



Provisional Attainment Statistics — August 2023

Official Statistics

Published: 8 August 2023

Lead analyst: Ryan MacGregor

Contact: data.analytics@sqa.org.uk

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ
Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, EH22 1FD

www.sqa.org.uk

The information in this publication may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications. If it is reproduced, SQA should be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be used for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from SQA. It must not be reproduced for trade or commercial purposes.

© *Scottish Qualifications Authority*

This document can be produced, on request, in alternative formats, including large type, Braille and numerous community languages. For further details telephone SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000.

SQA is committed to using plain English. We will try to make our publications as easy and straightforward to understand as we can, and will try to avoid all unnecessary jargon. If there's any language in this document that you feel is hard to understand, or could be improved, please write to Editor, Editorial Team, at the Glasgow address or email: editor@sqa.org.uk.

Contents

1	Attainment statistics	1
2	Qualifications included	2
3	Headline figures	4
3.1	National 5	4
3.2	Higher	4
3.3	Advanced Higher	4
3.4	Scottish Baccalaureate	4
3.5	National 2 to National 4	4
3.6	Skills for Work	4
4	Entries in Graded National Qualifications	5
4.1	By qualification level	5
4.2	Subject breakdown	6
4.2.1	National 5	6
4.2.2	Higher	8
4.2.3	Advanced Higher	10
4.3	Sex breakdown	11
4.4	Centre type breakdown	12
5	Attainment in Graded National Qualifications	13
5.1	By qualification level	13
5.1.1	National 5	14
5.1.2	Higher	14
5.1.3	Advanced Higher	14
5.2	Subject breakdown	15
5.2.1	National 5	15
5.2.2	Higher	17
5.2.3	Advanced Higher	19
5.3	Sex breakdown	22
5.3.1	National 5	22
5.3.2	Higher	23
5.3.3	Advanced Higher	23
5.4	Centre type breakdown	24
5.4.1	National 5	24
5.4.2	Higher	25
5.4.3	Advanced Higher	26
6	Scottish Baccalaureate	27
7	Ungraded National Courses	28
7.1	National 2	28
7.2	National 3	28
7.3	National 4	28
8	Skills for Work	30
9	Awards, National Certificates and National Progression Awards	31
10	Background information	32

1 Attainment statistics

Provisional Attainment Statistics — August 2023 presents a summary of entries and attainment on results day in August. This reflects information at a particular point in time (26 July 2023) and the figures are subject to change later in the year. Provisional Attainment Statistics — August 2023 are therefore considered 'provisional' subject to processes including appeals and late amendments.

In this release, attainment statistics for 2023 are generally presented with reference to attainment in the previous year (2022) and to 2019 (the most recent year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). The different awarding arrangements for graded National Courses in each year between 2019 and 2023 mean that it is not possible to compare attainment between years without full consideration of the essential contextual information outlined in the background information section.

2 Qualifications included

The types of qualification covered in this release are described in Table 1.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has 12 levels, which, in ascending order (SCQF levels 1–12) indicate the level of difficulty of a particular qualification. The SCQF allows for broad comparisons to be made between qualifications to allow candidates, employers, and the public to understand the range of skills and learning that should be achieved at each level. [More information can be found on the SCQF website.](#)

Table 1: Types of qualification covered in this release.

Qualification	Description
National 5 courses (SCQF level 5)	National 5 courses are notionally based on 160 hours of directed learning and 80 hours of self-directed learning and equate to 24 SCQF credit points.
Higher courses (SCQF level 6)	Higher courses are notionally based on 160 hours of directed learning and 80 hours of self-directed learning and equate to 24 SCQF credit points.
Advanced Higher courses (SCQF level 7)	Advanced Higher courses are notionally based on 160 hours of directed learning and 160 hours of self-directed learning and equate to 32 SCQF credit points.
Scottish Baccalaureate (SCQF level 7)	The Scottish Baccalaureate is available in four subject areas (Science, Languages, Social Sciences and Expressive Arts) and consists of a coherent group of Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications, and an Interdisciplinary Project. The Scottish Baccalaureate is notionally based on 1040 hours of learning and equates to 104 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7.
National 2 (SCQF level 2)	National 2 courses were introduced in 2014. National 2 courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units in a particular subject and are notionally based on 180 hours of learning and equate to 18 SCQF credit points.
National 3 (SCQF level 3)	National 3 courses were introduced in 2014. National 3 courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units in a particular subject and are notionally based on 180 hours of learning and equate to 18 SCQF credit points.
National 4 (SCQF level 4)	National 4 courses were introduced in 2014. National 4 courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units, including an Added Value unit in a particular subject, and is notionally based on 240 hours of learning and equates to 24 SCQF credit points.
Skills for Work (SCQF levels 3–6)	Skills for Work courses are available across SCQF levels 3 to 6. Skills for Work courses involve a strong element of learning through involvement in practical activities which are directly related to a particular vocational area, and they develop knowledge and skills that

are important to employment. The courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units in a particular subject.

Awards
(SCQF levels 1–6)

SQA Awards recognise the life and work skills that candidates gain from activities they might already be taking part in at school, at college or elsewhere, such as sport, mentoring, voluntary work, or fund-raising activities. In common with some other qualifications in SQA's portfolio they have been designed to recognise wider achievement. Awards require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units in a particular subject.

National Certificates
(SCQF levels 3–6)

National Certificates are primarily aimed at 16- to 18-year-old candidates and adults in education, normally at a college. They offer candidates a full-time programme of vocational study. National Certificates require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units in a particular subject.

National Progression
Awards
(SCQF levels 2–6)

National Progression Awards are designed to develop and assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas. They are linked to National Occupational Standards — the basis of Scottish Vocational Qualifications. National Progression Awards require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units in a particular subject.

3 Headline figures

3.1 National 5

- ◆ Entries were 321,360 in 2023 — an increase of 3.6% from 310,170 in 2022.
- ◆ A to C attainment was 78.8% (80.8% in 2022; 85.8% in 2021; 89.0% in 2020; 78.2% in 2019).
- ◆ A attainment was 38.6% (40.3% in 2022; 46.7% in 2021; 42.3% in 2020; 35.1% in 2019).

3.2 Higher

- ◆ Entries were 191,810 in 2023 — an increase of 1.9% from 188,220 in 2022.
- ◆ A to C attainment was 77.1% (78.9% in 2022; 87.3% in 2021; 89.3% in 2020; 74.8% in 2019).
- ◆ A attainment was 32.8% (34.8% in 2022; 47.6% in 2021; 40.0% in 2020; 28.3% in 2019).

3.3 Advanced Higher

- ◆ Entries were 27,750 in 2023 — a decrease of 1.7% from 28,220 in 2022.
- ◆ A to C attainment was 79.8% (81.3% in 2022; 90.2% in 2021; 93.1% in 2020; 79.4% in 2019).
- ◆ A attainment was 33.0% (33.7% in 2022; 51.0% in 2021; 46.3% in 2020; 31.8% in 2019).

3.4 Scottish Baccalaureate

- ◆ Entries were 175, with a total attainment rate of 75.7% (72.2% in 2022; 91.4% in 2021; 86.2% in 2020; 69.4% in 2019).

3.5 National 2 to National 4

- ◆ National 2 entries were 3,030, with an attainment rate of 69.2% (72.5% in 2022; 68.9% in 2021; 75.5% in 2020; 77.1% in 2019).
- ◆ National 3 entries were 22,480, with an attainment rate of 84.2% (84.9% in 2022; 86.1% in 2021; 91.5% in 2020; 87.9% in 2019).
- ◆ National 4 entries were 138,670, with an attainment rate of 87.8% (86.1% in 2022; 86.1% in 2021; 91.0% in 2020; 88.5% in 2019).

3.6 Skills for Work

- ◆ Total entries across all SCQF levels were 16,515, with an attainment rate of 80.6% (78.7% in 2022; 76.8% in 2021; 84.3% in 2020; 80.9% in 2019).

4 Entries in Graded National Qualifications

4.1 By qualification level

Entries for National 5 have increased to their five year high, increasing from 310,170 in 2022 to 321,360 in 2023. Before decreasing in 2021 to 297,975, entries increased from 288,950 in 2019 to 300,640 in 2020.

Entries for Higher increased between 2019 and 2021 from 185,915 to 186,215 to 194,600, a five-year high. Entries decreased in 2022 to 188,220, before continuing the upward trend to 191,230 in 2023.

Unlike National 5 and Higher, Advanced Higher entries have decreased in 2023 (27,750) from 2022 (28,220). Even with this decrease, entries have increased on 23,460 in 2019, 23,570 in 2020 and 26,795 in 2021.

Entries have increased for National 5 and Higher in 2023 from 2022 but decreased for Advanced Higher.

Figure 1: Entries for National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher from 2019 to 2023.

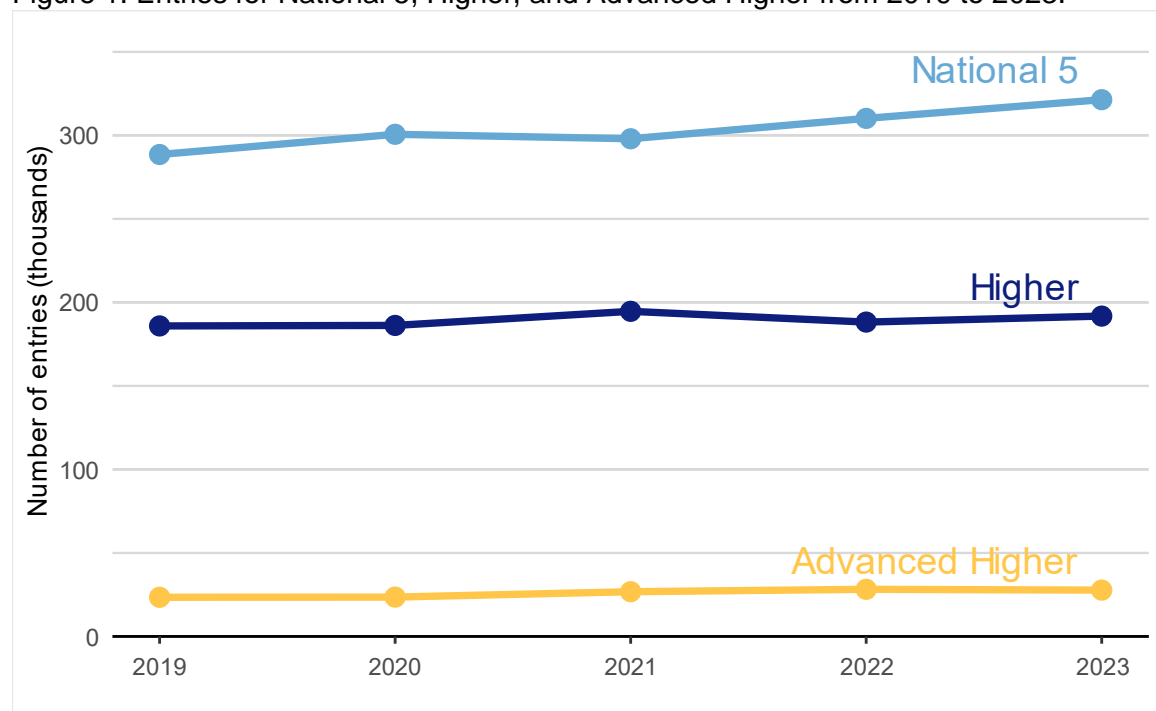


Table 2: Entries for National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher from 2019 to 2023.

Level	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
National 5	288,550	300,640	297,975	310,170	321,360
Higher	185,915	186,215	194,660	188,220	191,810
Advanced Higher	23,460	23,570	26,795	28,220	27,750

4.2 Subject breakdown

4.2.1 National 5

Of the nine most popular (largest entry) National 5 subjects in 2023, entries to Chemistry and Mathematics decreased while entries increased in the other seven most popular National 5 subjects, compared to 2022.

Figure 2: Entries in the nine most popular (largest entry) National 5 subjects from 2019 to 2023.

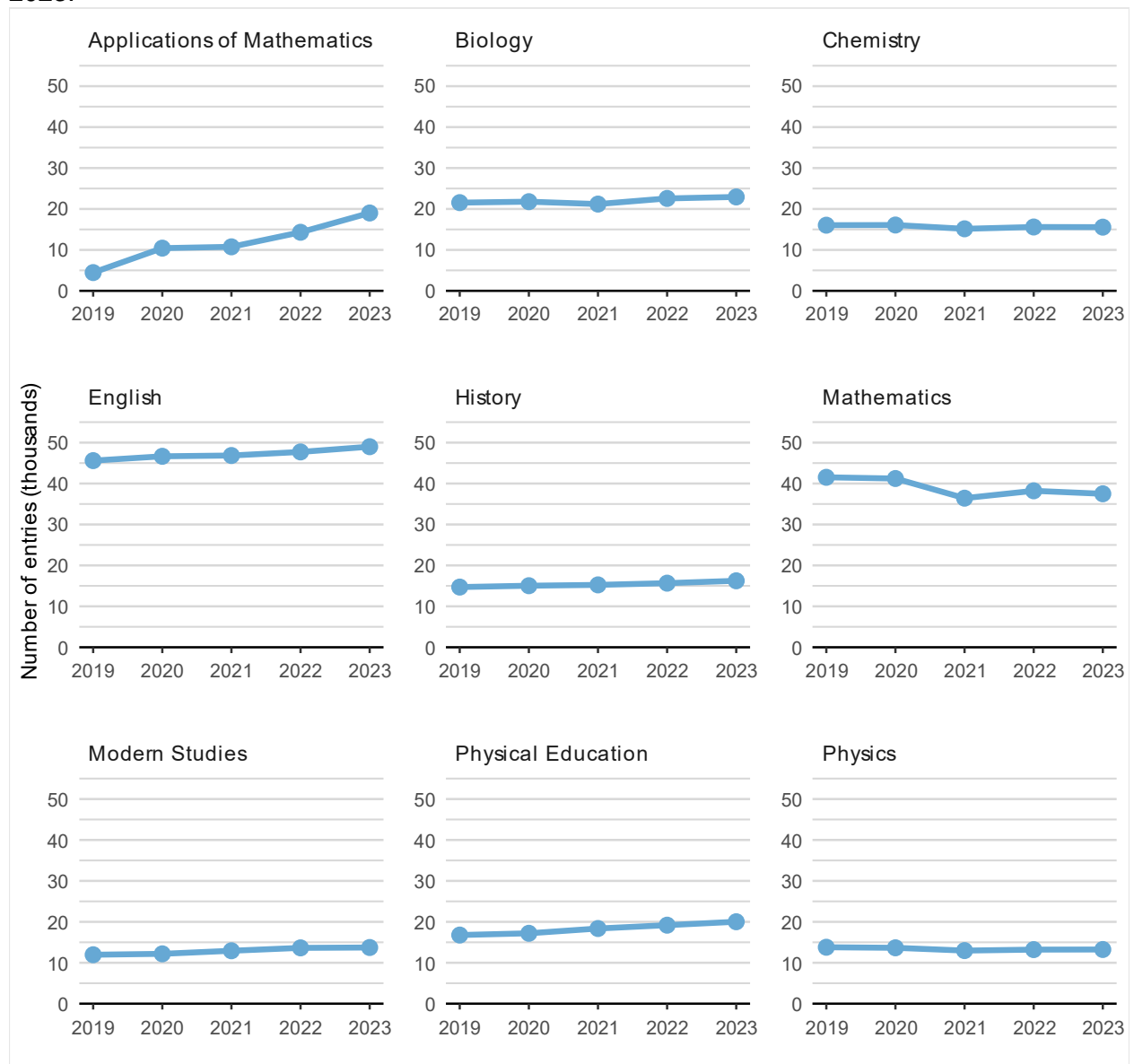


Table 3: Entries in the nine most popular (largest entry) National 5 subjects from 2019 to 2023.

Subject	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Applications of Mathematics	4,460	10,430	10,750	14,305	19,020
Biology	21,550	21,785	21,195	22,575	22,935
Chemistry	16,035	16,080	15,155	15,595	15,560
English	45,595	46,655	46,850	47,720	49,000
History	14,705	15,035	15,240	15,660	16,235
Mathematics	41,525	41,225	36,425	38,225	37,495
Modern Studies	11,960	12,185	12,930	13,635	13,725
Physical Education	16,770	17,195	18,365	19,180	20,020
Physics	13,790	13,655	12,975	13,210	13,235

4.2.2 Higher

Of the nine most popular (largest entry) Higher subjects in 2023, entries to Business Management, Physical Education and Physics decreased while entries increased in the other six most popular Higher subjects, compared to 2022.

Figure 3: Entries in the nine most popular (largest entry) Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.

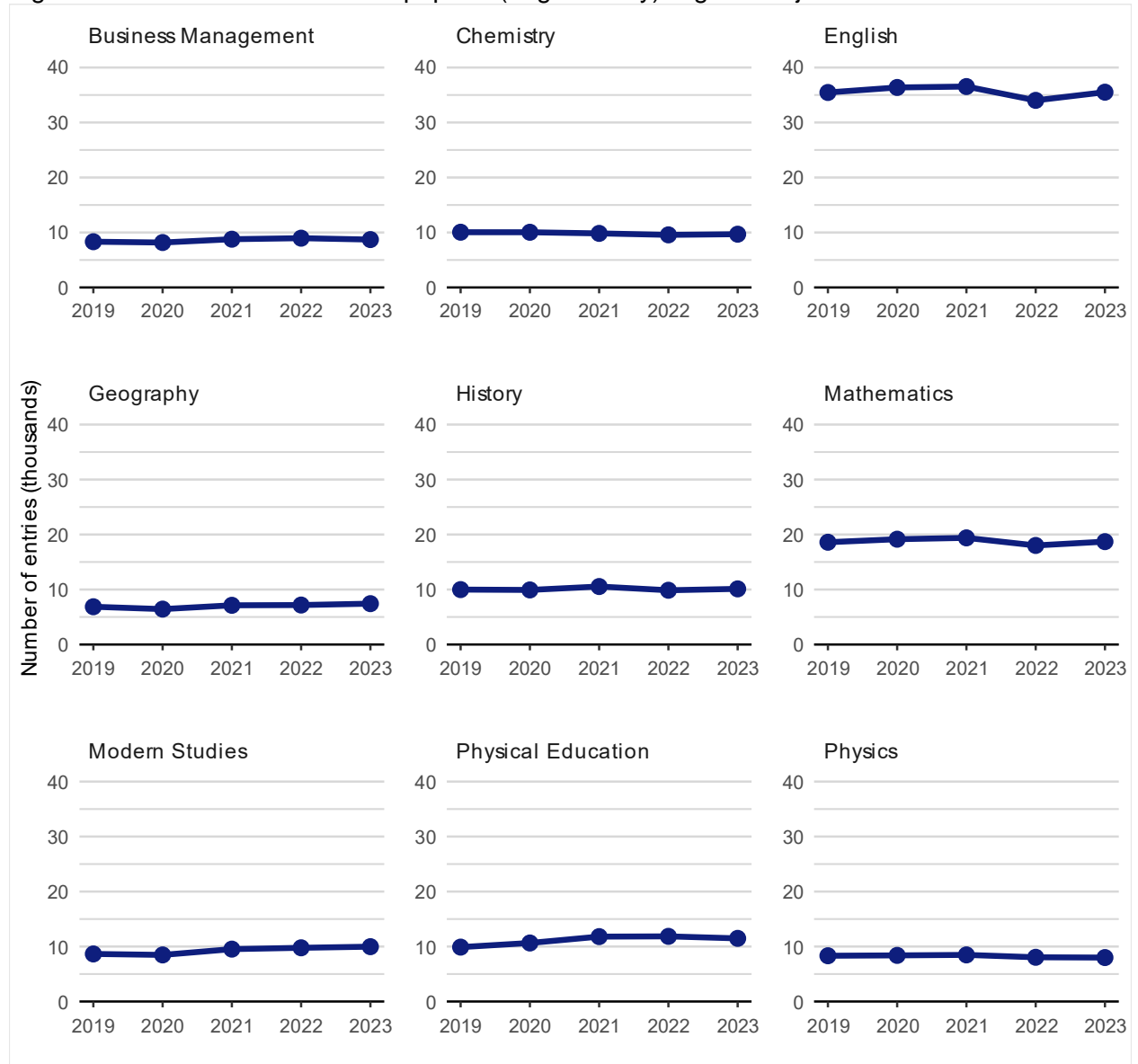


Table 4: Entries in the nine most popular (largest entry) Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.

Subject	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Business Management	8,320	8,170	8,775	8,960	8,710
Chemistry	10,045	10,040	9,835	9,565	9,685
English	35,460	36,370	36,535	34,025	35,515
Geography	6,865	6,435	7,130	7,175	7,425
History	9,985	9,920	10,540	9,865	10,115
Mathematics	18,595	19,145	19,390	18,010	18,705
Modern Studies	8,655	8,475	9,530	9,770	9,975
Physical Education	9,895	10,645	11,805	11,850	11,485
Physics	8,325	8,390	8,480	8,045	7,995

4.2.3 Advanced Higher

Of the nine most popular (largest entry) Advanced Higher subjects in 2023, entries to Chemistry, Mathematics and Music increased while entries decreased in the other six most popular Advanced Higher subjects, compared to 2022.

Figure 4: Entries in the nine most popular (largest entry) Advanced Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.

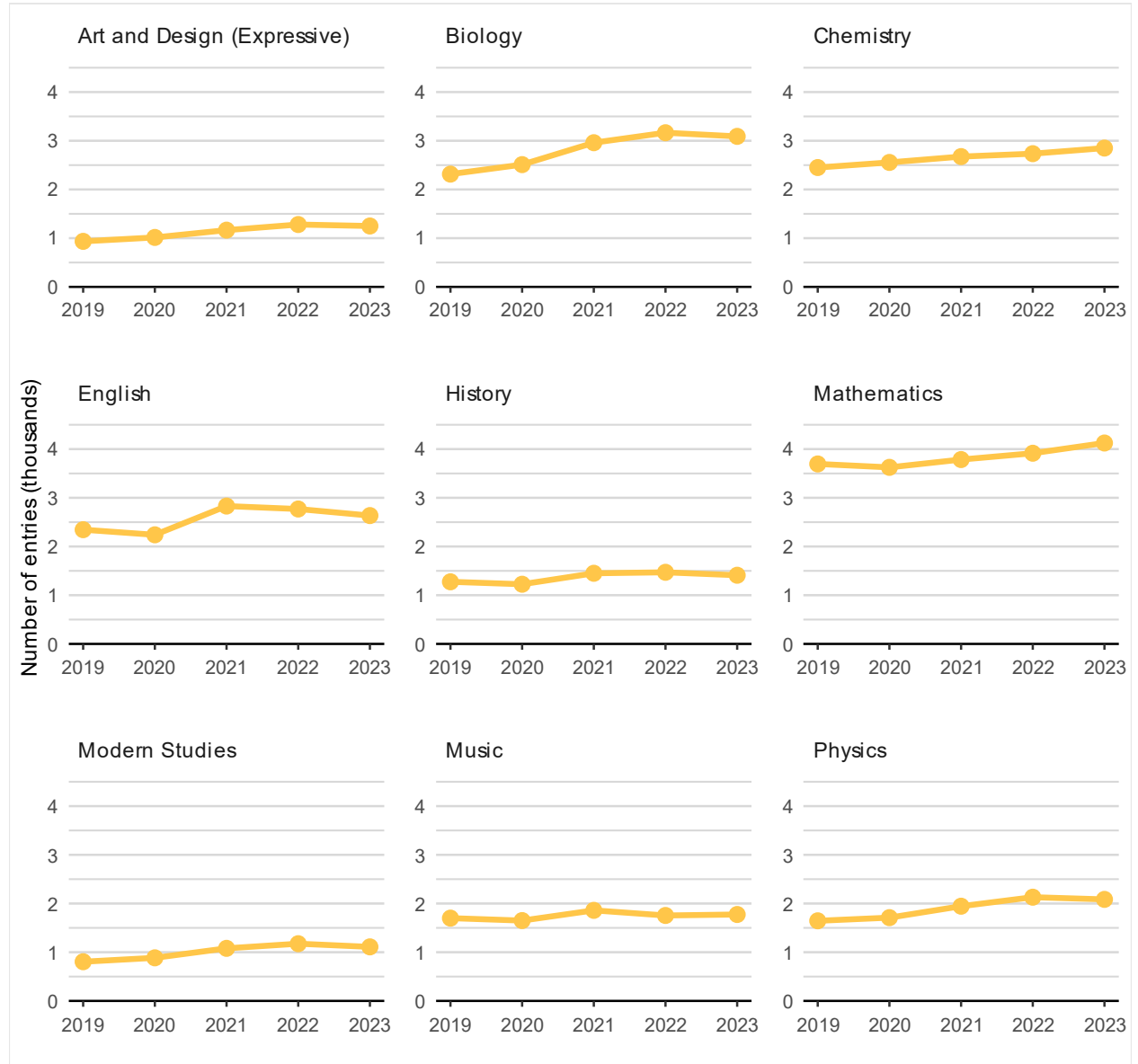


Table 5: Entries in the nine most popular (largest entry) Advanced Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.

Subject	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Art and Design (Expressive)	935	1,015	1,165	1,280	1,250
Biology	2,315	2,510	2,960	3,165	3,090
Chemistry	2,450	2,555	2,675	2,735	2,850
English	2,345	2,240	2,830	2,770	2,635
History	1,275	1,225	1,450	1,470	1,410
Mathematics	3,695	3,625	3,785	3,915	4,125
Modern Studies	805	885	1,080	1,175	1,110
Music	1,700	1,650	1,860	1,755	1,775
Physics	1,645	1,710	1,945	2,130	2,085

4.3 Sex breakdown

At National 5, there were 160,140 male candidate entries in 2023 (an increase of 3.5% from 154,695 in 2022). There were 161,140 female candidate entries in 2023 (an increase of 3.7% from 155,400 in 2022; Table 6).

At Higher, there were 88,710 male candidate entries in 2023 (an increase of 2.0% from 87,010 in 2022). There were 103,025 female candidate entries in 2023 (an increase of 1.9% from 101,120 in 2022; Table 6).

At Advanced Higher, there were 12,400 male candidate entries in 2023 (a decrease of 1.9% from 12,645 in 2022). There were 15,330 female candidate entries in 2023 (a decrease of 1.5% from 15,570 in 2022; Table 6).

Table 6: Entries by sex in graded National Qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Level	Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
National 5	Female	148,565	153,710	150,205	155,400	161,140
National 5	Male	139,990	146,915	147,690	154,695	160,140
Higher	Female	104,020	103,830	106,665	101,120	103,025
Higher	Male	81,890	82,380	87,980	87,010	88,710
Advanced Higher	Female	13,175	13,210	15,160	15,570	15,330
Advanced Higher	Male	10,285	10,360	11,635	12,645	12,400

4.4 Centre type breakdown

The majority of entries in graded National Qualifications were from education authority centres historically, and the same is true in 2023. The number of entries to National Qualifications across different centre types can be impacted by a range of factors.

At National 5, there were 299,710 entries for education authority centres in 2023 (an increase of 3.8% from 288,785 in 2022). There were 19,180 entries for independent centres in 2023 (an increase of 0.9% from 19,015 in 2022). There were 2,410 entries for FE colleges in 2023 (an increase of 3.7% from 2,325 in 2022).

At Higher, there were 173,520 entries for education authority centres in 2023 (an increase of 2.1% from 170,020 in 2022). There were 14,845 entries for independent centres in 2023 (an increase of 1.8% from 14,585 in 2022). There were 3,275 entries for FE colleges in 2023 (a decrease of 5.9% from 3,480 in 2022).

At Advanced Higher, there were 22,810 entries for education authority centres in 2023 (a decrease of 2.6% from 23,430 in 2022). There were 4,690 entries for independent centres in 2023 (an increase of 3.1% from 4,550 in 2022). There were 85 entries for FE colleges in 2023 (an increase of 13.3% from 75 in 2022).

Table 7: Entries by centre type in graded National Qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Level	Centre type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
National 5	Education Authority	266,485	278,525	276,330	288,785	299,710
Higher	Education Authority	164,830	166,655	175,740	170,020	173,520
Advanced Higher	Education Authority	19,320	19,085	22,245	23,430	22,810
National 5	Independent	18,300	18,370	18,820	19,015	19,180
Higher	Independent	14,575	14,165	14,465	14,585	14,845
Advanced Higher	Independent	3,895	4,230	4,315	4,550	4,690
National 5	FE College	3,680	3,690	2,780	2,325	2,410
Higher	FE College	6,410	5,280	4,315	3,480	3,275
Advanced Higher	FE College	95	80	50	75	85

5 Attainment in Graded National Qualifications

There were no external assessments in 2020 and 2021 due to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternative approaches to assessment, relying on teacher judgement, were used in those two years, to award grades and allow learners to progress. All visualisations of attainment in this report indicate this period using grey background shading.

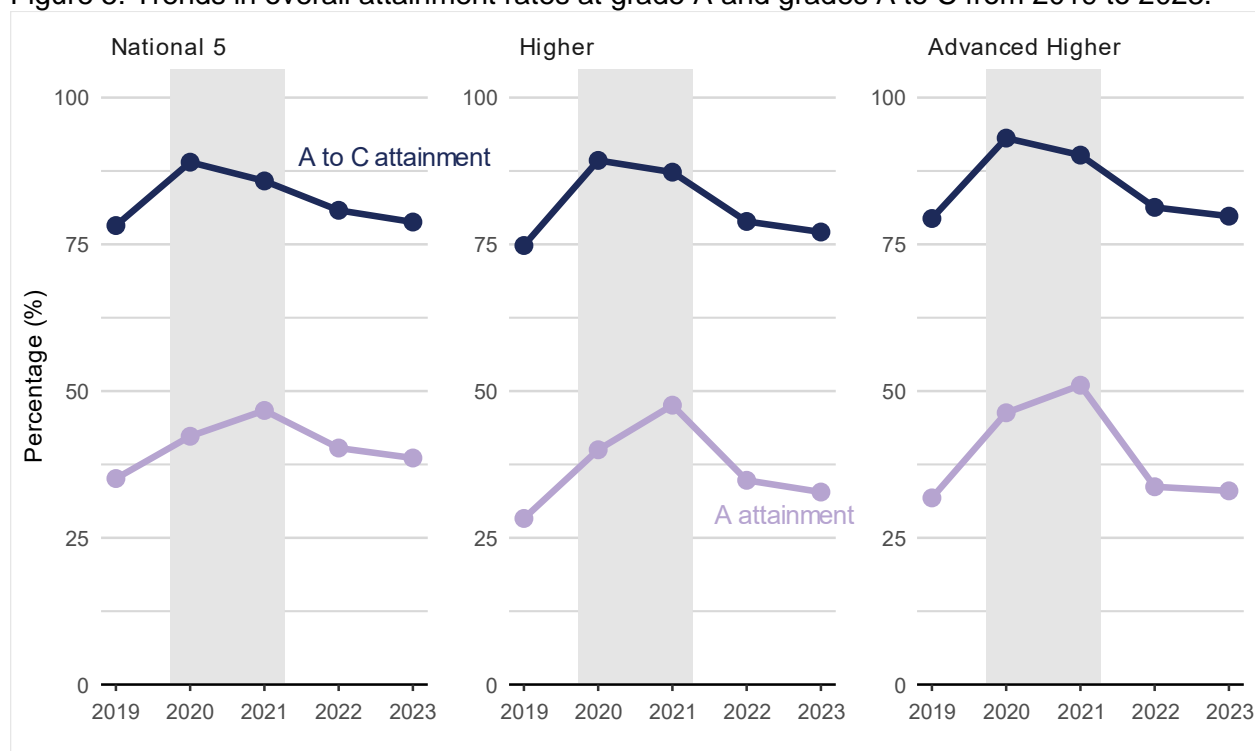
SQA external assessments returned in 2022, but assessment modifications were put in place with the aim of increasing learning and teaching time. These assessment modifications were retained for 2023. In this section, attainment statistics for 2023 are generally presented with reference to attainment in the previous year (2022) and to 2019 (the most recent year prior to the pandemic). The different awarding arrangements in place between 2019 and 2023 mean that it is not possible to compare attainment between years without full consideration of this essential contextual information.

The proportion of entries that achieved an A grade and the proportion of entries that achieved A to C grades are referred to as 'attainment rates' throughout this section.

5.1 By qualification level

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher attainment decreased in 2023 to levels between 2022 attainment and pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 5: Trends in overall attainment rates at grade A and grades A to C from 2019 to 2023.



Note: the period represented by the grey background shading indicates alternative approaches to assessment in 2020 and 2021.

Table 8: Summary of overall attainment rates from 2019 to 2023.

Level	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
National 5	A to C	78.2%	89.0%	85.8%	80.8%	78.8%
National 5	A	35.1%	42.3%	46.7%	40.3%	38.6%
Higher	A to C	74.8%	89.3%	87.3%	78.9%	77.1%
Higher	A	28.3%	40.0%	47.6%	34.8%	32.8%
Advanced Higher	A to C	79.4%	93.1%	90.2%	81.3%	79.8%
Advanced Higher	A	31.8%	46.3%	51.0%	33.7%	33.0%

5.1.1 National 5

The overall attainment rate at grades A to C for National 5 was 78.8% in 2023. This represents a decrease of 2.0 percentage points from 80.8% in 2022 and an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 78.2% in 2019.

The overall attainment rate at grade A was 38.6% in 2023. This represents a decrease of 1.7 percentage points from 40.3% in 2022 and an increase of 3.5 percentage points from 35.1% in 2019.

5.1.2 Higher

The overall attainment rate at grades A to C for Higher was 77.1% in 2023. This represents a decrease of 1.8 percentage points from 78.9% in 2022 and an increase of 2.3 percentage points from 74.8% in 2019.

The overall attainment rate at grade A was 32.8% in 2023. This represents a decrease of 2.0 percentage points from 34.8% in 2022 and an increase of 4.5 percentage points from 28.3% in 2019.

5.1.3 Advanced Higher

The overall attainment rate at grades A to C for Advanced Higher was 79.8% in 2023. This represents a decrease of 1.5 percentage points from 81.3% in 2022 and an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 79.4% in 2019.

The overall attainment rate at grade A was 33.0% in 2023. This represents a decrease of 0.7 percentage points from 33.7% in 2022 and an increase of 1.2 percentage points from 31.8% in 2019.

5.2 Subject breakdown

In this section, attainment is summarised for a selection of the most popular (largest entry) subjects at each level. Entries and attainment for the complete list of subjects is available in the data tables that accompany this release.

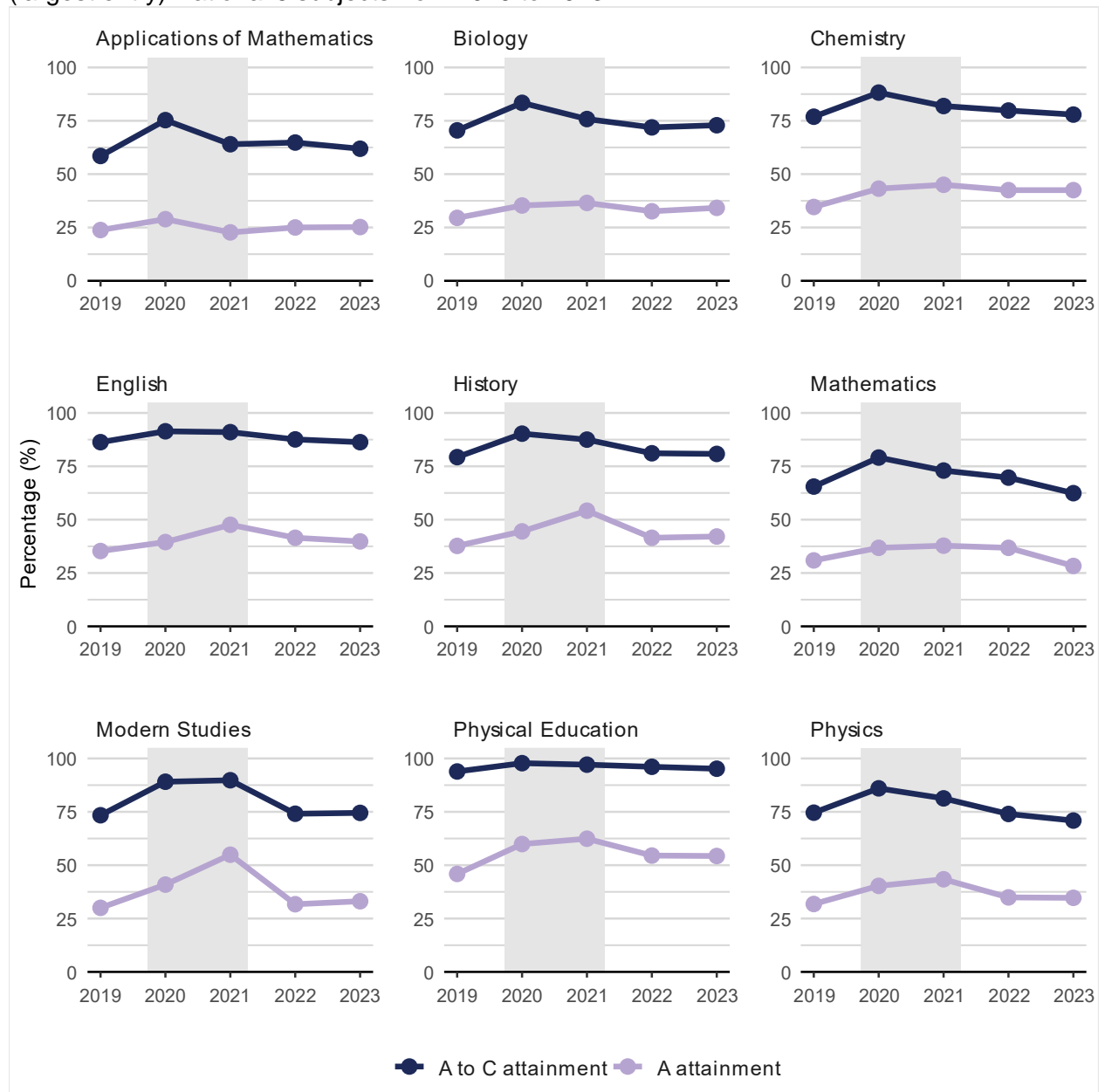
5.2.1 National 5

There were 37,495 entries for National 5 Mathematics in 2023 (a decrease of 1.9% from 38,225 in 2022). 62.4% of grades were A to C, a decrease of 7.3 percentage points from 69.7% in 2022 and a decrease of 3.1 percentage points from 65.5% in 2019. 28.3% of grades were A, a decrease of 8.5 percentage points from 36.8% in 2022 and a decrease of 2.6 percentage points from 30.9% in 2019.

There were 49,000 entries for National 5 English in 2023 (an increase of 2.7% from 47,720 in 2022). 86.3% of grades were A to C, a decrease of 1.3 percentage points from 87.6% in 2022, and no change in percentage points from 86.3% in 2019. 39.8% of grades were A, a decrease of 1.7 percentage points from 41.5% in 2022 and an increase of 4.5 percentage points from 35.3% in 2019.

For the other large uptake subjects including Applications of Mathematics, Chemistry, History, Physical Education, and Physics the A to C rate decreased from 2022, however Biology and Modern Studies have both seen an increase. Excluding Physics, all other subjects have seen an increase in the A to C rate from 2019. The A rate for Physical Education and Physics decreased from 2022. Applications of Mathematics, Biology, History, and Modern Studies have all seen an increase in the A rate from 2022. The A rate for Chemistry remained the same. All nine subjects have seen an increase in the A rate from 2019 (Figure 6; Table 9).

Figure 6: Trends in attainment at grade A and grades A to C for the nine most popular (largest entry) National 5 subjects from 2019 to 2023.



Note: the period represented by the grey background shading indicates that alternative approaches to assessment.

Table 9: Summary of attainment for selected National 5 subjects from 2019 to 2023.

Subject	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Applications of Mathematics	A to C	58.5%	75.3%	64.0%	64.8%	61.9%
Biology	A to C	70.5%	83.4%	75.8%	71.9%	72.9%
Chemistry	A to C	76.9%	88.2%	81.9%	79.8%	77.9%
English	A to C	86.3%	91.4%	91.0%	87.6%	86.3%
History	A to C	79.3%	90.3%	87.5%	81.1%	80.8%
Mathematics	A to C	65.5%	79.1%	73.0%	69.7%	62.4%
Modern Studies	A to C	73.4%	89.1%	89.8%	74.1%	74.5%
Physical Education	A to C	93.9%	97.8%	97.1%	96.1%	95.2%
Physics	A to C	74.6%	86.0%	81.3%	74.0%	70.9%
Applications of Mathematics	A	23.8%	28.9%	22.7%	25.0%	25.2%
Biology	A	29.5%	35.3%	36.5%	32.6%	34.2%
Chemistry	A	34.6%	43.2%	45.0%	42.5%	42.5%
English	A	35.3%	39.5%	47.6%	41.5%	39.8%
History	A	37.7%	44.5%	54.2%	41.5%	42.1%
Mathematics	A	30.9%	36.8%	37.8%	36.8%	28.3%
Modern Studies	A	30.0%	40.9%	54.9%	31.7%	33.1%
Physical Education	A	45.9%	59.9%	62.4%	54.5%	54.3%
Physics	A	31.8%	40.3%	43.4%	34.9%	34.7%

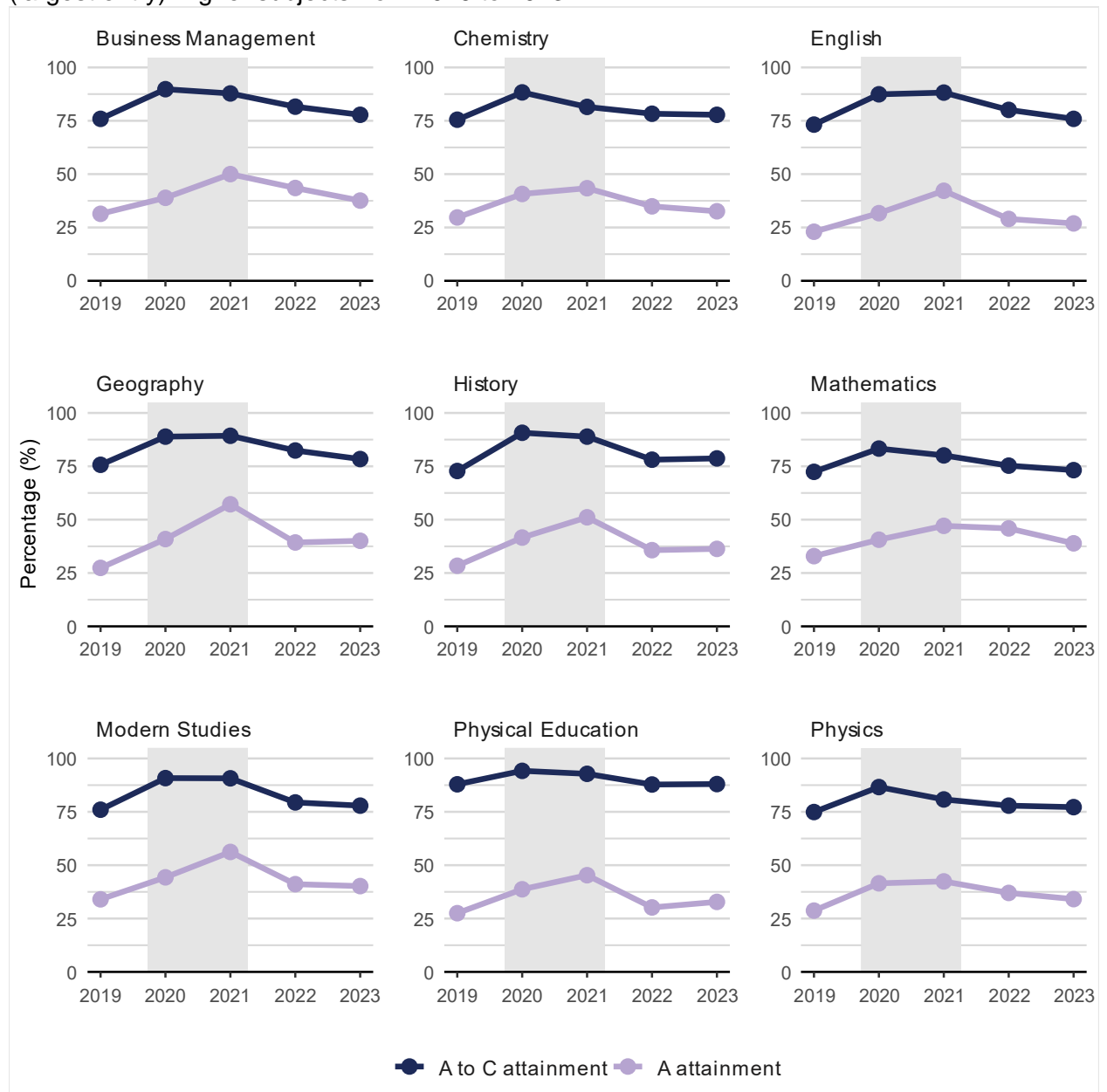
5.2.2 Higher

There were 18,705 entries for Higher Mathematics in 2023 (an increase of 3.9% from 18,010 in 2022). 73.2% of grades were A to C, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from 75.3% in 2022 and an increase of 0.8 percentage points from 72.4% in 2019. 38.9% of grades were A, a decrease of 7.0 percentage points from 45.9% in 2022 and an increase of 6.0 percentage points from 32.9% in 2019.

There were 35,515 entries for Higher English in 2023 (an increase of 4.4% from 34,025 in 2022). 75.9% of grades were A to C, a decrease of 4.2 percentage points from 80.1% in 2022 and an increase of 2.7 percentage points from 73.2% in 2019. 26.9% of grades were A, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from 29.0% in 2022 and an increase of 3.9 percentage points from 23.0% in 2019.

Trends in the proportion of candidates awarded grades A or grades A to C in other large entry subjects generally follow similar patterns to Mathematics and English. There are few exceptions — both History and Physical Education have higher 2023 A and A to C attainment rates than in 2022, and for Geography, the A attainment rate is also higher than in 2022. (Figure 7; Table 10).

Figure 7: Trends in attainment at grade A and grades A to C for the nine most popular (largest entry) Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.



Note: the period represented by the grey background shading indicates alternative approaches to assessment.

Table 10: Summary of attainment for selected Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.

Subject	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Business Management	A to C	75.9%	89.8%	87.8%	81.6%	77.8%
Chemistry	A to C	75.5%	88.3%	81.5%	78.3%	77.8%
English	A to C	73.2%	87.4%	88.2%	80.1%	75.9%
Geography	A to C	75.7%	88.9%	89.3%	82.4%	78.4%
History	A to C	72.8%	90.7%	88.9%	78.1%	78.7%
Mathematics	A to C	72.4%	83.3%	80.1%	75.3%	73.2%
Modern Studies	A to C	76.0%	90.8%	90.7%	79.4%	77.9%
Physical Education	A to C	87.9%	94.2%	92.8%	87.8%	88.0%
Physics	A to C	74.9%	86.6%	80.8%	77.9%	77.2%
Business Management	A	31.4%	38.9%	50.0%	43.5%	37.6%
Chemistry	A	29.7%	40.7%	43.4%	34.9%	32.6%
English	A	23.0%	31.7%	42.2%	29.0%	26.9%
Geography	A	27.4%	40.9%	57.2%	39.3%	40.1%
History	A	28.4%	41.6%	51.1%	35.7%	36.3%
Mathematics	A	32.9%	40.6%	47.1%	45.9%	38.9%
Modern Studies	A	34.0%	44.3%	56.2%	41.1%	40.2%
Physical Education	A	27.5%	38.7%	45.3%	30.2%	32.8%
Physics	A	28.7%	41.5%	42.4%	37.0%	34.1%

5.2.3 Advanced Higher

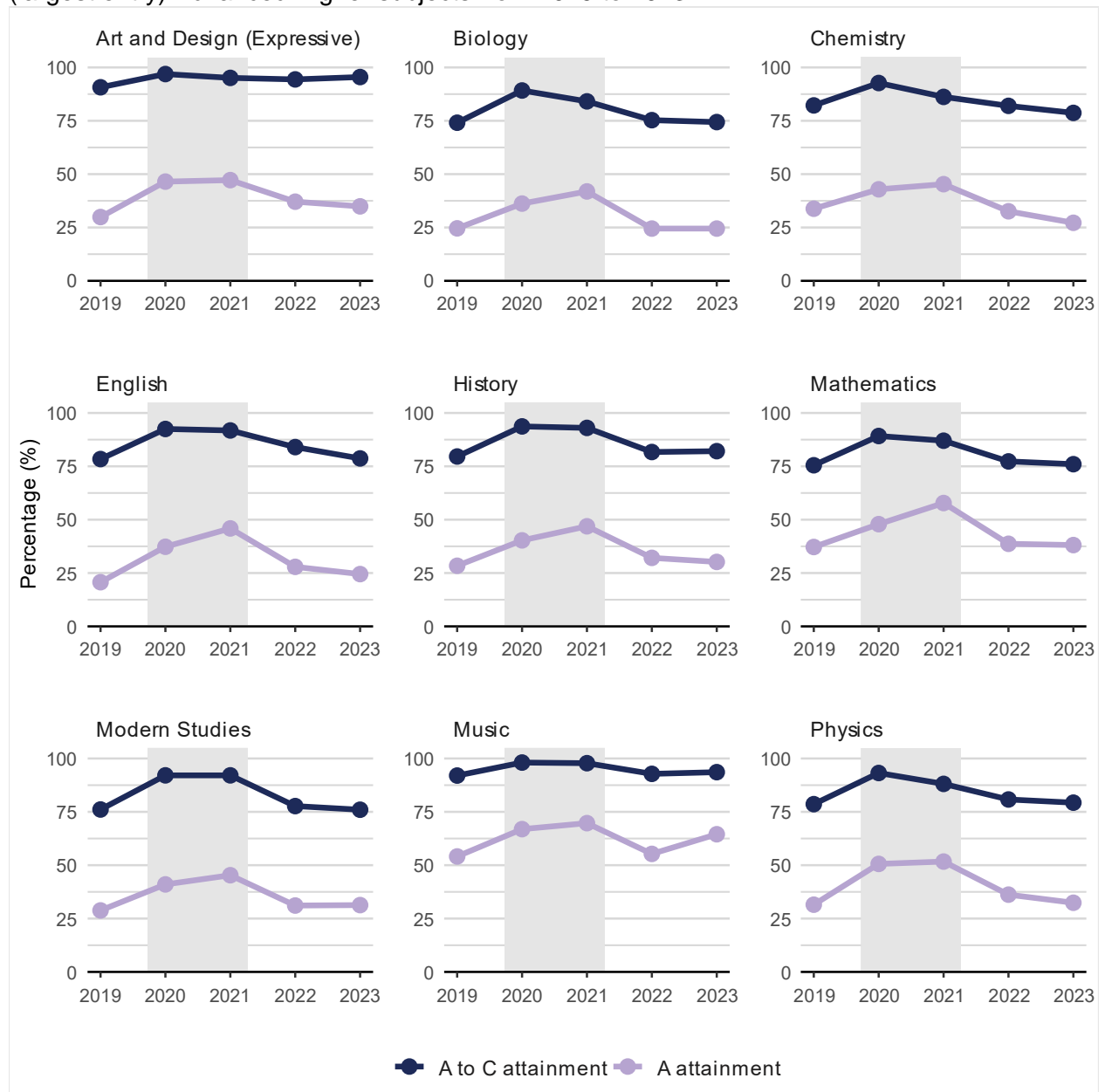
There were 4,125 entries for Advanced Higher Mathematics in 2023 (an increase of 5.4% from 3,915 in 2022). 76.0% of grades were A to C, a decrease of 1.3 percentage points from 77.3% in 2022 and an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 75.5% in 2019. 38.1% of grades were A, a decrease of 0.6 percentage points from 38.7% in 2022 and an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 37.2% in 2019.

There were 2,635 entries for Advanced Higher English in 2023 (a decrease of 4.9% from 2,770 in 2022). 78.7% of grades were A to C, a decrease of 5.3 percentage points from 84.0% in 2022 and an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 78.4% in 2019. 24.5% of grades were A, a decrease of 3.4 percentage points from 27.9% in 2022 and an increase of 3.8 percentage points from 20.7% in 2019.

For the other large uptake subjects including Biology, Chemistry, Modern Studies, and Physics, the A to C rate decreased from 2022, however Art and Design (Expressive), History, and Music have seen an increase. Excluding Chemistry and Modern Studies, all other large uptake subjects have seen an increase in the A to C rate from 2019. The A rate for Modern Studies and Music increased from 2022. Art and Design (Expressive), Chemistry, History, and Physics have all seen a decrease in the A rate from 2022. The A rate for

Modern Studies remained the same. Excluding Biology and Chemistry, all other large uptake subjects have seen an increase in the A rate from 2019 (Figure 8; Table 11).

Figure 8: Trends in attainment at grade A and grades A to C for the nine most popular (largest entry) Advanced Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.



Note: the period represented by the grey background shading indicates that alternative approaches to assessment.

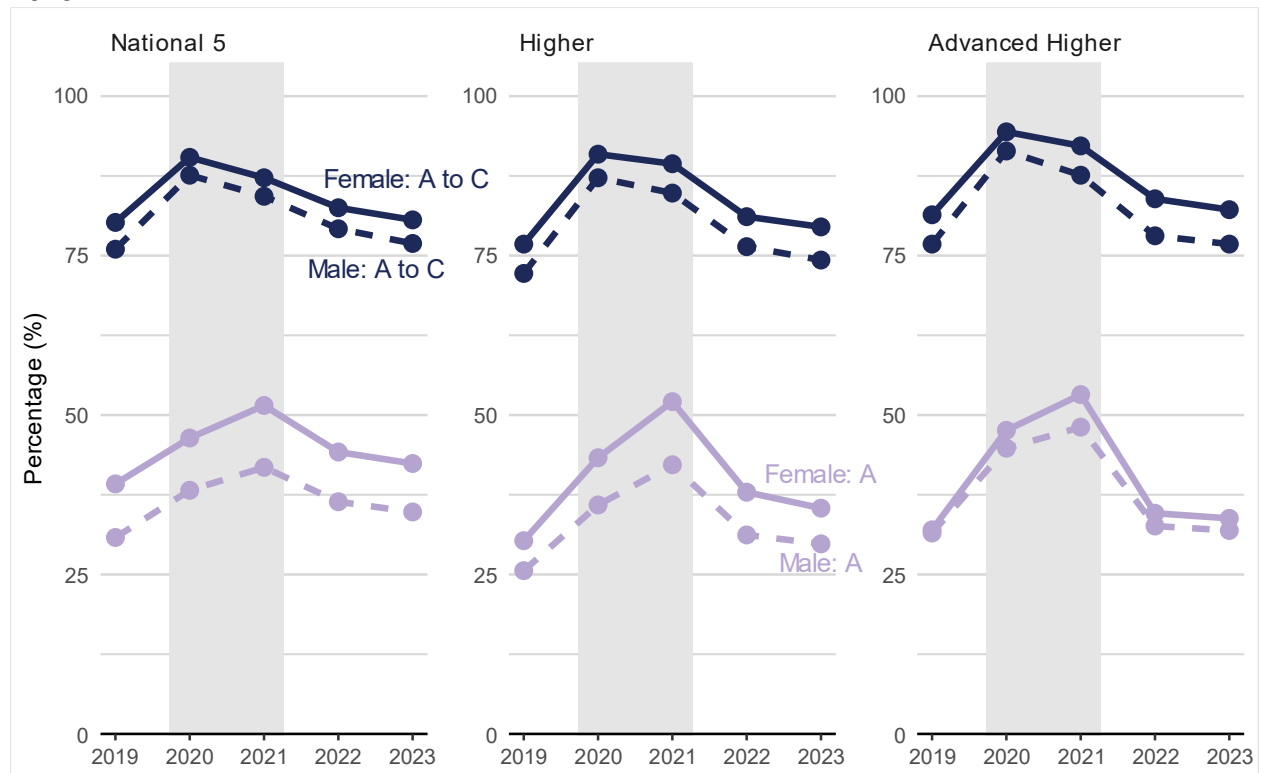
Table 11: Summary of attainment for selected Advanced Higher subjects from 2019 to 2023.

Subject	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Art and Design (Expressive)	A to C	90.7%	96.9%	95.1%	94.4%	95.5%
Biology	A to C	74.1%	89.2%	84.1%	75.3%	74.4%
Chemistry	A to C	82.2%	92.7%	86.2%	82.0%	78.7%
English	A to C	78.4%	92.5%	91.8%	84.0%	78.7%
History	A to C	79.6%	93.7%	93.0%	81.7%	82.1%
Mathematics	A to C	75.5%	89.2%	87.0%	77.3%	76.0%
Modern Studies	A to C	76.1%	92.1%	92.1%	77.7%	76.0%
Music	A to C	92.0%	98.1%	97.8%	92.8%	93.6%
Physics	A to C	78.6%	93.2%	88.1%	80.8%	79.3%
Art and Design (Expressive)	A	29.9%	46.5%	47.2%	37.1%	34.9%
Biology	A	24.6%	36.2%	41.9%	24.5%	24.5%
Chemistry	A	33.8%	42.9%	45.3%	32.6%	27.2%
English	A	20.7%	37.3%	45.9%	27.9%	24.5%
History	A	28.4%	40.3%	46.9%	32.1%	30.2%
Mathematics	A	37.2%	47.9%	57.8%	38.7%	38.1%
Modern Studies	A	28.8%	41.0%	45.3%	31.1%	31.3%
Music	A	54.1%	66.9%	69.7%	55.3%	64.5%
Physics	A	31.5%	50.6%	51.7%	36.2%	32.4%

5.3 Sex breakdown

Attainment rates have decreased for both male and female candidates in 2023 from 2022 across all levels and female candidates continue to have higher attainment rates than male candidates at all level.

Figure 9: Attainment rates by Sex for National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher from 2019 to 2023.



Note: the period represented by the grey background shading indicates that alternative approaches to assessment.

5.3.1 National 5

At grades A to C, the attainment rate decreased for male candidates and for female candidates in 2023 from 2022. 80.6% of female candidates' grades at National 5 were A to C in 2023, a decrease of 1.9 percentage points from 82.5% in 2022 and an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 80.2% in 2019. 76.9% of male candidates' grades at National 5 were A to C in 2023, a decrease of 2.3 percentage points from 79.2% in 2022 and an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 76.0% in 2019 (Table 12).

Grade A attainment rates decreased for male candidates and for female candidates in 2023 from 2022. 42.4% of female candidates' grades at National 5 were A in 2023, a decrease of 1.8 percentage points from 44.2% in 2022 and an increase of 3.2 percentage points from 39.2% in 2019. 34.8% of male candidates' grades at National 5 were A in 2023, a decrease of 1.6 percentage points from 36.4% in 2022 and an increase of 4.0 percentage points from 30.8% in 2019 (Table 12).

Table 12: Summary of attainment for National 5 qualifications from 2019 to 2023 by sex.

Sex	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female	A to C	80.2%	90.4%	87.2%	82.5%	80.6%
Male	A to C	76.0%	87.6%	84.3%	79.2%	76.9%
Female	A	39.2%	46.4%	51.5%	44.2%	42.4%
Male	A	30.8%	38.2%	41.8%	36.4%	34.8%

5.3.2 Higher

At grades A to C, the attainment rate decreased for male candidates and for female candidates in 2023 from 2022. 79.5% of female candidates' grades at Higher were A to C in 2023, a decrease of 1.6 percentage points from 81.1% in 2022 and an increase of 2.7 percentage points from 76.8% in 2019. 74.3% of male candidates' grades at Higher were A to C in 2023, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from 76.4% in 2022 and an increase of 2.1 percentage points from 72.2% in 2019 (Table 13).

At grade A, the attainment rate decreased for male candidates and for female candidates in 2023 from 2022. 35.4% of female candidates' grades at Higher were A in 2023, a decrease of 2.5 percentage points from 37.9% in 2022 and an increase of 5.1 percentage points from 30.3% in 2019. 29.8% of male candidates' grades at Higher were A in 2023, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points from 31.2% in 2022 and an increase of 4.2 percentage points from 25.6% in 2019 (Table 13).

Table 13: Summary of attainment for Higher qualifications from 2019 to 2023 by sex.

Sex	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female	A to C	76.8%	90.9%	89.4%	81.1%	79.5%
Male	A to C	72.2%	87.2%	84.8%	76.4%	74.3%
Female	A	30.3%	43.3%	52.1%	37.9%	35.4%
Male	A	25.6%	35.9%	42.2%	31.2%	29.8%

5.3.3 Advanced Higher

At grades A to C, the attainment rate decreased for male candidates and for female candidates in 2023 from 2022. 82.2% of female candidate grades at Advanced Higher were A to C in 2023, a decrease of 1.7 percentage points from 83.9% in 2022 and an increase of 0.8 percentage points from 81.4% in 2019. 76.8% of male candidate grades at Advanced Higher were A to C in 2023, a decrease of 1.3 percentage points from 78.1% in 2022 and no change in percentage points from 76.8% in 2019 (Table 14).

Grade A attainment rates decreased for male candidates and for female candidates in 2023 from 2022. 33.8% of female candidates' grades at Advanced Higher were A in 2023, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points from 34.6% in 2022 and an increase of 1.8 percentage points from 32.0% in 2019. 31.9% of male candidates' grades at Advanced Higher were A in 2023, a decrease of 0.7 percentage points from 32.6% in 2022 and an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 31.5% in 2019 (Table 14).

Table 14: Summary of attainment for Advanced Higher qualifications from 2019 to 2023 by sex.

Sex	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female	A to C	81.4%	94.4%	92.2%	83.9%	82.2%
Male	A to C	76.8%	91.4%	87.6%	78.1%	76.8%
Female	A	32.0%	47.6%	53.2%	34.6%	33.8%
Male	A	31.5%	44.8%	48.1%	32.6%	31.9%

5.4 Centre type breakdown

Historically, attainment rates have been higher for independent centres than education authority centres and the same was true in 2023.

FE colleges have relatively low uptake for graded National Qualifications (Table 7). The range of subjects taken in FE colleges is also considerably narrower than the other categories of centre type used in this release. For these reasons, overall attainment rates for FE colleges and the other categories of centre type are not comparable.

5.4.1 National 5

The attainment rate at grades A to C in education authority centres was 77.8% in 2023, a decrease of 2.2 percentage points from 80.0% in 2022 and an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 77.2% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 36.6% in education authority centres in 2023, a decrease of 1.6 percentage points from 38.2% in 2022 and an increase of 3.7 percentage points from 32.9% in 2019 (Table 15).

The attainment rate at grades A to C in independent centres was 94.8% in 2023, a decrease of 0.7 percentage points from 95.5% in 2022 and no change in percentage points from 94.8% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 71.5% in independent centres in 2023, a decrease of 2.5 percentage points from 74.0% in 2022 and an increase of 2.6 percentage points from 68.9% in 2019 (Table 15).

The attainment rate at grades A to C in FE colleges was 69.3% in 2023, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points from 70.7% in 2022 and an increase of 1.7 percentage points from 67.6% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 28.1% in FE colleges in 2023, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from 30.2% in 2022 and an increase of 2.9 percentage points from 25.2% in 2019 (Table 15).

Table 15: Summary of attainment for National 5 qualifications from 2019 to 2023 by centre type.

Centre type	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Education Authority	A to C	77.2%	88.5%	85.1%	80.0%	77.8%
Independent	A to C	94.8%	97.7%	96.8%	95.5%	94.8%
FE College	A to C	67.6%	85.7%	74.9%	70.7%	69.3%
Education Authority	A	32.9%	40.4%	44.8%	38.2%	36.6%
Independent	A	68.9%	72.9%	76.9%	74.0%	71.5%
FE College	A	25.2%	34.9%	33.2%	30.2%	28.1%

5.4.2 Higher

The attainment rate at grades A to C in education authority centres was 75.9% in 2023, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from 78.0% in 2022 and an increase of 2.0 percentage points from 73.9% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 30.6% in education authority centres in 2023, a decrease of 2.2 percentage points from 32.8% in 2022 and an increase of 4.5 percentage points from 26.1% in 2019 (Table 16).

The attainment rate at grades A to C in independent centres was 93.2% in 2023, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from 93.4% in 2022 and an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 92.8% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 60.8% in independent centres in 2023, a decrease of 1.2 percentage points from 62.0% in 2022 and an increase of 2.7 percentage points from 58.1% in 2019 (Table 16).

The attainment rate at grades A to C in FE colleges was 66.4% in 2023, an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 65.5% in 2022 and an increase of 10.1 percentage points from 56.3% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 23.4% in FE colleges in 2023, an increase of 3.0 percentage points from 20.4% in 2022 and an increase of 8.7 percentage points from 14.7% in 2019 (Table 16).

Table 16: Summary of attainment for Higher qualifications from 2019 to 2023 by centre type.

Centre type	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Education Authority	A to C	73.9%	88.8%	86.7%	78.0%	75.9%
Independent	A to C	92.8%	97.7%	97.2%	93.4%	93.2%
FE College	A to C	56.3%	81.7%	79.2%	65.5%	66.4%
Education Authority	A	26.1%	38.0%	45.6%	32.8%	30.6%
Independent	A	58.1%	67.0%	75.6%	62.0%	60.8%
FE College	A	14.7%	28.7%	37.7%	20.4%	23.4%

5.4.3 Advanced Higher

The attainment rate at grades A to C in education authority centres was 77.2% in 2023, a decrease of 2.0 percentage points from 79.2% in 2022 and an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 76.9% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 28.4% in education authority centres in 2023, a decrease of 1.2 percentage points from 29.6% in 2022 and an increase of 1.1 percentage points from 27.3% in 2019 (Table 17).

The attainment rate at grades A to C in independent centres was 92.5% in 2023, an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 91.9% in 2022 and an increase of 1.0 percentage points from 91.5% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 54.3% in independent centres in 2023, no change in percentage points from 54.3% in 2022 and an increase of 1.0 percentage points from 53.3% in 2019 (Table 17).

The attainment rate at grades A to C in FE colleges was 83.1% in 2023, a decrease of 6.4 percentage points from 89.5% in 2022 and an increase of 0.1 percentage points from 83.0% in 2019. At grade A, the attainment rate was 51.8% in FE colleges in 2023, a decrease of 4.8 percentage points from 56.6% in 2022 and an increase of 6.1 percentage points from 45.7% in 2019 (Table 17).

Table 17: Summary of attainment for Advanced Higher qualifications from 2019 to 2023 by centre type.

Centre type	Grade(s)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Education Authority	A to C	76.9%	92.0%	88.8%	79.2%	77.2%
Independent	A to C	91.5%	97.9%	96.9%	91.9%	92.5%
FE College	A to C	83.0%	88.5%	96.0%	89.5%	83.1%
Education Authority	A	27.3%	41.7%	46.7%	29.6%	28.4%
Independent	A	53.3%	66.8%	72.3%	54.3%	54.3%
FE College	A	45.7%	51.3%	74.0%	56.6%	51.8%

6 Scottish Baccalaureate

The number of entries for the Scottish Baccalaureate remained small in 2023. Attainment varies each year, which is to be expected given the small number of entries. The attainment rate (referred to in the following tables as 'Percentage of Pass') is based on entries which have resulted in a pass.

Table 18: Summary of entries and attainment for Scottish Baccalaureate qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Year	Entries	Number of Pass	Percentage of Pass	Number of Distinction	Percentage of Distinction
2019	155	110	69.4%	55	34.4%
2020	150	130	86.2%	85	55.9%
2021	150	140	91.4%	100	64.5%
2022	160	115	72.2%	70	45.6%
2023	175	130	75.7%	80	45.7%

7 Ungraded National Courses

National 2 and National 3 courses are a flexible provision and are not necessarily completed by candidates in a single academic year. Consequently, the results are not directly comparable with other courses.

National 2, National 3, and National 4 courses are all ungraded. The attainment rate (referred to in the following tables as 'Percentage Attained') is based on entries which have resulted in a pass.

7.1 National 2

Entries were made in 16 National 2 courses. Entries numbered 3,030 in 2023 with attainment of 2,095. The attainment rate was 69.2%.

Table 19: Summary of entries and attainment for National 2 qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Year	Entries	Number Attained	Percentage Attained
2019	2,070	1,595	77.1%
2020	2,010	1,520	75.5%
2021	2,185	1,505	68.9%
2022	2,345	1,700	72.5%
2023	3,030	2,095	69.2%

7.2 National 3

Entries were made in 36 National 3 courses. Entries numbered 22,480 in 2023 with attainment of 18,930. The attainment rate was 84.2%.

Table 20: Summary of entries and attainment for National 3 qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Year	Entries	Number Attained	Percentage Attained
2019	19,285	16,960	87.9%
2020	21,800	19,945	91.5%
2021	21,045	18,130	86.1%
2022	20,330	17,255	84.9%
2023	22,480	18,930	84.2%

7.3 National 4

Entries were made in 47 National 4 courses. Entries numbered 138,670 in 2023 with attainment of 121,810. The attainment rate was 87.8%.

National 4 figures for 2019 include those awarded through the Recognising Positive Achievement (RPA) process. SQA treat National 4 attainment arising through course completion and the RPA process as being equivalent. In 2019, National 4 course entries

within centres (excluding entries arising through RPA) was estimated, using certification data, to be 95,870.

Table 21: Summary of entries and attainment for National 4 qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Year	Entries	Number Attained	Percentage Attained
2019	104,865	92,845	88.5%
2020	103,595	94,230	91.0%
2021	104,380	89,895	86.1%
2022	124,120	106,845	86.1%
2023	138,670	121,810	87.8%

8 Skills for Work

Skills for Work courses are a flexible provision, not necessarily completed by candidates in a single academic year. Consequently, the results are not directly comparable with other courses.

As the courses are all ungraded, the attainment rate is based on entries which have resulted in a pass.

Table 22: Summary of entries and attainment for Skills for Work qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

Year	Entries	Number Attained	Percentage Attained
2019	11,940	9,660	80.9%
2020	14,630	12,330	84.3%
2021	13,625	10,465	76.8%
2022	14,300	11,260	78.7%
2023	16,515	13,305	80.6%

9 Awards, National Certificates and National Progression Awards

Table 23: Summary of attainment for Award, National Certificate and National Progression Award qualifications from 2019 to 2023.

SCQF Level	Qualification	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
SCQF1	Award	440	400	115	220	290
SCQF2	Award	1,005	910	710	625	515
SCQF2	National Progression Award	70	90	85	55	105
SCQF3	Award	4,430	4,255	3,360	3,480	2,830
SCQF3	National Certificate	5	5	0	0	0
SCQF3	National Progression Award	100	205	45	125	110
SCQF4	Award	10,290	11,735	9,490	9,660	10,740
SCQF4	National Certificate	225	165	130	70	95
SCQF4	National Progression Award	4,370	4,320	3,690	4,500	5,215
SCQF5	Award	5,185	8,230	7,200	9,605	11,210
SCQF5	National Certificate	1,810	1,465	1,175	1,435	1,050
SCQF5	National Progression Award	5,250	5,915	5,395	7,865	9,930
SCQF6	Award	5,390	5,895	5,675	5,865	7,105
SCQF6	National Certificate	2,835	2,650	1,840	2,385	1,410
SCQF6	National Progression Award	3,345	5,695	6,095	7,095	8,210

10 Background information

Provisional Attainment Statistics — August 2023 details the main qualifications taken at school and college level by candidates 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.

All figures in this report are rounded to the nearest five.

In this release, attainment statistics for Awards, National Progression Awards and National Certificate qualifications detail the number of certificated entries between 1 August 2022 and 30 June 2023 and therefore do not reflect a full year.

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 candidates undertake in the senior phase of secondary education, colleges and elsewhere.

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

In 2023, awarding for graded National Courses operated using the established procedure as far as possible in order to evaluate the performance of the course assessment, but with consideration given to the following factors:

- ◆ The impact of the reducing legacy of disruption to teaching and learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ The impact of modifications to course assessment
- ◆ The impact of removing revision support

Awarding decisions were therefore 'sensitive' to these factors, ensuring that grade boundary decisions recognised that performance continues to be impacted. This was informed by the full range of qualitative and quantitative data used during awarding, with additional data from 2021–22 on the impact of modifications.

In 2022, SQA worked with partners across the education sector, including teachers, lecturers, learners, parents and carers, throughout the year to agree the wide-ranging package of support that was put in place to enable learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do, despite the disruption to learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. SQA implemented various modifications and revision support to reduce the assessment requirements for courses and increase learning and teaching time.

In 2021, the Scottish Government commissioned SQA to develop an Alternative Certification Model (ACM 2021) for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher for 2021. The model was based on teacher judgement, supported by assessment resources and quality assurance. In 2020, the Deputy First Minister directed SQA to issue grades, primarily on the basis of

teacher estimates. Grades that had been adjusted upwards in an earlier moderation process were also retained.

Additional background information relating to this release is available in the background information document that accompanies it.

All the data analysed in this release is available in the data tables that accompany the release.