



## GCE A level art and design numbers see a slight fall in England and Northern Ireland and a rise in Wales

On the day that thousands of young people across the UK receive their GCE results there has been a very slight fall in candidates taking art and design GCE in England and Northern Ireland and a rise in numbers taking art and design in Wales.

The Society's scrutiny of A level results identifies a suite of trends that give us a health check on our subject to include an indication of the barriers faced by some young people in making informed choices to take a GCE in art and design. Provisional results published by JCQ, have identified the following trends:

**Across the UK** – the total numbers of students taking art and design has fallen slightly. However, this is in line with the fall in the total number of candidates taking A levels. This year there were 43,034 art and design candidates, in 2017 a total of 43,653 took the exam.

**National differences** – In England and Northern Ireland the numbers of students taking art and design has fallen but the percentage of the total number of students who sat art and design remained at 5.3% and 3.0% respectively. In Wales, this percentage rose to 6.0% from 5.7% (see table).

Nation	Number sitting art and design 2018	Number sitting art and design 2017	% sat of total 2018	% sat of total 2017
England	39,848	40,470	5.3%	5.3%
Northern Ireland	884	915	3.0%	3.0%
Wales	1,959	1,888	6.0%	5.7%

Table 1. Changes in candidate numbers in England, Northern Ireland and Wales

**AS level** – The total number of art and design candidate numbers has fallen from 22,324 in 2017 to 11,950 this year. However, the fall is in line with the decrease identified in many other subjects.

### Gender, participation and achievement

Art and design remains the fifth worst performing subject in terms of gender and participation rates. This year, 2.9% of all students taking the art and design exam were male and 7.2% were female, representing a 4.3% difference. There was no change in male v female participation rates from 2017. Of the total A levels sat, only one in four candidates are male.

In terms of achievement for A level, A\*/A and C grades the gender divide has widened. This year 10.4% of male candidates achieved grade A\* in art and design, compared to 12.9% of female candidates – a difference of 2.5%. The gender divide for candidates achieving a grade C at A level is now 8.4% compared to 6.2% last year.

	% Male grade A*	% Male grade A	% Female A*	% Female A	Difference A*	Difference A	% Male C	% Female C	Difference
2017	11.1	24.3	12.7	28.6	1.6	4.3	77.7	83.9	6.2
2018	10.4	23.0	12.9	29.3	2.5	6.3	76.6	85.0	8.4

Table 2. A\*/A and C grades and percentage difference 2017 and 2018

According to the [figures published by JCO](#), other subjects, to include design technology, English language and humanities subjects, have seen a fall in participation rates this year.

We wish to thank all the teachers and families who you have taught, inspired and supported A level candidates throughout their journey.

A young person who has achieved this qualification in art and design has a portfolio of skills and knowledge fit for purpose for the challenges of the 21st century.

Participation and engagement in art, craft and design at this level of education gives a unique and meaningful experience; developing transferable skills and personal expression, building confidence and self-esteem and signposting to career paths in the creative, cultural, digital media and heritage industries.

UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admission Service have provided data on the uptake of courses at higher education levels. Within Group W, Creative Arts and Design, UCAS have reported a drop in applications for these subjects from applicants domiciled in the UK, from 259,600 in June 2017 to 249,120 in June 2018.

Working with colleagues at CHEAD, the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, the Society will continue to monitor, respond and challenge barriers in the uptake of art and design.

More information data and infographics are published on the [JCO website](#).