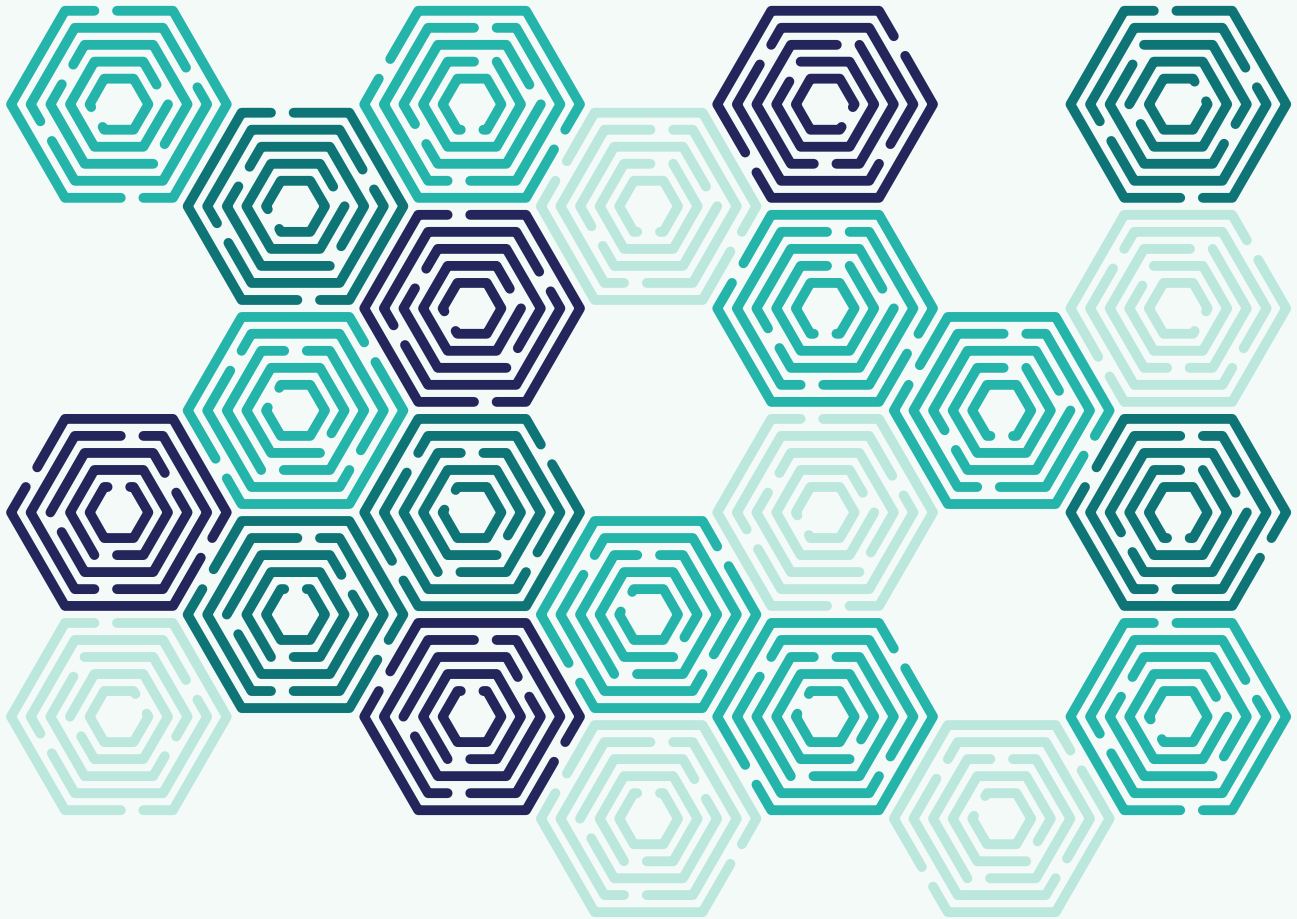




EngineeringUK

INSPIRING FUTURES TOGETHER



A LEVEL AND SCOTTISH HIGHER RESULTS

August 2026

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A level results 2026

Introduction

For 2026, normal exam grading was in place for the fourth year running, meaning 2026 data is directly comparable with 2023, 2024 and 2025. We have included five years of data in this report, but caution is still needed when comparing results with 2022 following disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The data released on results day is followed by more detailed releases later in the year, including demographics beyond gender.

The 2026 A level cohort is larger than in 2025, with increases in entries across a range of STEM subjects. Overall entries were up 2.7% to 906,425. Maths remains the most popular A level subject, maintaining more than 100,000 entries for the third consecutive year. Entries for maths have increased by 20% over the past 5 years. Entries also increased in further maths, computing, design and technology, and physics. These trends highlight continued interest in STEM subjects, although female students remain underrepresented in several subjects linked to engineering and technology careers.

A levels are completed across England, Northern Ireland and Wales. In Scotland, the equivalent qualification is Highers, which are covered later in this document

Subject entries

STEM subject entries – proportion of entries

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Biology	8.5%	8.6%	8.4%	8.1%	8.2%
Chemistry	6.9%	7.1%	7.1%	7.2%	7.2%
Computing	1.8%	2.1%	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%
Design and Technology	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Digital Technology*	-	0.2	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Economics	4.3%	4.5%	4.6%	4.8%	5.2%
Environmental Science*	-	-	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Life & Health Science (Double Award)*	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Life & Health Science (Single Award)*	-	-	-	0.1	0.1%
Mathematics	11.3%	11.2%	12.1%	12.7%	12.7%
Mathematics (Further)	1.8%	1.7%	2%	2.2%	2.3%
Other sciences**	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	-
Physics	4.7%	4.4%	4.9%	5.1%	5.1%
Statistics*	-	-	-	0.1%	0.1%

*Digital technology, environmental science, statistics, and life & health science both double and single award were not included in the data published by JCQ in the years with blank cells.

**Other sciences is no longer included in the data, in favour of the separate subjects

- With 12.7% of all A level entries, Maths is once again the most popular subject in 2026. It matches its percentage share of all entries in 2025
- STEM subjects make up 4 out of the top 5 most popular subjects at A level, and 5 of the top 10. STEM subjects account for just under half (44.7%) of all A level entries in 2026
- The most popular STEM subjects are Maths (1st), Biology (3rd), Chemistry (4th), Economics (5th) and Physics (8th).
- Economics has risen from 4.8% in 2025 to 5.2% in 2026. It is now the 5th most popular subject, up from 10th in 2025

STEM subjects entries changes 2025 to 2026

Subjects	2025	2026	% change
Biology	71,400	73,925	3.5%
Chemistry	63,538	65,541	3.2%
Computing	19,796	20,009	1.1%
Design and Technology	10,576	10,874	2.8%
Digital Technology	959	1,042	8.7%
Economics	42,667	47,157	10.5%
Environmental Science	2,392	2,521	5.4%
Life & Health Science (Double Award)	288	224	-22.2%
Life & Health Science (Single Award)	614	643	4.7%
Mathematics	111,033	115,380	3.9%
Mathematics (Further)	19,390	21,032	8.5%
Physics	44,957	45,800	1.9%
Statistics	1,105	1,140	3.2%

- Alongside an increase in overall entries, all but one STEM subjects saw an increase in entries between 2025 and 2026
- STEM subjects saw an average increase of 4.3%
- There are notable increases in Economics (+10.5%), Digital Technology (+8.7%), Mathematics (Further) (+8.5%), Environmental Science (+5.4%), and Mathematics (+3.9%)
- Other subjects have seen smaller increases like Design and Technology (2.8%), which has seen two consecutive years of growth, and Computing (1.1%)
- Life and Health Science (Double Award) is the only subject to see a decline between 2025 and 2026 (-22%). However, with entries going from 288 in 2025 to 224 in 2026, in real terms this is a drop of just 64 entries

Subject results

A*-A in STEM subjects

STEM Subjects	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)
Biology	34.9%	27.0%	27.7%	28.0%	27.8%
Chemistry	39.4%	32.2%	32.7%	32.6%	32.3%
Computing	35.4%	22.2%	24.0%	25.2%	25.5%
Design and Technology	30.8%	17.9%	19.3%	19.3%	19.3%
Digital Technology*	-	23.3%	17.3%	25.0%	26.8%
Economics	38.3%	29.3%	30.2%	29.7%	30.2%
Environmental Science*	-	-	15.1%	14%	14.7%
Life & Health Science (Double Award)*	-	-	-	14.6%	17.0%
Life & Health Science (Single Award)*	-	-	-	9.4%	8.7%
Mathematics	48.2%	41.9%	42.0%	42.0%	42.5%
Mathematics (Further)	67.8%	58.5%	58.4%	58.2%	58.9%
Physics	39.5%	31.7%	31.9%	32.1%	32.5%
Statistics*	-	-	-	14.9%	12.5%

*Digital technology, environmental science, statistics, and life & health science both double and single award were not included in the data published by JCQ in the years with blank cells.

- A*-A attainment has remained largely stable across most STEM subjects
- Maths continued to have the highest A*-A attainment rate, with a slight increase since 2025 (+0.5%p)
- Digital Technology has shown the strongest year-on-year growth between 2025-2026 (+1.8%p) continuing its uptick from 2024
- Statistics (-2.4%p) and Life & Health Science (single award) (-0.7%p) and have seen slight declines since 2025

A*-C in STEM subjects

STEM Subjects	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)
Biology	76.0%	68.6%	69.8%	71.8%	72.3%
Chemistry	76.3%	71.6%	73.5%	73.9%	74.6%
Computing	76.5%	65.8%	67.1%	70.2%	70.7%
Design and Technology	81.1%	68.9%	71.4%	71.9%	74.1%
Digital Technology*	-	73.3%	69.2%	76.3%	80.9%
Economics	86.0%	80.2%	81.3%	82.5%	83.0%
Environmental Science*	-	-	62.5%	62.9%	65.2%
Life & Health Science (Double Award)*	-	-	-	74.3%	85.7%
Life & Health Science (Single Award)*	-	-	-	67.1%	66.4%
Mathematics	80.5%	76.5%	76.7%	78.4%	78.2%
Mathematics (Further)	92.2%	88.5%	89.8%	89.6%	90.8%
Physics	77.6%	69.3%	69.7%	71.7%	73.2%
Statistics*	-	-	-	59.6%	57.6%

*Digital technology, environmental science, statistics, and life & health science both double and single award were not included in the data published by JCQ in the years with blank cells.

- A*-C attainment has increased in 11 of the 13 STEM subjects between 2025 and 2026
- Digital Technology recorded the largest increase, rising from 76.3% to 80.9%
- All three sciences increased and continued their recent growth trend - Physics (+1.5%p), Chemistry (+0.7%p), and Biology (+0.5%p)
- Statistics (-2%p) and Life & Health Science (single award) (-0.5%p) have seen slight declines in A* - C, driven by the A*/A decline

STEM subjects vs. non-STEM subjects – A*-A

	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)	2024 to 2026 (%p)	2025 to 2026 (%p)
STEM	34.2%	34.3%	34.6%	0.6%p	0.3%p
Non-STEM	23%	23.5%	23.5%	0.4%p	0%p
All Subjects	27.8%	28.3%	28.5%	0.7%p	0.2%p

- Over one-third (34.6%) of STEM entries resulted in a A*-A grade in 2026– considerably higher than in non-STEM subjects (23.4%) and across all subjects (28.5%)
- Since 2025 STEM subjects have recorded a modest increase in A*-A attainment (0.3%p) a continuous increase since 2024
- Non-STEM attainment has also seen a very modest increase of 0.2%p

STEM subjects vs. non-STEM subjects – A*-C

	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)	2024 to 2026 (%p)	2025 to 2026 (%p)
STEM	73.3%	75.9%	76.6%	3.3%p	0.7%p
Non-STEM	77.9%	79.5%	79.9%	2%p	0.4%p
All Subjects	76.0%	77.9%	78.4%	2.4%p	0.5%p

- Over three quarters (76.6%) of STEM entries resulted in a A*- C grade in 2026 a slight increase from 2025 (+0.7%p)
- A*- C attainment is slightly lower for STEM subjects than non-STEM subjects (79.9%), though non-STEM subjects saw a smaller year-on-year increase (+0.4%p)

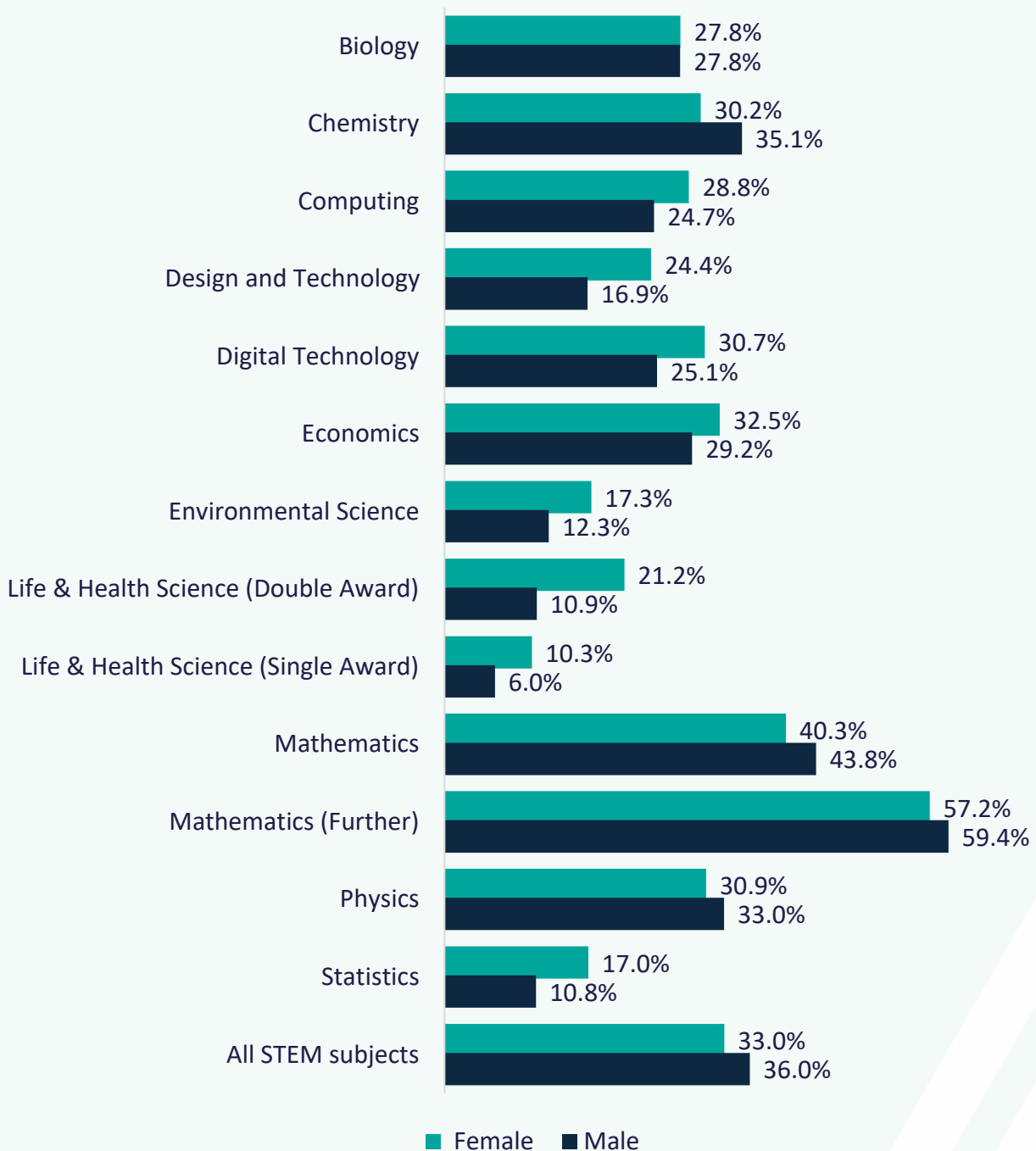
Gender

Entries by gender

Subjects	Total number of entries	Female entries	% female	Male entries	% males
Biology	73,925	48,050	65.0%	25,875	35.0%
Chemistry	65,541	37,123	56.6%	28,418	43.4%
Computing	20,009	3,782	18.9%	16,227	81.1%
Design and Technology	10,874	3,584	33.0%	7,290	67.0%
Digital Technology	1,042	316	30.3%	726	69.7%
Economics	47,157	14,308	30.3%	32,849	69.7%
Environmental Science	2,521	1,219	48.4%	1,302	51.6%
Life & Health Science (Double Award)	224	132	58.9%	92	41.1%
Life & Health Science (Single Award)	643	408	63.5%	235	36.5%
Mathematics	11,5380	42,761	37.1%	72,619	62.9%
Mathematics (Further)	21,032	5,550	26.4%	15,482	73.6%
Physics	45,800	10,854	23.7%	34,946	76.3%
Statistics	1,140	324	28.4%	816	71.6%
All STEM subjects	402,767	167,192	41.5%	235,575	58.5%

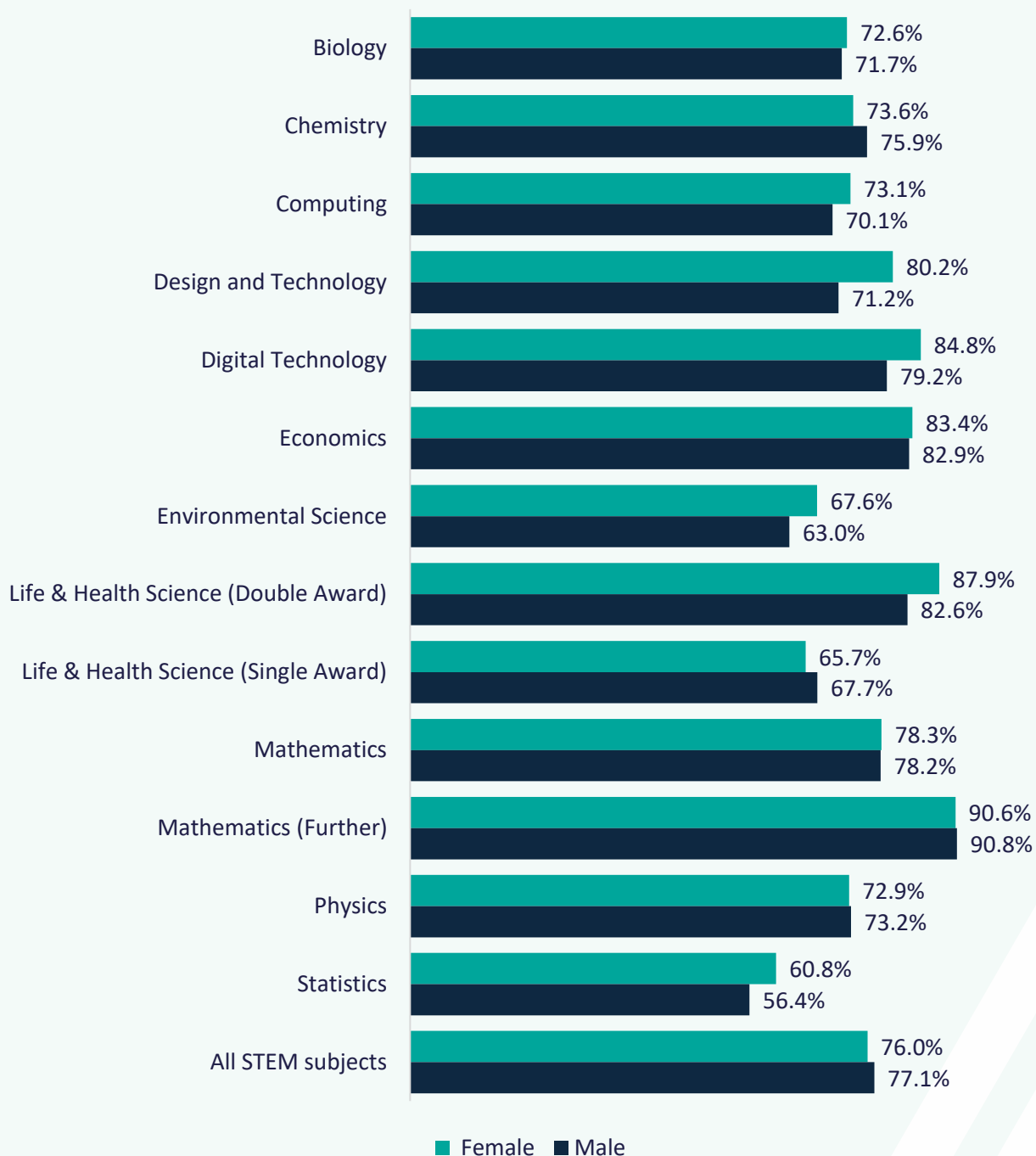
- For the majority of STEM subjects, the number of entries is higher for male students than female students
- The only STEM subjects where entries for female students are higher are in Biology (65% vs. 35%), Chemistry (56.6% vs. 43.4%) and Life & Health Science – both double (58.9% vs. 41.1%) and single award (63.5% vs. 36.5%)
- The gender gap between male and female students is particularly large in Computing (81.1% vs. 18.9%) and Physics (76.3% vs. 23.7%), where over three quarters of all entries are by male students
- Despite the remaining large gaps, it is encouraging to see continued growth in the number of female entries for both subjects – Computing +2.8% and Physics +0.4% - as well as a 3.6% increase in D&T

A* to A grades in STEM subjects by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 9 of the 13 STEM subjects for the proportion attaining A* to A grades
- Female students outperform most in Life & Health Science Double Award (10.3%), D&T (7.9%) and Digital Technology (5.6%)
- Male students outperform most in Chemistry (4.9%)

A* to C grades in STEM subjects by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 9 of the 13 STEM subjects for the proportion attaining A* to C grades, with outperformance matching the subjects for A*/A

Scottish Higher results 2026

Introduction

2026 is the third year where Scottish Higher assessments have remained the same since the Covid-19 pandemic. This improves consistency and comparability between 2024, 2025 and 2026.

In 2026, the Scottish Qualifications Authority was replaced by a new national awarding body, Qualifications Scotland. This change did not affect the 2026 exam series. However, future reforms are expected with changes to assessment arrangements. Proposed changes include shorter exam papers and more time for students to answer questions.

Subject entries

STEM subjects entries

Subject	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Mathematics	9.6%	9.8%	9.4%	9.7%	9.5%
Chemistry	5.1%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	4.8%
Physics	4.3%	4.2%	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%
Human Biology	3.7%	3.7%	3.8%	3.6%	3.6%
Applications of Mathematics	0.5%	0.8%	1.5%	2.3%	3.4%
Biology	3.9%	3.7%	3.6%	3.5%	3.2%
Administration and IT	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.6%	2.7%
Computing Science	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%
Design and Manufacture	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
Engineering Science	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%
Health and Food Technology	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Economics	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Fashion and Textile Technology	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Environmental Science	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

- Mathematics continues to be the most popular STEM subject for Scottish Higher entries with 9.5% of all Higher starts being in Mathematics. Mathematics is also the second most popular subject overall.

- Applications of Mathematics¹ has seen the largest percentage share of entries increase of all subjects, increasing from 2.3% in 2025 to 3.4% in 2026. This has also moved it from the 15th most popular subject overall to 10th most popular subject.
- 5 of the top 10 subjects are STEM subjects: Mathematics (2nd), Chemistry (5th), Physics (8th), Human Biology (9th) and Applications of Mathematics (10th)

STEM subjects entries changes 2025 to 2026

Subjects	2025	2026	% change
Applications of Mathematics	4,680	7,025	50%
Economics	910	1,085	19%
Health and Food Technology	1,330	1,545	16%
Engineering Science	1,400	1,615	15%
Fashion and Textile Technology	345	385	12%
Administration and IT	5,250	5,545	6%
Physics	8,560	8,665	1%
Human Biology	7,320	7,400	1%
Computing Science	3,960	3,990	1%
Mathematics	19,705	19,740	0%
Chemistry	10,120	9,990	-1%
Design and Manufacture	1,940	1,850	-5%
Biology	7,010	6,660	-5%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	60	50	-17%
Environmental Science	490	295	-40%

- The number of entries for Applications of Mathematics has increased by 50% between 2025 and 2026 (4,680 to 7,025). This is the largest year on year increase of all subjects. This subject has increased by 707% since 2022 (870 to 7,025)
- 10 out of 15 STEM subjects have seen an increase in entries between 2025 and 2026.

¹ Application of Mathematic can be studied alongside or instead of maths. Learners develop knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to apply mathematical ideas and strategies in real-life situations. These include managing finances, statistics, data and probability, geometry and measurement.

Subject results

Grade A in STEM subjects

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Administration and IT	34.8%	32.6%	31.0%	33.4%	31.8%
Applications of Mathematics	23.6%	24.8%	19.5%	15.6%	16.4%
Biology	30.4%	34.4%	27.9%	29.1%	32.7%
Chemistry	34.9%	32.6%	29.7%	32.0%	32.9%
Computing Science	36.0%	36.4%	38.3%	42.2%	45.2%
Design and Manufacture	17.5%	12.3%	11.0%	14.7%	16.2%
Economics	50.0%	37.6%	44.3%	45.6%	46.1%
Engineering Science	27.4%	23.7%	21.9%	26.1%	35.6%
Environmental Science	20.2%	13.7%	7.0%	12.2%	16.9%
Fashion and Textile Technology	19.4%	11.4%	16.9%	17.4%	18.2%
Health and Food Technology	16.5%	12.2%	19.9%	10.9%	14.2%
Human Biology	28.3%	29.6%	23.3%	26.2%	30.3%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	33.3%	37.5%	42.9%	33.3%	10.0%
Mathematics	45.9%	38.9%	40.4%	41.2%	37.6%
Physics	37.0%	34.1%	28.9%	27.7%	28.8%
All STEM Subjects	35.8%	33.0%	30.8%	31.7%	31.7%

- Just under a third (31.7%) of all entries to STEM subjects resulted in an A grade.
- 12 out of 15 saw an increase in the proportion of entries resulting in an A grade.
- The largest percentage point increases are in Engineering Science (+9.5%p), Environmental Science (+4.7%p) and Human Biology (+4.1%p)
- The only dips were in Matamataig (Mathematics) (-23.3%p), Mathematics (-3.6%p), and Administration and IT (-1.6%p). However, the large Matamataig (Mathematics) drop is explained by only having 50 entries in total, so small changes in numbers can result in large percentage changes.

Grade A-C in STEM subjects

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Administration and IT	80.1%	79.9%	75.8%	79.0%	78.3%
Applications of Mathematics	69.0%	73.7%	60.4%	64.3%	62.6%
Biology	75.3%	75.4%	70.6%	69.3%	71.8%
Chemistry	78.3%	77.8%	74.3%	76.1%	75.9%
Computing Science	71.2%	69.8%	72.8%	75.5%	78.2%
Design and Manufacture	67.5%	54.8%	51.6%	59.0%	62.2%
Economics	81.4%	74.2%	75.7%	80.2%	78.3%
Engineering Science	69.2%	63.9%	62.4%	61.4%	74.0%
Environmental Science	68.8%	59.8%	53.9%	52.0%	61.0%
Fashion and Textile Technology	72.2%	71.4%	83.1%	81.2%	76.6%
Health and Food Technology	67.9%	62.2%	66.1%	54.1%	62.8%
Human Biology	72.2%	71.0%	64.5%	68.4%	69.8%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	77.8%	75.0%	71.4%	66.7%	50.0%
Mathematics	75.3%	73.2%	72.7%	73.9%	73.6%
Physics	77.9%	77.2%	75.7%	73.7%	74.3%
All STEM subjects	75.2%	73.5%	70.8%	72.0%	72.5%

- 8 out of 15 subjects have seen an increase in the proportion of entries resulting in a C grade or above between 2025 and 2026.
- The largest percentage point increases are in Engineering Science (+12.6%p), Environmental Science (+9%p) and Health and Food Technology (+8.6%p)
- The biggest drops were in Matamataig (Mathematics) (-16.7%p), Fashion and Textile Technology (-4.5%p) and Economics (-1.9%p). Again, Matamataig (Mathematics) has very small entries which can cause high variation year on year.

STEM subjects vs. non-STEM subjects – A Grade

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
STEM	35.8%	33.0%	30.8%	31.7%	31.7%
Non-STEM	34.3%	32.7%	30.0%	30.3%	30.4%
All Subjects	34.8%	32.8%	30.3%	30.8%	30.9%

- Just under a third of STEM entries result in an A grade (31.7%)
- The proportion of STEM entries resulting in an A grade is slightly higher than non-STEM subjects and all subjects
- The proportion of entries to STEM subjects resulting in an A grade has remained in line with 2025

STEM subjects vs. non-STEM subjects – A to C grade

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
STEM	75.2%	73.5%	70.8%	72.0%	72.5%
Non-STEM	80.9%	79.0%	77.1%	78.1%	79.1%
All Subjects	78.9%	77.1%	74.9%	75.9%	76.7%

- There has been a +0.5%p increase in the proportion of entries to STEM subjects resulting in an A to C grade, although this is lower than the increase for non-STEM (+1%p) subjects.
- The proportion of entries to STEM subjects resulting in an A to C grade is below non-STEM subjects and all subjects.

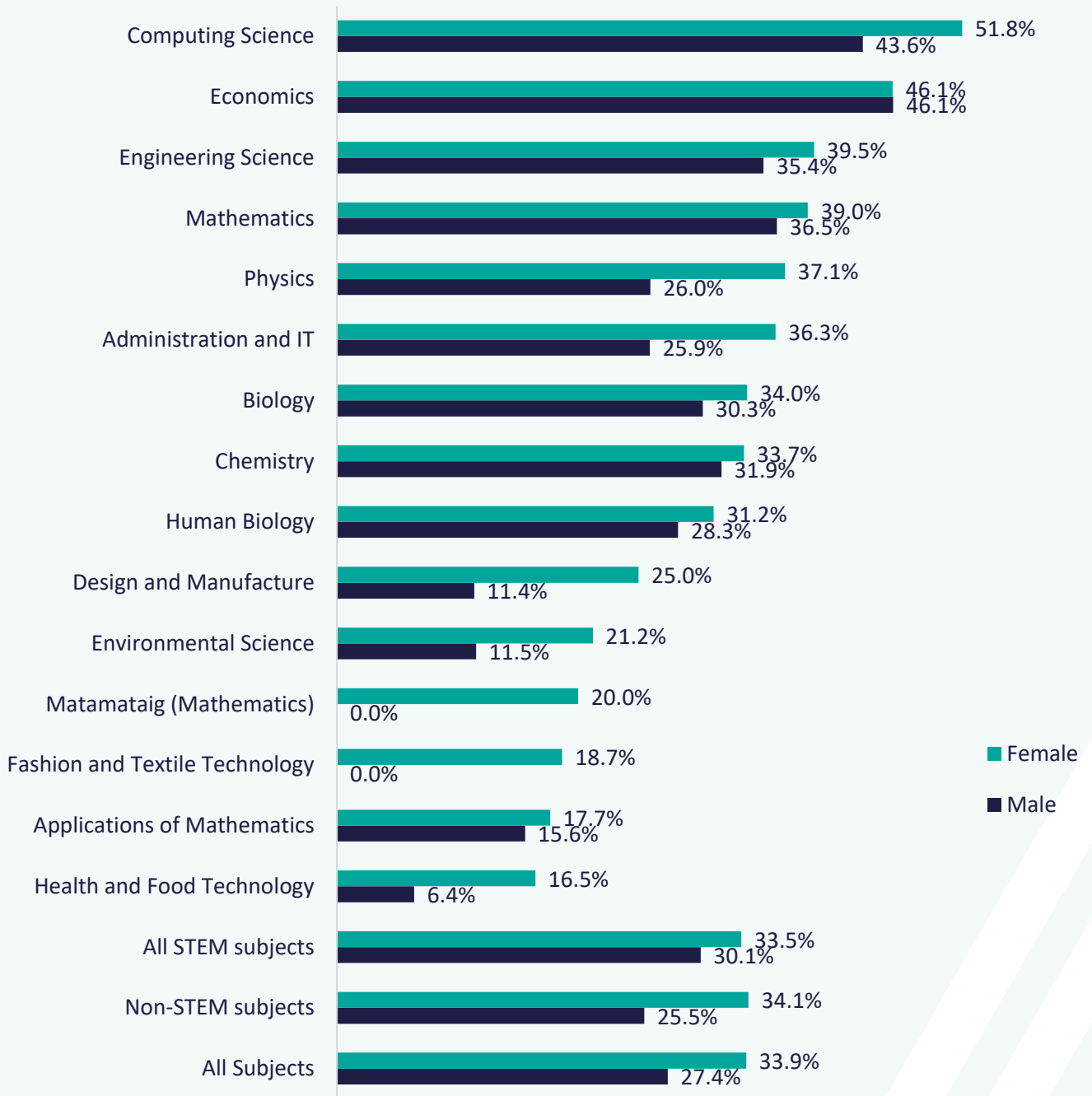
Gender

Entries by gender

Subject	All entries	Female entries	% of entries female	Male entries	% of entries male
Administration and IT	5,545	3,150	57%	2,390	43%
Applications of Mathematics	7,025	2,915	41%	4,105	58%
Biology	6,660	4,280	64%	2,375	36%
Chemistry	9,990	5,410	54%	4,580	46%
Computing Science	3,990	830	21%	3,155	79%
Design and Manufacture	1,850	620	34%	1,230	66%
Economics	1,085	380	35%	705	65%
Engineering Science	1,615	215	13%	1,400	87%
Environmental Science	295	165	56%	130	44%
Fashion and Textile Technology	385	375	97%	10	3%
Health and Food Technology	1,545	1,155	75%	390	25%
Human Biology	7,400	5,060	68%	2,335	32%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	50	25	50%	25	50%
Mathematics	9,740	8,995	46%	0,735	54%
Physics	8,665	2,195	25%	6,470	75%
STEM subject	75,840	35,770	47%	40,035	53%
Non-STEM	132,125	75,635	57%	56,475	43%
All subjects	207,980	111,415	54%	96,520	46%

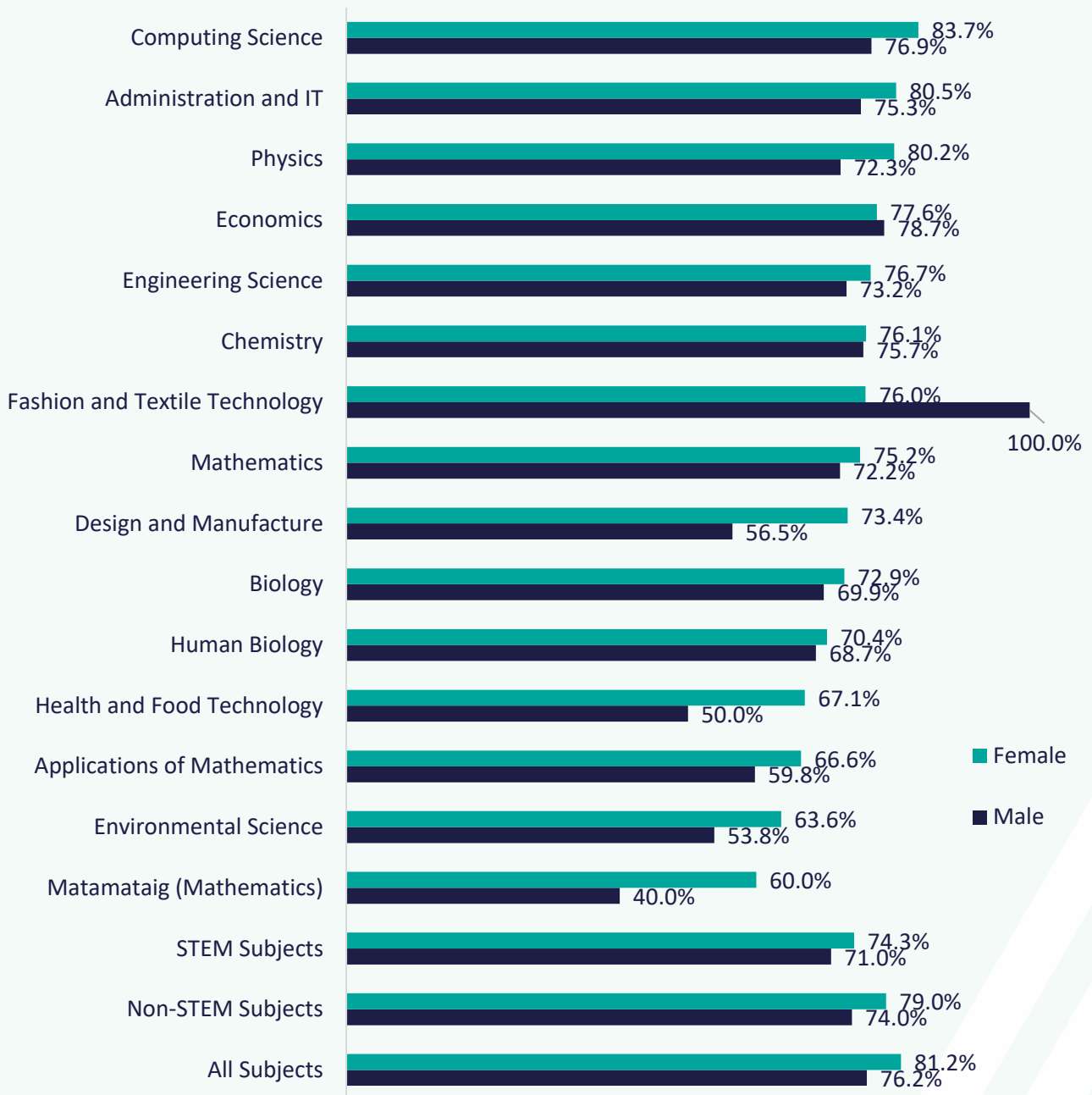
- Just under half of all entries to STEM subjects are by female students (47%)
- The subjects with the largest female to male split are Fashion and Textile Technology (97% to 3%), Health and Food Technology (75% to 25%) and Human Biology (68% to 32%)
- The subjects with the largest male to female split are Engineering Science (87% to 13%), Computing Science (79% to 21%) and Physics (75% to 25%)

A grade in STEM subjects by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 14 out of 15 STEM subjects for proportion of entries resulting in an A grade
- The largest % differences are in Matamataig (Mathematics) (20% to 0%), Fashion and Textile Technology (18.7% to 0%) and Design and Manufacture (25% to 11.4%)
- Large differences in attainment by gender may be partly explained by small cohort sizes in certain subjects, making percentages more sensitive to variation

A to C grade in STEM subjects by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 13 out of 15 STEM subjects for proportion of entries resulting in an C grade or above
- The largest % difference between female and male students is in Matamataig (Mathematics) (60% v 40%), Health and Food Technology (67.1% v 50%) and Design and Manufacture (73.4% v 56.5%)
- The largest % difference between male and female students is in Fashion and Textile Technology (100% v 76%).
- Differences in attainment by gender may be partly explained by small cohort sizes in certain subjects, making percentages more sensitive to variation