SCILT Scotland's National Centre for Languages — University of Strathclyde Glasgow

**Language Trends Scotland
2012-2018***
(a) as percentage of pupil roll
(b) numerical entries

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*2018 data = pre-appeal

Overview of Findings

- Entries at Higher in Modern Languages have recently experienced a drop in entries but are still above 2012 levels. Relative to the S5-S6 cohort, however, there has been an increase.

- Entries at Advanced Higher in Modern Languages are on an upward trend overall, with a slight decline in 2018. Relative to the S6 cohort, uptake has also increased.

- Entries at Advanced Higher in the lesser studied languages (Gaelic Learners, Italian and Mandarin) have been variable.

- Entries below Higher in Modern Languages dropped significantly after 2012, the year which marked the official end of the 'Languages for All' policy. Relative to the S4-S6 cohort, languages have higher percentage uptake than two of the three sciences (Biology, Physics), with only Chemistry showing a percentage increase.

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Entries at Higher as Percentage of S5-S6 Roll

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NB: We feel justified in considering languages as one subject because currently only around 7% of learners study more than one language in the senior phase.

The above slide shows that language entries at Higher, i.e. at the point when pupils start to commit themselves to a subject, in relation to the pupil cohort in S5-S6 (when most Higher courses would be taken), uptake in the subject shows an upward trend, from 9.8% to 10.6%.

Turning to the three major science subjects, we see that biology and physics experienced a slight drop (from 12% to 10% and 12.1% to 11.9% respectively), whilst chemistry remained almost unchanged, with a rise of just 0.1%.
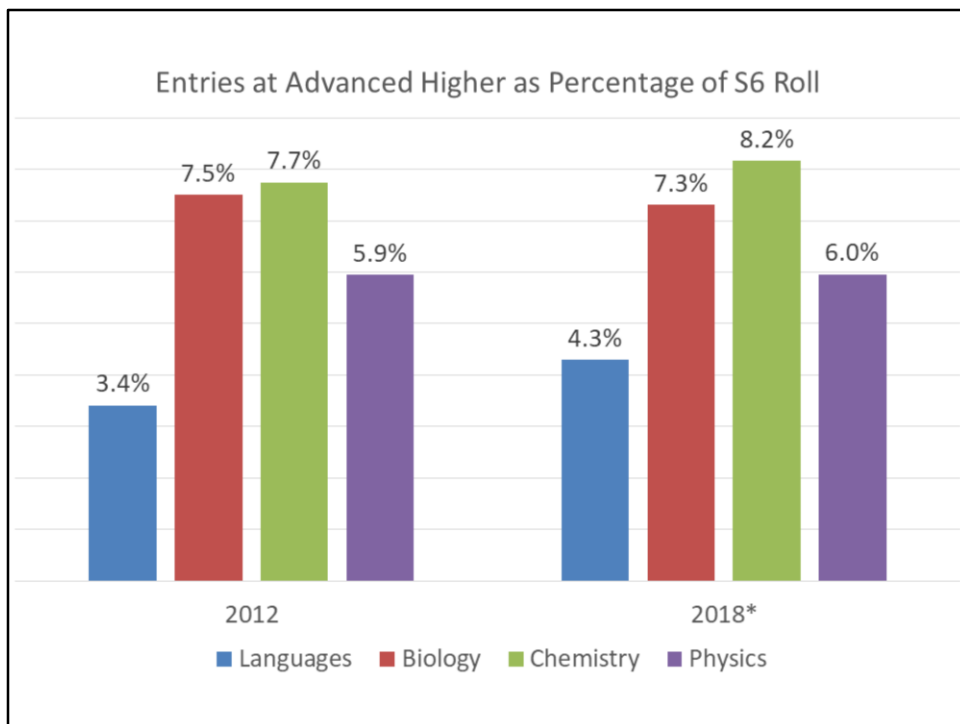
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There are some good news for languages at Advanced Higher too. Proportionately to the S6 cohort, entries for biology and physics are almost unchanged (minus 0.2% and plus 01.% respectively), whilst chemistry has increased by only 0.5%. In contrast, languages have increased by nearly 1% point from 3.4% to 4.3%.

Entries below Higher 2012-2018* as percentage of S4-S6 cohort
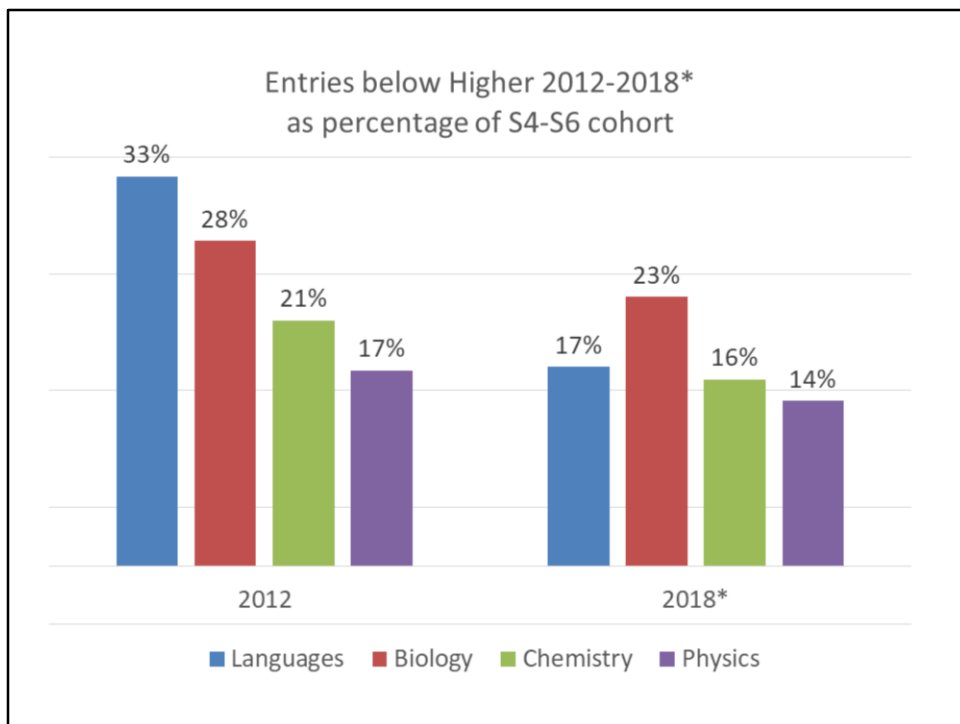
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Although proportional uptake in languages at Higher has increased it is a different story for, entries at National 3-5 levels. Arguably, the abandonment of the 'Languages for All' policy in 2012 had a negative impact on uptake. Whilst in 2012 33% of the senior cohort was studying a language, in 2018 it was only 17%.

in the three sciences, there has also been a decline, but at a much lower rate. Biology and Chemistry both dropped five percentage points, down to from 28 to 23% and from 21 to 16% respectively. Physics dropped three percentage points, from 17 to 14%.

Whilst the steep drop in languages is disappointing, it is encouraging to see that overall the subject ranks nevertheless in second place after Biology, and above Chemistry and Physics.

Modern Language Entries at Higher Grade 2012-2018

(All ML values: 7820, 7450, 7508, 8568, 8695, 8183, 7974)
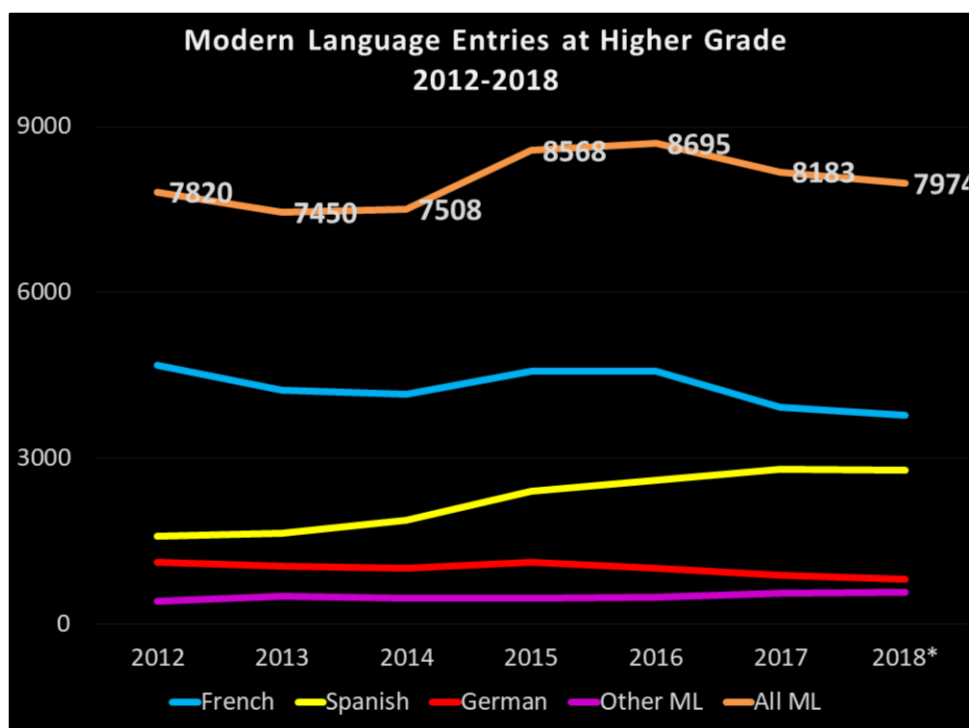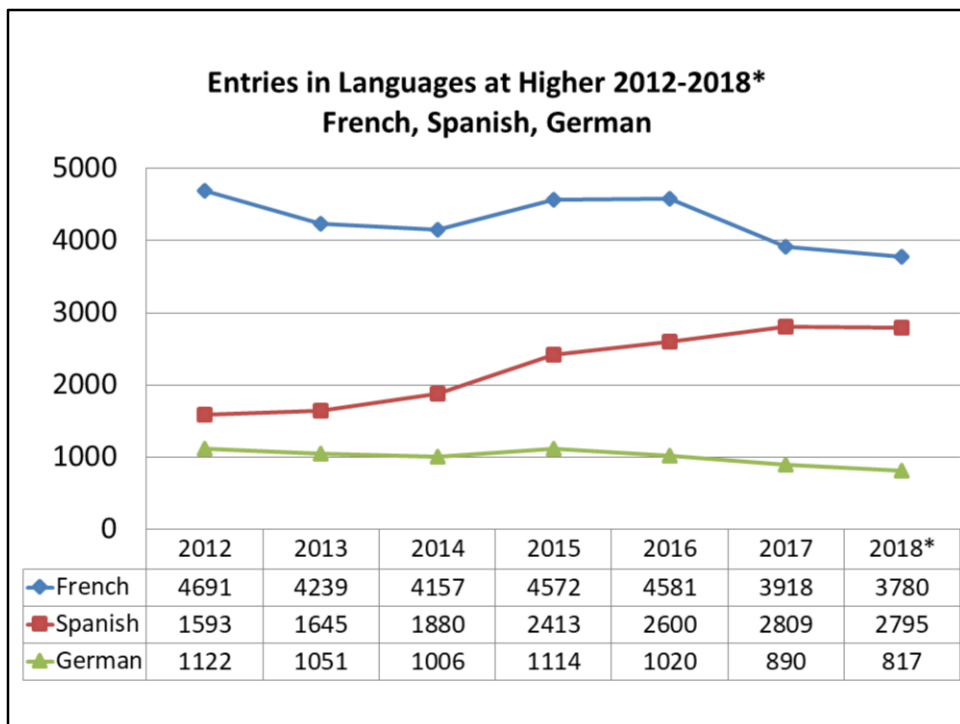
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Looking at numerical data, we can see that entries in French and German have dropped, whilst entries in Spanish have continued to rise (although that rise seems to have steadied since 2017). Entries in other languages overall have also slightly risen, and closer examination reveals that the rise comes mostly from entries in Mandarin Chinese (the other languages in this category are Italian, Urdu and Gaelic Learners).

We also note that overall uptake at Higher is still above 2012 levels, i.e. after the 'Languages in All' policy was abandoned and restrictions to the number of option choices were introduced (in 2014).

The current levels also suggests that language entries at Higher are moving towards a French/Spanish dominant pattern rather than diversity of language provision. The continued increase of entries in Spanish arguably buys into the 'world language' status claim, and interest in (see British Council, 2013 and 2017: 'Languages for the Future') the immediate relevance to pupils is lacking and this is likely a dominant negative impact factor.

Other Modern Languages: Italian, Chinese languages (Cantonese, Mandarin), Gaelic Learners, Urdu.

Entries in Languages at Higher 2012-2018*
French, Spanish, German

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
French	4691	4239	4157	4572	4581	3918	3780
Spanish	1593	1645	1880	2413	2600	2809	2795
German	1122	1051	1006	1114	1020	890	817

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7-year trend of uptake at Higher in the 'Big 3' languages (2012-2018)

Entries in 2014 and 2015 increased in all three main languages. in French, the increase continued until 2016, in Spanish until 2017.
However, entries in 2018 are all lower than 2017.

At the same time, it is worth noting that the total number of entries at Higher in the three languages in 2018 (7392) is only just below that of 2012 (7406), a difference of only 14 entries.

Entries at Higher 2012-2018*
(other languages)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
—Italian	177	238	173	212	219	264	252
—Chinese languages	61	49	86	73	99	129	152
—Urdu	66	109	103	87	92	104	103
—Gaelic (L)	110	119	103	97	84	69	75
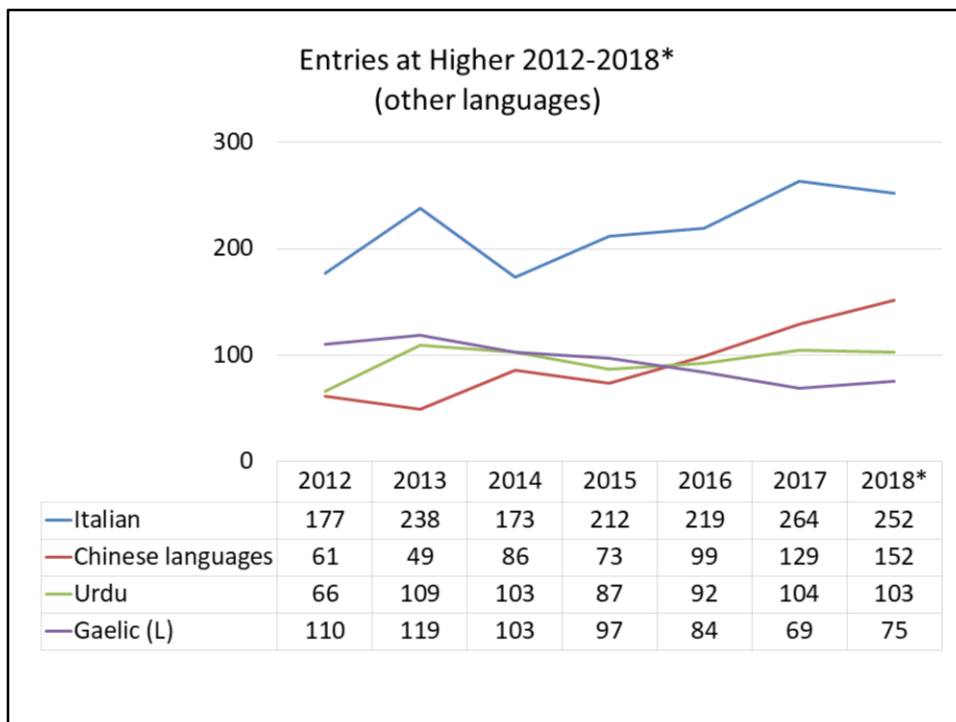
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7-year trend of uptake at Higher in other languages (2012-2018)

Higher entries in Italian have been on an upward trend overall, despite fluctuations and a dip in 2014.

Higher entries in Chinese languages (mostly Mandarin Simplified) also show an upward trend.

Higher entries in Urdu have returned to 2014 levels after a dip between 2015 and 2016.

Higher entries in Gaelic (Learners) have been on a downward trend overall, and remain well below 2014 entries. Compared to 2012, there has been a 32% drop.

Language Entries at Advanced Higher 2012-2018*
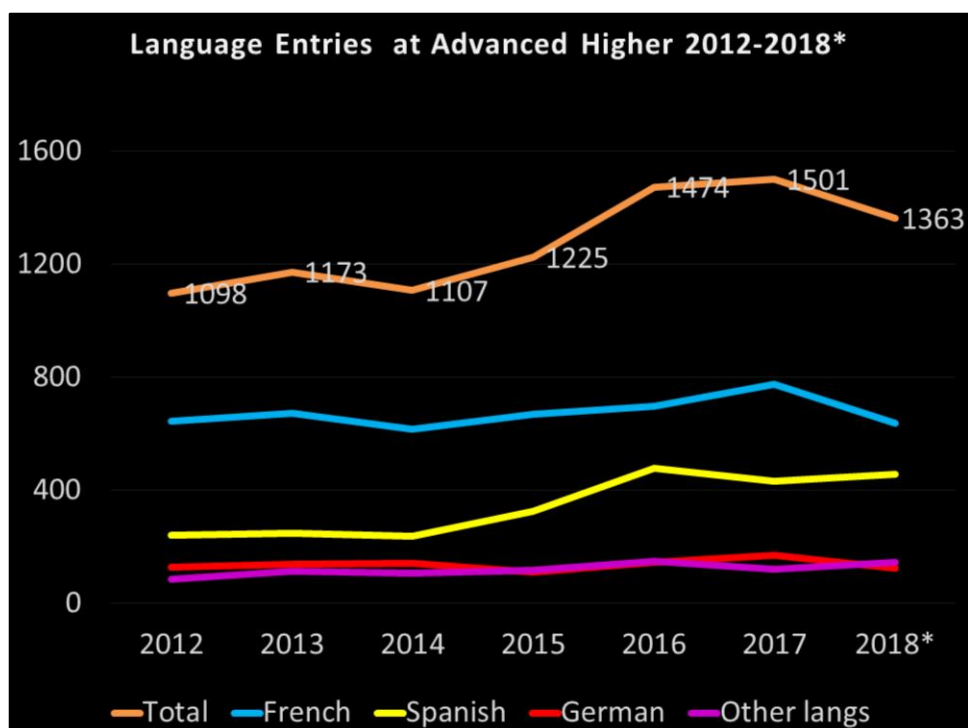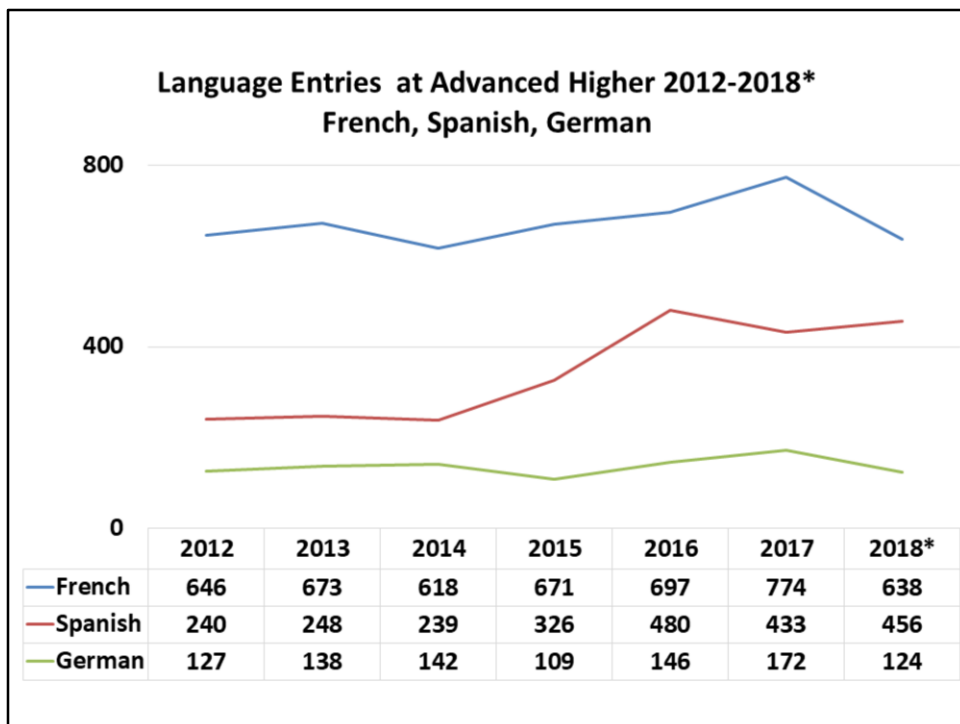
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7-year trend of uptake at Advanced Higher (2012-2018)

Entries at Advanced Higher increased up until 2017 but despite a dip in 2018 entries, entries overall are still above those in 2012. The increase is largely due an increase in entries in Spanish, and up until 2017, also in French. Entries in German increased between 2015 and 2017 but dipped again in 2018.

The entries at Advanced Higher languages in other languages has remained steady, with a slight increase overall.
Other languages: Mandarin, Gaelic (Learners), Italian, Latin. We have exceptionally included Latin in the calculation in Advanced Higher entries to monitor uptake at this level.
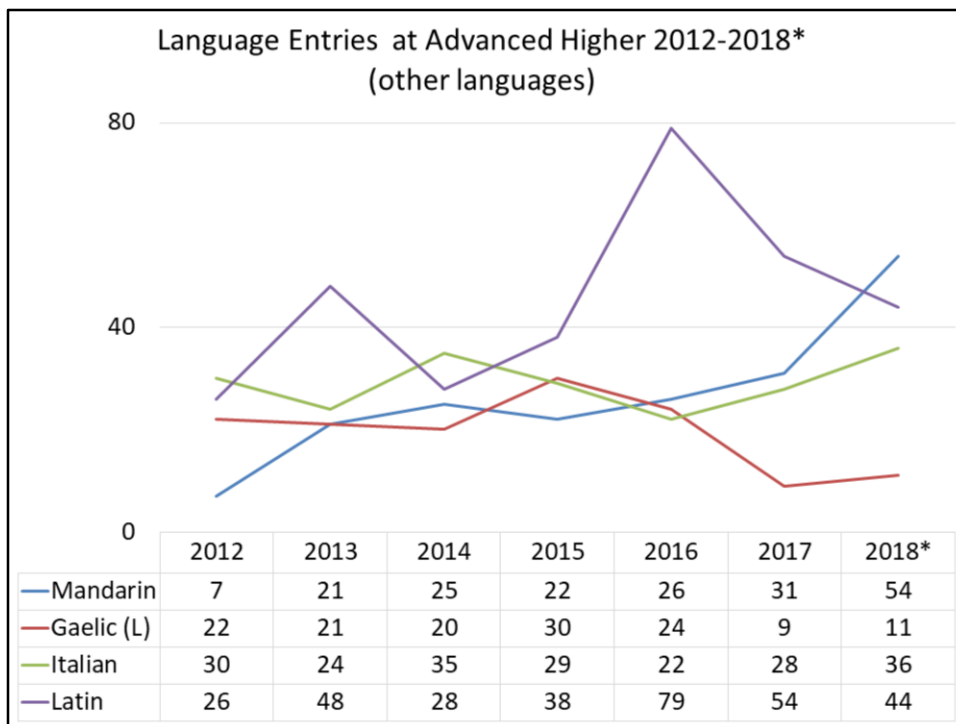
Language Entries at Advanced Higher 2012-2018*
French, Spanish, German

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
French	646	673	618	671	697	774	638
Spanish	240	248	239	326	480	433	456
German	127	138	142	109	146	172	124

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7-year trend of uptake at Advanced Higher French, Spanish and German (2012-2018)

Entries in French for 2018 (638) are just below those of 2012 (646), but above those of 2014 (618).

Entries in Spanish are on an upward trend, and have nearly doubled since 2012.

Entries in German for 2018 (124) are just below those for 2012 (12), and also below those of 2014 (142). There was a brief rise in entries between 2013 and 2014, and between 2015 and 2017.

Language Entries at Advanced Higher 2012-2018* (other languages)

|	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
—Mandarin	7	21	25	22	26	31	54
—Gaelic (L)	22	21	20	30	24	9	11
—Italian	30	24	35	29	22	28	36
—Latin	26	48	28	38	79	54	44

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7-year trend of uptake at Advanced Higher in other languages (2012-2018)

Entries in Mandarin have been on an upward trend, with a more significant rise in 2018 (from 31 in 2017 to 54 in 2018).

Entries in Gaelic (Learners) were more or less steady up until 2016, but dropped significantly in 2017. Compared to 2012 and 2014, entries in 2018 are halved.

Entries in Italian have remained fairly steady, with a low in 2016 (22 entries) and a high in 2018 (36 entries).

Entries in Latin have been variable, with a low in 2012 (26 entries) and a high in 2016 (79 entries). Entries for 2018 (44) are significantly above those of 2012 and s014 (28 entries).
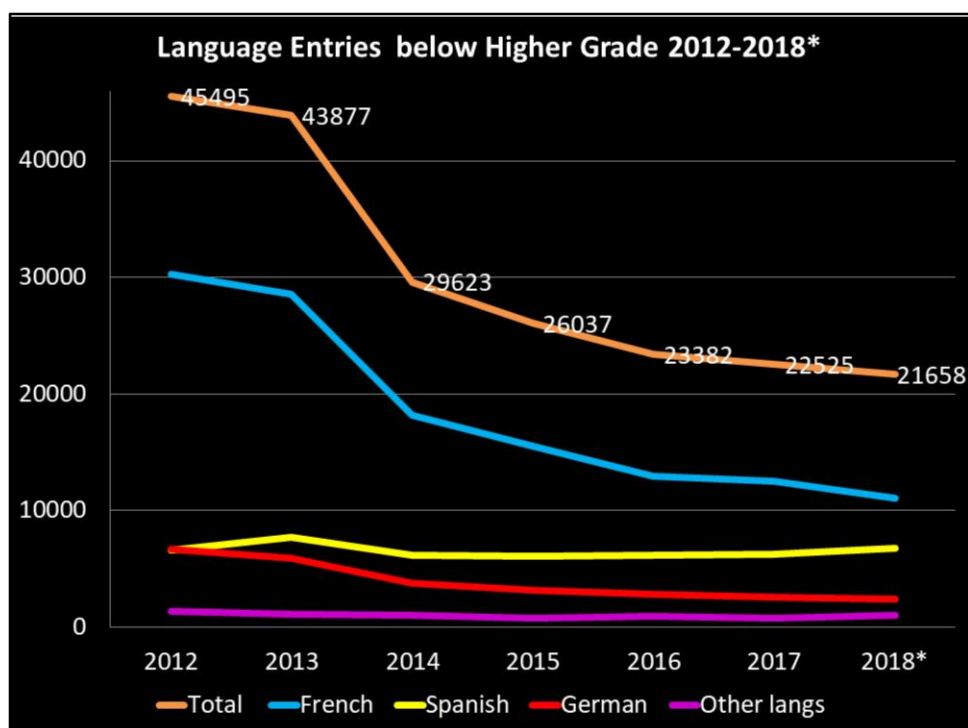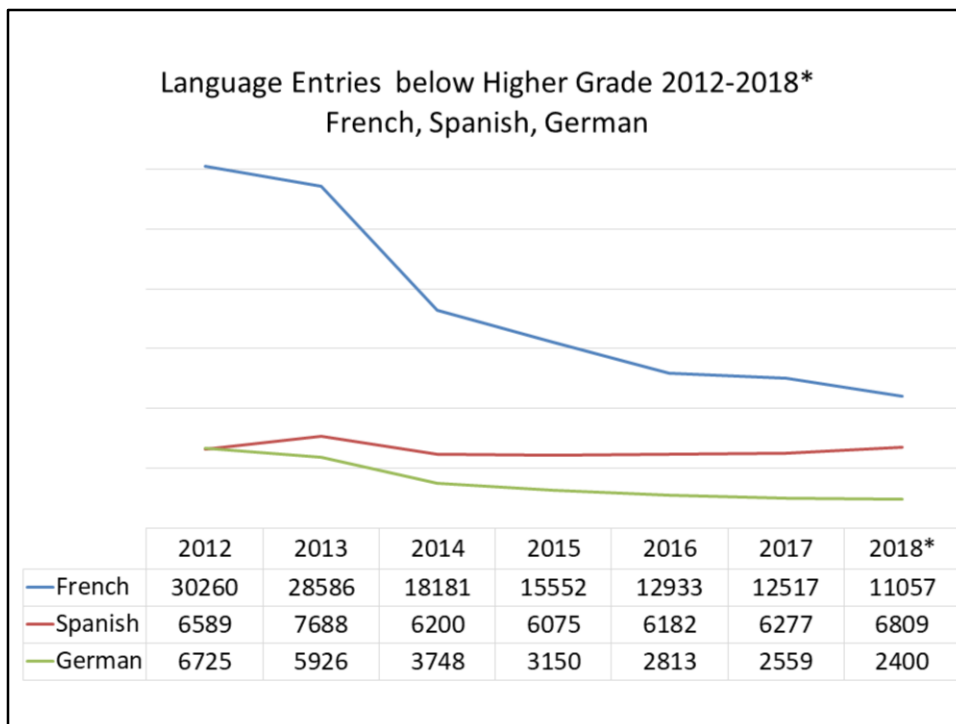
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7-year trend of uptake in language entries below Higher (2012-2018) Overview

Language entries overall for 2018 (21,658) are less than half of what they were in 2012 (45,495). There was a significant drop in entries in 2014 (29,623 entries). The drop was mainly in entries for French, and to a much lesser extent, in entries for German. Spanish has been on an upward trend, despite a dip in 2014.

Entries for the other languages have remained steady overall.

Other languages: Italian, Chinese languages (mostly Mandarin Simplified), Gaelic (Learners) and Urdu.
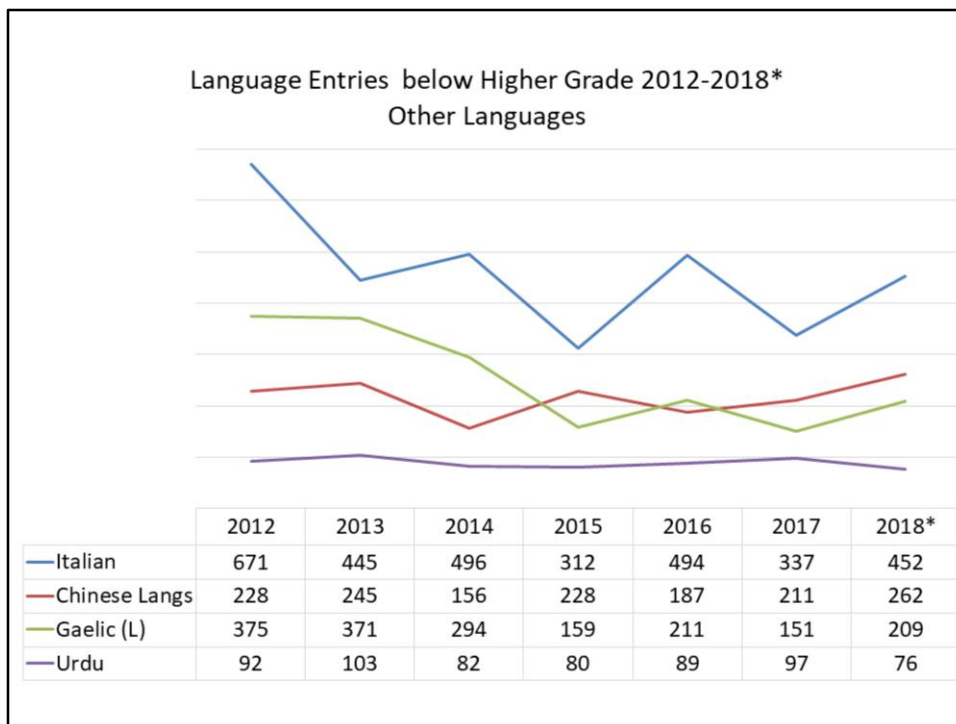
Language Entries below Higher Grade 2012-2018*
French, Spanish, German

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
French	30260	28586	18181	15552	12933	12517	11057
Spanish	6589	7688	6200	6075	6182	6277	6809
German	6725	5926	3748	3150	2813	2559	2400

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7-year trend of uptake in language entries below Higher (2012-2018): French, Spanish, German

Entries in French in 2018 (11,057) have dropped by around two thirds compared to 2012 (30,260). They are also significantly below entries for 2014 (18181). Entries appear to be on a downward trend overall.

Entries in Spanish are on a slight upward trend, and entries for 2018 (6809) are above those for 2012 (6589) and 2014 (6200). Entries dipped between 2013 and 2015 but have since been rising, with a more significant increase compared to 2017 (6277 entries).

Language Entries below Higher Grade 2012-2018*
Other Languages

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Italian	671	445	496	312	494	337	452
Chinese Langs	228	245	156	228	187	211	262
Gaelic (L)	375	371	294	159	211	151	209
Urdu	92	103	82	80	89	97	76

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7-year trend of uptake in language entries below Higher (2012-2018): other languages

Entries in Italian have been variable. Entries for 2018 (452) are below those for 2012 (671) and 2014 (496), but up from 2017 (337 entries).

Entries for Gaelic (Learners) were on a downward trend between 2012 and 2015 (from 375 to159), recovered a little in 2016 (211 entries) before dipping again in 2017 (151 entries) and moving back up again in 2018 (209 entries), but still down by 44% from 2012.

Entries in Chinese languages are on an upward trend overall. Entries for 2018 (262) are above those for 2012 (228) and 2014 (156).

Entries in Urdu are consistently low. Entries for 2018 (76) are below those for 2012 (92) and 2014 (82).