

UKGAP Theme 5: Inspiring people to value and care for our Geodiversity

UKGAP Indicator 13: Recognition within formal education - the total number of exam students sitting Geology GCSE (or Geology Intermediate in Scotland)

Relevance

Gathering the numbers of Geology examination entries provides an understanding of the recognition of the relevance of geodiversity within the formal education system. It may also provide an indication of the availability of geology teachers or others enthusiastic about geology, and the level of support for the subject from Government and those in management positions.

Data Sources

We are grateful to Chris King who directly supplied the numbers of geology examination entries each year from 1988 to 2014, as he had already gathered these data for England, Northern Ireland and Wales. No data is presented for Scottish Intermediate or Higher qualifications.

Data

Figure 1 – GCSE Geology entries 1988 to 2014

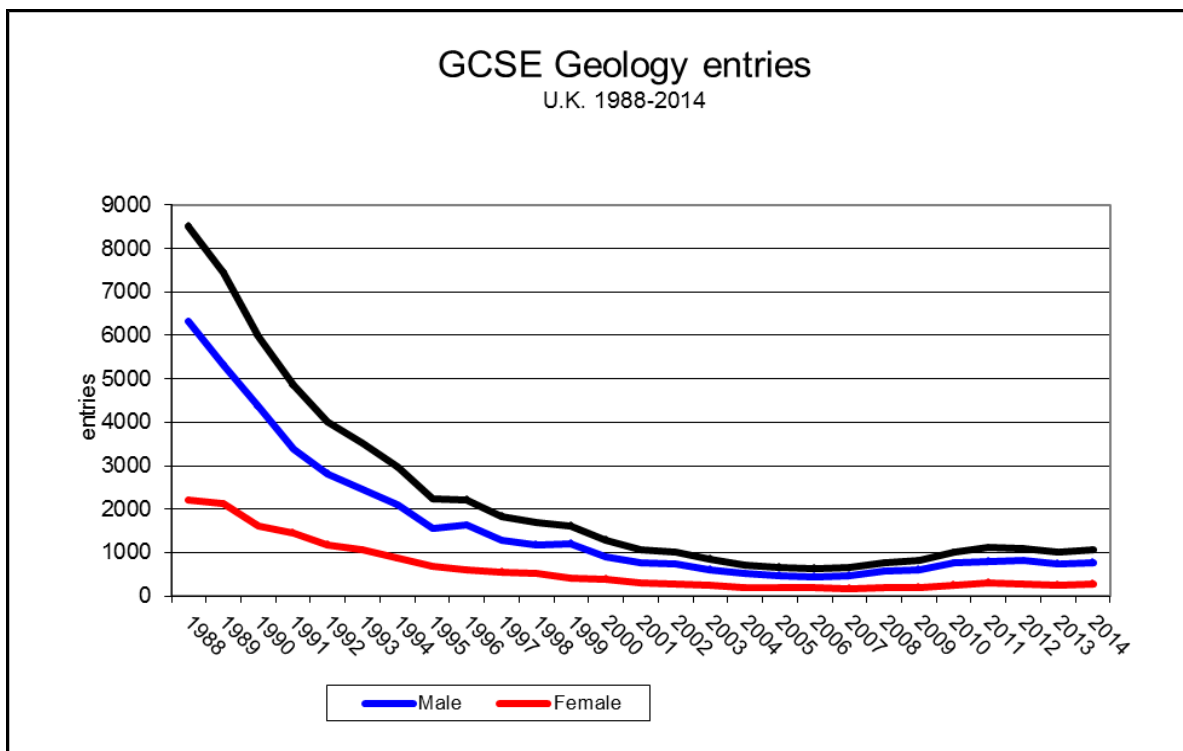
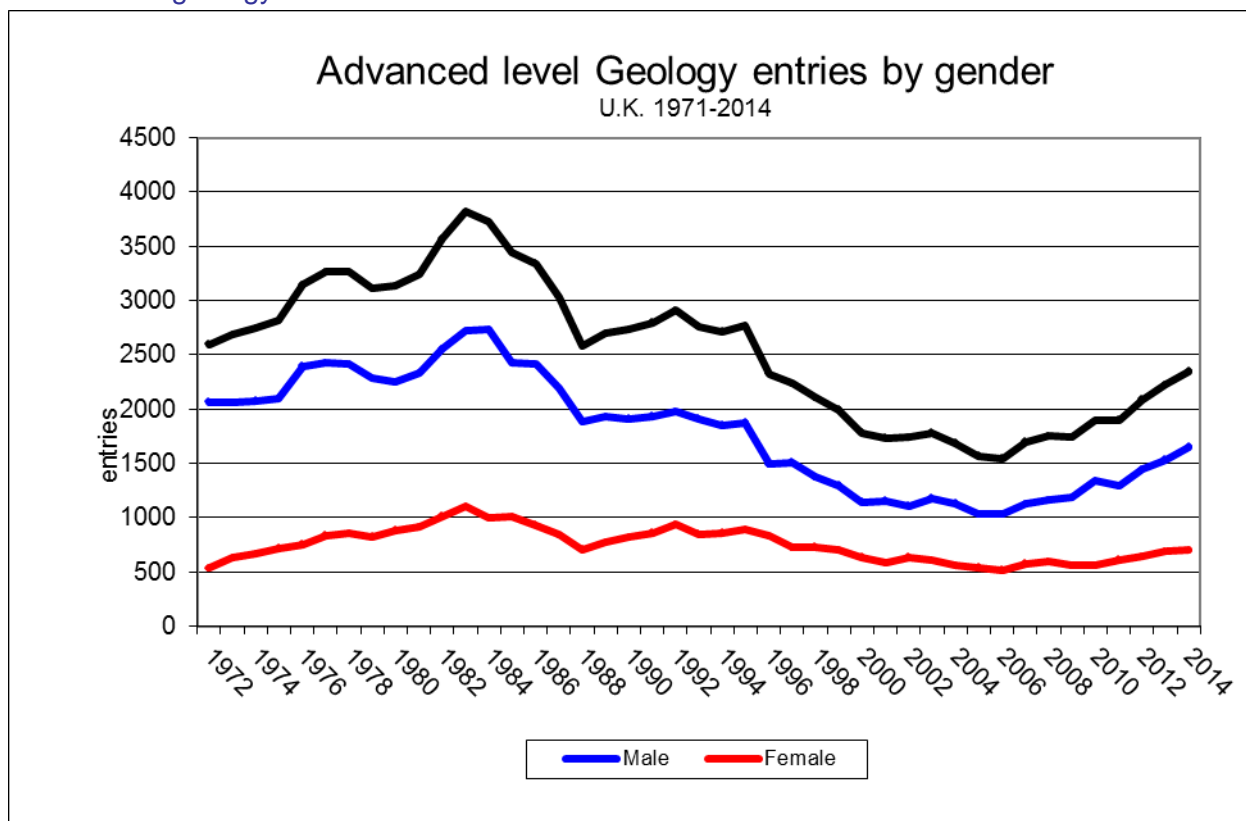


Figure 2 – A level geology entries 1971 to 2014.



Assessment of trend

The first chart clearly shows an overall decline in the numbers of Geology GCSE examination entries over the period 1988 to 2007 inclusive. It is generally agreed that these statistics reflect the impact of the National Curriculum when geology was not considered as either a core or foundation subject.

In recent years (since 2007) there has been a slight increase in the numbers of Geology GCSE examination entries. Geology GCSE entries in England, Northern Ireland and Wales now appear to have plateaued around 1,000 entries per year.

The second chart shows the number of A Level entries for geology between 1971 and 2014. The data show a steady increase between 1971 and 1983, followed by a sharp decline to 1988 which continues more gently until 2006. This trend is similar to the trend in geology GCSE entries perhaps indicating that only those that study GCSE geology are likely to go on to study A Level (although there is no prerequisite to study geology GCSE before taking A Level) or perhaps reflects the number of schools and colleges teaching both GCSE and A Level.

Around 260 schools or colleges currently teach geology GCSE, AS or A2, see https://mapsengine.google.com/map/viewer?mid=z46HFuDgyK_M.kclBs-iomd_4 for a map and more detailed information (compiled by ESTA).