

GCSE Mathematics results 2017

Advice for schools and colleges

The new GCSE Mathematics higher tier has been designed to provide a smooth transition to AS and A level Mathematics, so the step up to studying maths at AS/A level should be easier than in the past. All students who achieve a grade 5 or above should be strongly encouraged to take at least AS level Mathematics, and should be given the opportunity to do so. Taking AS/A level Mathematics is especially important for students who are interested in higher education or a career involving Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths (STEM), and is also valuable for many other courses and careers.

Recent research evidence* indicates that taking Mathematics and Further Mathematics at A level enhances students' chances of gaining a place at a leading university and improves their career prospects and earnings. Numbers studying for A levels in Mathematics and Further Mathematics have been growing rapidly for more than a decade, but the UK's participation rates in maths education at this level are still relatively low when compared to many other developed countries and it is very much in the best interest of students to choose to study maths at AS/A level.

Those who achieve a grade 4 or above in GCSE Mathematics would benefit from taking maths post-16, even if they don't intend to take AS/A level Mathematics. The recently developed [Core Maths qualifications](#) teach students to think mathematically, helping them to use maths in a range of contexts which they are likely to meet in their future work and studies. More schools and colleges are now offering their students the opportunity to study for Core Maths qualifications and students who do not intend to take AS/A level Mathematics should be encouraged to take Core Maths. In addition to being increasingly important when studying other subjects at A level and beyond, quantitative skills are vital for all citizens, enabling them to participate fully in our democracy and help to strengthen our economy.

*[Dilnot \(2017\)](#), [Adkins and Noyes \(2016\)](#)

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