



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

Provision of GCE A-level subjects

Statistics Report Series No. 1

Carmen L. Vidal Rodeiro

December 2005

Research Division – Statistics Group
Assessment Research and Development
Cambridge Assessment
1 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1GG

Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, a department of the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge Assessment is a not-for-profit organisation.

Introduction

This report is the first in an occasional series of reports producing detailed statistics of examination provision and uptake. This is a continuation of a rolling programme of such work which has been previously reported in Bell (2001, 2002), Bell and Forster (2001) and Bell *et al.* (2005).

The objective of this research is to study the provision of GCE in England in 2004. The next report in the series will consider the provision of GCSE in England in 2004 (Claessen (2005)). Clearly it is interesting to consider the current provision of A-level and AS-level subjects in order to see what implications this would have for the development of a diploma for students of this age range.

A 1991 White paper included proposals for an ordinary or advanced diploma to be awarded to all students on achievement of a required standard in academic, vocational or mixed courses. These plans were postponed, but research continued on this area and new proposals and suggestions have come forward. In a report by the Tomlinson group about the reform of the 14-19 curriculum and qualifications in 2004, it is suggested that the existing system of qualifications taken by 14-19 year olds should be replaced by a framework of diplomas at entry, foundation, intermediate and advance levels. Successful completion of a programme at a given level should lead to the award of a diploma recognising achievement across the whole programme. In this framework, it is appropriate to conduct a wide study of the post-compulsory curriculum in schools/colleges with sixth forms.

Sixth forms offer a wide range of A-levels and, in theory, a number of subject combinations are possible. In a paper by Bell *et al.* (2005), where the changing pattern of A-level uptake in England is studied, it is said that there is considerable diversity in the uptake of A-levels, with nearly 21000 different combinations of A-levels being present in the 2002 A-level results. However, it is thought (for example, Payne (1993)) that the range of subjects may be problematic. Some people argue that the options available to students are restricted in some schools and they can affect the students' futures. In fact, young people have reported that they had compromised their subject and course choices by tailoring their options to what the schools could make available.

Some sixth forms regard some subjects as more important than others. According to Schagen *et al.* (1996), Music and Modern Foreign Languages (in particular German) were subjects which many schools felt important to run, however low the student numbers. One justification for this could be that the lack of suitable language courses could prevent young people from going on to university. Also, schools are keen on keeping existing subjects going for small numbers but not on introducing new subjects for fewer than six students. The cost of employing a new member of staff for minority subjects could be prohibitive for a small sixth form. One solution may be collaboration (*e.g.* in the form of a consortium, joint courses, franchise arrangements) with other schools that offer minority subjects. But, on many

occasions, the prospect of a considerably long journey every day had prevented many students attending a different institution, even though they would have been able to access courses and subjects they would have preferred to those they were actually pursuing.

Many schools try to provide a range of sixth form courses wide enough to cater for most, if not all, of their students. The problem is that this strategy can and often does result in very small teaching groups. The DES (Department of Education and Science) recommends, for educational as well as economic reasons, that A-level groups should have a minimum of 10 students; however many schools are reluctant to abandon courses. Very small sixth forms are unable to offer a wide range of courses. In those cases, most of the young people have the option of transferring to college or to another school, but some may take an unsuitable course in order to say on, and others may leave full-time education.

The curriculum offered by each school (note that in this report unless qualified by an indication of type, e.g. independent school, the term school includes colleges) can be seen as a balance struck between internal and external demands. Internal demands arise firstly from the needs of the students, which will vary according to the levels and variations in levels of their attainments and aspirations, and secondly from the needs of the school as an institution. External demands are those created by public opinion generally, and by especially significant sectors such as those representing employers and institutions of higher education. Although many aspects of the selection process of university departments must be considered capable of influencing the nature of the curriculum which schools can offer to sixth formers, the one that is likely to have the greatest impact is the extent to which the various A-level subjects are found acceptable by different types of university departments.

The main aim of this research is to study the provision of GCE A-level subjects in England in 2004 by school type, school attainment, school size and school sex. The provision of Modern Foreign Languages, Economics and Business Studies is studied in more detail. We define that a centre provides a subject if at least one candidate from that centre takes the exam in that subject. This means that a school might be able to provide additional subjects if there were demand for them.

In the next section, the data used in this report and how the schools were classified is described. This is followed by a section where the number of A-level subjects per school is shown. Then, the provision of individual A-level subjects by the various categories of schools is described. Finally, the provision of Modern Foreign Languages, Economics and Business Studies is reported. These areas have been cited as areas of concern (see, for example, Hurd *et al.* (1997), Machin and Oswald (2000), Bell and Forster (2003) or CILT (2005)). The report concludes with a brief discussion of the findings.

Data

These analyses were carried out using the data for the entire A-level entry (all subjects from all of England's awarding bodies) in England in 2004. School characteristics were obtained or derived using data from the National Centre Number (NCN) file, which is maintained by Cambridge Assessment.

School Type

Post-compulsory education is offered in the sixth form of many secondary schools, in sixth-form colleges and in further education institutions. For this research, schools offering GCE A-level subjects were classified into the six categories shown in Table 1.

Table 1. School type.

School Type	Number of Schools	Percentage
Comprehensive	1532	54.6
FE College	262	9.3
Grammar	163	5.8
Independent	577	20.6
Sixth Form College	142	5.1
Tertiary College	51	1.8

The majority of schools are comprehensive schools, that is, they are non-selective maintained schools and accept students regardless of their ability. In some areas, there are schools that select their students by ability. These are known as grammar schools. In our research we are considering 163 of them. There are 577 (21%) independent schools, that is, schools that are not maintained by a Local Education Authority (LEA). Secondary modern schools are not taken into account, since they usually have very small sixth forms. This could be due to the fact that most of their students leave school at 15 to seek employment or to take courses at technical colleges. Around 16% of the centres considered in this research are colleges (sixth form, further education or tertiary). It should be noted that schools that do not offer A-levels would not be included in this data, e.g. schools that offer the International Baccalaureate.

Ability of Schools

The ability or attainment group of the schools was computed as the mean of the attainment of the students attending them. The attainment of the students was based on the A-level points score. To compute the A-level points score, all the candidates in the 2004 cohort with at least three A-level results, excluding general studies, were selected. The A-level grades for these candidates were converted into scores using the old UCAS tariff, shown in Table 2, and the sum of the scores of their three best A-levels was computed. Therefore, the A-level score ranges from 0 to 30. For example, a score of 24 is equivalent to the A-level grades BBA, ABC or AAD.

Table 2. A-level marks and grades (old UCAS tariff).

Grade	Mark
A	10
B	8
C	6
D	4
E	2
N	0
U	0

A frequency distribution of these scores was obtained and used to allocate the schools into attainment groups. The cut-off points are shown in Table 3. Group I is the lowest attainment category and Group V is the highest.

Table 3. School attainment/ability group.

School Ability Group	Number of Schools	Minimum	Maximum
Group I	482	0.0	10.3
Group II	542	10.4	13.6
Group III	550	13.7	16.1
Group IV	552	16.2	19.5
Group V	552	19.6	30.0

Obviously, it is possible for individual students to obtain high grades in a group I school and low grades in a group V school. However, a group V school is likely to have more high attaining students than a group I school which has obvious implications for provision and teaching. Note that this classification is not necessarily related to school effectiveness. For example, a group V school is quite likely to have an entry with higher GCSE scores than a group I school.

Using the schools' postcodes, it is possible to consider the level of deprivation in the immediate vicinity of the school (electoral ward). This information can be found in the Office for National Statistics (<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/>). However, this can be misleading for individual schools because the location might not reflect the catchment area (this issue is discussed in greater detail in Bell (2003)). It is for this reason that tables of provision by deprivation have not been produced. However, it is useful to note that there is a relationship between the attainment group of a school and the level of deprivation of the school location. Table 4 illustrates this. The schools were allocated into four deprivation categories A-D with D being the most deprived. There is a clear relationship between school attainment and deprivation: 68% of the schools in the highest performing category are in deprivation categories A and B compared to 37% of the schools in the lowest category. Ideally, it would be useful to have data about deprivation at the student level but when considering the results about provision by attainment group, it is worth thinking that they could have implications for the provision of A-level subjects for poor students.

Table 4: School attainment and deprivation (column percentages).

Deprivation	Attainment group					
	I	II	III	IV	V	All
A	14.5	21.1	27.9	37.2	39.6	28.1
B	22.4	28.4	27.5	31.0	28.3	27.6
C	28.7	28.1	25.9	21.57	20.1	24.9
D	34.3	22.4	18.6	10.2	11.9	19.5

School sex

To define the variable school sex, we computed a female ratio per school (number of females in the school over the total number of students in the school). If the female ratio was bigger than 0.95, the school was considered a “Girls only” school. If the female ratio was lower than 0.05, then the school was considered a “Boys only” school. The rest of the schools were considered “Mixed” schools. The following table (Table 5) shows the numbers and percentages of the different types of schools.

Table 5. School sex (Classification 1).

School Sex	Number of schools	Percentages
Boys	168	6.0
Girls	363	13.0
Mixed	2275	81.1

Some schools are single-sex during the compulsory education stage and become co-educational in the sixth form. For some analysis in this report we considered other school sex classification. This is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. School sex (Classification 2).

School Sex	Number of schools	Percentages
Boys – Boys	128	5.2
Boys – Mixed	57	2.3
Girls – Girls	291	11.8
Girls – Mixed	27	1.1
Mixed – Mixed	1970	79.7

According to Table 6, a small percentage of single-sex schools (3.4%) became co-educational schools in the sixth forms. For example, a “Boys – Mixed” school was a “Boys only” secondary school and it became a “Mixed” sixth form.

This categorisation is of interest because there are sex-related variations in the A-level uptake (Bell *et al.* 2005).

School size

There is a big variation in the size of a sixth form. Around 70 schools have less than 10 students and there are much bigger centres that have over 1000 students. In the following

table we classify the sixth forms into five groups according to their size (based on the number of students in the upper sixth form).

Table 7. School size.

School Size	Number of schools	Percentages
Less than 30	224	8.0
30 – 59	223	7.9
60 – 119	603	21.5
120 – 239	1370	48.8
More than 240	386	13.7

Obviously school size is important for provision because a larger school is more likely to have viable numbers for minority subjects.

Number of A-level offered per school

The number of A-levels offered is, in large part, related to the size of the sixth form. In general, based on the data in this study, the average number of A-levels offered by school is 20. In 1996, according to a report written by Schagen *et al.* (1996), the average number of A-levels offered was 17. This shows a slight increase in the average provision of GCE A-levels.

The majority of the schools offer a core of “traditional” A-levels such as English, History and Mathematics. According to the DES

“A school sixth form can be expected to offer a choice of A-level subjects which include all those commonly taken and an appropriate selection of other subjects. Such an approach would normally lead to a choice of not less than about 15 subjects”.

On average, the schools considered in this research are offering 5 A-levels more than the DES recommended minimum. However, looking at the school size, we can show that schools with a low number of students are offering, on average, a much lower number of A-levels. Table 8 shows the average number of A-levels offered by school size.

Table 8. Number of A-levels by school size.

School Size	Average number of A-levels
Less than 30	9
30 – 59	17
60 – 119	17
120 – 239	21
More than 240	30

Competition between post-16 institutions and the desire to attract students has become an increasingly important factor in a school deciding whether or not to run a course. Less traditional or minority subjects, such as Philosophy, Music and some Modern Languages, are being used as a magnet to attract students to particular schools.

It is important to take into account that some schools offer the International Baccalaureate (IB), a two-year pre-university course, that is considered to be intellectually very demanding. Students are required to take two languages, a combination of both arts and science subjects as well as Mathematics and either Art&Design or Music, Latin, Classical Greek or Computing Studies. However, very few state-maintained schools offer the IB.

According to DES (1985), the minimum number of students for a viable sixth form is 150. However, there are quite a few sixth forms with fewer students than that and it is argued that they have too few students to enable them to offer a full range of courses.

The number of A-levels offered by school can depend, as well, on the attainment of the students that attend it. Table 9 shows the average number of A-levels offered by school attainment groups.

Table 9. Number of A-levels by school attainment groups.

School Attainment Group	Average number of A-levels
Group I	13
Group II	20
Group III	24
Group IV	24
Group V	24

Schools that are in the bottom two attainment groups offer a smaller number of A-levels. The other three groups offer, on average, the same number of A-levels.

There is also variation in the number of A-levels that different types of schools offer. Table 10 shows the average number of A-levels offered by school type.

Table 10. Number of A-levels by school type.

School Type	Average number of A-levels
Comprehensive	20
FE College	16
Grammar	24
Independent	20
Sixth Form College	33
Tertiary College	31

Sixth form colleges and tertiary colleges offer (on average) a higher number of A-levels. FE colleges and independent and comprehensive schools offer a much lower number.

Table 11 shows the average number of A-levels offered by school sex. There is not much difference in the number of A-levels offered by single-sex or co-educational schools (Table 11(a)). However, schools that were single-sex in the compulsory education stage and have a co-educational sixth form offer, on average, four more A-levels (Table 11(b)) than single-sex and mixed sixth forms.

Table 11. Number of A-levels by school sex.

School Sex	Average number of A-levels
Boys	19
Girls	19
Mixed	21

(a)

School Sex	Average number of A-levels
Boys – Boys	20
Boys – Mixed	25
Girls – Girls	20
Girls – Mixed	24
Mixed	20

(b)

Finally, in the following table we show the relationship between the centre type and the attainment group. The figures in Table 12 are row percentages (for example, 4% of comprehensive and 74% of grammar schools are in the highest performing group).

Table 12. Relationship between centre type and attainment.

School type	Attainment group				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Comprehensive	17.8	25.8	28.0	24.4	3.9
FE College	54.2	34.3	7.4	3.2	0.9
Grammar	0.6	0.6	1.8	23.3	73.6
Independent	5.4	5.4	7.3	17.4	64.5
Sixth Form College	8.6	15.1	41.7	26.6	7.9
Tertiary College	12.2	40.8	24.5	22.4	0.0

Provision of individual A-level subjects

The first issue that we are considering is the number and percentage of schools that offer individual A-levels. Table 13 shows the provision of individual subjects by school type, following the classification given in Table 1. The percentages for certain traditional A-levels, such as Mathematics, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry, History or Physics are quite high in all types of schools and around 100% in grammar schools. There are other traditional subjects, like Economics or Further Mathematics that are offered, respectively, in 67% and 99% of grammar schools but the percentages in other types of schools are less than half of these. Newer subjects, such as Business Studies, are offered in only 56% of the comprehensive schools, although this percentage is much higher in the grammar and independent sector (around 65-70%) and sixth form and tertiary colleges (approximately 90%). Subjects like Media Studies are offered in very few grammar and independent schools but in almost 50% of comprehensive schools and 80% of sixth forms and tertiary colleges. The provision of Art&Design, Accounting or Film Studies is much lower in grammar and independent schools than in colleges or comprehensive schools. Classical Greek is offered in around 19% of independent schools and rarely in state-maintained schools and Latin is

offered in 45% of independent schools and 35% of grammar schools). However, the percentages of other schools offering these subjects is, in general, lower than 3%.

During the decision-making in the selection process of University departments, there are a number of factors that influence the outcome of applications: interview, conditional offer and especially, the A-level course being followed by the candidate. The fact that certain schools do not offer a subject, for example, only 32% of the comprehensive schools offer Economics, means that it cannot be used as a fairly admissions requirement.

Table 14 shows the provision of individual subjects by school attainment group (only for comprehensive schools). Comprehensive schools that are in the highest attainment group (Group V) are more similar in their provision to independent and grammar schools than schools in the lower attainment groups. For example, if we focus on the provision of A-level Economics, 66% of grammar schools and 55% of independent schools offer this subject and only 32% of comprehensive do. However, if we have a closer look at the comprehensive schools, more than 50% of those in attainment groups IV and V offer Economics. The same pattern appears with other subjects such as Further Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages (in particular, German, French and Spanish) or Latin.

The provision of individual subjects by school attainment (for all schools) is displayed in Table 15. The provision of schools in the lower attainment groups is quite different from the provision in the higher attainment schools. For example, lower attainment schools offer the traditional A-level subjects (for example, Mathematics, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry, History or Physics) and subjects such as Media Studies or Sociology. Higher attainment schools offer, apart from the more traditional A-levels, subjects like Economics, Modern Foreign Languages, History of Art, Government and Politics or Music and not many of them offer, for example, Media Studies (only 13% of schools in Group V) or Sociology (24% of schools in Group V).

The provision of individual subjects by school size is shown in Table 16. In general, as it is expected, the more students a school has, the higher the number of A-levels that it offers. This table shows that for almost all subjects, the percentage of schools that offer them is higher in the larger schools. For example, Mathematics is offered in 55% and 85% of small schools and in all schools with more than 240 students. Biology and Chemistry follow the same pattern. Exceptions to this pattern include subjects like Japanese, Russian, Latin or History of Art.

Finally, in Tables 17(a) and 17(b), the provision of individual subjects by school sex is displayed. The pattern of provision tends to follow the traditional gender stereotypes for the subjects. For example, there are big differences in the percentages of schools offering subjects such as Psychology (28% of "Boys only" schools, 50% of "Girls only" schools), Sociology (17% of "Boys only" schools, 36% of "Girls only" schools) or Dance and Drama (38% of "Boys only" schools, 65% of "Girls only" schools). On the other hand, the percentages for subjects such as Economics, Design and Technology or Further Mathematics are much

higher for “Boys only” schools than for “Girls only” schools. The most popular Modern Foreign Languages (French, German and Spanish) are offered in higher percentages in “Girls only” schools.

If we look at the second classification for the sex of schools (Table 17(b)), we find that the provision of Economics, Design and Technology or Further Mathematics is higher not in “Boys only” schools but in schools that were “Boys only” schools in the compulsory education stage but have a mixed sixth form.

Table 13. Provision of A-levels by school type.

Subject	Comprehensive		FE College		Grammar		Independent		Sixth Form College		Tertiary College	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accounting/Finance	100	6.5	89	34.0	6	3.7	31	5.4	84	59.2	36	70.6
Ancient History	9	0.6	3	1.1	6	3.7	25	4.3	11	7.7	3	5.9
Arabic	54	3.5	13	5.0	5	3.1	28	4.9	17	12.0	3	5.9
Archaeology	19	1.2	14	5.3	2	1.2	1	0.2	22	15.5	16	31.4
Art & Des(3D Stds)	29	1.9	24	9.2	0	0.0	28	4.9	25	17.6	20	39.2
Art & Des(Graphcs)	102	6.7	54	20.6	10	6.1	27	4.7	65	45.8	25	49.0
Art & Des(Photo.)	243	15.9	94	35.9	6	3.7	98	17.0	63	44.4	36	70.6
Art & Des(Textles)	178	11.6	54	20.6	13	8.0	66	11.4	66	46.5	26	51.0
Art & Design	715	46.7	71	27.1	70	42.9	235	40.7	61	43.0	17	33.3
Art&Des - Fine Art	786	51.3	128	48.9	109	66.9	330	57.2	105	73.9	39	76.5
Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	11	0.7	14	5.3	2	1.2	11	1.9	10	7.0	4	7.8
Bengali	10	0.7	3	1.1	1	0.6	2	0.3	3	2.1	0	0.0
Biology	1387	90.5	141	53.8	161	98.8	509	88.2	135	95.1	47	92.2
Biology: Human	132	8.6	87	33.2	19	11.7	47	8.1	47	33.1	26	51.0
Bus. Studs:Single	865	56.5	157	59.9	119	73.0	370	64.1	131	92.3	47	92.2
Bus.Stds&Economics	145	9.5	8	3.1	18	11.0	41	7.1	5	3.5	4	7.8
Chemistry	1337	87.3	139	53.1	162	99.4	515	89.3	133	93.7	48	94.1
Chinese	78	5.1	19	7.3	22	13.5	248	43.0	29	20.4	4	7.8
Class.Civilisation	84	5.5	9	3.4	55	33.7	236	40.9	48	33.8	12	23.5
Classical Greek	4	0.3	0	0.0	6	3.7	108	18.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Com.Stds/Computing	283	18.5	83	31.7	63	38.7	105	18.2	109	76.8	39	76.5
Communication Stds	60	3.9	45	17.2	6	3.7	7	1.2	32	22.5	19	37.3
Critical Thinking	172	11.2	44	16.8	41	25.2	59	10.2	59	41.5	21	41.2
D&T Food Technolgy	202	13.2	0	0.0	20	12.3	17	2.9	6	4.2	1	2.0
D&T Product Design	1177	76.8	20	7.6	138	84.7	308	53.4	86	60.6	17	33.3
D&T Systems & Cont	78	5.1	4	1.5	13	8.0	27	4.7	11	7.7	1	2.0
Dance	153	10.0	52	19.8	10	6.1	21	3.6	61	43.0	24	47.1
Drama & Theat.Stds	954	62.3	86	32.8	104	63.8	367	63.6	114	80.3	38	74.5
Dutch	11	0.7	4	1.5	2	1.2	7	1.2	5	3.5	0	0.0
Economics	496	32.4	62	23.7	109	66.9	317	54.9	100	70.4	22	43.1
English	373	24.3	115	43.9	39	23.9	52	9.0	89	62.7	36	70.6
English Language	474	30.9	85	32.4	38	23.3	98	17.0	97	68.3	35	68.6
English Literature	1346	87.9	155	59.2	163	100.0	514	89.1	130	91.5	44	86.3
European Studies	11	0.7	3	1.1	1	0.6	3	0.5	8	5.6	2	3.9
Film Studies	135	8.8	108	41.2	11	6.7	15	2.6	71	50.0	37	72.5
French	1117	72.9	112	42.7	159	97.5	496	86.0	126	88.7	40	78.4
General Studies	978	63.8	65	24.8	138	84.7	206	35.7	102	71.8	30	58.8
Geography	1306	85.2	102	38.9	162	99.4	489	84.7	125	88.0	45	88.2
German	762	49.7	51	19.5	145	89.0	417	72.3	110	77.5	33	64.7
Govt and Politics	384	25.1	67	25.6	105	64.4	211	36.6	104	73.2	29	56.9
Gujarati	5	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.2	2	1.4	0	0.0
History	1372	89.6	138	52.7	161	98.8	508	88.0	132	93.0	47	92.2
History Of Art	16	1.0	9	3.4	6	3.7	105	18.2	8	5.6	5	9.8
Home Economics	53	3.5	0	0.0	11	6.7	72	12.5	6	4.2	0	0.0
Inform Comm Tech	707	46.1	120	45.8	86	52.8	258	44.7	117	82.4	41	80.4
Italian	67	4.4	14	5.3	20	12.3	90	15.6	33	23.2	4	7.8
Japanese	27	1.8	0	0.0	9	5.5	88	15.3	8	5.6	0	0.0
Latin	42	2.7	0	0.0	53	32.5	262	45.4	9	6.3	0	0.0
Law	380	24.8	161	61.5	19	11.7	48	8.3	110	77.5	45	88.2

The provision of GCE A-level subjects

Table 13
(continuation)

Subject	Comprehensive		FE College		Grammar		Independent		Sixth Form College		Tertiary College	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Logic / Philosophy	84	5.5	40	15.3	22	13.5	56	9.7	59	41.5	18	35.3
Mathematics	1424	93.0	176	67.2	163	100.0	536	92.9	135	95.1	49	96.1
Maths (Further)	640	41.8	30	11.5	144	88.3	362	62.7	114	80.3	27	52.9
Media/Film/TV Stds	738	48.2	130	49.6	44	27.0	61	10.6	117	82.4	42	82.4
Modern Greek	35	2.3	3	1.1	3	1.8	14	2.4	4	2.8	0	0.0
Modern Hebrew	6	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Music	872	56.9	33	12.6	149	91.4	407	70.5	106	74.6	30	58.8
Music Technology	282	18.4	25	9.5	24	14.7	71	12.3	59	41.5	29	56.9
Panjabi	34	2.2	5	1.9	4	2.5	0	0.0	4	2.8	2	3.9
Performance Stds	195	12.7	15	5.7	5	3.1	21	3.6	58	40.8	8	15.7
Persian	26	1.7	9	3.4	1	0.6	8	1.4	4	2.8	1	2.0
Physics	1313	85.7	129	49.2	162	99.4	508	88.0	131	92.3	45	88.2
Polish	29	1.9	0	0.0	5	3.1	27	4.7	5	3.5	1	2.0
Portuguese	41	2.7	5	1.9	6	3.7	10	1.7	9	6.3	2	3.9
Psychology	1063	69.4	179	68.3	96	58.9	183	31.7	123	86.6	42	82.4
Religious Studies	789	51.5	27	10.3	122	74.8	326	56.5	86	60.6	18	35.3
Russian	59	3.9	12	4.6	23	14.1	109	18.9	25	17.6	3	5.9
Sci for Public Und	39	2.5	14	5.3	3	1.8	8	1.4	20	14.1	7	13.7
Sci: Electronics	80	5.2	24	9.2	12	7.4	37	6.4	56	39.4	15	29.4
Sci: Environmental	68	4.4	39	14.9	2	1.2	14	2.4	48	33.8	30	58.8
Science: Geology	79	5.2	15	5.7	17	10.4	30	5.2	57	40.1	17	33.3
Soc Sci:Citizenshp	17	1.1	20	7.6	2	1.2	2	0.3	17	12.0	6	11.8
Social Policy	0	0.0	2	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.4	3	5.9
Sociology	1003	65.5	172	65.6	71	43.6	63	10.9	126	88.7	49	96.1
Spanish	382	24.9	58	22.1	76	46.6	340	58.9	98	69.0	33	64.7
Sport/P.E. Studies	1189	77.6	77	29.4	124	76.1	338	58.6	120	84.5	40	78.4
Turkish	38	2.5	6	2.3	2	1.2	9	1.6	7	4.9	2	3.9
Urdu	69	4.5	17	6.5	1	0.6	11	1.9	13	9.2	9	17.6
World Development	0	0.0	4	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	4.2	5	9.8

Table 14. Provision of A-levels by school attainment group (only comprehensive schools).

Subject	Group I		Group II		Group III		Group IV		Group V	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accounting/Finance	8	3.0	25	6.6	37	8.9	23	6.4	7	12.1
Ancient History	0	0.0	2	0.5	3	0.7	3	0.8	1	1.7
Arabic	9	3.4	11	2.9	17	4.1	12	3.3	5	8.6
Archaeology	3	1.1	6	1.6	6	1.4	4	1.1	0	0.0
Art & Des(3D Stds)	2	0.8	11	2.9	5	1.2	9	2.5	2	3.4
Art & Des(Graphics)	13	4.9	21	5.5	26	6.3	37	10.2	5	8.6
Art & Des(Photo.)	25	9.5	68	17.8	64	15.5	76	21.1	10	17.2
Art & Des(Textiles)	19	7.2	36	9.4	61	14.7	50	13.9	11	19.0
Art & Design	119	45.2	192	50.4	211	51.0	162	44.9	27	46.6
Art&Des - Fine Art	98	37.3	198	52.0	227	54.8	227	62.9	34	58.6
Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	1	0.4	4	1.0	1	0.2	5	1.4	0	0.0
Bengali	0	0.0	6	1.6	2	0.5	0	0.0	1	1.7
Biology	198	75.3	366	96.1	407	98.3	356	98.6	56	96.6
Biology: Human	23	8.7	30	7.9	39	9.4	36	10.0	4	6.9
Bus. Studs:Single	92	35.0	204	53.5	273	65.9	256	70.9	39	67.2
Bus.Stds&Economics	14	5.3	31	8.1	50	12.1	43	11.9	6	10.3
Chemistry	171	65.0	347	91.1	402	97.1	359	99.4	55	94.8
Chinese	6	2.3	16	4.2	25	6.0	23	6.4	7	12.1
Class.Civilisation	1	0.4	7	1.8	30	7.2	38	10.5	7	12.1
Classical Greek	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.2	1	0.3	1	1.7
Com.Stds/Computing	23	8.7	63	16.5	98	23.7	86	23.8	11	19.0
Communication Stds	7	2.7	12	3.1	18	4.3	21	5.8	2	3.4
Critical Thinking	20	7.6	38	10.0	46	11.1	54	15.0	12	20.7
D&T Food Technolgy	17	6.5	39	10.2	59	14.3	80	22.2	7	12.1
D&T Product Design	157	59.7	300	78.7	346	83.6	324	89.8	48	82.8
D&T Systems & Cont	4	1.5	18	4.7	29	7.0	23	6.4	4	6.9
Dance	18	6.8	42	11.0	52	12.6	37	10.2	3	5.2
Drama & Theat.Stds	104	39.5	231	60.6	289	69.8	282	78.1	42	72.4
Dutch	1	0.4	4	1.0	2	0.5	3	0.8	1	1.7
Economics	24	9.1	96	25.2	154	37.2	183	50.7	37	63.8
English	44	16.7	79	20.7	130	31.4	99	27.4	18	31.0
English Language	39	14.8	112	29.4	153	37.0	153	42.4	17	29.3
English Literature	207	78.7	347	91.1	385	93.0	348	96.4	54	93.1
European Studies	3	1.1	1	0.3	5	1.2	2	0.6	0	0.0
Film Studies	21	8.0	33	8.7	45	10.9	30	8.3	5	8.6
French	107	40.7	258	67.7	357	86.2	338	93.6	55	94.8
General Studies	116	44.1	266	69.8	312	75.4	244	67.6	36	62.1
Geography	163	62.0	335	87.9	400	96.6	350	97.0	57	98.3
German	47	17.9	165	43.3	244	58.9	263	72.9	43	74.1
Govt and Politics	23	8.7	72	18.9	117	28.3	144	39.9	27	46.6
Gujarati	1	0.4	2	0.5	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
History	183	69.6	363	95.3	410	99.0	356	98.6	56	96.6
History Of Art	1	0.4	0	0.0	4	1.0	9	2.5	2	3.4
Home Economics	4	1.5	9	2.4	16	3.9	18	5.0	6	10.3
Inform Comm Tech	79	30.0	179	47.0	215	51.9	200	55.4	30	51.7
Italian	5	1.9	11	2.9	22	5.3	22	6.1	7	12.1
Japanese	0	0.0	7	1.8	8	1.9	5	1.4	7	12.1
Latin	2	0.8	3	0.8	7	1.7	19	5.3	11	19.0
Law	58	22.1	107	28.1	116	28.0	91	25.2	6	10.3
Logic / Philosophy	5	1.9	16	4.2	29	7.0	28	7.8	6	10.3
Mathematics	216	82.1	373	97.9	410	99.0	360	99.7	56	96.6
Maths (Further)	24	9.1	100	26.2	209	50.5	259	71.7	48	82.8
Media/Film/TV Stds	107	40.7	200	52.5	229	55.3	177	49.0	23	39.7
Modern Greek	2	0.8	6	1.6	10	2.4	15	4.2	2	3.4
Modern Hebrew	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3	4	6.9

Table 14
(continuation)

Subject	Group I		Group II		Group III		Group IV		Group V	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Music	51	19.4	204	53.5	281	67.9	286	79.2	49	84.5
Music Technology	30	11.4	71	18.6	88	21.3	82	22.7	11	19.0
Panjabi	9	3.4	13	3.4	6	1.4	5	1.4	0	0.0
Performance Stds	28	10.6	61	16.0	64	15.5	38	10.5	4	6.9
Persian	9	3.4	3	0.8	5	1.2	9	2.5	0	0.0
Physics	158	60.1	344	90.3	395	95.4	356	98.6	56	96.6
Polish	2	0.8	1	0.3	7	1.7	16	4.4	3	5.2
Portuguese	6	2.3	9	2.4	6	1.4	15	4.2	2	3.4
Psychology	143	54.4	275	72.2	323	78.0	281	77.8	37	63.8
Religious Studies	67	25.5	170	44.6	256	61.8	254	70.4	41	70.7
Russian	6	2.3	14	3.7	14	3.4	19	5.3	6	10.3
Sci for Public Und	1	0.4	4	1.0	14	3.4	18	5.0	1	1.7
Sci: Electronics	10	3.8	16	4.2	29	7.0	25	6.9	0	0.0
Sci: Environmental	4	1.5	18	4.7	26	6.3	16	4.4	4	6.9
Science: Geology	4	1.5	12	3.1	32	7.7	28	7.8	3	5.2
Soc Sci:Citizenshp	3	1.1	7	1.8	5	1.2	2	0.6	0	0.0
Sociology	140	53.2	261	68.5	294	71.0	261	72.3	45	77.6
Spanish	33	12.5	56	14.7	132	31.9	132	36.6	29	50.0
Sport/P.E. Studies	175	66.5	297	78.0	357	86.2	318	88.1	40	69.0
Turkish	14	5.3	9	2.4	7	1.7	5	1.4	1	1.7
Urdu	20	7.6	15	3.9	7	1.7	15	4.2	2	3.4

Table 15. Provision of A-levels by school attainment group (all schools).

Subject	Group I		Group II		Group III		Group IV		Group V	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accounting/Finance	49	10.2	104	19.2	93	16.9	72	13	26	4.7
Ancient History	1	0.2	4	0.7	13	2.4	12	2	27	4.9
Arabic	18	3.7	26	4.8	28	5.1	22	4	25	4.5
Archaeology	9	1.9	17	3.1	24	4.4	19	3	5	0.9
Art & Des(3D Stds)	20	4.1	31	5.7	34	6.2	28	5	17	3.1
Art & Des(Graphcs)	50	10.4	65	12.0	71	12.9	75	14	27	4.9
Art & Des(Photo.)	80	16.6	131	24.2	124	22.5	129	23	75	13.6
Art & Des(Textles)	59	12.2	86	15.9	115	20.9	91	16	61	11.1
Art & Design	199	41.3	256	47.2	266	48.4	242	44	242	43.8
Art&Des - Fine Art	185	38.4	306	56.5	318	57.8	360	65	341	61.8
Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	6	1.2	12	2.2	10	1.8	10	2	13	2.4
Bengali	2	0.4	9	1.7	4	0.7	0	0	3	0.5
Biology	300	62.2	502	92.6	537	97.6	535	97	543	98.4
Biology: Human	68	14.1	88	16.2	85	15.5	73	13	46	8.3
Bus. Studs:Single	191	39.6	337	62.2	389	70.7	412	75	374	67.8
Bus.Stds&Economics	20	4.1	37	6.8	56	10.2	57	10	51	9.2
Chemistry	257	53.3	486	89.7	530	96.4	542	98	542	98.2
Chinese	14	2.9	42	7.7	61	11.1	85	15	196	35.5
Class.Civilisation	3	0.6	19	3.5	66	12.0	89	16	267	48.4
Classical Greek	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2	1	0	115	20.8
Com.Stds/Computing	62	12.9	139	25.6	179	32.5	162	29	139	25.2
Communication Stds	24	5.0	52	9.6	45	8.2	39	7	12	2.2
Critical Thinking	40	8.3	74	13.7	90	16.4	96	17	97	17.6
D&T Food Technolgy	18	3.7	45	8.3	64	11.6	92	17	31	5.6
D&T Product Design	198	41.1	352	64.9	430	78.2	435	79	370	67.0
D&T Systems & Cont	6	1.2	23	4.2	37	6.7	31	6	38	6.9
Dance	48	10.0	89	16.4	95	17.3	71	13	21	3.8
Drama & Theat.Stds	149	30.9	324	59.8	389	70.7	413	75	399	72.3
Dutch	4	0.8	10	1.8	3	0.5	5	1	8	1.4
Economics	47	9.8	157	29.0	223	40.5	286	52	393	71.2
English	112	23.2	165	30.4	194	35.3	149	27	85	15.4
English Language	80	16.6	189	34.9	222	40.4	211	38	123	22.3
English Literature	340	70.5	483	89.1	510	92.7	531	96	537	97.3
European Studies	4	0.8	4	0.7	10	1.8	8	1	2	0.4
Film Studies	83	17.2	112	20.7	95	17.3	72	13	21	3.8
French	171	35.5	373	68.8	476	86.5	512	93	537	97.3
General Studies	168	34.9	335	61.8	393	71.5	352	64	290	52.5
Geography	234	48.5	457	84.3	522	94.9	524	95	534	96.7
German	67	13.9	228	42.1	342	62.2	409	74	479	86.8
Govt and Politics	50	10.4	133	24.5	195	35.5	238	43	289	52.4
Gujarati	1	0.2	3	0.6	3	0.5	0	0	2	0.4
History	288	59.8	497	91.7	539	98.0	536	97	541	98.0
History Of Art	4	0.8	7	1.3	10	1.8	26	5	103	18.7
Home Economics	4	0.8	9	1.7	23	4.2	40	7	67	12.1
Inform Comm Tech	155	32.2	290	53.5	321	58.4	329	60	254	46.0
Italian	11	2.3	21	3.9	44	8.0	47	9	108	19.6
Japanese	1	0.2	13	2.4	13	2.4	28	5	77	13.9
Latin	2	0.4	3	0.6	12	2.2	51	9	298	54.0
Law	157	32.6	218	40.2	200	36.4	150	27	46	8.3
Logic / Philosophy	16	3.3	54	10.0	68	12.4	65	12	75	13.6
Mathematics	359	74.5	522	96.3	540	98.2	548	99	547	99.1
Maths (Further)	37	7.7	138	25.5	295	53.6	384	70	468	84.8
Media/Film/TV Stds	195	40.5	315	58.1	320	58.2	261	47	73	13.2
Modern Greek	5	1.0	8	1.5	13	2.4	18	3	15	2.7
Modern Hebrew	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	2	0	10	1.8
Music	84	17.4	256	47.2	370	67.3	427	77	480	87.0

Table 15
(continuation)

Subject	Group I		Group II		Group III		Group IV		Group V	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Music Technology	51	10.6	110	20.3	130	23.6	125	23	86	15.6
Panjabi	15	3.1	17	3.1	9	1.6	8	1	3	0.5
Performance Stds	40	8.3	88	16.2	95	17.3	70	13	17	3.1
Persian	12	2.5	10	1.8	9	1.6	14	3	4	0.7
Physics	235	48.8	476	87.8	520	94.5	535	97	541	98.0
Polish	3	0.6	4	0.7	12	2.2	22	4	28	5.1
Portuguese	9	1.9	14	2.6	11	2.0	22	4	15	2.7
Psychology	271	56.2	386	71.2	419	76.2	387	70	237	42.9
Religious Studies	91	18.9	211	38.9	323	58.7	358	65	405	73.4
Russian	12	2.5	25	4.6	31	5.6	55	10	108	19.6
Sci for Public Und	10	2.1	13	2.4	33	6.0	27	5	8	1.4
Sci: Electronics	22	4.6	34	6.3	73	13.3	54	10	43	7.8
Sci: Environmental	19	3.9	58	10.7	62	11.3	43	8	20	3.6
Science: Geology	10	2.1	27	5.0	71	12.9	63	11	44	8.0
Soc Sci:Citizenshp	8	1.7	23	4.2	19	3.5	11	2	1	0.2
Social Policy	2	0.4	1	0.2	3	0.5	1	0	0	0.0
Sociology	246	51.0	390	72.0	390	70.9	345	63	134	24.3
Spanish	60	12.4	119	22.0	210	38.2	241	44	363	65.8
Sport/P.E. Studies	250	51.9	397	73.2	470	85.5	464	84	359	65.0
Turkish	17	3.5	16	3.0	16	2.9	7	1	9	1.6
Urdu	34	7.1	29	5.4	18	3.3	21	4	7	1.3
World Development	1	0.2	6	1.1	4	0.7	3	1	1	0.2

Table 16. Provision of A-levels by school size.

Subject	Less than 30		30 - 59		60 - 119		120 - 239		More than 240	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accounting/Finance	17	7.6	20	9.0	43	7.1	126	9.2	143	37.0
Ancient History	3	1.3	3	1.3	13	2.2	21	1.5	18	4.7
Arabic	9	4.0	10	4.5	23	3.8	47	3.4	31	8.0
Archaeology	0	0.0	1	0.4	2	0.3	19	1.4	52	13.5
Art & Des(3D Stds)	6	2.7	12	5.4	15	2.5	46	3.4	51	13.2
Art & Des(Graphics)	8	3.6	17	7.6	32	5.3	129	9.4	104	26.9
Art & Des(Photo.)	21	9.4	47	21.1	70	11.6	256	18.7	154	39.9
Art & Des(Textiles)	21	9.4	31	13.9	59	9.8	183	13.4	122	31.6
Art & Design	59	26.3	90	40.4	227	37.6	656	47.9	182	47.2
Art&Des - Fine Art	71	31.7	114	51.1	300	49.8	763	55.7	274	71.0
Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	2	0.9	5	2.2	8	1.3	20	1.5	17	4.4
Bengali	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.3	10	0.7	5	1.3
Biology	102	45.5	174	78.0	478	79.3	1291	94.2	381	98.7
Biology: Human	19	8.5	20	9.0	64	10.6	150	10.9	113	29.3
Bus. Studs:Single	92	41.1	130	58.3	312	51.7	869	63.4	312	80.8
Bus.Stds&Economics	6	2.7	19	8.5	44	7.3	122	8.9	31	8.0
Chemistry	100	44.6	173	77.6	455	75.5	1255	91.6	383	99.2
Chinese	43	19.2	76	34.1	112	18.6	120	8.8	50	13.0
Class.Civilisation	16	7.1	68	30.5	130	21.6	142	10.4	89	23.1
Classical Greek	2	0.9	15	6.7	48	8.0	51	3.7	2	0.5
Com.Stds/Computing	12	5.4	29	13.0	109	18.1	323	23.6	213	55.2
Communication Stds	4	1.8	5	2.2	25	4.1	60	4.4	79	20.5
Critical Thinking	5	2.2	17	7.6	64	10.6	201	14.7	112	29.0
D&T Food Technology	2	0.9	7	3.1	24	4.0	158	11.5	59	15.3
D&T Product Design	20	8.9	80	35.9	330	54.7	1052	76.8	306	79.3
D&T Systems & Cont	0	0.0	3	1.3	16	2.7	82	6.0	34	8.8
Dance	10	4.5	7	3.1	33	5.5	140	10.2	137	35.5
Drama & Theat.Stds	50	22.3	111	49.8	309	51.2	896	65.4	319	82.6
Dutch	1	0.4	2	0.9	5	0.8	15	1.1	7	1.8
Economics	28	12.5	83	37.2	216	35.8	525	38.3	257	66.6
English	18	8.0	40	17.9	103	17.1	359	26.2	193	50.0
English Language	20	8.9	26	11.7	105	17.4	426	31.1	252	65.3
English Literature	115	51.3	176	78.9	497	82.4	1251	91.3	376	97.4
European Studies	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.2	11	0.8	15	3.9
Film Studies	5	2.2	18	8.1	57	9.5	160	11.7	147	38.1
French	89	39.7	160	71.7	391	64.8	1070	78.1	364	94.3
General Studies	37	16.5	63	28.3	269	44.6	872	63.6	302	78.2
Geography	82	36.6	153	68.6	440	73.0	1220	89.1	381	98.7
German	51	22.8	119	53.4	286	47.4	769	56.1	301	78.0
Govt and Politics	16	7.1	50	22.4	188	31.2	424	30.9	229	59.3
Gujarati	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.5	4	0.3	3	0.8
History	97	43.3	169	75.8	467	77.4	1291	94.2	385	99.7
History Of Art	7	3.1	32	14.3	45	7.5	47	3.4	19	4.9
Home Economics	12	5.4	29	13.0	30	5.0	50	3.6	22	5.7
Inform Comm Tech	58	25.9	98	43.9	257	42.6	674	49.2	273	70.7
Italian	6	2.7	16	7.2	51	8.5	108	7.9	50	13.0
Japanese	10	4.5	23	10.3	42	7.0	46	3.4	11	2.8
Latin	11	4.9	55	24.7	138	22.9	144	10.5	18	4.7
Law	29	12.9	43	19.3	102	16.9	389	28.4	223	57.8
Logic / Philosophy	6	2.7	9	4.0	43	7.1	111	8.1	110	28.5
Mathematics	125	55.8	195	87.4	509	84.4	1322	96.5	386	100.0
Maths (Further)	30	13.4	85	38.1	268	44.4	657	48.0	282	73.1
Media/Film/TV Stds	18	8.0	42	18.8	154	25.5	681	49.7	273	70.7

Table 16
(continuation)

Subject	Less than 30		30 - 59		60 - 119		120 - 239		More than 240	
	N	%	N	%	N		N	%	N	%
Modern Greek	2	0.9	1	0.4	12	2.0	33	2.4	11	2.8
Modern Hebrew	1	0.4	1	0.4	7	1.2	4	0.3	1	0.3
Music	41	18.3	119	53.4	300	49.8	851	62.1	308	79.8
Music Technology	5	2.2	12	5.4	77	12.8	245	17.9	165	42.7
Panjabi	2	0.9	2	0.9	14	2.3	27	2.0	8	2.1
Performance Stds	3	1.3	8	3.6	25	4.1	174	12.7	100	25.9
Persian	3	1.3	3	1.3	10	1.7	22	1.6	11	2.8
Physics	95	42.4	167	74.9	433	71.8	1236	90.2	384	99.5
Polish	1	0.4	5	2.2	15	2.5	38	2.8	10	2.6
Portuguese	1	0.4	1	0.4	21	3.5	32	2.3	19	4.9
Psychology	62	27.7	104	46.6	285	47.3	940	68.6	331	85.8
Religious Studies	31	13.8	97	43.5	278	46.1	737	53.8	246	63.7
Russian	12	5.4	24	10.8	64	10.6	98	7.2	34	8.8
Sci for Public Und	3	1.3	1	0.4	6	1.0	42	3.1	40	10.4
Sci: Electronics	1	0.4	5	2.2	24	4.0	91	6.6	105	27.2
Sci: Environmental	2	0.9	7	3.1	24	4.0	78	5.7	91	23.6
Science: Geology	2	0.9	3	1.3	25	4.1	79	5.8	106	27.5
Soc Sci:Citizenshp	2	0.9	3	1.3	11	1.8	20	1.5	28	7.3
Social Policy	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.1	5	1.3
Sociology	34	15.2	63	28.3	200	33.2	872	63.6	349	90.4
Spanish	31	13.8	99	44.4	210	34.8	427	31.2	226	58.5
Sport/P.E. Studies	45	20.1	108	48.4	338	56.1	1085	79.2	367	95.1
Turkish	2	0.9	3	1.3	11	1.8	35	2.6	16	4.1
Urdu	6	2.7	8	3.6	27	4.5	51	3.7	31	8.0
World Development	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	3.9

Table 17(a). Provision of A-levels by school sex.

Subject	Boys		Girls		Mixed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accounting/Finance	4	2.4	12	3.3	333	14.6
Ancient History	13	7.7	3	0.8	42	1.8
Arabic	9	5.4	15	4.1	96	4.2
Archaeology	0	0.0	2	0.6	72	3.2
Art & Des(3D Stds)	4	2.4	8	2.2	118	5.2
Art & Des(Graphcs)	10	6.0	18	5.0	262	11.5
Art & Des(Photo.)	18	10.7	44	12.1	486	21.4
Art & Des(Textles)	1	0.6	61	16.8	354	15.6
Art & Design	65	38.7	153	42.1	996	43.8
Art&Des - Fine Art	88	52.4	199	54.8	1235	54.3
Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	1	0.6	6	1.7	45	2.0
Bengali	0	0.0	4	1.1	15	0.7
Biology	135	80.4	317	87.3	1974	86.8
Biology: Human	9	5.4	31	8.5	326	14.3
Bus. Studs:Single	96	57.1	196	54.0	1423	62.5
Bus.Stds&Economics	8	4.8	35	9.6	179	7.9
Chemistry	138	82.1	313	86.2	1915	84.2
Chinese	31	18.5	97	26.7	273	12.0
Class.Civilisation	42	25.0	144	39.7	259	11.4
Classical Greek	25	14.9	42	11.6	51	2.2
Com.Stds/Computing	59	35.1	21	5.8	606	26.6
Communication Stds	6	3.6	6	1.7	161	7.1
Critical Thinking	23	13.7	44	12.1	332	14.6
D&T Food Technolgy	4	2.4	22	6.1	224	9.8
D&T Product Design	105	62.5	152	41.9	1531	67.3
D&T Systems & Cont	13	7.7	4	1.1	118	5.2
Dance	0	0.0	34	9.4	293	12.9
Drama & Theat.Stds	64	38.1	236	65.0	1385	60.9
Dutch	1	0.6	3	0.8	26	1.1
Economics	112	66.7	144	39.7	853	37.5
English	29	17.3	48	13.2	636	28.0
English Language	28	16.7	58	16.0	743	32.7
English Literature	135	80.4	320	88.2	1960	86.2
European Studies	1	0.6	3	0.8	24	1.1
Film Studies	7	4.2	9	2.5	371	16.3
French	120	71.4	293	80.7	1661	73.0
General Studies	83	49.4	144	39.7	1316	57.8
Geography	135	80.4	295	81.3	1846	81.1
German	92	54.8	226	62.3	1208	53.1
Govt and Politics	86	51.2	125	34.4	696	30.6
Gujarati	1	0.6	2	0.6	7	0.3
History	140	83.3	311	85.7	1958	86.1
History Of Art	9	5.4	60	16.5	81	3.6
Home Economics	2	1.2	58	16.0	83	3.6
Inform Comm Tech	72	42.9	152	41.9	1136	49.9
Italian	24	14.3	47	12.9	160	7.0
Japanese	14	8.3	40	11.0	78	3.4
Latin	60	35.7	129	35.5	177	7.8
Law	22	13.1	35	9.6	729	32.0

The provision of GCE A-level subjects

Table 17(a)
(continuation)

Subject	Boys		Girls		Mixed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Logic / Philosophy	21	12.5	25	6.9	233	10.2
Mathematics	145	86.3	323	89.0	2069	90.9
Maths (Further)	100	59.5	176	48.5	1046	46.0
Media/Film/TV Stds	39	23.2	78	21.5	1051	46.2
Modern Greek	5	3.0	10	2.8	44	1.9
Modern Hebrew	3	1.8	2	0.6	9	0.4
Music	99	58.9	236	65.0	1284	56.4
Music Technology	27	16.1	17	4.7	460	20.2
Panjabi	1	0.6	4	1.1	48	2.1
Performance Stds	6	3.6	18	5.0	286	12.6
Persian	3	1.8	7	1.9	39	1.7
Physics	140	83.3	290	79.9	1885	82.9
Polish	4	2.4	14	3.9	51	2.2
Portuguese	7	4.2	14	3.9	53	2.3
Psychology	48	28.6	179	49.3	1495	65.7
Religious Studies	76	45.2	240	66.1	1073	47.2
Russian	26	15.5	35	9.6	171	7.5
Sci for Public Und	0	0.0	5	1.4	87	3.8
Sci: Electronics	19	11.3	0	0.0	207	9.1
Sci: Environmental	1	0.6	3	0.8	198	8.7
Science: Geology	10	6.0	6	1.7	199	8.7
Soc Sci: Citizenship	2	1.2	2	0.6	60	2.6
Social Policy	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	0.3
Sociology	29	17.3	130	35.8	1359	59.7
Spanish	60	35.7	203	55.9	730	32.1
Sport/P.E. Studies	99	58.9	165	45.5	1679	73.8
Turkish	4	2.4	9	2.5	54	2.4
Urdu	5	3.0	16	4.4	102	4.5
World Development	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	0.7

Table 17(b). Provision of A-levels by school sex.

Subject	Boys-Boys		Boys-Mixed		Girls-Girls		Girls-Mixed		Mixed-Mixed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accounting/Finance	2	1.6	2	3.5	7	2.4	1	3.7	254	12.9
Ancient History	12	9.4	3	5.3	3	1.0	0	0.0	33	1.7
Arabic	7	5.5	4	7.0	15	5.2	2	7.4	76	3.9
Archaeology	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.7	2	7.4	48	2.4
Art & Des(3D Stds)	3	2.3	2	3.5	6	2.1	0	0.0	94	4.8
Art & Des(Graphics)	9	7.0	3	5.3	14	4.8	2	7.4	203	10.3
Art & Des(Photo.)	15	11.7	14	24.6	38	13.1	5	18.5	393	19.9
Art & Des(Textiles)	1	0.8	2	3.5	47	16.2	3	11.1	291	14.8
Art & Design	56	43.8	17	29.8	129	44.3	12	44.4	895	45.4
Art&Des - Fine Art	74	57.8	41	71.9	168	57.7	20	74.1	1051	53.4
Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	0	0.0	2	3.5	4	1.4	0	0.0	34	1.7
Bengali	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.4	0	0.0	12	0.6
Biology	113	88.3	57	100.0	271	93.1	27	100.0	1739	88.3
Biology: Human	5	3.9	2	3.5	25	8.6	1	3.7	254	12.9
Bus. Studs:Single	78	60.9	41	71.9	168	57.7	19	70.4	1210	61.4
Bus.Stds&Economics	7	5.5	1	1.8	30	10.3	1	3.7	170	8.6
Chemistry	113	88.3	56	98.2	268	92.1	27	100.0	1682	85.4
Chinese	27	21.1	13	22.8	85	29.2	4	14.8	234	11.9
Class.Civilisation	35	27.3	23	40.4	121	41.6	10	37.0	198	10.1
Classical Greek	24	18.8	8	14.0	36	12.4	1	3.7	42	2.1
Com.Stds/Computing	52	40.6	31	54.4	18	6.2	4	14.8	470	23.9
Communication Stds	4	3.1	0	0.0	6	2.1	0	0.0	124	6.3
Critical Thinking	21	16.4	10	17.5	39	13.4	6	22.2	269	13.7
D&T Food Technolgy	4	3.1	1	1.8	20	6.9	3	11.1	213	10.8
D&T Product Design	88	68.8	49	86.0	133	45.7	22	81.5	1393	70.7
D&T Systems & Cont	12	9.4	7	12.3	4	1.4	0	0.0	103	5.2
Dance	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	9.3	6	22.2	236	12.0
Drama & Theat.Stds	54	42.2	27	47.4	204	70.1	20	74.1	1230	62.4
Dutch	1	0.8	2	3.5	3	1.0	1	3.7	21	1.1
Economics	91	71.1	45	78.9	124	42.6	8	29.6	714	36.2
English	24	18.8	12	21.1	38	13.1	11	40.7	509	25.8
English Language	24	18.8	7	12.3	45	15.5	1	3.7	638	32.4
English Literature	112	87.5	56	98.2	271	93.1	26	96.3	1725	87.6
European Studies	1	0.8	2	3.5	2	0.7	0	0.0	15	0.8
Film Studies	5	3.9	5	8.8	7	2.4	5	18.5	278	14.1
French	100	78.1	56	98.2	251	86.3	23	85.2	1457	74.0
General Studies	70	54.7	41	71.9	128	44.0	13	48.1	1163	59.0
Geography	113	88.3	57	100.0	251	86.3	26	96.3	1636	83.0
German	79	61.7	46	80.7	195	67.0	20	74.1	1053	53.5
Govt and Politics	72	56.3	33	57.9	102	35.1	16	59.3	560	28.4
Gujarati	1	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	3.7	5	0.3
History	117	91.4	57	100.0	264	90.7	27	100.0	1726	87.6
History Of Art	8	6.3	7	12.3	49	16.8	3	11.1	61	3.1
Home Economics	2	1.6	0	0.0	51	17.5	3	11.1	77	3.9
Inform Comm Tech	54	42.2	29	50.9	126	43.3	14	51.9	959	48.7
Italian	22	17.2	10	17.5	39	13.4	6	22.2	124	6.3
Japanese	13	10.2	4	7.0	36	12.4	1	3.7	69	3.5
Latin	52	40.6	27	47.4	111	38.1	5	18.5	140	7.1
Law	18	14.1	8	14.0	26	8.9	5	18.5	578	29.3
Logic / Philosophy	18	14.1	10	17.5	19	6.5	2	7.4	175	8.9
Mathematics	116	90.6	56	98.2	274	94.2	27	100.0	1822	92.5
Maths (Further)	87	68.0	49	86.0	152	52.2	16	59.3	897	45.5
Media/Film/TV Stds	32	25.0	13	22.8	68	23.4	15	55.6	892	45.3

The provision of GCE A-level subjects

Table 17(b)
(continuation)

Subject	Boys-Boys		Boys-Mixed		Girls-Girls		Girls-Mixed		Mixed-Mixed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Modern Greek	5	3.9	4	7.0	8	2.7	0	0.0	37	1.9
Modern Hebrew	3	2.3	0	0.0	2	0.7	1	3.7	8	0.4
Music	83	64.8	49	86.0	205	70.4	23	85.2	1122	57.0
Music Technology	24	18.8	13	22.8	15	5.2	2	7.4	393	19.9
Panjabi	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.4	3	11.1	39	2.0
Performance Stds	4	3.1	1	1.8	15	5.2	3	11.1	238	12.1
Persian	1	0.8	2	3.5	6	2.1	0	0.0	33	1.7
Physics	114	89.1	57	100.0	249	85.6	24	88.9	1662	84.4
Polish	4	3.1	5	8.8	10	3.4	1	3.7	43	2.2
Portuguese	7	5.5	2	3.5	13	4.5	3	11.1	42	2.1
Psychology	37	28.9	22	38.6	154	52.9	21	77.8	1289	65.4
Religious Studies	64	50.0	47	82.5	204	70.1	26	96.3	931	47.3
Russian	22	17.2	9	15.8	29	10.0	3	11.1	144	7.3
Sci for Public Und	0	0.0	2	3.5	5	1.7	0	0.0	72	3.7
Sci: Electronics	16	12.5	6	10.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	163	8.3
Sci: Environmental	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.0	0	0.0	154	7.8
Science: Geology	9	7.0	7	12.3	4	1.4	0	0.0	152	7.7
Soc Sci:Citizenshp	2	1.6	0	0.0	2	0.7	0	0.0	39	2.0
Social Policy	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	0.4
Sociology	25	19.5	11	19.3	107	36.8	21	77.8	1170	59.4
Spanish	53	41.4	30	52.6	176	60.5	18	66.7	600	30.5
Sport/P.E. Studies	80	62.5	49	86.0	143	49.1	18	66.7	1497	76.0
Turkish	3	2.3	2	3.5	7	2.4	2	7.4	45	2.3
Urdu	3	2.3	0	0.0	11	3.8	1	3.7	84	4.3
World Development	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	0.5

Provision of Modern Foreign Languages

One of the areas of particular concern about the uptake at A-level is the Modern Foreign Languages (e.g. CILT (2005)). For A-level studies, the three main languages in terms of uptake are French, German and Spanish (see Bell *et al.* (2005)). There are also a number of minority languages offered by a small number of schools and taken by a relatively small number of candidates. In table 18 we display the languages that were offered at A-level in 2004. The pattern shown here corresponds, in general, with the uptake pattern shown in Bell *et al.* (2005).

Table 18. Modern Foreign Languages offered at A-level.

Modern Foreign Language	Number of schools	Percentage
French	2075	33.04
German	1526	24.30
Spanish	993	15.81
Chinese	401	6.39
Russian	232	3.69
Italian	231	3.68
Japanese	132	2.10
Urdu	123	1.96
Arabic	120	1.91
Portuguese	74	1.18
Polish	69	1.10
Turkish	67	1.07
Modern Greek	60	0.96
Panjabi	54	0.86
Persian	50	0.80
Dutch	30	0.48
Bengali	19	0.30
Modern Hebrew	14	0.22
Gujarati	10	0.16

The following figures display the number of Modern Foreign Languages offered by school type (Figure 1), school attainment group (Figure 2) and school sex (Figure 3).

It is clear from Figure 1 that independent schools offer a higher number of Modern Foreign Languages than the other types of schools. They are followed by comprehensive schools and sixth form colleges.

There is a stronger pattern in the provision of Modern Foreign Languages by school attainment group (Figure 2). The schools in the higher level of attainment groups offer more Modern Foreign Languages at A-level.

Figure 1. Number of Modern Foreign Languages A-levels offered by school type.

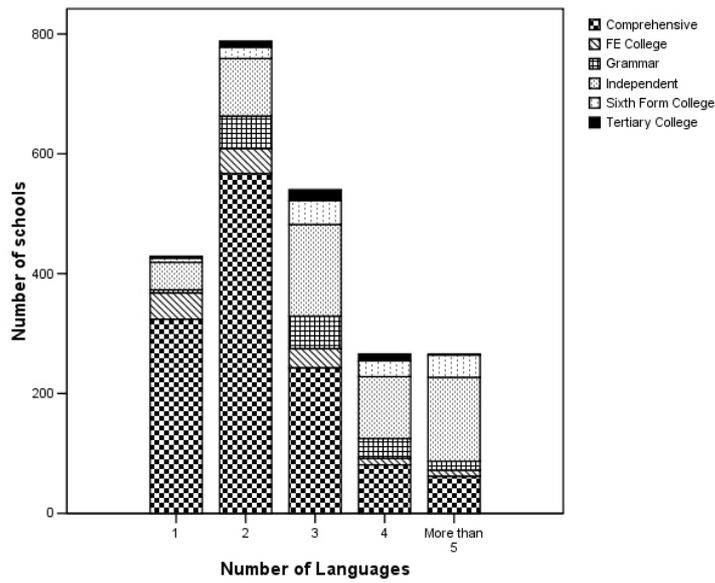
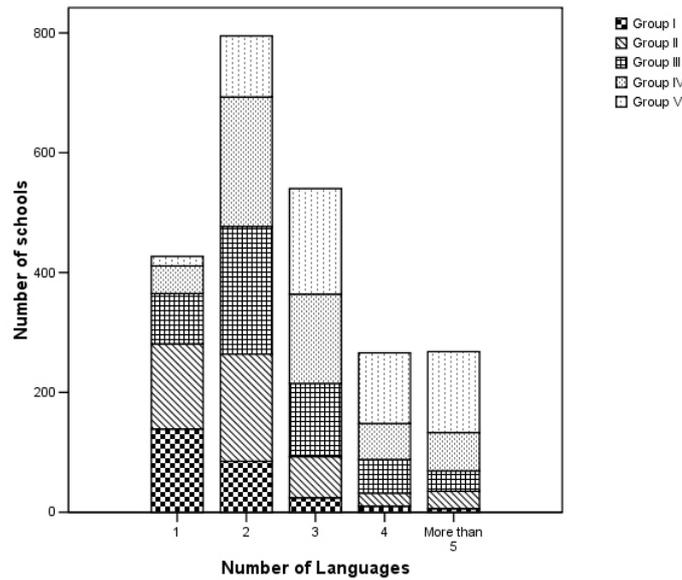


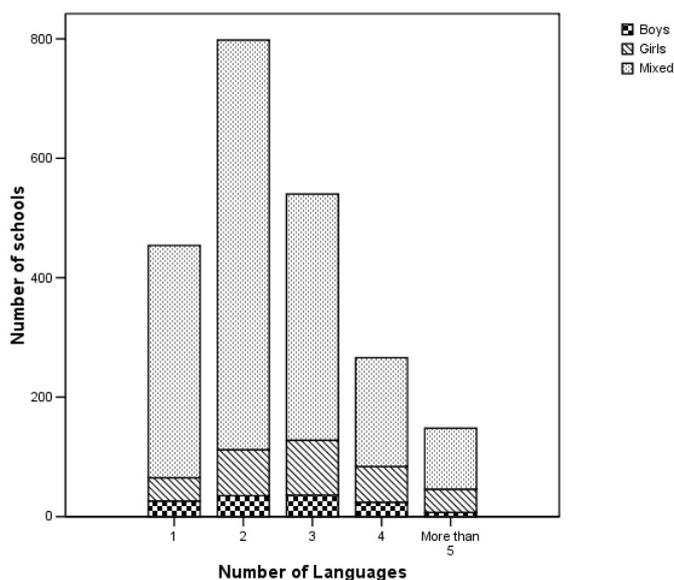
Figure 2. Number of Modern Foreign Languages A-levels offered by school attainment group.



In general, from Figure 3 we can see that “Girls only” schools offer a higher number of Modern Foreign Languages than “Boys only” schools.

The BBC news noted that “the image of Modern Languages as being the preserve of better-off students was reinforced by figures from the Independent Schools Council last year which showed that 60% of all A-level grade As in French were achieved by students in independent schools” (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4357314.stm>). The results of this research are entirely consistent with this.

Figure 3. Number of modern foreign languages A-levels offered by school sex.



Provision of Economics and Business Studies

Another area of interest is the provision of Economics and Business Studies. Ashworth and Evans (2000) reported a 50% decline in the numbers taking A-level Economics over the previous fifteen years (however, some of this change is related to a decline in number of eighteen year olds per year in this period). This has been matched by an increase in the popularity of Business Studies through the 1990s, suggesting perhaps that these two subjects provide close substitutes for one another (Hurd *et al.* (1997)). Furthermore, this has been suggested as part of the explanation for the reduced popularity of Economics degree programmes at university level by Heads of Economics Departments (see Machin and Oswald (2000)). It should also be noted that in 2003 Business Studies was the most popular degree subject with one in eight university students taking it (<http://www.hesa.ac.uk>).

Table 19 shows the number and percentages of schools, by type of school, that offer only Economics, only Business Studies or the Business Studies & Economics A-level. Table 20 shows the same percentages for the combinations of these subjects.

Table 19. Provision of Economics, Business Studies or Business Studies&Economics A-levels by school type.

School type	Economics		Business Studies		Eco&Bus	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Comprehensive	178	11.6	539	35.2	129	8.4
FE College	5	1.9	98	37.4	6	2.3
Grammar	23	14.1	35	21.5	13	8.0
Independent	99	17.2	149	25.8	36	6.2
Sixth Form	2	1.4	32	22.5	1	0.7
Tertiary	0	0.0	24	47.1	1	2.0

Around 35% of comprehensive schools and FE and Tertiary Colleges offer only Business Studies. However, not many comprehensive schools (11%) or colleges (around 3%) offer Economics. Economics only is offered by 17% of independent and 14% of grammar schools.

Table 20. Provision of the combinations of Economics, Business Studies or Business Studies&Economics A-levels by school type.

School type	Eco + Bus		Eco + Eco&Bus		Bus + Eco&Bus	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Comprehensive	313	20.4	3	0.2	11	0.7
FE College	57	21.8	0	0.0	2	0.8
Grammar	82	50.3	3	1.8	1	0.6
Independent	216	37.4	0	0.0	3	0.5
Sixth Form	95	66.9	0	0.0	1	0.7
Tertiary	20	39.2	0	0.0	1	2.0

The most common combination is Economics and Business Studies. This is offered by around 70% of the sixth form colleges and by 50% of the grammar schools. The other combinations of two subjects are not very popular and there are no big differences between the provision in different types of schools. Only 10 schools offer the three subjects and therefore, we do not display the results in the table. We should note that the percentages of schools offering the combination of Economics and Business Studies are higher than those of schools offering only Economics but this is not the case for Business Studies. For example, 35% of comprehensive schools offer Business Studies and only 20% offer the combination with Economics.

In Tables 21 and 22, the effect of school attainment is considered. As with Modern Foreign Languages, Economics is offered more in high attainment schools. However, Business Studies is offered in around 40% of medium attainment schools and only in 16% of high attainment schools.

Table 21. Provision of Economics, Business Studies or Business Studies&Economics A-levels by school attainment group.

School ability group	Economics		Business Studies		Eco&Bus	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Group I	28	5.8	171	35.5	19	3.9
Group II	61	11.3	239	44.1	35	6.5
Group III	50	9.1	210	38.2	45	8.2
Group IV	57	10.3	181	32.8	45	8.2
Group V	112	20.3	91	16.5	42	7.6

With regard to the combination of subjects, again, the percentages of schools offering a combination of Economics and Business Studies increase with attainment. The other combinations of two subjects are not very popular and there are no big differences in the provision between the different attainment groups.

Table 22. Provision of the combinations of Economics, Business Studies or Business Studies&Economics A-levels by school attainment group.

School ability	Eco + Bus		Eco + Eco&Bus		Bus + Eco&Bus	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Group I	19	3.9	0	0.0	1	0.2
Group II	96	17.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
Group III	169	30.7	1	0.2	7	1.3
Group IV	222	40.2	3	0.5	5	0.9
Group V	276	50.0	2	0.4	4	0.7

Discussion

The provision of A-level subjects has obvious implications for access to universities. If a subject is a requirement (or just strongly preferred) then students who attend schools where it is not offered are obviously at a disadvantage. The most extreme case of this is the classical languages where the majority of the provision is in either state maintained grammar schools or independent schools so if they are a requirement for entrance to classic courses at university then the entry comes from a very restricted section of the population.

Perhaps of greater importance are the patterns of provision of science and mathematics subjects. For example, Chemistry A-level (which is usually perceived as important for the future study of medicine) is not provided in 13% of comprehensive schools and 35% of the lowest attaining schools. Another area where provision is of interest is Further Mathematics, which is strongly recommended as preparation for mathematics degree courses in elite universities. This subject is only offered by 42% of comprehensive schools.

Of course, it can be argued that students can select schools or colleges that provide the courses that match their future aspirations. There are a number of problems with this. For example, there may be additional travel costs or students may have to split from friendship groups. It is also the case that students might not have a clear view of their future career at age 16.

References

- Ashworth J. and Evans L. (2000) Economists are grading students away from the subject. *Educational Studies* 26: 475–487.
- Bell J.F. (2001) Patterns of subject uptake and examination entry 1984-1997. *Educational Studies* 27(2): 201-219.
- Bell J.F. (2002) *Science subject uptake for year 11 pupils (1974-1997)*. Internal report. Research Division, Cambridge Assessment.

Bell J.F. (2003) Beyond the school gates: the influence of school neighbourhood on the relative progress of pupils. *Oxford Review of Education* 29(4): 485-502.

Bell J.F. and Forster M. (2001) Patterns of uptake of modern language examinations in England 1984-1999. *Language Learning Journal* 24: 48-52.

Bell J.F., Malacova E. and Shannon M. (2005) The changing pattern of A-level/AS uptake in England. *The Curriculum Journal*, in press.

Claessen M. (2005) *Provision of GCSE subjects*. Statistics Report Series, no. 2. Research Division, Cambridge Assessment.

CILT (2005) *Language trends. Languages in Key Stage 4*. CILT: The National centre for languages (http://www.cilt.org.uk/key/trends2005/trends2005_ks4.pdf).

Department of Education and Science (1985). *Better Schools*. London, HMSO.

Hurd S., Coates G. and Anderton A. (1997) *Economics and Business Studies – Trends in A-level*. Working Paper 97.8. Division of Economics, University of Staffordshire.

Machin S. and Oswald A. (2000) UK Economics and the future supply of academic economists. *Economic Journal* 110: 334-339.

Payne A. (1993) A post-16 common curriculum. *FORUM* 35, 2: 46-48.

Schagen S., Johnson F. and Simkin C. (1996) *Sixth Form Options: post-compulsory education in maintained schools*. Slough, NFER.

Appendix: A-level subjects

LEAP Code	Subject Title	LEAP Code	Subject Title
7410	Accounting/Finance	2210	Mathematics
6510	Ancient History	2330	Maths (Further)
5910	Arabic	5350	Media/Film/TV Stds
4730	Archaeology	5710	Modern Greek
3670	Art & Des(3D Stds)	6030	Modern Hebrew
3550	Art & Des(Graphcs)	7010	Music
3570	Art & Des(Photo.)	7040	Music Technology
3650	Art & Des(Textles)	6050	Panjabi
3510	Art & Design	5330	Performance Stds
3690	Art&Des - Fine Art	6150	Persian
3680	Art&Des(Crit&Cont)	1210	Physics
5930	Bengali	6070	Polish
1010	Biology	5730	Portuguese
1030	Biology: Human	4850	Psychology
3210	Bus. Stds:Single	4610	Religious Studies
3230	Bus.Stds&Economics	6090	Russian
1110	Chemistry	1920	Sci for Public Und
5950	Chinese	1730	Sci: Electronics
6530	Class.Civilisation	1750	Sci: Environmental
6550	Classical Greek	1770	Science: Geology
2610	Com.Stds/Computing	4910	Soc Sci:Citizenshp
5310	Communication Stds	4895	Social Policy
7830	Critical Thinking	4890	Sociology
9020	D&T Food Technolgy	5750	Spanish
9080	D&T Product Design	7210	Sport/P.E. Studies
9060	D&T Systems & Cont	6110	Turkish
7230	Dance	6130	Urdu
5210	Drama & Theat.Stds	3920	World Development
5630	Dutch		
4410	Economics		
5010	English		
5030	English Language		
5110	English Literature		
4150	European Studies		
5360	Film Studies		
5650	French		
7810	General Studies		
3910	Geography		
5670	German		
4830	Govt and Politics		
5970	Gujarati		
4010	History		
3830	History Of Art		
3310	Home Economics		
2650	Inform Comm Tech		
5690	Italian		
6010	Japanese		
6610	Latin		
4770	Law		
4790	Logic / Philosophy		