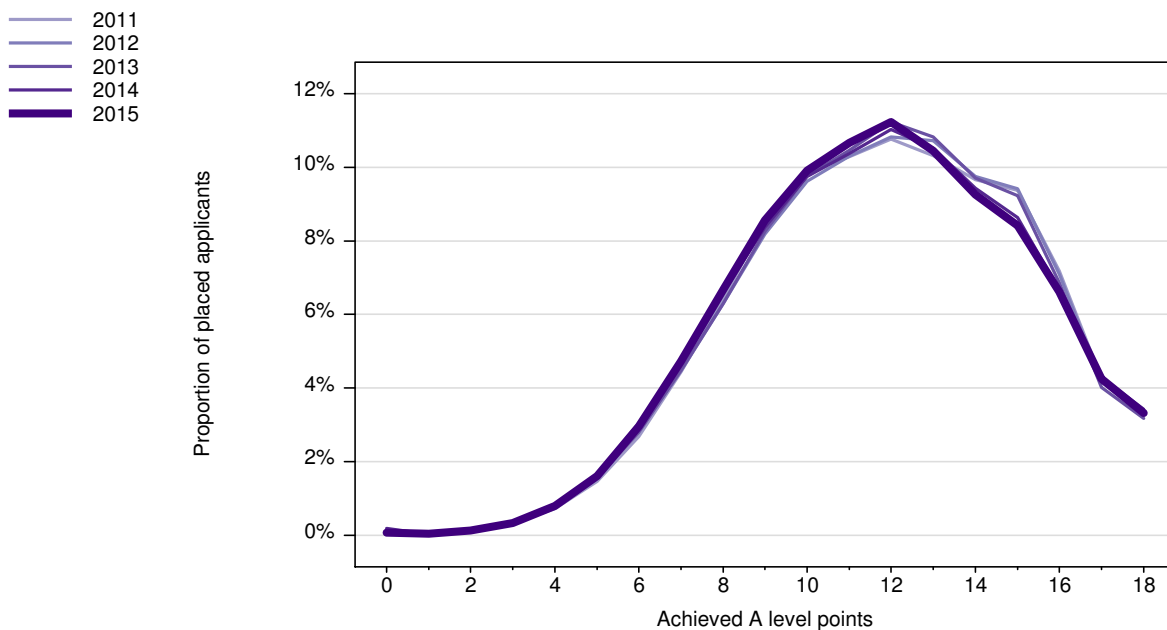




Achieved A level grades of young applicants placed in higher education have remained broadly similar in recent cycles

The distribution of attainment amongst young A level applicants placed through UCAS has remained broadly similar each year between 2011 and 2015. Most A level placed applicants enter higher education with between 9 points (equivalent to CCC) and 15 points (equivalent to AAA). The most commonly held point score is 12 A level points (equivalent to BBB, 11.2 per cent of acceptances holding A levels in 2015). There has been little change in the overall distribution across the period, the proportion being placed with grades of AAB or better was 34 per cent in 2011 and 32 per cent in 2015.

Figure 1: Achieved A level points of UK domiciled 18 year old placed applicants to HE with at least three predicted A levels at the June deadline, 28 days after A level Results Day by year



In 2015, around two-thirds (105,210) of all placed applicants who had at least three predicted A levels achieved between 9 and 15 A level points (equivalent to a best three A level grade profile of between CCC and AAA). Around one-sixth (26,570) of placed applicants achieved fewer than 9 points while the proportion that achieved more than 15 points was around one-seventh (21,790). In 2015, 3.3 per cent of placed applicants (5,100) achieved the maximum of 18 A level points (equivalent to A*A*A*), while 5.9 per cent achieved six points or lower (equivalent to DDD or below).

The distribution of placed applicants' point scores has changed slightly over time. Modest increases of typically less than half a percentage point since 2011 are seen in the proportion achieving 13 points or fewer. These increases offset falls in the proportion of placed applicants who achieved scores of 14 points or more. The proportion achieving 14 and 15 points remained broadly stable between 2011 and 2013, but subsequently fell by 0.5 and 0.8 percentage points respectively, while the proportion achieving 16 points fell more steadily, by 0.6 percentage points since 2011 (0.2 percentage points since 2013). Smaller falls of no more than 0.1 percentage points were seen for those achieving 17 and 18 points. These changes mean that the proportion of placed applicants achieving 13 points or fewer increased from 66.1 per cent in 2011 to 68.1 per cent in 2015, while the proportion achieving higher than this fell from 33.9 per cent to 31.9 per cent.

These changes, in conjunction with the change in the overall number of placed applicants across the period mean that, in 2015, there were 104,640 placed applicants who achieved 13 points or less, 2,540 more than in 2011 (a proportional increase of 2.5 per cent). In comparison there were 48,930 placed applicants who achieved more than 13 points, 3,400 less than in 2011 (a proportional fall of 6.5 per cent).

Technical notes

1. This analysis is based on UK domiciled 18 year old applicants who applied by the June 30 deadline. This group account for the majority of all applicants who apply with predicted A levels. Placed applicants are those as of 10 September, 28 days after A level results day. Applicants who are not yet placed may still be holding an offer for a place on a HE course (0.3 per cent of all applicants predicted three A levels fall into this category), or seeking a place through Clearing (10.2 per cent of all applicants predicted three A levels fall into this category).
2. Information about the number of predicted A levels an applicant holds is supplied by the applicant when they apply via UCAS, and this is used to identify those applicants that have been predicted three or more A levels. Applicants also supply information about other level 3 qualifications they are predicted to gain, plus any level 3 qualifications they already hold, but this information is not used when identifying applicants predicted three or more A levels. This means that applicants who are predicted three or more A levels may also be predicted to gain other qualifications, and/or may already hold other level 3 qualifications.
3. A level grades are assigned points such that A*=6 points, A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2 and E=1. Achieved A level grades profiles of applicants are assigned the total number of points of their best three achieved grades, called A level points. For example, a grade profile of AAB would be worth 14 A level points.
4. The statistics reported 28 days (4 weeks) after A level Results Day usually indicate around 98 per cent of the eventual end of cycle totals over recent cycles.
5. A data file for the data points shown in Figure 1 is available with this analysis note at www.ucas.com/data-analysis.

Table 1: Achieved A level points of UK domiciled 18 year old placed applicants to HE with at least three predicted A levels at the June deadline, 28 days after A level Results Day by year

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
6 or lower	5.5%	8,440	5.7%	8,470	5.6%	8,480	6.2%	9,210	5.9%	9,070
7	4.4%	6,860	4.5%	6,590	4.5%	6,740	4.7%	6,940	4.7%	7,260
8	6.4%	9,930	6.3%	9,310	6.3%	9,470	6.6%	9,820	6.7%	10,240
9	8.5%	13,170	8.2%	12,110	8.3%	12,420	8.4%	12,440	8.6%	13,150
10	9.9%	15,240	9.6%	14,210	9.8%	14,680	9.8%	14,500	9.9%	15,220
11	10.3%	15,890	10.3%	15,230	10.5%	15,730	10.4%	15,420	10.7%	16,380
12	10.8%	16,630	10.8%	16,010	11.2%	16,890	11.0%	16,390	11.2%	17,260
13	10.3%	15,940	10.7%	15,840	10.8%	16,290	10.5%	15,620	10.5%	16,060
14	9.7%	14,930	9.8%	14,420	9.7%	14,600	9.4%	14,030	9.3%	14,210
15	9.4%	14,490	9.4%	13,920	9.2%	13,880	8.6%	12,830	8.4%	12,930
16	7.2%	11,090	7.1%	10,480	6.9%	10,320	6.7%	9,900	6.6%	10,170
17	4.3%	6,570	4.2%	6,150	4.0%	6,050	4.3%	6,370	4.3%	6,530
18	3.4%	5,260	3.4%	5,010	3.2%	4,770	3.4%	5,090	3.3%	5,100
All	100.0%	154,440	100.0%	147,760	100.0%	150,300	100.0%	148,550	100.0%	153,570