



Attainment Statistics (August) by Education Authority National Qualifications Methodology

This document forms part of the SQA methodology document releases designed to supplement and support our Official Statistics publications.

Source Data and Definitions

Entries in this publication are defined by the recorded statistical qualification entries as extracted annually in July each year as part of the SQA statistical data pertaining to certification entries and awards.

Attainment in this publication is defined by:

- **National 2 - National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher and Scottish Baccalaureate**
The recorded statistical qualification results as extracted annually in July as part of the SQA statistical data pertaining to certification entries and awards.

Education Authority reference data pertaining to the current status of each centre is used to supplement the Entries and Requests data by taking a statistical extract of the *live SQA reference data* annually in July each year. At the point the **education authority reference (statistical) data** is taken it will agree with the *live SQA reference data* held at that particular time point.

Methodology

The development work required to undertake this reporting was undertaken in-house.

The *entries* and *attainment* data is supplemented (through a merge operation) with the additional *education authority reference data*.

Entries and *attainment* allocated to a centre of centre_type (3 or 5) correspond to 'Education Authority' centres. Any *entry* and *attainment* allocated to an 'Education Authority' centre was assigned to the specific education authority as indicated by the *education authority reference data*.

Total entries are calculated for each qualification within selected qualification types contained in the report: National 2 - National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher and Scottish Baccalaureate.

Total attainment is calculated for each qualification within all qualification types contained in the report: National 2 - National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher and Scottish Baccalaureate.

For graded qualifications (National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) attainment is reported cumulatively from A to A-D, with No Awards reported separately. For ungraded qualifications (National 2 – National 4 and Scottish Baccalaureate) attainment is reported as the number of candidates attaining the qualification. The Scottish Baccalaureate also details the number of candidates obtaining the Pass classification 'Distinction'.

Where the qualification can be completed in different language mediums, the combined total entries and attainment are reported:

- 'Mandarin (Traditional)', 'Mandarin (Simplified)' and 'Cantonese' are combined and reported as 'Chinese Languages'.
- 'Mathematics' and 'Matamataig' are combined and reported as 'Mathematics'.
- 'Applications of Mathematics' and 'Gnìomhachas Matamataigs' are combined and reported as 'Applications of Mathematics'.
- 'History' and 'Eachdraidh' are combined and reported as 'History'.
- 'Geography' and 'Cruinn-eolas' are combined and reported as 'Geography'.
- 'Modern Studies' and 'Nuadh-Eolas' are combined and reported as 'Modern Studies'.

Full details of the format and content can be found within the 'Tables Format and Content' tab of the publication.

Publication History

Education Authority statistics were published in April 2019 for diet 2017/18 using August data in response to a request from Scottish Parliament (SPICE). This publication was subsequently replaced by '*Attainment Statistics (December) by Education Authority*' published on an annual basis in April using December data, after the conclusion of the Post Result Services (PRS) procedure.

Education Authority tables will now be published based on both August and December data, at the relevant point in the year.

In addition to the '*Attainment Statistics (August) by Education Authority*' publication for diet 2020/21, tables pertaining to diet 2018/19 will also be published. As each publication contains data for two diets, this provides a 5-year timeseries inclusive of the April 2019 publication.

Processing Notes/Exceptions

From 2016, Skills for Work and Personal Development courses are reported separately. Personal Development Courses fall within the SQA 'Award' qualifications, previously being part of SQA National Qualification provision.

For the purposes of the September 2021 publications only, which covered data between 2018/19 and 2020/21, a single statistical extract of additional centre reference data was taken in July 2021 and used for the entire publication. It is possible that some centres altered their centre records across this period, as a statistical snapshot/extract of the centre reference data was not taken in previous years. This situation means that the allocation of centres to each education authority for all years up to and including 2020/21 data is based on the centre reference data as held by SQA in July 2021. Publications in future years will use statistical extracts taken in the July of the respective year, which may result in entries and requests being

allocated to different areas if the live SQA reference data is amended/updated throughout the year by operational colleagues or the centre.

Information Governance Notes

All of the data in this publication is defined as being 'statistical' for the purposes of information governance and data protection purposes. This primarily means that the associated processing is not carried out for the purposes of measures or decisions with respect to a particular data subject. Please see the appropriate legislation linked at the end of this document for details of this processing category.

Statistical disclosure control

Statistical disclosure control is applied to published tables to ensure that candidate level information cannot be identified.

Historic statistical disclosure control policy was to suppress grade distribution figures for subjects with fewer than five entries, in order that individual candidates cannot be identified. Issues with this approach included that figures could often be "back-calculated" from totals or by combining information across tables.

In August 2021, the statistical disclosure control procedure has been enhanced with additional suppression of figures. The aim of this has been to ensure that disclosure controlled figures cannot be re-calculated. This applies to August 2021 publications and historic tables have not been amended.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance procedures include the checking of published figures using different statistical programs by individual members of the statistical team.

References

Data Protection Act 2018, Processing for archiving, research and statistical purposes (Section 19) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/section/19/enacted>