2017-2021)



5.2 Higher

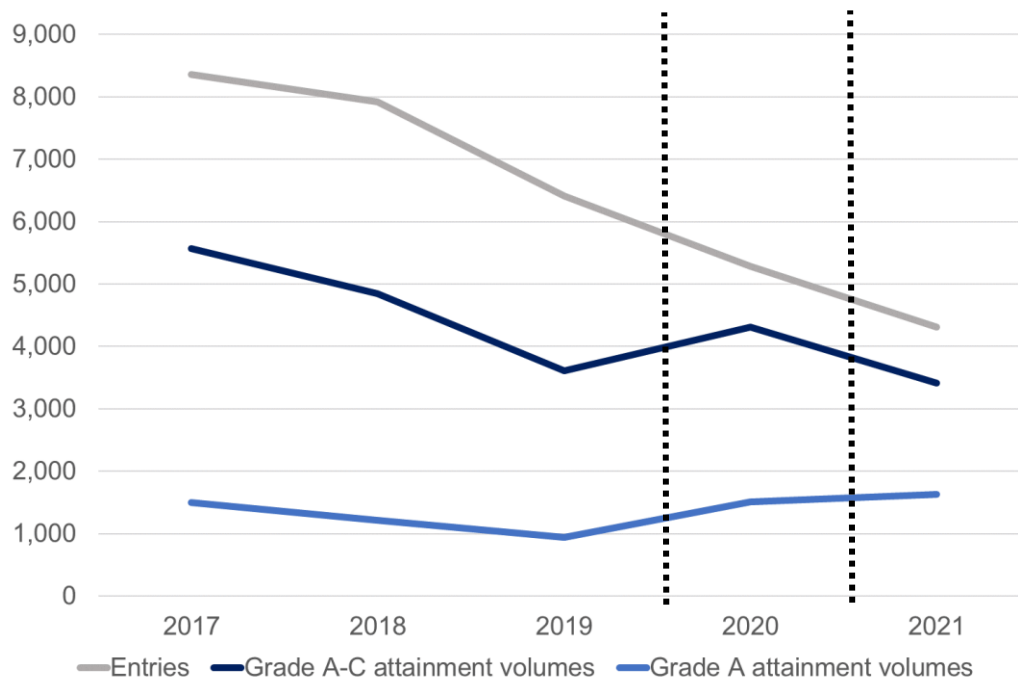
- There were **4,313** entries at **Higher level** in 2021 (-967 from 2020)
- Entries at Higher for colleges have seen a consistent year on year decline in the period considered (Table 20).
- Attainment of A-C as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) had been declining in recent years.

- Similar to the national picture, the A-C attainment rate increased in 2020 over prior historical rates. In that year, the A-C attainment rate increased to 81.7% from 56.3% in 2019.
- Similar to the national picture, in 2021 the attainment rate decreased on 2020 but, at 79.2%, remains higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2019.
- Similar to the national picture, the decrease in entries this year means that total volumes of A-C grades in 2021, at 3,416, are at a low in the period considered (Chart 14).
- Despite the decrease in entries, the increasing A attainment rate this year means the number of A grades at Higher are at a five year high at 1,626.

Table 20. College Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	8,359	7,916	6,411	5,280	4,313
Grade A-C attainment volumes	5,570	4,847	3,608	4,312	3,416
Grade A-C attainment rate	66.6%	61.2%	56.3%	81.7%	79.2%
Grade A attainment volumes	1,502	1,213	940	1,514	1,626
Grade A attainment rate	18.0%	15.3%	14.7%	28.7%	37.7%

Chart 14. College Higher summary (2017-2021)



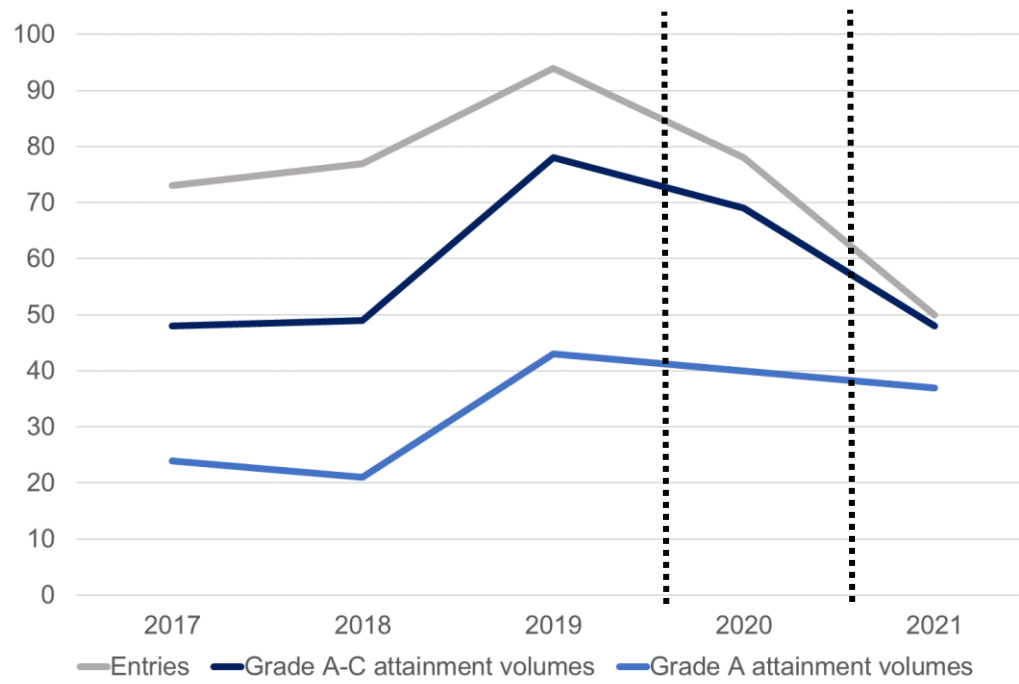
5.3 Advanced Higher

- There were **50** entries at Advanced **Higher level** in 2021 (-28 from 2020)
- Entries at Advanced Higher in 2021 at 50, are lower than each year in the period 2017 to 2020 (Table 21).
- Unlike the national picture, attainment of A-C results as a percentage of total entries (A-C attainment rate) increased in 2021 over 2020 and previous historical rates to 96.0%.
- Despite this, the decrease in entries in 2021 means that the total volume of A-C grades at 4,184 is low.
- Like the national picture, A attainment rates increased in 2021 on 2020, and on historical attainment rates.
- Unlike the national picture, the peak of volumes of A-C and A College results was in 2019 (Chart 15).

Table 21. College Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	73	77	94	78	50
Grade A-C attainment volumes	48	49	78	69	48
Grade A-C attainment rate	65.8%	63.6%	83.0%	88.5%	96.0%
Grade A attainment volumes	24	21	43	40	37
Grade A attainment rate	32.9%	27.3%	45.7%	51.3%	74.0%

Chart 15. College Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)



6 Other

Note that 2017-2019 entry and attainment figures are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches. The above should be considered throughout this publication, where differences between years are presented and described for context.

Due to the small numbers entering for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher through Other centres, the attainment rate has been more variable historically.

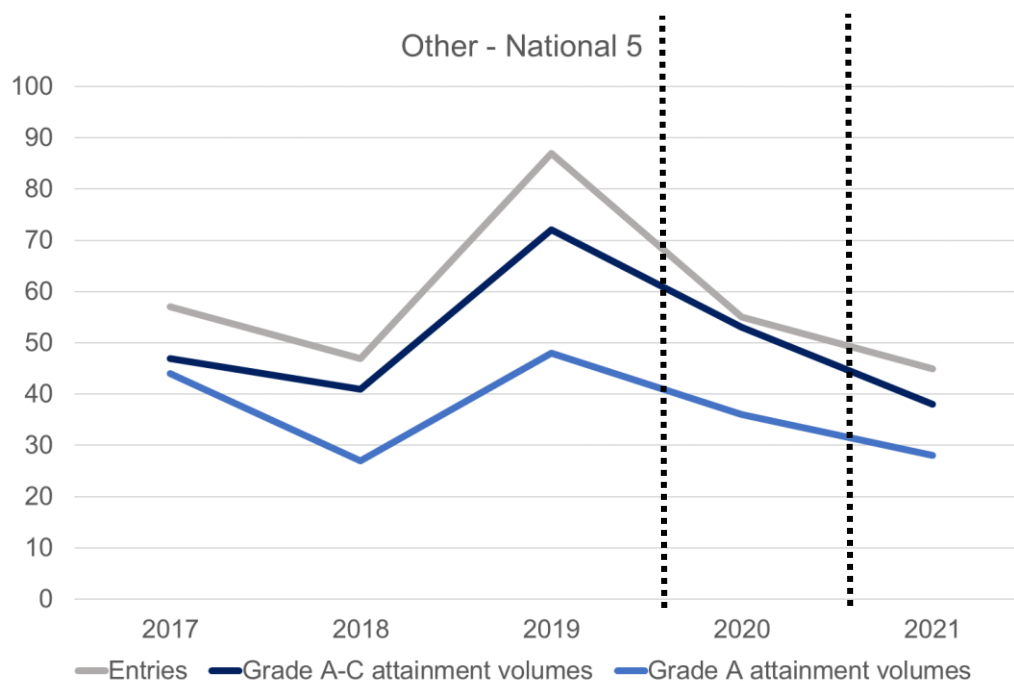
6.1 National 5

- There were **45** entries at **National 5 level** in 2021 (-10 from 2020)
- Due to the small numbers taking National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher through Other centres, the attainment rate is more variable (Table 22).
- Attainment volumes at grade A-C are down on 2020 as well as the wider period considered (Chart 16).
- Attainment volumes at grade A are down on 2020 but do not reflect the lowest volume in the period considered.

Table 22. Other National 5 summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	57	47	87	55	45
Grade A-C attainment volumes	47	41	72	53	38
Grade A-C attainment rate	82.5%	87.2%	82.8%	96.4%	84.4%
Grade A attainment volumes	44	27	48	36	28
Grade A attainment rate	77.2%	57.4%	55.2%	65.5%	62.2%

Chart 16. Other National 5 summary (2017-2021)



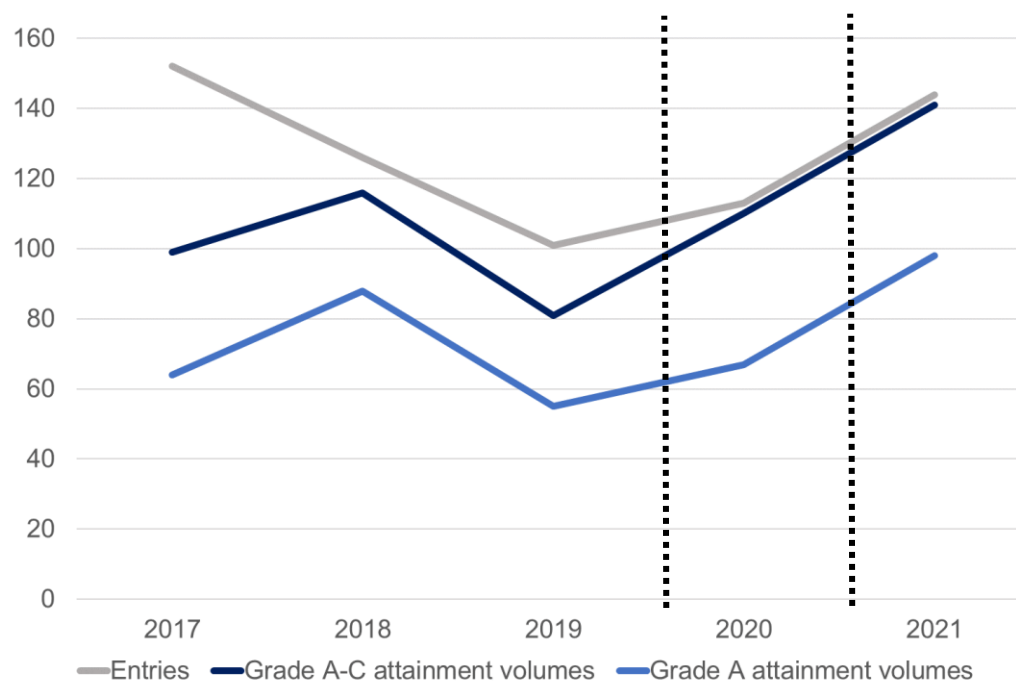
6.2 Higher

- There were **144** entries at **Higher level** in 2021 (+31 from 2020)
- Entries are higher than 2020 but remain below 2017 (Table 23)
- The A-C attainment rate increased on 2020 (from 97.3% to 97.9%)
- The A attainment rate increased on 2020 (from 59.3% to 68.1%)
- Attainment volumes at A-C are higher than the period considered (Chart 17)
- Attainment volumes at A are higher than the period considered

Table 23. Other Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	152	126	101	113	144
Grade A-C attainment volumes	99	116	81	110	141
Grade A-C attainment rate	65.1%	92.1%	80.2%	97.3%	97.9%
Grade A attainment volumes	64	88	55	67	98
Grade A attainment rate	42.1%	69.8%	54.5%	59.3%	68.1%

Chart 17. Other Higher summary (2017-2021)



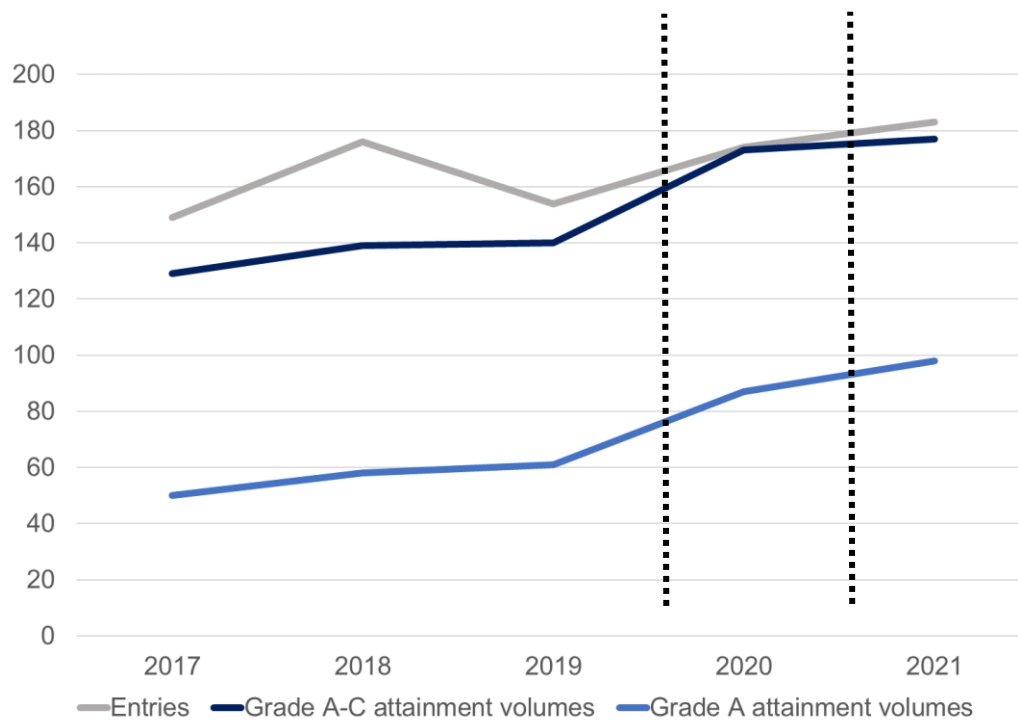
6.3 Advanced Higher

- There were **183** entries at Advanced **Higher level** in 2021 (+9 from 2020)
- Entries at Advanced Higher in 2021 are higher than each year in the period 2017 to 2020 (Table 24).
- The A-C attainment rate decreased on 2020 (from 99.4% to 96.7%)
- The A attainment rate increased on 2020 (from 50.0% to 53.6%)
- Attainment volumes at A-C are higher than the period considered (Chart 18)
- Attainment volumes at A are higher than the period considered

Table 24. Other Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Entries	149	176	154	174	183
Grade A-C attainment volumes	129	139	140	173	177
Grade A-C attainment rate	86.6%	79.0%	90.9%	99.4%	96.7%
Grade A attainment volumes	50	58	61	87	98
Grade A attainment rate	33.6%	33.0%	39.6%	50.0%	53.6%

Chart 18. Other Advanced Higher summary (2017-2021)



7 Additional links

[SQA Official Statistics documentation](#)

[SQA Methodology for Attainment Statistics \(August\)](#)

[SQA Statistics Publication Schedule](#)

[SQA Statistics](#) – current year

[SQA Statistics - archive](#)

[SQA Information](#) – current year

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[SQA Statistics Revisions and Correction Policy](#)