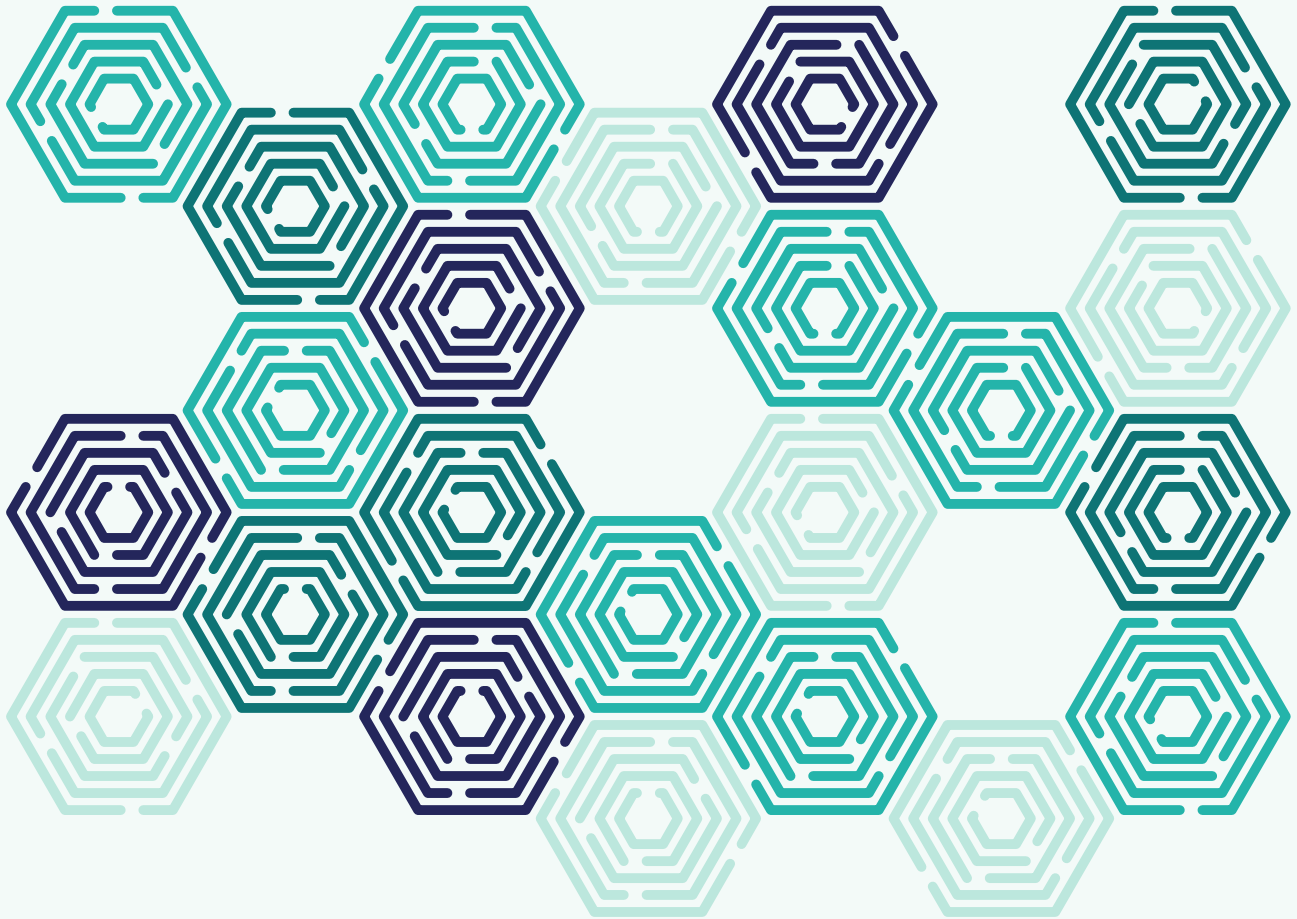




EngineeringUK

INSPIRING FUTURES TOGETHER



LEVEL 2 RESULTS: GCSE, VTQ AND NATIONAL 5

August 2026

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GCSE results 2026

Introduction

For 2026, GCSE grading arrangements remained unchanged, meaning results are 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 demographic breakdowns beyond gender.

The 2026 GCSE cohort is larger than in 2025, with increases in entries for several STEM subjects. Mathematics and Science: Double Award continue to account for the largest proportions of entries, reflecting their status as core subjects. Among optional STEM subjects, Statistics recorded the largest percentage increase in entries for the third consecutive year. Attainment at both grade 7/A and above and grade 4/C and above remained broadly stable across STEM subjects overall.

GCSEs are the main Level 2 qualifications taken by young people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They play an important role in progression to further education, apprenticeships and future careers. This section examines participation and attainment in STEM subjects, including differences between STEM and non-STEM subjects and patterns by gender. The report also includes analysis of Level 1 and 2 vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) and Scottish National 5s later in the document

Subject entries

STEM subject entries – proportion of entries

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Science: Double Award**	15.8%	15.8%	15.9%	16.4%	16.3%
Mathematics	13.7%	13.7%	13.7%	14.8%	14.7%
Geography	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%	4.8%
Biology	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	2.9%	2.9%
Chemistry	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	2.8%	2.8%
Physics	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	2.8%	2.8%
Computing	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
Design & Technology	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%
Statistics	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%
Mathematics: Numeracy	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%
Science	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Economics	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Digital Technology*	-	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Mathematics (Additional)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Engineering	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Astronomy*	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Electronics*	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Agriculture & Land Use*	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Geology*	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%

*Where cells are blank, data was not available for these subjects in these years

**Science: Double Award counts for 2 entries per student

- Entries to STEM subjects have remained broadly stable in 2026
- Compulsory subjects like Science: Double Award (16.3%) and Mathematics (14.7%) continue to be the STEM subjects with the highest proportion of entries
- Despite continuous increases over the previous 4 years, Science: Double award percentage share of entries has slightly fallen slightly (-0.1%) as overall entries also increased

STEM subjects entries changes 2025 to 2026

Subject	2025	2026	% change
Agriculture & Land Use	499	513	2.8%
Astronomy	1,388	1,023	-26.3%
Biology	183,539	180,769	-1.5%
Chemistry	174,088	171,024	-1.8%
Computing	91,619	85,096	-7.1%
Construction	1,484	1,496	0.8%
Design & Technology	86,307	84,320	-2.3%
Digital Technology	6,992	6,445	-7.8%
Economics	7,608	7,622	0.2%
Electronics	937	827	-11.7%
Engineering	2,476	2,250	-9.1%
Geography	302,706	299,306	-1.1%
Geology	522	500	-4.2%
Mathematics	893,198	912,410	2.2%
Mathematics (Additional)	4,463	4,520	1.3%
Mathematics: Numeracy	23,772	18,417	-22.5%
Physics	173,227	170,583	-1.5%
Science	8,717	8,933	2.5%
Science: Double Award*	989,264	1,007,628	1.9%
Statistics	34,879	38,770	11.2%

* Science: Double Award counts for 2 entries per student

- Entries increased in 8 of the 20 STEM subjects
- For the third consecutive year Statistics recorded the largest percentage increase of any STEM subject (+11.2%)
- Other increases between 2025 and 2026 were in Agriculture & Land Use (+2.8%), Science (+2.5%), Mathematics (+2.2%), and Science: Double Award (+1.9%)
- The largest percentage decreases were in Astronomy (-26.3%), Mathematic: Numeracy (-22.5%), Electronics (-11.7%) and Engineering (-9.1%)
- The increases in Science: Double (award) (+1.9%) have been mirrored in declines in entries to Chemistry (-1.8%), Biology (-1.5%) and Physics (-1.5%). This indicates a continuation of schools and/or students opting for double over triple science

Subject results

Results of GCSEs in England are graded on a numerical scale from 9 to 1. Grades 7 and above are broadly equivalent to A and A* under the previous system, while a grade 4 is broadly in line with a C and deemed a standard pass. Wales and Northern Ireland retain the alphabetical system with A* the top grade awarded.

7/A and above in STEM subjects

Subject	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)
Agriculture & Land Use*	-	-	-	22.8	23.8
Astronomy*	-	-	-	33.1	26.3
Biology	50	42.4	42.2	43.5	43.6
Chemistry	50	44	44.9	46.1	47.1
Computing	34.1	24.6	28.3	29.6	29.9
Construction	34.8	29.4	26.2	30.2	29.9
Design & Technology	26.8	21.1	22.3	22.9	22.8
Digital Technology*	-	28	24.2	27.7	28.5
Economics	43.5	32.3	32	33.1	34.3
Electronics*	-	-	-	62.2	56.6
Engineering	23.6	15.8	15	18.2	18.1
Geography	30.8	24.9	24.9	25.2	25.5
Geology*	-	-	-	58.6	60.6
Mathematics	20.1	17.5	16.9	16.6	17.0
Mathematics (Additional)	67.4	64.1	58.3	59.6	58.7
Mathematics: Numeracy	18.7	16.6	13	13.6	11.9
Physics	50.6	43.4	44.2	45.2	46.1
Science	8.5	7.6	4.6	5.8	5.8
Science: Double Award	10.7	8.9	9.1	9.3	9.4
Statistics	28	20.5	20	21.0	22.6

*Where cells are blank, data was not available for these subjects in these years

- Attainment at Grade 7/A or above has remained broadly stable across STEM subjects
- There were increases in 13 of the 20 STEM subjects
- Subjects with the largest increases between 2025 and 2026 were Geology (+2%p), Statistics (+1.6%p), Economics (+1.3%) and Chemistry (+1%p)

- The largest decreases were seen in Astronomy (-6.6%pp), Electronics (-5.6%p), and Mathematics: Numeracy (-1.7%p)
- Attainment at 7/A Mathematics has increased slightly (+0.4%p) following 2 years of decline, while Science: Double Award (+0.1%p) increased for the third consecutive year

4/C and above in STEM Subjects

Subject	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)
Agriculture & Land Use*	-	-	-	78.4	79.1
Astronomy*	-	-	-	73.4	67.5
Biology	92	89.6	89.3	89.4	89.6
Chemistry	93	89.8	90.5	91.5	92.0
Computing	75.3	64.8	68.4	69.3	70.6
Construction	87.9	81.5	76.3	80.7	81.2
Design & Technology	72	65.6	66.2	67.1	66.9
Digital Technology*	-	70.4	65.8	69.4	70.7
Economics	87	80.3	80.7	82.2	82.9
Electronics*	-	-	-	84.1	85.5
Engineering	71.3	57.4	55.2	61.5	64.0
Geography	72.7	65.6	65.6	65.7	66.1
Geology*	-	-	-	88.7	91.2
Mathematics	65	61.1	59.5	58.3	57.3
Mathematics (Additional)	97.8	96	94.7	95.0	94.5
Mathematics: Numeracy	59.6	55.4	52.3	52.1	49.4
Physics	93.8	90.2	90.3	90.9	91.6
Science	68	61.5	56.9	58.8	57.4
Science: Double Award	60.9	57.1	57.3	57.8	58.3
Statistics	77.8	71	70.3	71.1	72.3

*Where cells are blank, data was not available for these subjects in these years

- There have been increases in 14 out of 20 STEM subjects in attainment 4/C or above
- The largest increases were in Engineering (+2.5%p), Geology (+2.5%p) and Electronics (+1.4%p)
- The largest decreases were in Astronomy (-5.9%p), Mathematics: Numeracy (-2.7%p), and Science (-1.4%p)

STEM vs. non-STEM subjects – 7/A and above

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
STEM	24.2%	20.9%	20.8%	20.8%	21.0%
Non-STEM	27.9%	22.7%	22.7%	23.0%	22.9%
All Subjects	26.3%	21.8%	21.8%	21.9%	22.0%

- Around a fifth of all entries in STEM subjects (21%) resulted in a 7/A or above, which is slightly lower than for non-STEM subjects (22.9%)
- Attainment at grade 7/A or above has remained relatively stable with a very slight increase STEM Subjects (+0.1%), while there has been a similar negative drop for non-STEM subject (-0.1%)

STEM vs. non-STEM subjects – 4/C and above

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
STEM	70.5%	65.9%	65.8%	65.5%	65.4%
Non-STEM	75.4%	69.1%	69.3%	69.1%	69.1%
All Subjects	73.2%	67.6%	67.6%	67.4%	67.3%

- Just under two thirds (65.4%) of STEM subject entries in 2026 resulted in a 4/C grade or above. This is lower than for non-STEM subjects where just under 70% of entries result in a 4/C
- 2026 has seen results remain broadly in line with 2025 for the proportion of entries resulting in a 4/C grade across STEM, non-STEM and all subjects

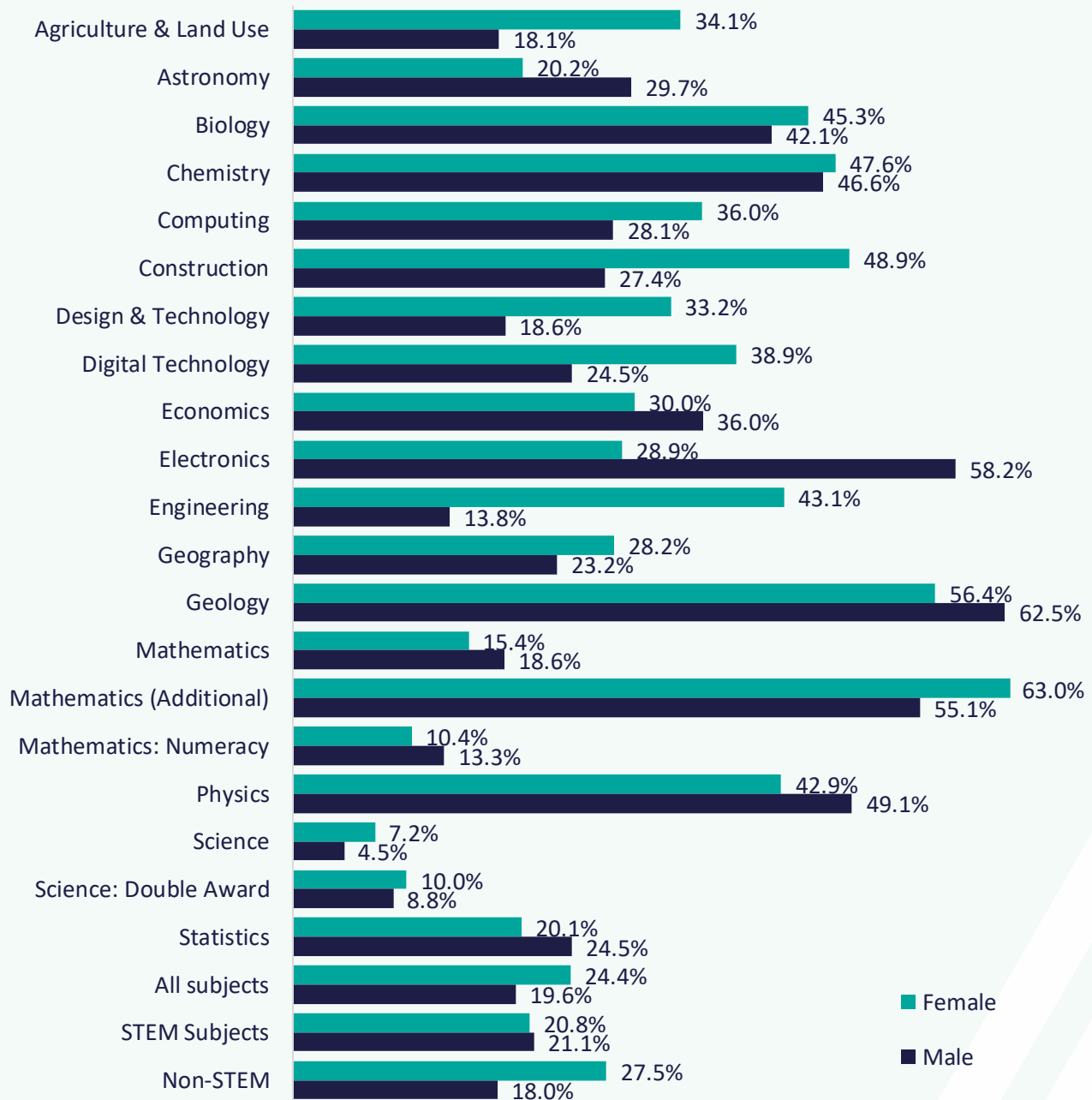
Gender

Entries by gender

Subjects	Total entries	Female	% Female	Male	% Male
Agriculture & Land Use	513	182	35.5%	331	64.5%
Astronomy	1,023	367	35.9%	656	64.1%
Biology	180,769	88,941	49.2%	91,828	50.8%
Chemistry	171,024	83,235	48.7%	87,789	51.3%
Computing	85,096	19,392	22.8%	65,704	77.2%
Construction	1,496	174	11.6%	1,322	88.4%
Design & Technology	84,320	24,191	28.7%	60,129	71.3%
Digital Technology	6,445	1,770	27.5%	4,675	72.5%
Economics	7,622	2,173	28.5%	5,449	71.5%
Electronics	827	45	5.4%	782	94.6%
Engineering	2,250	334	14.8%	1,916	85.2%
Geography	299,306	135,863	45.4%	163,443	54.6%
Geology	500	156	31.2%	344	68.8%
Mathematics	912,410	458,058	50.2%	454,352	49.8%
Mathematics (Additional)	4,520	2,106	46.6%	2,414	53.4%
Mathematics: Numeracy	18,417	9,191	49.9%	9,226	50.1%
Physics	170,583	82,105	48.1%	88,478	51.9%
Science	8,933	4,280	47.9%	4,653	52.1%
Science: Double Award	1,007,628	499,742	49.6%	507,886	50.4%
Statistics	38,770	16,627	42.9%	22,143	57.1%
STEM subjects	3,002,452	1,428,932	47.6%	1,573,520	52.4%

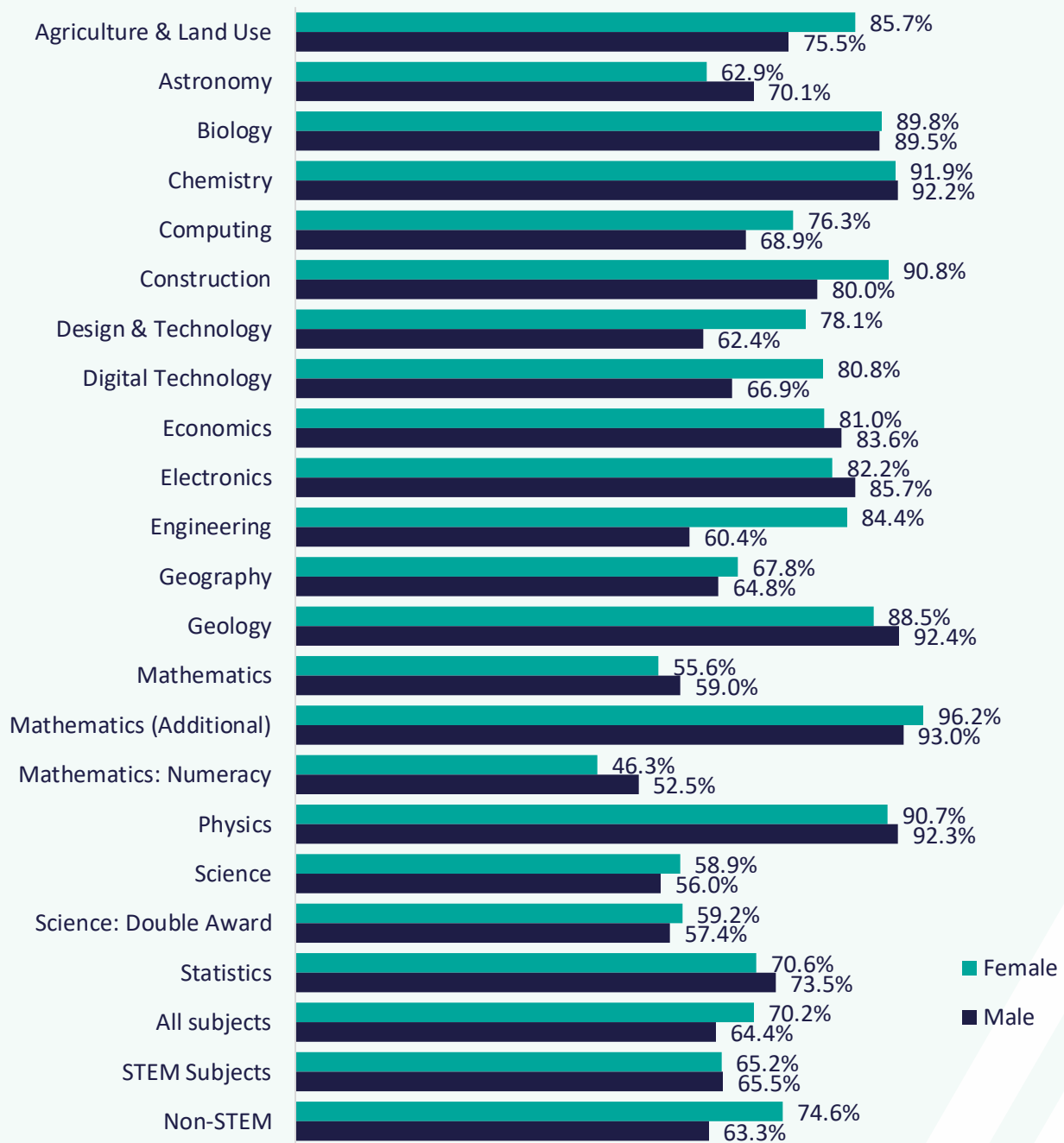
- Male students outnumber female students in 19 of the 20 STEM subjects in 2026
- As expected, for some of the compulsory subjects the gender split is a lot less defined, with only marginal difference in core science and mathematics qualifications
- The largest imbalances are found in Electronics (94.6% vs 5.4%), Construction (88.4% vs. 11.6%), and Engineering (85.2% vs. 14.8%)

Grades 7/A and above in STEM subjects by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 12 out of 20 STEM subjects in attaining a grade 7/A or above
- But across the average of all STEM subjects, the difference is very small, in favour of male students (21.1% compared to 20.8%)
- The subjects with the biggest overperformance of female students compared to male students are Engineering (+29.3%p), Construction (+21.5%p), and Agriculture & Land Use (+15.9%p)
- Male students outperform female students in electronics (+29.3%p), Astronomy (+9.6%), Physics (+6.2%p) and Statistics (+4.4%p)

Grade C/4 and above in STEM subjects by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 11 out of 20 STEM subjects in attaining a grade 4/C or above
- But across the average of all STEM subjects, the difference is very small, in favour of male students (65.5% compared to 65.2%)
- The subjects with the biggest overperformance of female students compared to male students are Engineering (+24.0%p), Design & Technology (+15.7%p) and Digital Technology (+13.9%p)
- Male students outperform female students in Astronomy (+7.2%), Mathematics: Numeracy (+6.2%p) and Geology (+4.0%p)

Level 1 and 2 Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) 2026

Overall number of VTQ results awarded

In total 445,349 results were awarded in level 1 and 2 VTQs in 2026 across 308 qualifications. Most awards were for small sized VTQs:

Size	Guided learning hours	GCSE equivalence	Awards in 2026
Small	Up to 180	~1 to 1.5 GCSEs	384,120
Medium	181-599	~2 to 5 GCSEs	59,358
Large	600+	~6+ GCSEs	1,871

Engineering and technology VTQ results awarded

There were 113,061 awards for engineering and technology subjects. Most of these were for small qualifications, though for Construction, Planning and the Built Environment these were more likely to be medium. Overall, engineering and technology VTQs made up 25% of all awards, but 57% of medium and 69% of large. Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies make up the vast majority of these, with 1,293 awards in large sized qualifications.

	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	33,107	8,254	1,293	42,654
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	22,876	24,705	c*	47,581
Digital Technology	22,145	681	0	22,826
All engineering and tech	78,128	33,640	1,293	113,061

*The number of large qualifications for Construction, Planning and the Built Environment was low enough to be suppressed

VTQ attainment

VTQs data covers a large range of qualifications. As well as the different sizes, there are different award structures and grading scales. Overall, 68,840 (15%) were awarded an A/Distinction equivalent and above.

Scottish National 5 results 2026

Introduction

National 5 exams are the Scottish equivalent of GCSEs in the rest of the UK. This is the third successive year where full assessments have returned, making comparability between 2024, 2025 and 2026 possible.

The biggest changes since 2025 are in practical National 5 subjects, including two STEM subjects: Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking. These subjects removed written exams and replaced them with continuous, hands-on classroom coursework and practical tasks.

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 proposed to include a reduced emphasis on end of year exams towards continuous assessments. This will result in a shortening of exam papers, reducing overall marks, or shifting the grade weight away from end of year exams towards coursework.

Notes on subject options in Scotland

In 2017, Application of Mathematics was introduced as an option for young people in Scotland. This subject explores the applications of mathematical techniques and skills in everyday situations, including financial matters, statistics, and measurement. It can be studied alongside or instead of Mathematics.

There are a few subjects that can be studied in Scottish as well as English. In STEM, there are three: Cruinn-eòlas (Geography), Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics) and Matamataig (Mathematics).

It is also important to note that science subjects (biology, chemistry and physics) are not compulsory subjects in the same way that science is in the rest of the UK.

Subject entries

STEM subject entries as a proportion of all entries

Subject	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Mathematics	12.3%	11.7%	11.2%	10.4%	9.9%
Applications of Mathematics	4.6%	5.9%	7.4%	8.3%	8.8%
Biology	7.3%	7.1%	6.8%	6.6%	6.6%
Chemistry	5.0%	4.8%	4.8%	4.6%	4.4%
Physics	4.3%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
Practical Woodworking	2.3%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	2.9%
Geography	3.3%	3.2%	3.0%	3.0%	2.7%
Computing Science	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%
Administration and IT	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%
Design and Manufacture	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%
Engineering Science	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Practical Metalworking	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Health and Food Technology	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Practical Electronics	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Fashion and Textile Technology	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Economics	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Environmental Science	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cruinn-eòlas (Geography)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

- Mathematics remains the most popular STEM subject, though entries have declined for the third consecutive year. The decline in mathematics aligns with the emergence of applications of mathematics.
- Application of mathematics continues to grow and has increased its percentage share from 8.3% to 8.8% in 2026. It is the fastest growing subject at National 5 with a 4.2%p increase since 2022.
- Half of the 10 most popular subjects in 2026 were STEM subjects: mathematics (9.9%), applications of mathematics (8.8%), biology (6.6%), chemistry (4.4%) and physics (4.1%).

STEM subject entry changes 2025 to 2026

Subject	2025	2026	% change
Administration and IT	5350	5375	0.5%
Applications of Mathematics	27655	30045	8.6%
Biology	22090	22285	0.9%
Chemistry	15210	15070	-0.9%
Computing Science	6585	6445	-2.1%
Cruinn-eòlas (Geography)	30	25	-16.7%
Design and Manufacture	3990	3790	-5.0%
Economics	510	615	20.6%
Engineering Science	2135	2155	0.9%
Environmental Science	350	170	-51.4%
Fashion and Textile Technology	680	760	11.8%
Geography	10025	9215	-8.1%
Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics)	55	30	-45.5%
Health and Food Technology	1540	1570	1.9%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	75	85	13.3%
Mathematics	34775	33770	-2.9%
Physics	13680	13820	1.0%
Practical Electronics	825	830	0.6%
Practical Metalworking	1755	1945	10.8%
Practical Woodworking	9040	9770	8.1%

- For the second year running Economics has seen the largest increase in entries among STEM subjects – +20.6% between 2025 and 2026.
- Mathematics has declined by -2.9% in 2026, driven by Applications of Mathematics increases (+8.6%).
- There were also large increases for Matamataig (Mathematics) (+13.3%), Fashion and Textile Technology (+11.8%) and Practical Metalworking (+10.8%). It's important to highlight Matamataig (Mathematics) has small numbers of entries which can result in highly variable percentage changes year on year.
- Entries to practical subjects, like Practical Metalworking (+10.8%) and Practical Woodworking (+8.1%) have seen large increases since 2025. Practical subjects have seen some of the largest increases since 2022 with Practical Electronics (+47%), Practical Woodworking (+35%) and Practical Metalworking (+20%) all increasing. These are likely at least in part due to the move away from exams, outlined in the introduction.
- Environmental Science (-51.4%) has seen the largest decrease, although it has relatively low entries overall. Geography (-8.1%), Design and Manufacture (-5.0%) and Computing Science (-2.1%) have also seen declines. Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics) (-45.5%) and Cruinn-eòlas (Geography) (-16.7%) have also seen a large decreases entry levels are low for these subjects and are prone to high variation.

Subject results

Grade A in STEM subjects

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Administration and IT	31.1%	31.7%	34.3%	33.4%	33.8%
Applications of Mathematics	25.0%	25.2%	25.6%	29.1%	32.0%
Biology	32.6%	34.2%	28.0%	28.7%	33.2%
Chemistry	42.5%	42.5%	41.5%	45.3%	44.0%
Computing Science	40.9%	42.4%	45.1%	49.8%	41.4%
Cruinn-eòlas (Geography)	60.0%	50.0%	57.1%	33.3%	20.0%
Design and Manufacture	24.6%	22.9%	26.8%	32.1%	31.7%
Economics	71.6%	60.2%	69.7%	68.6%	73.2%
Engineering Science	57.0%	51.7%	49.3%	52.9%	52.0%
Environmental Science	17.1%	10.8%	5.4%	7.1%	8.8%
Fashion and Textile Technology	15.5%	19.0%	17.9%	27.2%	27.0%
Geography	41.5%	34.9%	37.3%	32.2%	36.0%
Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics)	-	-	-	36.4%	-
Health and Food Technology	24.1%	28.8%	21.9%	31.5%	34.4%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	42.9%	41.7%	50.0%	20.0%	23.5%
Mathematics	36.8%	28.3%	39.8%	39.7%	40.3%
Physics	34.9%	34.7%	34.4%	32.8%	31.9%
Practical Electronics	39.8%	40.9%	33.6%	32.1%	38.0%
Practical Metalworking	44.1%	41.5%	22.8%	29.3%	39.3%
Practical Woodworking	50.5%	49.4%	31.2%	36.0%	46.0%
All STEM subjects	36.2%	33.6%	34.3%	35.4%	37.1%

- There has been an improvement in the proportion of A grades in 12 of the 20 STEM subjects at National 5 level between 2025 and 2026.
- Practical Metalworking (+10%p), Practical Woodworking (+10%p) and Practical Electronics (+5.8%p) have seen the largest increases in the proportion of students attaining an A from 2025 to 2026. Again this is likely due to the shift away from end of year exams.
- Computing Science fell sharply from 2025 as the largest decrease (-8.4%p). Only Cruinn-eòlas (Geography) (-13.3%p) had a larger decline, but with very small numbers of entries there is high variation year on year.
- Physics (-0.9%p) continues its recent trend of decline, with Chemistry (-1.3%p) also declining. Biology (+4.5%p) bucked this trend with a large upshift in grade A achievements.

Grade A to C in STEM Subjects

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Administration and IT	81.0%	80.1%	80.5%	80.2%	79.7%
Applications of Mathematics	64.8%	61.9%	59.3%	62.1%	63.0%
Biology	71.9%	72.9%	64.5%	65.7%	67.1%
Chemistry	79.8%	77.9%	76.6%	79.7%	77.5%
Computing Science	78.0%	78.7%	78.8%	81.9%	75.7%
Cruinn-eòlas (Geography)	80.0%	100.0%	85.7%	83.3%	60.0%
Design and Manufacture	80.6%	76.6%	74.5%	77.6%	79.0%
Economics	92.5%	89.8%	89.9%	94.1%	93.5%
Engineering Science	85.4%	84.3%	79.8%	84.5%	84.5%
Environmental Science	64.3%	45.8%	57.0%	45.7%	41.2%
Fashion and Textile Technology	69.0%	72.2%	74.8%	77.2%	77.6%
Geography	80.5%	75.6%	76.8%	72.3%	72.7%
Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics)	-	-	40.0%	72.7%	50.0%
Health and Food Technology	79.5%	77.6%	69.6%	79.2%	82.2%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	78.6%	75.0%	83.3%	66.7%	64.7%
Mathematics	69.7%	62.4%	68.1%	69.3%	70.6%
Physics	74.0%	70.9%	73.9%	72.6%	72.3%
Practical Electronics	81.4%	86.1%	75.0%	73.9%	80.1%
Practical Metalworking	88.0%	82.7%	73.8%	80.3%	86.4%
Practical Woodworking	91.8%	90.1%	81.9%	85.4%	91.7%
All STEM subjects	74.6%	71.3%	70.3%	71.6%	72.3%

- There has been an improvement in the proportion of A to C grades in STEM subjects at National 5 level between 2025 and 2026 (+0.7%p).
- Half of all STEM subjects have increased in the proportion of entries resulting in a A-C grade between 2025 and 2026
- Some of the largest increases in the proportion of A to C grades in STEM subjects are in practical subjects like Practical Woodworking (+6.3%p), Practical Electronics (6.2%p), and Practical Metalworking (+6.0%p) – once again likely because of the move to continuous assessment and away from end of year exams.
- Cruinn-eòlas (Geography) (-23.3%p) and Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics) (-22.7%p) have seen the largest decline, however the number of young people entering this subject is very small resulting in high variability.
- Computing Science (-6.2%p) and Environmental science (-4.5%p) are the other subjects with the largest decreases between 2025 and 2026.

STEM subjects vs. non-STEM subjects – A grade

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
STEM	36.2%	33.6%	34.3%	35.4%	37.1%
Non-STEM	44.0%	43.1%	41.2%	42.4%	43.0%
Total	40.3%	38.6%	38.0%	39.2%	40.3%

- Overall, a higher proportion of students attain an A grade in non-STEM subjects than they do in STEM subjects, this has been consistent since 2022.
- However, the proportion of A grades attained in STEM subjects has continued to improve since 2023.
- The increase seen between 2025 to 2026 (+1.7%p) was larger than that of non-STEM subjects (0.5%p) which remained the same as 2025
- Non-STEM subjects have yet to reach former pre-2024 heights

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

Subjects	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
STEM	74.6%	71.3%	70.3%	71.6%	72.3%
Non-STEM	86.3%	85.3%	83.4%	84.3%	85.2%
Total	80.8%	78.8%	77.2%	78.4%	79.2%

- A higher proportion of students attain an A to C grade in non-STEM subjects than they do in STEM subjects, this has been consistent since 2022.
- The proportion of entries in STEM subjects resulting in a A to C grade has improved for STEM, non-STEM and the average across all subjects between 2025 and 2026. However, the increases for STEM subjects (+0.7%p) were below non-STEM subjects (+0.9%p).

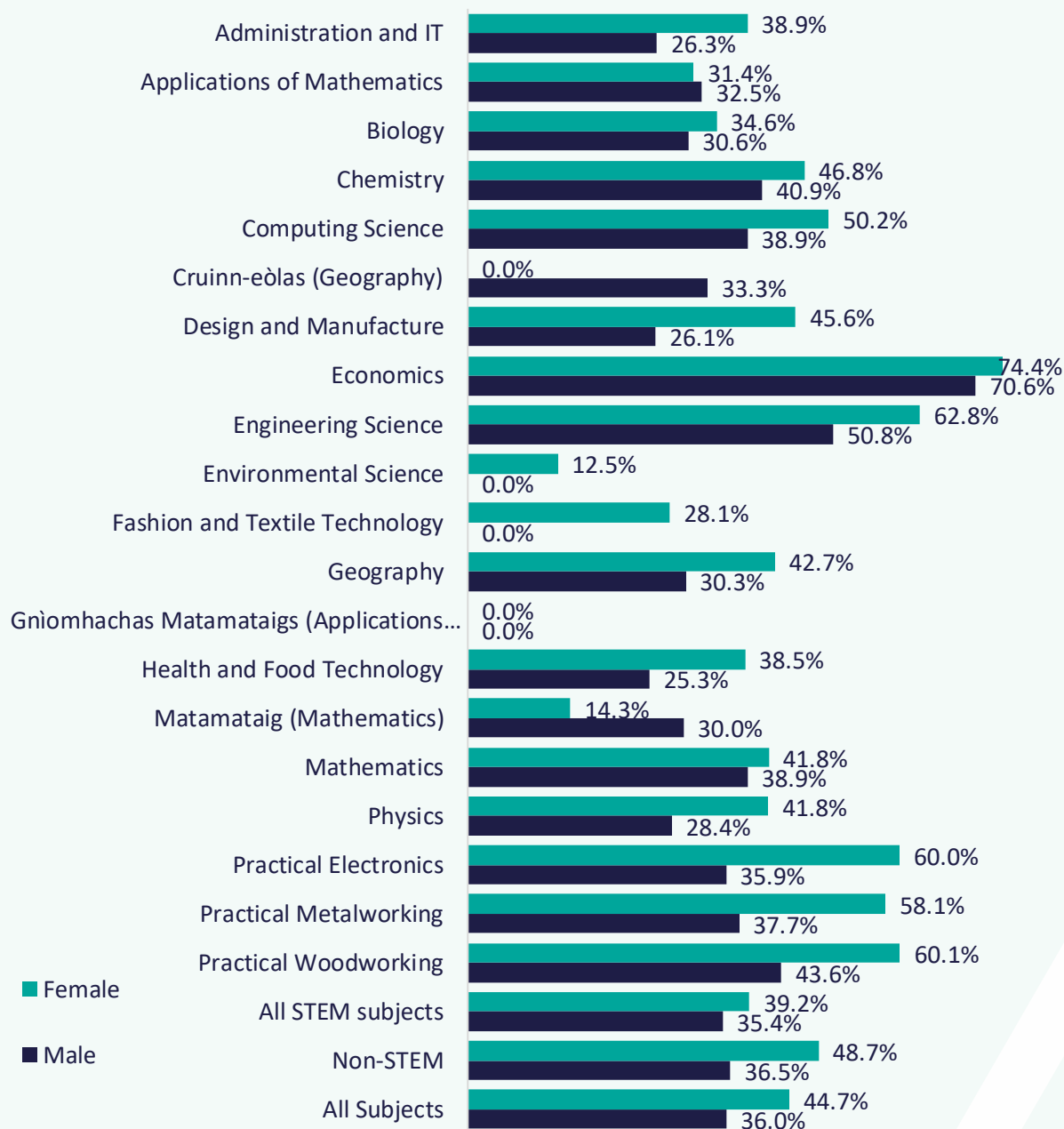
Gender

Entries by gender

Subjects	Total entries	Female	% Female	Male	% Male
Administration and IT	5,375	3,190	59.3%	2,185	40.7%
Applications of Mathematics	30,045	14,830	49.4%	15,210	50.6%
Biology	22,285	14,640	65.7%	7,635	34.3%
Chemistry	15,070	7,910	52.5%	7,160	47.5%
Computing Science	6,445	1,465	22.7%	4,980	77.3%
Cruinn-eòlas (Geography)	25	10	40.0%	15	60.0%
Design and Manufacture	3,790	1,075	28.4%	2,720	71.8%
Economics	615	195	31.7%	425	69.1%
Engineering Science	2,155	215	10.0%	1,940	90.0%
Environmental Science	170	80	47.1%	90	52.9%
Fashion and Textile Technology	760	730	96.1%	30	3.9%
Geography	9,215	4,230	45.9%	4,985	54.1%
Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics)	30	15	50.0%	15	50.0%
Health and Food Technology	1,570	1,090	69.4%	475	30.3%
Matamataig (Mathematics)	85	35	41.2%	50	58.8%
Mathematics	33,770	16,365	48.5%	17,400	51.5%
Physics	13,820	3,640	26.3%	10,175	73.6%
Practical Electronics	830	50	6.0%	780	94.0%
Practical Metalworking	1,945	155	8.0%	1,790	92.0%
Practical Woodworking	9,770	1,390	14.2%	8,375	85.7%
All STEM subjects	157,770	71,310	45.2%	86,435	54.8%

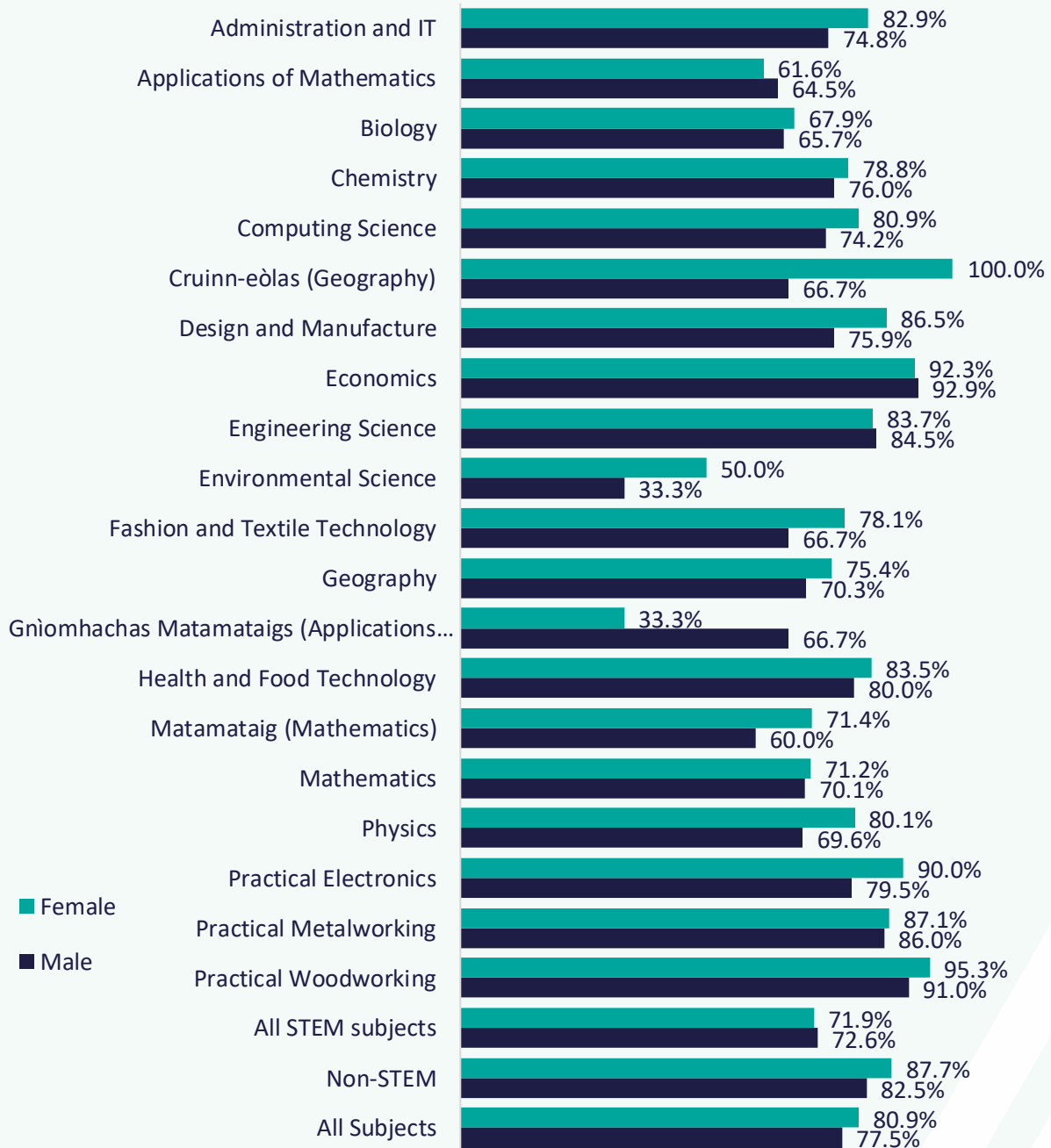
- Male students outnumber female students in all but 5 of the 20 STEM subjects.
- Subjects with the largest male to female student difference are practical electronics (94.0% vs. 6.0%), practical metalworking (92% vs. 8%) and engineering science (90.0% to 10.0%).
- Subjects with the largest female to male student difference are fashion and textile technology (96.1% vs. 3.9%), health and food technology (69.4% vs. 30.3%) and biology (65.7% vs. 34.3%).
- There are interesting gender splits in science subjects. Science subjects are not compulsory in the same way as they are in the rest of the UK. Entries for biology are higher among female students than male students (65.7% vs. 34.3%), while for physics entries are higher among male students (73.6% vs. 26.3%). In previous years Chemistry had slightly more male entries however 2026 has more female entries than male ones (52.5% vs. 47.5%).

A grade in STEM subject by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 16 of the 20 STEM subjects at A grade.
- The largest gap between female and male students is in practical subjects despite having some of the smallest entries from female students. More female students attain an A grade in Practical electronics (60.0% vs. 35.9%), Practical Metalworking (58.1% vs. 37.7%), and Practical Woodworking (60.1 vs. 43.6%)
- Another subject where female students outperform male students is design and manufacture (45.6% vs. 26.1%).
- Male students only perform better than female students in applications of mathematics (32.5% vs. 31.4%), and Matamataig (Mathematics) (30.0% vs. 14.3%) although there are low entries so this is prone to volatility.

A to C grade in STEM subject by gender



- Female students outperform male students in 16 of the 20 STEM subjects at A-C grade.
- Some of the largest gap between female and male students are in Environmental Science (50.0% vs. 33.3%), Fashion and Textile Technology (78.1% vs. 66.7%) and Design and Manufacture (86.5% vs. 75.9%)
- There is large differences in attainment in subjects taught in Scottish however, due to small overall entries this can be highly variable year on year.
- Male students perform better than female students in applications of mathematics (64.5% vs. 61.6%) making it the only subject where male students perform better at both A grade and A-C grade.