

**Providing Access to  
High Quality Career  
Focused Education:**

BTEC Firsts Results  
for the academic  
year 2023/24



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# BTEC Firsts L2 qualifications


BTECs are rigorous, future-focussed, and globally recognised qualifications that equip learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and confidence to succeed in a modern, skills-based economy. One in five UK working age adults have one or more BTECs, and 6 million learners have achieved a BTEC in the last decade.

The courses are developed hand-in-glove with employers. This approach ensures that not only are the learners set up for a successful transition into the workplace, but they will go into jobs that will help satisfy the UK economy's widening skills gaps. Included in the class of 2024 are many future healthcare professionals, engineers and construction workers, among others, who are so vital to the UK's economy.

BTEC Firsts provide both Key Stage 4 and Post-16 learners with the opportunity to take a vocational qualification in their chosen area of study.

In schools, learners have the opportunity to study a BTEC First Award (120 GLH) in their chosen subject as part of their wider KS4 programme of study. For post-16 learners BTEC Firsts offer learners the Certificate (240 GLH), Extended Certificate (360 GLH) or Diploma (480 GLH) as their main focus of study.

There is increasing demand from young people for BTEC courses in UK schools. The combination of traditional academic learning with vocational and transferable skills allows young people to prepare for the possibilities that will be opened to them as the careers of the future evolve.



# Context of the 2023/24 academic year

This academic year in line with the regulatory guidance from Ofqual the aim was to continue with normal grading arrangements having returned to pre-pandemic performance standards last academic year. Our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2024 has been to maintain the performance standards from 2023.

BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications – BTECs are modular qualifications (with assessments taking place throughout the course) compared to GCSEs and A levels which are linear (assessed and awarded at the same time at the end of the year).

The aim of all awarding bodies has been to ensure fairness for learners by neither advantaging or disadvantaging any one group of students compared to their peers. [Further information can be found here.](#)



# BTEC Firsts: Key Headlines

- As these are legacy qualifications, there has been a decrease in entry volumes across all qualification sizes. Many learners are transitioning onto new qualifications such as BTEC Tech Awards (2022).
- The First Award (120 GLH) size remains by far the most popular size. The First Award is equivalent to a GCSE and can be delivered alongside other KS4 qualifications.
- Business, Sport & ICT are the most popular sectors.
- Given the significant changes in cohort size and make-up, comparisons to historical years is not possible and must be treated with caution.



# Introduction: Understanding BTEC First Results

## Qualification suites and qualification frameworks

The current suite of BTEC First qualifications at Level 1/2 (GCSE level) was developed to sit within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). These specifications were introduced for first teaching in 2012.

Although it is convenient to refer to NQF qualifications using the qualification framework applicable when they were developed, it should be noted that the current qualification framework is the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework), which was introduced in 2015.

## The academic year

The academic year for the purpose of this results publication is from 1 September to 31 August; results are grouped according to the academic year in which they are projected to complete the qualification.



# Introduction: Understanding BTEC Firsts Results

The following pages show the outcomes of BTEC qualifications for Level 1/2 Firsts for the academic year 2023/24. The outcomes from previous years have been included for comparison. Results from learners in all locations are included. This includes England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and all jurisdictions where learners are expected to complete these qualifications in the academic years reported.

## Cohort and Completion

The results published this year represent achievement for learners in UK schools and further education establishments (FE) for the 2023/24 full academic year. They represent learners at a cohort level, i.e. those that were expected to complete in 2023/24. This provides a picture of the results for BTEC Firsts over the year. Performance tables report on completion rates, so the inclusion of this data aligns these results closely with national reporting.

Learners' results may be reported as 'not completed' for a number of reasons: put simply, the student has not passed the qualification in the expected timeframe. However, it may be they are still studying for their qualification, or that a fallback Certificate of Unit Achievement was requested, or that they have withdrawn from the course.



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2024  
Learner  
completions

BTEC Firsts

Level 1/2  
qualifications



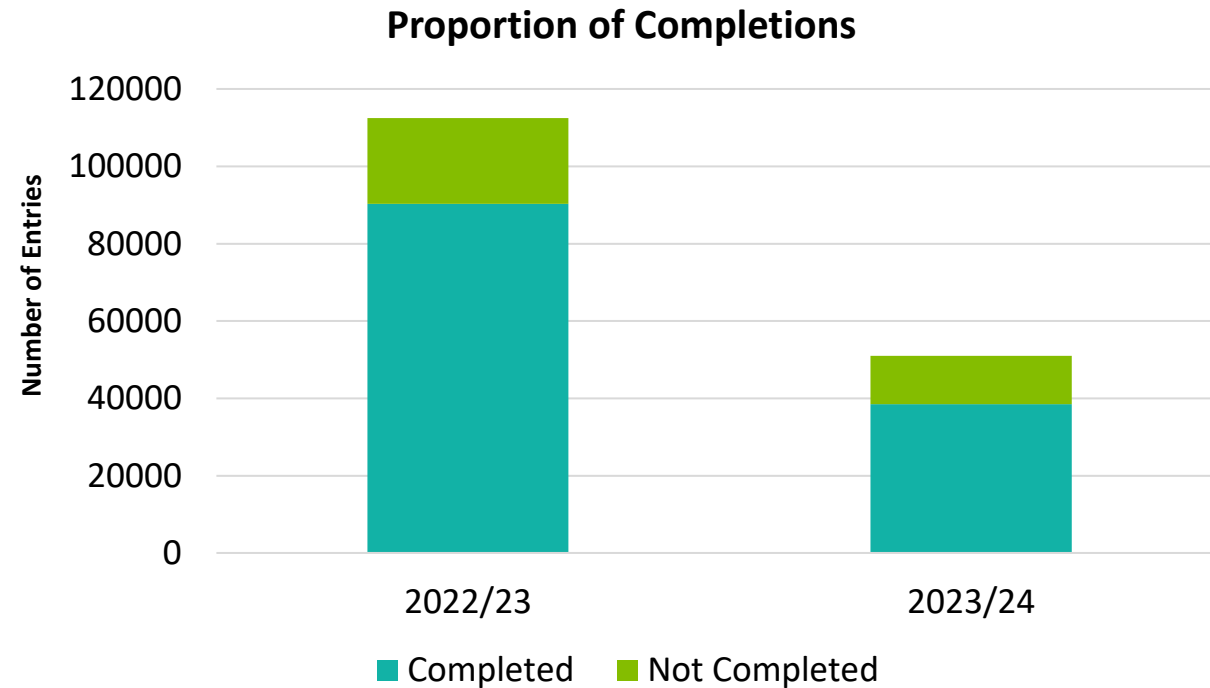


# Changing patterns in entry

## BTEC Firsts Cohort Overview

The size of the BTEC Firsts cohort as whole has decreased in 2023/24 compared to the previous year.

The introduction of other new L2 qualifications such as the BTEC Tech Awards (2022) qualifications has continued to impact on the cohort volumes for the BTEC Firsts in some subject areas.



Completed: learners who completed by the end of the specified course duration and were awarded a qualification grade.

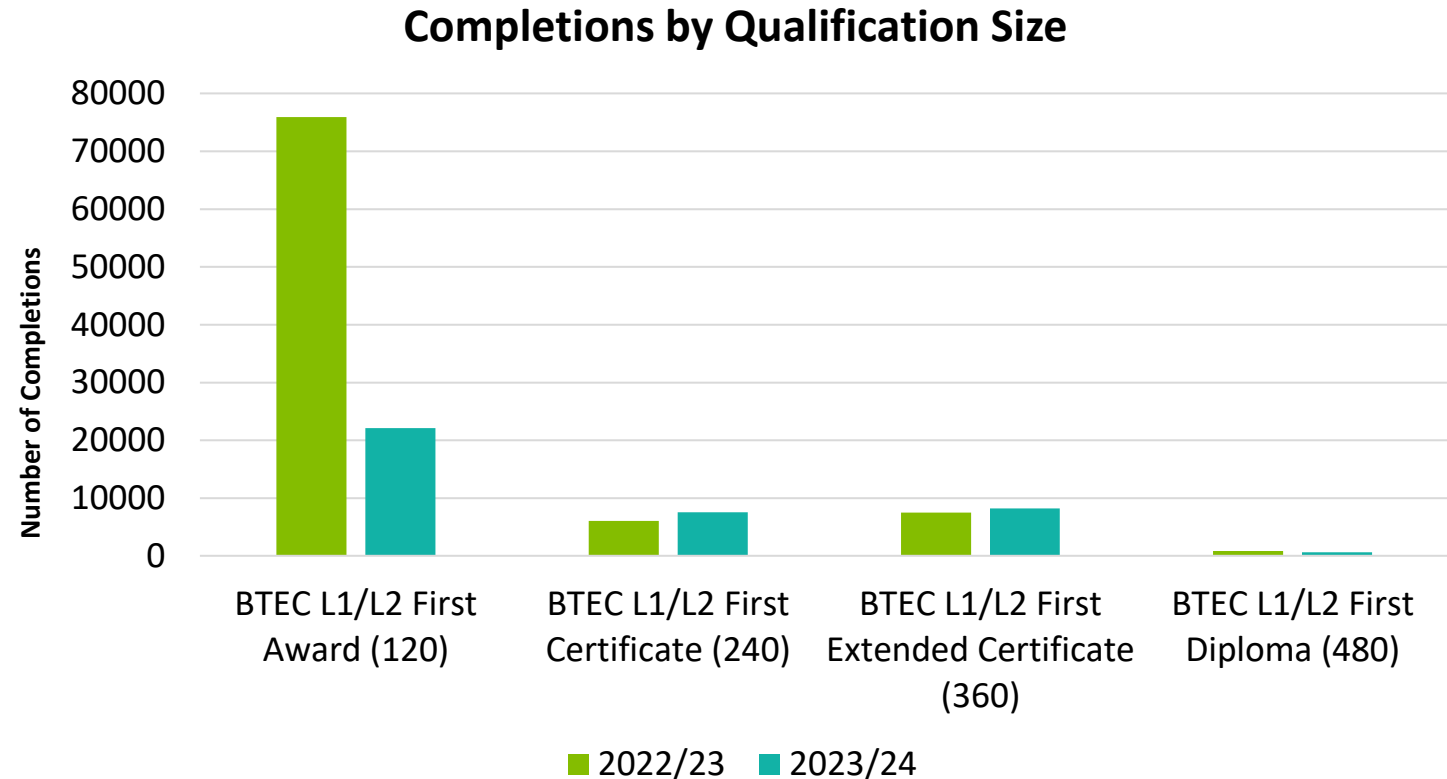
Not completed: learners who withdrew, claimed fallback, or were yet to complete at the end of the specified course duration.

# The BTEC First Award is most popular with learners

## Cohort Overview by Qualification Size

These figures show the different size (different GLH) qualifications available on the BTEC Firsts (NQF).

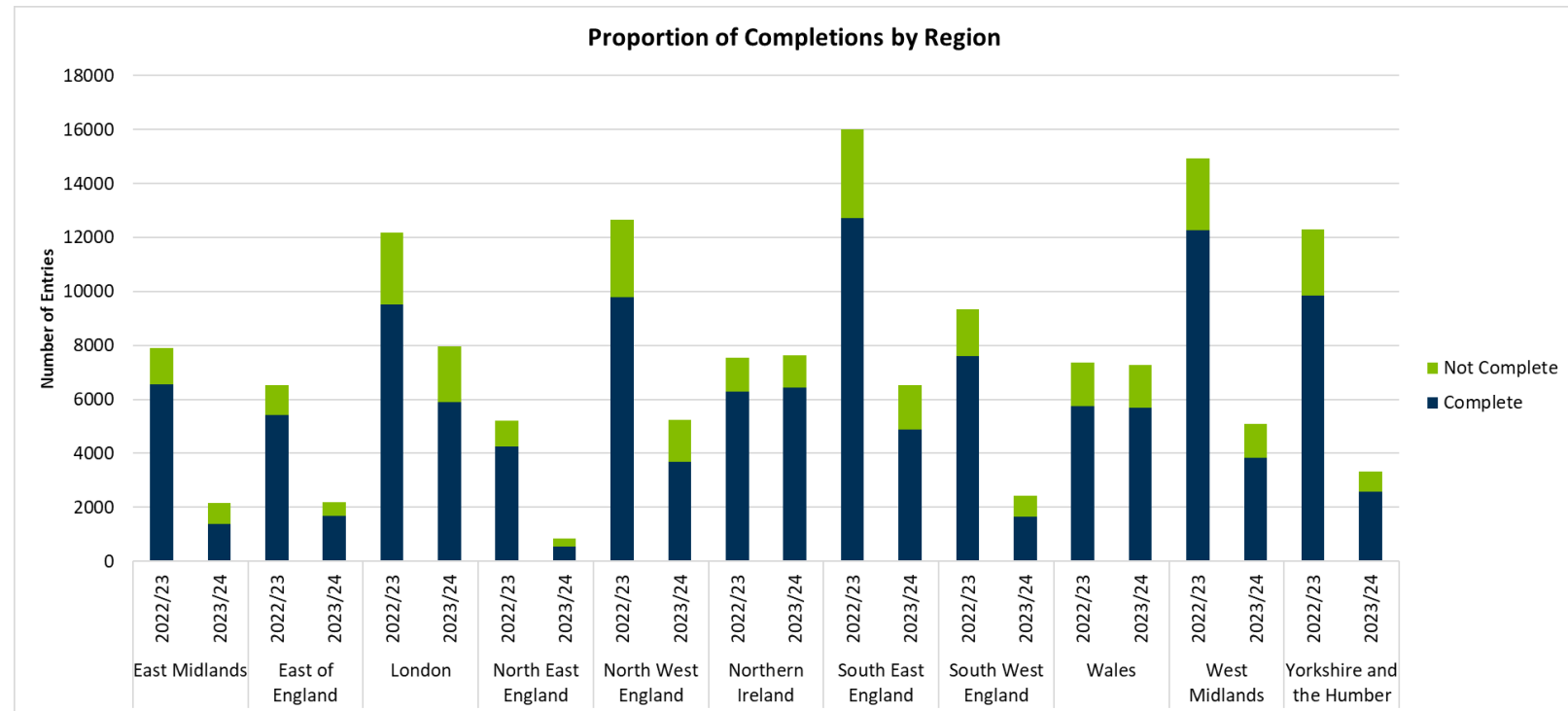
The First Award continues to be the most popular size qualification for the BTEC Firsts. Most learners take this as a two year course.



# BTEC appeals to learners nationwide

BTEC Firsts: an overview of volume by region

In 2023/24, London had the most learners and Northern Ireland has the second highest number of learners.



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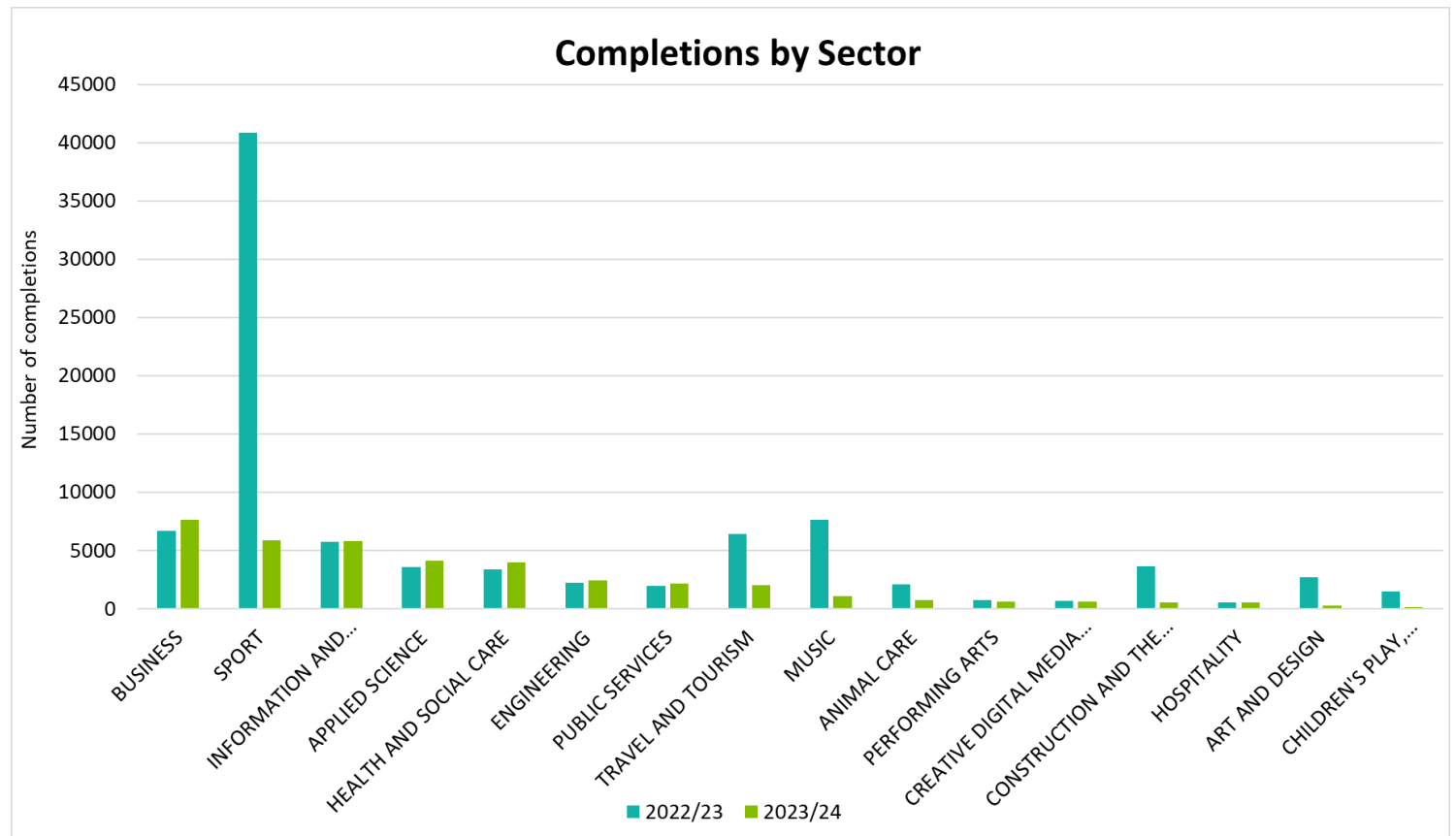
# Completions by Sector

## BTEC Firsts: completions by sector

The chart shows the number of completed qualifications for sectors with more than 250 learners.

Sport, the most popular subject in 2022/23, has seen a notable decrease in 2023/24.

We have seen the continued trend in the overall numbers of learners decreasing again this academic year. Notable exceptions are Business, Applied Science and Health and Social Care.



# Top 5 sectors this academic year

Sector	Cohort		Completion	
	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
Business	8,900	9,600	6,700	7,600
Sport	48,800	8,300	40,800	5,900
ICT	7,400	7,300	5,800	5,800
Applied Science	4,600	5,300	3,500	4,100
Health And Social Care	4,700	5,200	3,400	4,000

BTEC Firsts: cohort and completion – top 5 sectors in 2023/24

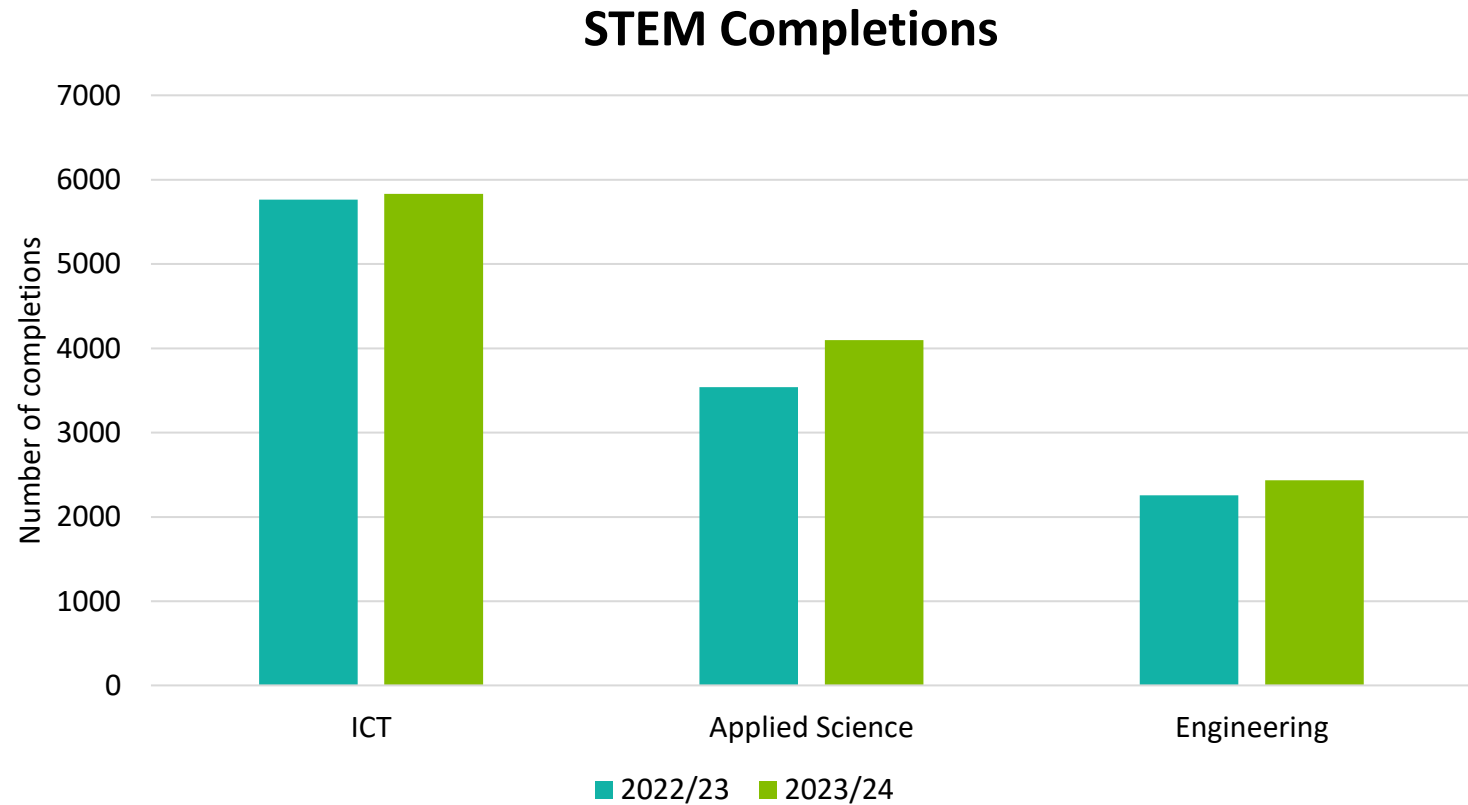
Applied Science and Health and Social Care are now among the top 5 sectors, and there was, along with Business, an increase in completions this academic year.

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# Completions in STEM Sectors

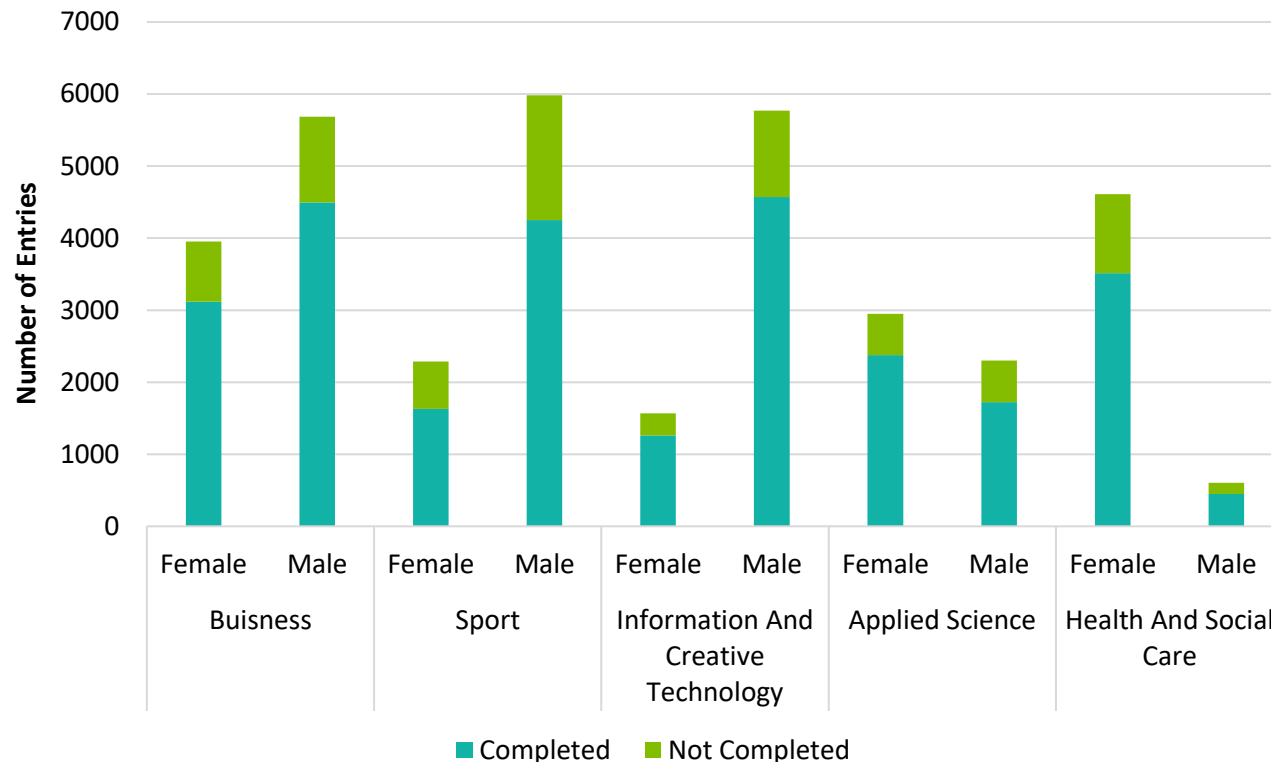
BTEC Firsts: completions in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sectors

Completion figures for all STEM sectors have increased in 2023/24.



# Gender differences exist among subject choice

**Proportion of Completions by Sector across Genders**



BTEC Firsts: 2023/24 top 5 sectors by volume and gender

Learners taking Business, Sport and ICT are more likely to be male, while learners taking Applied Science and Health and Social Care are more likely to be female.

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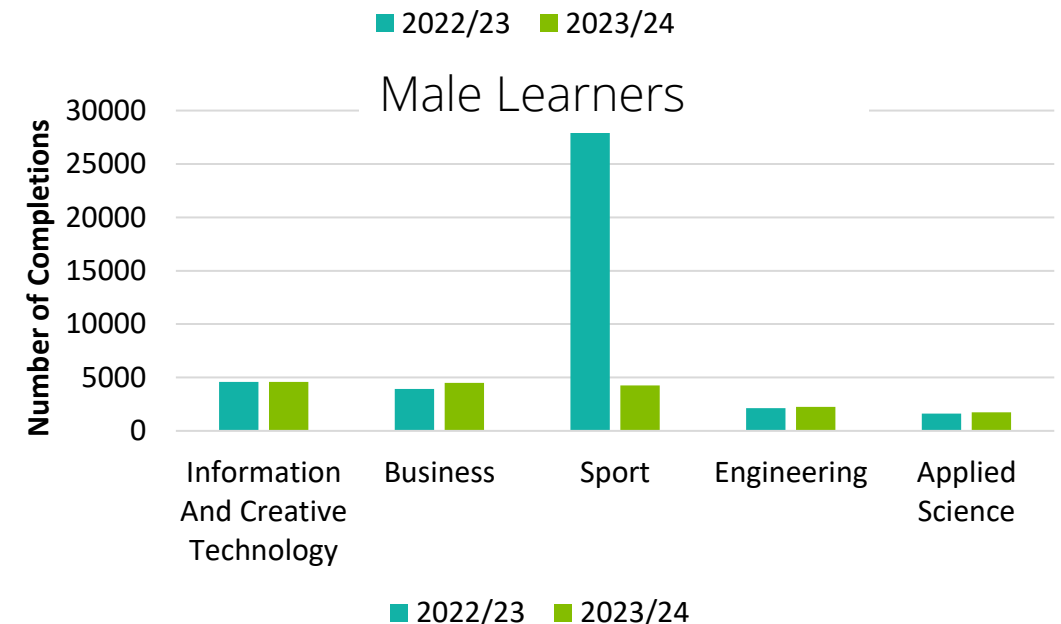
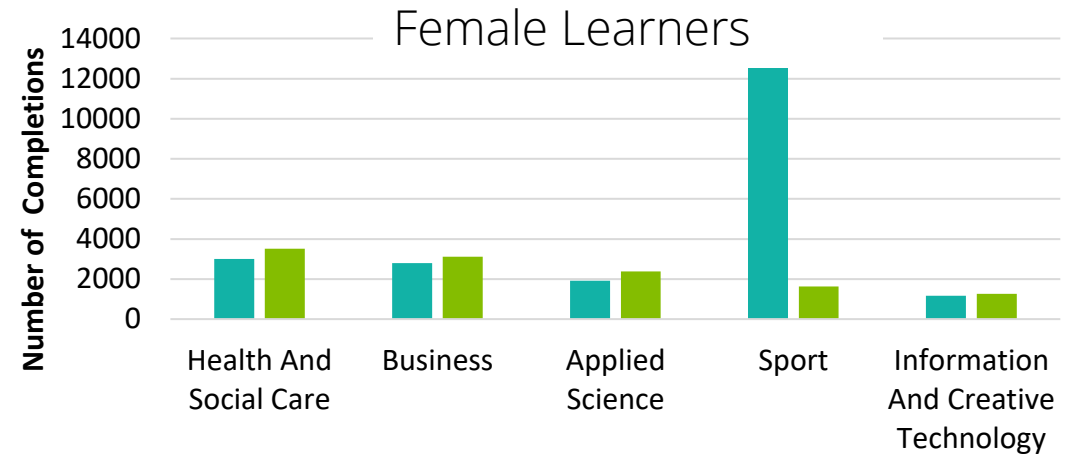
# Business continues to be of interest to both male and female learners

BTEC Firsts: top 5 sectors for female and male learners by completion volume

Business continues to be one of the top 5 sectors this academic year with popularity between both male and female learners.

The BTEC First in Health and Social Care is still popular with female learners and Sport more popular among males.

Applied Science and ICT have replaced Travel and Tourism and Music in the top 5.







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# 2024 Learner achievement - BTEC Firsts

Level 1/2 qualifications  
Grade outcomes and  
technical reporting

# BTEC Level 1 / Level 2 Firsts (NQF) grades explained

Qualification Grade	Grade name
D*	Distinction Star
D	Distinction
M	Merit
P	Pass
L1P	Level 1 Pass
U	Unclassified

The BTEC Level 1 / Level 2 Firsts (NQF) have four grades at Level 2 (Distinction Star, Distinction, Merit and Pass) and one grade at Level 1 (Level 1 Pass).

Learners passing the First Award (120 GLH) at Level 2 are awarded single grades,

e.g. D. Learners passing the Certificate (240 GLH), Extended Certificate (360 GLH) or Diploma (480 GLH) at Level 2 are awarded double grades, e.g. DM.

Learners who have met the standard for a Pass at Level 1 but not at Level 2 are awarded a Level 1 Pass (1) on all sizes of the qualification.

Learners who have not met the standard for a Level 1 Pass are graded U (Unclassified) on all sizes of the qualification.

# BTEC Firsts achievement by year (single grades) - 2024

## BTEC Firsts achievement: grade distribution overview

For the BTEC First Award (NQF, 120 GLH). Grades at pass and above for these qualifications are awarded as a single grade, e.g. D. This table shows the percentage of learners on each grade, or with each outcome.

Year	Cohort	D*	D	M	P	L1P	U	Not completed
2022-23	92,600	13.2%	9.6%	22.4%	23.1%	11.6%	2.1%	18.0%
2023-24	29,800	6.9%	7.1%	18.6%	27.0%	12.5%	2.3%	25.7%

*Due to the significant changes in cohort make-up and size comparisons to historical years must be treated with caution.*

*Learners' results may be reported as 'not completed' for a number of reasons: put simply, the student has not passed the qualification in the expected timeframe. However, it may be they are still studying for their qualification, or that a fallback Certificate of Unit Achievement was requested, or that they have withdrawn from the course.*

# BTEC Firsts achievement by year (double grades) - 2024

## BTEC Firsts achievement: grade distribution overview

For these qualifications: Certificate (NQF, 240 GLH), Extended Certificate (NQF, 360 GLH), Diploma (NQF, 480 GLH). Grades at pass level and above for these qualifications are awarded as two grades, e.g. DM. This table shows the percentage of learners on each grade, or with each outcome.

Year	Cohort	D*D*	D*D	DD	DM	MM	MP	PP	L1P	U	Not completed
2022-23	19,900	1.1%	1.2%	2.0%	7.2%	8.8%	12.3%	25.8%	13.2%	0.9%	27.4%
2023-24	21,200	1.4%	1.6%	2.4%	8.1%	10.3%	13.0%	27.5%	11.9%	0.9%	22.8%

*Due to the significant changes in cohort make-up and size comparisons to historical years must be treated with caution.*

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# BTEC Firsts achievement by gender (single grades) - 2024

## BTEC Firsts achievement: gender and grade overview

For the BTEC First Award (NQF, 120 GLH). Grades at pass and above for these qualifications are awarded as a single grade, e.g. D. This table shows the percentage of learners on each grade, or with each outcome.

Year	Gender	Learners in the gender cohort	Gender cohort as a percentage of annual cohort	Percentage of gender cohort with each outcome						
				D*	D	M	P	L1P	U	Not completed
2022-23	Female	35,700	38.6%	17.1%	10.9%	22.3%	19.8%	9.3%	1.7%	19.0%
	Male	56,900	61.4%	10.8%	8.7%	22.6%	25.3%	13.0%	2.3%	17.4%
2023-24	Female	12,400	41.8%	9.3%	8.2%	19.7%	24.7%	10.3%	2.0%	25.9%
	Male	17,300	58.2%	5.3%	6.2%	17.8%	28.6%	14.0%	2.5%	25.5%

As in the previous year, there is a higher proportion of male learners than female learners. Female learners' performance was better on average, with a higher percentage of female learners being awarded the highest grades (D and above).

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# BTEC Firsts achievement by gender (double grades) - 2024

## BTEC Firsts achievement: gender and grade overview

For these qualifications: Certificate (NQF, 240 GLH), Extended Certificate (NQF, 360 GLH), Diploma (NQF, 480 GLH). Grades at pass level and above for these qualifications are awarded as two grades, e.g. DM. This table shows the percentage of learners on each grade, or with each outcome.

Year	Gender	Learners in the gender cohort	Gender cohort as a percentage of annual cohort	Percentage of gender cohort with each outcome									
				D*D*	D*D	DD	DM	MM	MP	PP	L1P	U	Not completed
2022-23	Female	8,000	40.2%	1.7%	1.8%	2.7%	8.7%	9.4%	12.4%	23.3%	11.3%	0.8%	27.9%
	Male	11,900	59.8%	0.7%	0.8%	1.5%	6.2%	8.4%	12.3%	27.4%	14.4%	1.0%	27.3%
2023-24	Female	9,000	42.5%	2.3%	2.5%	2.9%	10.0%	11.7%	13.6%	24.1%	10.1%	0.7%	21.9%
	Male	12,200	57.5%	0.8%	0.9%	2.0%	6.8%	9.3%	12.5%	29.9%	13.3%	1.0%	23.4%

As in previous years, there is a higher proportion of male learners than female learners. In each year, female learners' performance was better across the range, with a higher percentage of female learners being awarded higher grades (MM and above) and a higher percentage of male learners being awarded lower grades (PP and below).

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# BTEC Firsts achievement: most popular sectors (single grades) - 2024

## BTEC Firsts achievement: gender and grade overview for the 5 largest sectors

For the BTEC First Award (NQF). Grades at pass and above for these qualifications are awarded as a single grade, e.g. D. This table shows the percentage of learners on each grade, or with each outcome.

Sector	Gender	Learners in the gender cohort	Gender cohort as a percentage of annual cohort	Percentage of gender cohort with each outcome						
				D*	D	M	P	L1P	U	Not completed
Buisness	Female	1,600	42.3%	9.3%	13.4%	20.7%	24.2%	10.7%	1.8%	19.9%
	Male	2,100	57.7%	7.6%	11.1%	19.9%	30.1%	12.2%	2.2%	16.8%
Sport	Female	1,900	29.8%	12.8%	8.1%	21.8%	17.8%	7.7%	1.8%	30.0%
	Male	4,500	70.2%	6.2%	5.5%	17.7%	24.5%	12.5%	3.0%	30.6%
ICT	Female	1,000	31.2%	1.2%	14.0%	25.0%	28.8%	7.9%	2.2%	20.9%
	Male	2,100	68.8%	1.0%	9.0%	20.0%	34.9%	13.9%	1.8%	19.3%
Applied Science	Female	2,200	53.6%	6.3%	4.1%	16.8%	37.3%	14.3%	1.5%	19.7%
	Male	1,900	46.4%	2.2%	1.8%	12.6%	38.5%	16.5%	1.8%	26.5%
Health And Social Care	Female	1,000	83.3%	5.9%	7.9%	20.0%	24.4%	9.0%	1.5%	31.4%
	Male	200	16.7%	2.5%	4.5%	13.5%	25.5%	19.5%	3.0%	31.5%

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# BTEC Firsts achievement: most popular sectors (double grades) - 2024

## BTEC Firsts achievement: gender and grade overview for the 5 largest sectors

For these qualifications: Certificate (NQF, 240 GLH), Extended Certificate (NQF, 360 GLH), Diploma (NQF, 480 GLH). Grades at pass level and above for these qualifications are awarded as two grades, e.g. DM. This table shows the percentage of learners on each grade, or with each outcome.

Year	Gender	Learners in the gender cohort	Gender cohort as a percentage of annual cohort	Percentage of gender cohort with each outcome									
				D*D*	D*D	DD	DM	MM	MP	PP	L1P	U	Not completed
Buisness	Female	2,400	40.2%	1.6%	2.6%	1.9%	7.3%	10.7%	13.7%	27.3%	12.2%	0.8%	21.9%
	Male	3,500	59.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	6.1%	8.9%	11.9%	31.4%	13.4%	1.4%	23.4%
Sport	Female	400	20.1%	0.8%	1.9%	1.1%	9.3%	12.1%	14.5%	27.9%	8.5%	1.6%	22.2%
	Male	1,500	79.9%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	4.3%	9.6%	13.3%	33.4%	12.3%	1.1%	23.6%
ICT	Female	40	14.1%	0.2%	0.7%	5.2%	16.9%	9.7%	13.4%	24.0%	11.7%	0.5%	17.8%
	Male	90	85.9%	0.3%	0.6%	3.0%	8.6%	9.0%	11.7%	28.6%	15.6%	0.9%	21.6%
Applied Science	Female	800	65.4%	4.9%	1.2%	2.1%	11.0%	13.5%	17.1%	25.2%	6.0%	0.3%	18.8%
	Male	400	34.6%	0.8%	0.8%	1.5%	6.8%	12.3%	16.0%	33.8%	8.5%	1.0%	18.5%
Health And Social Care	Female	3,600	89.9%	2.3%	2.9%	3.4%	10.1%	12.5%	13.0%	23.1%	10.2%	0.8%	21.7%
	Male	400	10.1%	1.0%	0.5%	3.0%	8.4%	10.6%	13.3%	25.7%	14.1%	0.5%	23.0%

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