

NEWS RELEASE TO SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, *August 2017*

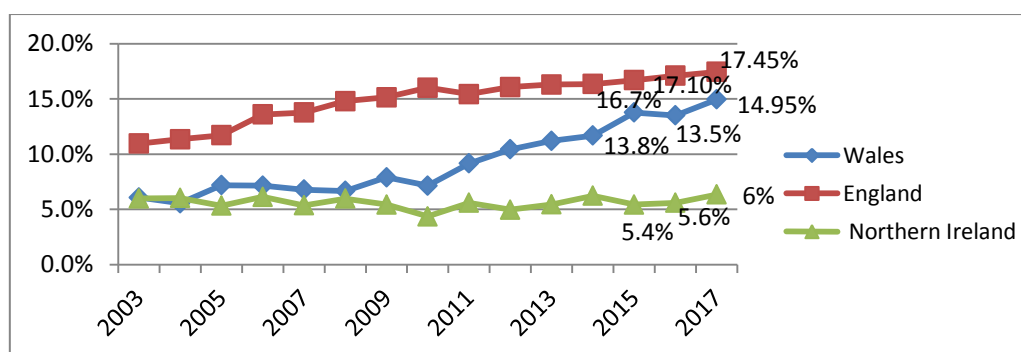
A record high number of Welsh students studying Further Mathematics

Mathematics and Further Mathematics A-level results are a cause for celebration in Wales this year and many more Welsh students will use their Further Mathematics qualifications to pursue their chosen study or career path. The results have built upon last year's entry:

- A-level Mathematics numbers are up from 3719 to 3931, a 5.7% increase.
- A-level Further Mathematics numbers are up from 502 to 588, a 17% increase.
- AS Mathematics numbers are up from 5501 to 5409, a 1.7% increase.
- AS Further Mathematics numbers are up from 458 to 498, a 6.7% increase.

Mathematics remains the most popular AS and A-level in Wales followed by History and Biology. The proportion of Mathematics students who sat Further Mathematics A-level reached 13.8%, which is the highest result ever in Further Mathematics in Wales. In 2017 Further Mathematics became the fourth fastest growing subject in the UK. Since the Further Mathematics Support Programme (FMSP) was launched by the Welsh Government in 2010, the numbers of students more than doubled in Wales.

Graph 1. Percentages of A-level Mathematics students taking A-level Further Mathematics in England, Northern Ireland and Wales since 2003 (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/a-levels>)



Students in Wales continue exceeding the rest of the UK in achieving A*/A grades in both Mathematics and Further Mathematics (see table 1 below). Wales also achieved a higher than England proportion of female students studying AS or A-level Further Mathematics (29% against 27%). Compared with 2016:

- Boys' participation is up from 327 to 347, an increase of 6%. Girls' participation in AS Further Mathematics is up from 131 to 142, an increase of 8%.
- Boys' participation is up from 331 to 420, an increase of 29%. Girls' participation in A-level Further Mathematics is slightly down from 171 to 168, a decrease of 2%. Note, however, that it represents an increase of 18% when compared with 2015.
- At the same time, Welsh girls have outperformed Welsh boys in the number of A* in Further Mathematics (47.6% against 37.1%).

Table 1. Comparison of percentages of A-level Mathematics students achieving A* and A* - A grades in both A-level Further Mathematics and Mathematics between Wales and the UK as a whole in 2015 (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/a-levels>).

Grade Achieved	Further Mathematics		Mathematics	
	Wales	UK	Wales	UK
A*	40.1 %	30.0 %	19.0%	17.9%
A* - A	63.1 %	58.1 %	43.3%	42.3%

Further Mathematics qualifications allow students to enrich their Mathematics experience and build a more solid foundation for pursuing careers in Science, Technology, Economics, Actuarial Science and Finance. The qualifications are not seen any more as only serving Mathematics degrees and Further Mathematics students enjoy a variety of destinations. Morgan Cronin from Hawthorn High School, who achieved A* in both Mathematics and Further Mathematics and will be majoring in Physics and Philosophy in Yale from next week, commented, *“I have thoroughly enjoyed studying Further Maths through FMSP. It was an amazing opportunity to explore my academic interests and experience a new learning environment, both of which I believe have made me more prepared for university. I would recommend it to anyone who has a keen passion for maths.”* John Stanley of Ysgol St Richard Gwyn, who also studied with FMSP, believes that it was Further Mathematics that helped him to secure a placement in the university of his choice. Others, like Harry Haral from Ysgol Y Creuddyn are planning to start a prestigious apprenticeship with Airbus. While only a small proportion of all Further Mathematics students study the subject through FMSP, the programme supports provision in schools and colleges through access to teaching and learning resources, enrichment programmes and teacher professional learning courses. FMSP tuition courses use the blended learning model, already effectively utilised by HEI’s, and, by now, proven to work well at post-16 level.

From August 2016, supported with further funding from the Welsh Government, the programme operates in all counties in Wales. Kirsty Williams, the Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Education, outlined the Welsh Government’s commitment to FMSP Wales at the opening of the National Network of Excellence in Mathematics (NNEM) in Wales in July 2017. Project leader Dr Sofya Lyakhova said: *“Networking with teachers across Wales and beyond has been at the heart of all of the FMSP activities and I am thrilled that the programme will continue as part of NNEM. While the A-level Mathematics and Further Mathematic specifications are changing from next year, working together remains our preferred strategy for allowing more students to enjoy the subject they like and are good at.”*

All state-funded secondary schools and colleges in Wales are invited to register with the Programme at <http://www.furthermaths.org.uk/?section=teachers&page=register> and express their interest in tuition assistance by contacting Sofya Lyakhova on 01792 602793.

Notes for Editors

1. The FMSP Wales is managed by The Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences (WIMCS) and is in partnership with Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI, www.mei.org.uk). It is funded by the Welsh Government.
2. More information regarding the Further Maths support programme Wales can be found at: <http://furthermaths.org.uk/wales> . For case studies from students, parents and schools please visit <http://www.furthermaths.org.uk/wales-case-studies>
3. The National Network for Excellence in Mathematics (NNEM) was launched in 2017. NNEM provides a platform for partners from a range of backgrounds and settings in Mathematics education in Wales to work collaboratively with the aim of raising levels of achievement in mathematics for all pupils across all educational settings. For more information please visit <https://hwb.gov.wales/nnem>
4. The Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences (WIMCS) is a collaborative partnership of the universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, South Wales and Swansea. It has been set up by the Welsh Government through the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. WIMCS aims to enhance the standing of Mathematics and Computation in Wales, to foster links with industry, commerce and business, to generate substantial research funding and to provide a forum for education and public awareness of the Mathematical Sciences (www.wimcs.ac.uk).
5. For more information please contact the FMSP Wales Administrator on 01792 606609 or by email adminwales@furthermaths.org.uk

Further Mathematics Support Programme Wales

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www.furthermaths.org.uk/wales

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