



CaSE Press Release: 27th August 2009

Triple Science GCSEs rising fast – but still a large impact of school type

At the end of Key Stage 4, students may take separate or “triple” science GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics, two science GCSEs (either Additional or Additional Applied Science combined with Science) or a single award (Science).

Triple Science Uptake

In 2008, triple science entries were up about a third on 2007. This year rises continued with an increase of 18% in biology, 20% in chemistry and 21% in physics – between 15,000 and 16,000 extra students in each subject even though overall GCSE entries decreased 3.5%.

Dr Hilary Leever, CaSE's Assistant Director, commented:

“We are delighted that entries into triple science GCSEs are increasing and by such large amounts. Over 91,000 students took physics GCSE this year so it is really possible that we might reach the government target of 100,000 in the foreseeable, or maybe even near, future.”

Triple science availability and school-type

“CaSE has long campaigned for triple science to be available to all students and, as more are now being offered triple science, we are pleased and relieved to see that students are flocking to it. However, a disproportionate number of entries were from the independent and selective sector – while independent schools account for 9% of overall entries they accounted for 18% of entries into triple science and while grammar schools account for 6.5% of overall entries they make up 17% of entries into triple science. It is exciting to think how many students might take triple science if it was actually offered in all schools – last year only 32% of schools entered students into triple science including just 72% of science specialist schools.”

(See note 3 on triple science provision.)

Mathematics

Mathematics GCSE entries increased by 2.2% and additional mathematics increased by 10.6%.

Hilary Leever commented: “It is great news that mathematics entries are on the rise but there was an interesting shift in performance with gender. Where females had previously out-performed males at all levels, this year males outperformed females at levels C to A*. It is vital that we work to understand this shift.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Contact: Dr Hilary Leever, Assistant Director, hilary@sciencecampaign.org.uk, 020 7679 4995, 07905 304702.

2. Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) is a policy advocate for science and engineering in the UK. CaSE is supported by its members, which includes individuals, corporations, universities and learned societies. Further information on CaSE can be found on our website: <http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk>
Follow CaSE on twitter: <http://twitter.com/sciencecampaign>

3. Provision of Triple Science GCSEs

The Government had a target that by September 2008, all pupils achieving at least level 6 at Key Stage 3 would be entitled to study triple science GCSE (although, not necessarily in their own schools) and all science specialist schools were meant to offer triple science GCSEs (*Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014: Next Steps*).

In reality, only 32% of state schools entered students into triple science in 2008 including just 72% of science specialist schools (DCSF communication).

In February, the Prime Minister announced a new target for 60% of schools to offer triple science by 2011, increasing to 90% by 2014. The second target is for 17% of pupils to be studying triple science by 2014 - over 100,000 pupils.

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page18472>.

4. Briefing on the delivery of science GCSEs:

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/documents/2009/GCSEdelivery.pdf>

5. All GCSE figures can be viewed at www.jcq.org.uk.