



# Progression statistics summary report 2023

## Official Statistics in Development

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# Introduction

Progression 2023 presents a summary of the progression statistics from National 4 to National 5, National 5 to Higher, and Higher to Advanced Higher following the completion of appeals and other post-certification procedures.

In this release, progression statistics for 2023 are presented with reference to progression from the previous year, 2022. The different awarding arrangements in place prior to 2020, in 2022, and in 2023 mean that it is not possible to compare progression between years without full consideration of this essential contextual information.

Official statistics in development are official statistics that are undergoing development; they may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

This is the first time progression statistics are being published as official statistics in development. To ensure the statistics are developed in a way which is useful we invite users to provide their views and feedback on future developments or improvements that could be made to these statistics to meet your needs. If you have comments or questions, please contact us: [data.analytics@sqa.org.uk](mailto:data.analytics@sqa.org.uk).

# Candidate progression

## National 4 to National 5

The subject with the largest number of candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 was Mathematics, 4,590 candidates, followed by English with 4,200 candidates and then Applications of Mathematics with 1,460.

Table 1: Top five subjects for which candidates progressed from National 4 to National 5

National 4 title	National 5 title	Total candidates progressing
Mathematics	Mathematics	4,590
English	English	4,200
Applications of Mathematics	Applications of Mathematics	1,460
Biology	Biology	1,390
History	History	560

## National 5 to Higher

The subject with the largest number of candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher was English, 31,390 candidates, followed by Mathematics with 16,090 candidates and then Physical Education with 8,770.

Table 2: Top five subjects for which candidates progressed from National 5 to Higher

National 5 title	Higher title	Total candidates progressing
English	English	31,390
Mathematics	Mathematics	16,090
Physical Education	Physical Education	8,770
Chemistry	Chemistry	8,010
History	History	7,440

## Higher to Advanced Higher

The subject with the largest number of candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher was Mathematics, 4,080 candidates, followed by Chemistry with 2,830 candidates and then English with 2,620.

Table 3: Top five subjects for which candidates progressed from Higher to Advanced Higher

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Total candidates progressing
Mathematics	Mathematics	4,080
Chemistry	Chemistry	2,830
English	English	2,620
Physics	Physics	2,070
Biology	Biology	1,740

# Progression grade breakdown

This section will provide analysis on three different qualification areas, focusing on the highest uptake subjects:

- ◆ Languages, consisting of French, German, and Spanish.
- ◆ Science, consisting of Biology, Chemistry, Human Biology and Physics.
- ◆ Social sciences, consisting of Geography, History and Modern Studies.

Please note that Human Biology is only available at Higher and therefore will only appear in the National 5 to Higher and Higher to Advanced Higher sections.

## National 4 to National 5

### Languages

French reported the largest number of candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 in 2023 with 38% of candidates attaining a National 5 A grade. This was higher than both German and Spanish where the percentage of candidates attaining a National 5 A grade from a National 4 was 23%. French also had the greatest percentage of candidates progressing to an A to C grade with 79%. German followed with 69% and then Spanish with 63%.

*Table 4a: Total candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 for languages*

National 4 title	National 5 title	Total candidates progressing
French	French	60
German	German	10
Spanish	Spanish	50

*Table 4b: National 4 to National 5 progression percentages for languages*

National 4 title	National 5 title	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
French	French	38%	29%	13%	11%	11%	100%
German	German	23%	23%	23%	23%	8%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	23%	23%	17%	21%	15%	100%

### Sciences

Biology reported the largest number of candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 with 1,390 candidates. For Chemistry, 11% of progressing candidates attained a National 5 A grade. This was greater than both Biology and Physics where the percentage of candidates progressing from National 4 to a National 5 A grade was 4% and 2%, respectively. Furthermore, when looking at progression to a National 5 A to C grade, Chemistry had a greater percentage with 44% compared to 34% for Biology and 30% for Physics. Across all three sciences, progression to a National 5 No Award saw the highest percentage.

Table 5a: Total candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 for sciences

National 4 title	National 5 title	Total candidates progressing
Biology	Biology	1,390
Chemistry	Chemistry	480
Physics	Physics	530

Table 5b: National 4 to National 5 progression percentages for sciences

National 4 title	National 5 title	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Biology	Biology	4%	9%	20%	27%	40%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	11%	13%	20%	24%	32%	100%
Physics	Physics	2%	9%	18%	30%	41%	100%

## Social sciences

History reported the largest number of candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 with 560 candidates. History saw 6% of progressing candidates attain a National 5 A grade. This was greater than both Geography and Modern Studies where the proportion of candidates progressing to a National 5 A grade was 4% and 3%, respectively. History had a higher percentage of candidates progressing to a National 5 A to C grade with 48% compared to 33% for Modern Studies and 32% for Geography. Across all three social sciences, progression to a National 5 No Award saw the highest percentage.

Table 6a: Total candidates progressing from National 4 to National 5 for social sciences

National 4 title	National 5 title	Total candidates progressing
Geography	Geography	250
History	History	560
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	340

Table 6b: National 4 to National 5 progression percentages for social sciences

National 4 title	National 5 title	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Geography	Geography	4%	9%	19%	26%	42%	100%
History	History	6%	16%	25%	24%	28%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	3%	10%	20%	25%	42%	100%

## National 5 to Higher

### Languages

Spanish reported the largest number of candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher with 1,890 candidates. German had fewer candidates progressing than both French and Spanish, with only 380. German saw a greater percentage of candidates progressing from a National 5 A grade to Higher A grade with 78% when compared with French (62%) and Spanish (60%). When looking at progression from a National 5 grade A to a Higher A to C grade, German had a greater percentage with 99% in comparison with 93% for Spanish and

92% for French. A greater proportion of candidates progressed from a National 5 grade B to a Higher A to C grade for German (79%) than both French (40%) and Spanish (43%).

*Table 7a: Total candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher for languages*

National 5 title	Higher title	Total candidates progressing
French	French	1,760
German	German	380
Spanish	Spanish	1,880

*Table 7b: National 5 to Higher progression percentages for languages*

National 5 title	Higher title	National 5 grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
French	French	A	62%	19%	11%	6%	1%	100%
French	French	B	5%	7%	28%	34%	25%	100%
French	French	C	3%	3%	11%	33%	51%	100%
French	French	D	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%	100%
French	French	No Award	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	100%
German	German	A	78%	14%	6%	1%	0%	100%
German	German	B	16%	27%	35%	15%	6%	100%
German	German	C	0%	7%	27%	20%	47%	100%
German	German	D	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
German	German	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
Spanish	Spanish	A	60%	20%	13%	5%	2%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	B	3%	14%	26%	33%	24%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	C	3%	4%	16%	30%	48%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	D	0%	10%	0%	10%	80%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]

## Sciences

Chemistry reported the largest number of candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher with 8,010 candidates. For Physics, 64% progressed from a National 5 A grade to Higher A grade. This was greater than Biology with 62%, Human Biology (progressing from National 5 Biology) with 59%, and Chemistry with 54%. Biology, Human Biology and Physics each saw 97% of candidates progressing from a National 5 A grade to an A to C grade at Higher. This was closely followed by Chemistry with 95%.

*Table 8a: Total candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher for sciences*

National 5 title	Higher title	Total candidates progressing
Biology	Biology	5,610
Biology	Human Biology	5,500
Chemistry	Chemistry	8,010
Physics	Physics	6,390

Table 8b: National 5 to Higher progression percentages for sciences

National 5 title	Higher title	National 5 grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Biology	Biology	A	62%	25%	10%	3%	[low]	100%
Biology	Biology	B	6%	26%	35%	25%	7%	100%
Biology	Biology	C	1%	9%	21%	38%	32%	100%
Biology	Biology	D	0%	3%	5%	28%	64%	100%
Biology	Biology	No Award	0%	10%	0%	0%	90%	100%
Biology	Human Biology	A	59%	26%	12%	3%	1%	100%
Biology	Human Biology	B	6%	24%	36%	24%	9%	100%
Biology	Human Biology	C	1%	7%	22%	37%	33%	100%
Biology	Human Biology	D	0%	0%	6%	26%	68%	100%
Biology	Human Biology	No Award	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	A	54%	28%	14%	4%	1%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	B	3%	19%	38%	29%	11%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	C	1%	4%	21%	42%	32%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	D	0%	3%	9%	38%	50%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	No Award	0%	0%	7%	7%	86%	100%
Physics	Physics	A	64%	25%	8%	2%	1%	100%
Physics	Physics	B	8%	34%	32%	19%	8%	100%
Physics	Physics	C	1%	11%	26%	34%	27%	100%
Physics	Physics	D	1%	2%	11%	35%	51%	100%
Physics	Physics	No Award	5%	5%	0%	24%	67%	100%

## Social sciences

History reported the largest number of candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher History with 7,440 candidates. Focusing on progression from National 5 A grade to Higher A grade, Geography saw the highest percentage at 69% followed by Modern Studies at 68%, and then History at 59%. When looking at progression from grade A at National 5 to an A to C grade at Higher, Geography reported 97% in comparison with History and Modern Studies which both saw 95% progressing from grade A at National 5 to an A to C grade at Higher. The percentage of candidates progressing from a National 5 B grade to an A to C grade at Higher ranged from 73% to 77%.

The percentage of candidates progressing from a National 5 B grade to a Higher A grade was greatest for Modern Studies at 27% and lowest for History at 17%. Conversely, the percentage progressing from a National 5 grade B to Higher grade B was greatest for History (31%) and lowest for Modern Studies (26%).

Table 9a: Total candidates progressing from National 5 to Higher for social sciences

National 5 title	Higher title	Total candidates progressing
Geography	Geography	4,750
History	History	7,440
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	6,410



Table 9b: National 5 to Higher progression percentages for social sciences

National 5 title	Higher title	National 5 grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Geography	Geography	A	69%	20%	8%	2%	1%	100%
Geography	Geography	B	20%	28%	27%	18%	7%	100%
Geography	Geography	C	4%	14%	26%	29%	27%	100%
Geography	Geography	D	2%	13%	11%	30%	44%	100%
Geography	Geography	No Award	10%	0%	10%	20%	60%	100%
History	History	A	59%	25%	11%	3%	2%	100%
History	History	B	17%	31%	25%	14%	12%	100%
History	History	C	5%	17%	25%	24%	29%	100%
History	History	D	1%	7%	13%	23%	57%	100%
History	History	No Award	0%	10%	10%	24%	57%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	A	68%	19%	8%	3%	2%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	B	27%	26%	24%	14%	9%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	C	12%	19%	25%	22%	22%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	D	4%	10%	24%	26%	36%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	No Award	0%	4%	8%	15%	73%	100%

## Higher to Advanced Higher

### Languages

French reported the largest number of candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher with 430 candidates. German had fewer candidates progressing than both French and Spanish, with only 70. For both French and Spanish, 40% of candidates who attained a grade A at Higher went on to attain a grade A at Advanced Higher, lower than the 64% for German. For progression from grade A at Higher to an A to C grade at Advanced Higher, French had a greater percentage with 86% compared to the 84% for Spanish, but lower than German with 99%.

Table 10a: Total candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher for languages

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Total candidates progressing
French	French	430
German	German	70
Spanish	Spanish	360

Table 10b: Higher to Advanced Higher progression percentages for languages

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Higher grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
French	French	A	40%	25%	22%	10%	4%	100%
French	French	B	0%	3%	24%	31%	41%	100%
French	French	C	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%	100%
French	French	D	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
French	French	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
German	German	A	64%	21%	13%	1%	0%	100%

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Higher grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
German	German	B	0%	20%	80%	0%	0%	100%
German	German	C	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
German	German	D	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
German	German	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
Spanish	Spanish	A	40%	23%	22%	10%	6%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	B	0%	0%	18%	18%	65%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	C	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%
Spanish	Spanish	D	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
Spanish	Spanish	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]

## Sciences

Chemistry reported the largest number of candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher Chemistry with 2,830 candidates. 44% of candidates progressed from a Higher A grade to Advanced Higher A grade in Physics. This was greater than 39% in Chemistry, 38% in Biology, and 30% for Human Biology (progressing from Higher Biology). The progression from candidates attaining a Higher A grade to Advanced Higher A to C grade was 92% for Chemistry and Biology, and 91% for Physics. 88% of candidates progressed from a Higher Human Biology A grade to Advanced Higher A to C grade for Biology.

Table 11a: Total candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher for sciences

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Total candidates progressing
Biology	Biology	1,740
Chemistry	Chemistry	2,830
Human Biology	Biology	1,340
Physics	Physics	2,070

Table 11b: Higher to Advanced Higher progression percentages for sciences

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Higher grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Biology	Biology	A	38%	33%	20%	7%	2%	100%
Biology	Biology	B	3%	14%	28%	40%	15%	100%
Biology	Biology	C	1%	3%	18%	44%	34%	100%
Biology	Biology	D	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	100%
Biology	Biology	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]
Chemistry	Chemistry	A	39%	35%	18%	6%	2%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	B	2%	18%	35%	31%	15%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	C	1%	6%	27%	39%	27%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	D	0%	0%	19%	44%	38%	100%
Chemistry	Chemistry	No Award	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Human Biology	Biology	A	30%	36%	22%	10%	2%	100%
Human Biology	Biology	B	1%	11%	32%	35%	20%	100%
Human Biology	Biology	C	0%	1%	17%	42%	39%	100%
Human Biology	Biology	D	0%	0%	17%	33%	50%	100%
Human Biology	Biology	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Higher grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Physics	Physics	A	44%	30%	17%	6%	3%	100%
Physics	Physics	B	5%	20%	31%	27%	17%	100%
Physics	Physics	C	1%	10%	28%	33%	28%	100%
Physics	Physics	D	0%	0%	5%	45%	50%	100%
Physics	Physics	No Award	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]	[z]

## Social sciences

History reported the largest number of candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher History with 1,380 candidates. For History, 39% of candidates attained an Advanced Higher A grade after attaining a grade A for Higher in the previous year. This was greater than Modern Studies and Geography which saw 37% and 35%, respectively. The progression of candidates attaining a Higher A grade to Advanced Higher A to C grade was the highest for Geography with 92%, followed by History (88%) and Modern Studies (84%). A lower percentage of candidates progressed from a Higher B grade to an Advanced Higher A grade for History (7%) compared to Geography and Modern Studies (both 16%).

*Table 12a: Total candidates progressing from Higher to Advanced Higher for social sciences*

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Total candidates progressing
Geography	Geography	960
History	History	1,380
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	1,070

*Table 12b: Higher to Advanced Higher progression percentages for social sciences*

Higher title	Advanced Higher title	Higher grade	A	B	C	D	No Award	Total
Geography	Geography	A	35%	36%	21%	6%	2%	100%
Geography	Geography	B	16%	29%	37%	13%	4%	100%
Geography	Geography	C	3%	26%	29%	27%	15%	100%
Geography	Geography	D	0%	40%	0%	0%	60%	100%
Geography	Geography	No Award	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
History	History	A	39%	31%	19%	7%	4%	100%
History	History	B	7%	25%	33%	26%	9%	100%
History	History	C	4%	12%	38%	25%	21%	100%
History	History	D	0%	14%	43%	29%	14%	100%
History	History	No Award	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	A	37%	26%	21%	9%	7%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	B	16%	19%	26%	21%	18%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	C	9%	10%	24%	30%	27%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	D	0%	18%	27%	36%	18%	100%
Modern Studies	Modern Studies	No Award	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

# Background information

The 'Total Candidates Progressing' figure is the total number of candidates progressing from the lower qualification level to the higher qualification level.

'Total Candidates Progressing' figures between one and nine inclusive have been suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information and are marked up with the shorthand [c]. All percentage figures relating to that course have also been suppressed. The remaining 'Total Candidates Progressing' figures are rounded to the nearest ten.

'Not applicable' is used where no candidates have progressed from the given grade at the lower level to any grade at the higher level. Cells containing such figures are marked up with the shorthand [z].

Percentages are calculated using figures prior to rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, with a value greater than zero and less than 0.5% marked up with the shorthand [low].

Progression from National 4 to National 5 is reported as the number of candidates progressing from any National 4 result to each of the available National 5 grades (A to No Award).

In 2023, awarding 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 the awarding procedure, with additional data from 2021–22 on the impact of modifications.

Additional background information relating to this summary is available in the 'Background information for progression 2023' document that accompanies this report, and all the data analysed is available in the 'Progression 2023 tables' document that also accompanies this report.