

Background

Overall Positions (OPs)¹ provide a statewide rank order of students from 1 (highest) to 25 (lowest) based on students' achievement in Authority subjects studied for the Queensland Senior Certificate. A student's OP shows how well that student has performed in their senior studies when compared with the performances of all other OP-eligible students in Queensland.

OPs are used in the selection of students for tertiary education courses. They are used by tertiary institutions as one basis for selecting applicants for a course when there are more eligible applicants than quota places for that course.

Students are eligible for an OP at the end of Year 12 provided they have completed a minimum of 20 semester units of Authority subjects, including at least three subjects for all four semesters, and sat for the QCS Test in that year.

Field Positions (FPs) are calculated only for OP-eligible students. A field is an area of study that emphasises particular knowledge and skills. An FP is a rank order from 1 (highest) to 10 (lowest) in that area of study. There are five fields with about 20% of students qualifying for all 5 FPs and most students qualifying for 3 or 4 fields.

OP distribution

Figure 1 represents the distribution of the 25 028 Queensland students² who received an OP in 2008 and Table 1 includes for each band: the number, the cumulative number (from 1 up to that band), the percentage and the cumulative percentage of students.

¹In 1992 OPs and FPs replaced the Tertiary Entrance (TE) Score. All data in this document relate to OPs and FPs.

²Visa students are not included unless indicated. A visa student is a student who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia. Visa students are not generally regarded as OP/FP-eligible. They may qualify for an equivalent-OP/FP.

Figure 1: 2008 OP distribution

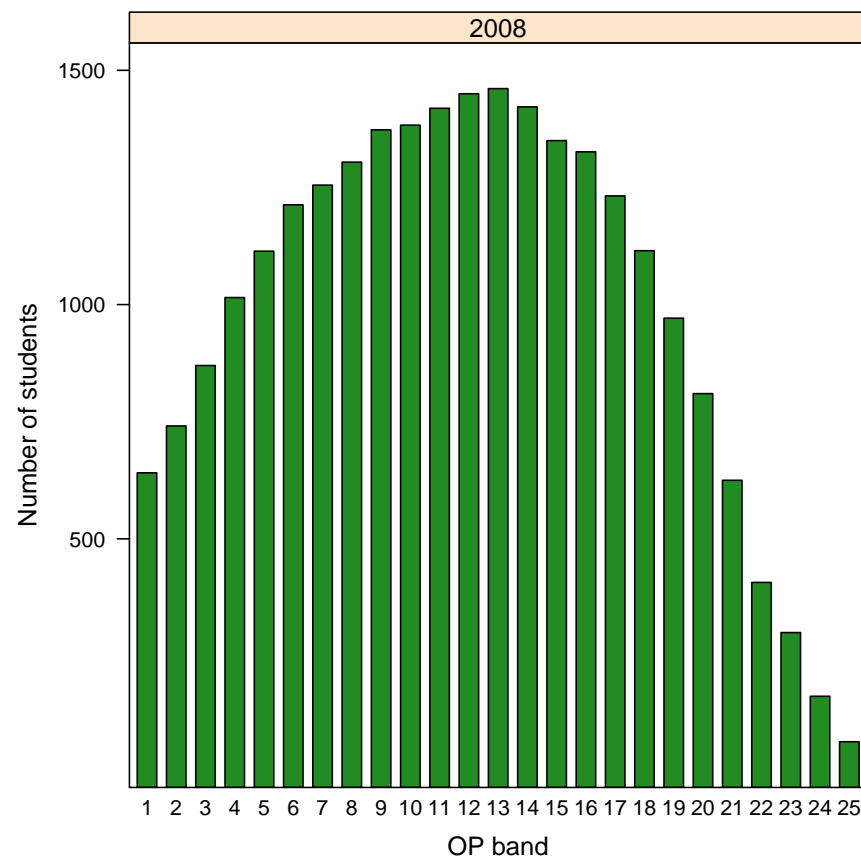


Table 1: 2008 OP distribution

OP band	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Number	641	741	870	1015	1114	1213	1255	1304	1373	1383	1419	1450	1461	1422	1350	1326	1232	1115	971	810	625	407	300	164	67
Cumulative	641	1382	2252	3267	4381	5594	6849	8153	9526	10909	12328	13778	15239	16661	18011	19337	20569	21684	22655	23465	24090	24497	24797	24961	25028
Per cent	2.56	2.96	3.48	4.06	4.45	4.85	5.01	5.21	5.49	5.53	5.67	5.79	5.84	5.68	5.39	5.30	4.92	4.46	3.88	3.24	2.50	1.63	1.20	0.66	0.27
Cumulative	2.56	5.52	9.00	13.05	17.50	22.35	27.37	32.58	38.06	43.59	49.26	55.05	60.89	66.57	71.96	77.26	82.18	86.64	90.52	93.75	96.25	97.88	99.08	99.73	100.00

Figure 2: 2008 OP distribution by gender

Comparing OPs across years

*The Review of Tertiary Entrance in Queensland 1990*³ recommended “basic year-to-year comparability” of OPs. Consequently, a numerical process is used to equate students’ performances across years. This means that there is no fixed quota of students in each band and that year-to-year differences in the OP-eligible cohort may produce variations in the proportions of students in each band.⁴

OP distribution by gender

Figure 2 and Table 2 show the distribution of OPs by gender. Care is needed when making comparisons between the numbers of females and males in each band. The participation rates are different between the genders as are the proportions of males and females choosing to be OP-eligible — Figure 3 shows a percentage distribution within each gender.

There are more females in each OP band except 1 and 25. In the higher OP bands, there are many more females than males whilst the differences are quite small in bands 23 and 24.

³ Report submitted to the Minister for Education by the Tertiary Entrance Reviewer Professor Nancy Viviani.

⁴ Since 2005 the corresponding percentage of OP-eligible students receiving an OP 1 has increased from 2 per cent. Both the increase in the percentage of OP 1 students and decrease in OP 25 students is because the standard for each OP is held constant from year to year and there has been a decrease in the proportion of the population that is OP-eligible in this period, with a greater number of the lower achieving students choosing pathways that do not lead to OP-eligibility

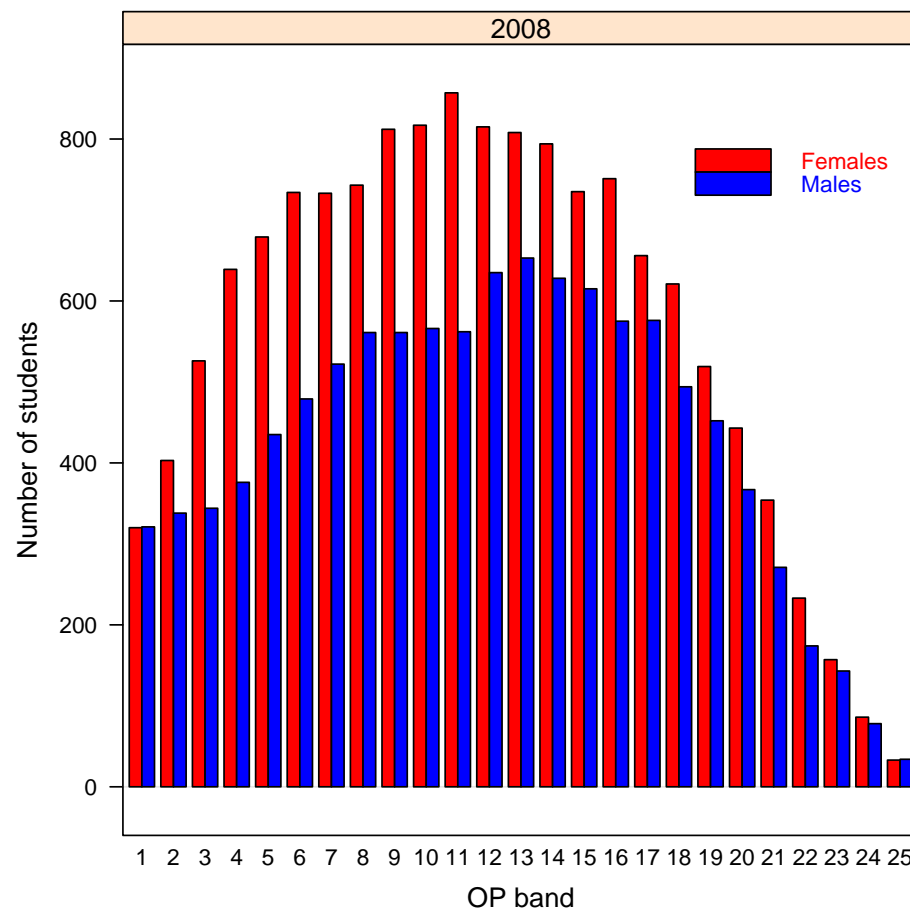


Table 2: 2008 OP distribution

OP band	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Total
All students	641	741	870	1015	1114	1213	1255	1304	1373	1383	1419	1450	1461	1422	1350	1326	1232	1115	971	810	625	407	300	164	67	25028
Females	320	403	526	639	679	734	733	743	812	817	857	815	808	794	735	751	656	621	519	443	354	233	157	86	33	14268
Males	321	338	344	376	435	479	522	561	561	566	562	635	653	628	615	575	576	494	452	367	271	174	143	78	34	10760

Figure 3: 2008 OP percentage distribution within gender

Calculation of OPs

OPs are calculated each year by the Queensland Studies Authority using student assessment information from Queensland schools. The process for determining OPs is explained further in *Calculating OPs: The Basic Principles*, available at <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/publications/te/opsbasics.pdf>.

OP percentage distribution within gender

Figure 3 and Table 3 show the percentage distribution of OPs within each gender.⁵ Since, more females than males are eligible for an OP, it is useful to express the figures as percentages of the total number of females or males.

In most years, except for OPs 1 and 2, the higher OP bands contain a greater percentage of the female OP-eligible students. The lower bands, have a greater percentage of males.

⁵ The proportion of females in each OP band expressed as a percentage of the total number of females, and the same for males.

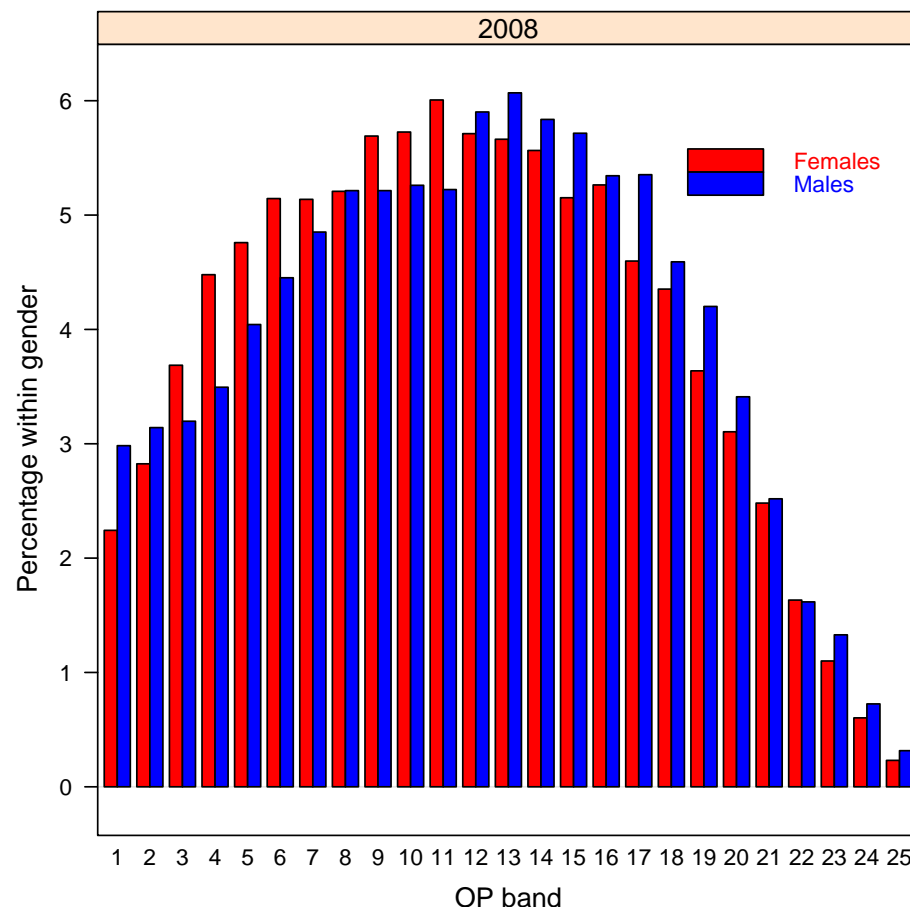


Table 3: 2008 OP percentage distribution within gender

OP band	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
All students %	2.56	2.96	3.48	4.06	4.45	4.85	5.01	5.21	5.49	5.53	5.67	5.79	5.84	5.68	5.39	5.30	4.92	4.46	3.88	3.24	2.50	1.63	1.20	0.66	0.27
Female %	2.24	2.82	3.69	4.48	4.76	5.14	5.14	5.21	5.69	5.73	6.01	5.71	5.66	5.56	5.15	5.26	4.60	4.35	3.64	3.10	2.48	1.63	1.10	0.60	0.23
Male %	2.98	3.14	3.20	3.49	4.04	4.45	4.85	5.21	5.21	5.26	5.22	5.90	6.07	5.84	5.72	5.34	5.35	4.59	4.20	3.41	2.52	1.62	1.33	0.72	0.32

FP distributions

Figure 4 shows the FP distributions for 2008. In up to five fields, FPs show a student's rank on a 1 to 10 scale (with 1 being the highest) based on their achievement in Authority subjects. These fields identify areas of study that emphasise particular knowledge and skills. FPs are determined only for OP-eligible students and students only receive FPs in the fields for which they are eligible, according to the Authority Subjects they studied.

The five fields are:

- Field A** — extended written expression involving complex analysis and synthesis of ideas
- Field B** — short written communication involving reading, comprehension and expression in English or a foreign language
- Field C** — basic numeracy involving simple calculations, and graphical and tabular interpretation
- Field D** — solving complex problems involving mathematical symbols and abstractions
- Field E** — substantial practical performance involving physical or creative arts or expressive skills

Table 4: FP distributions

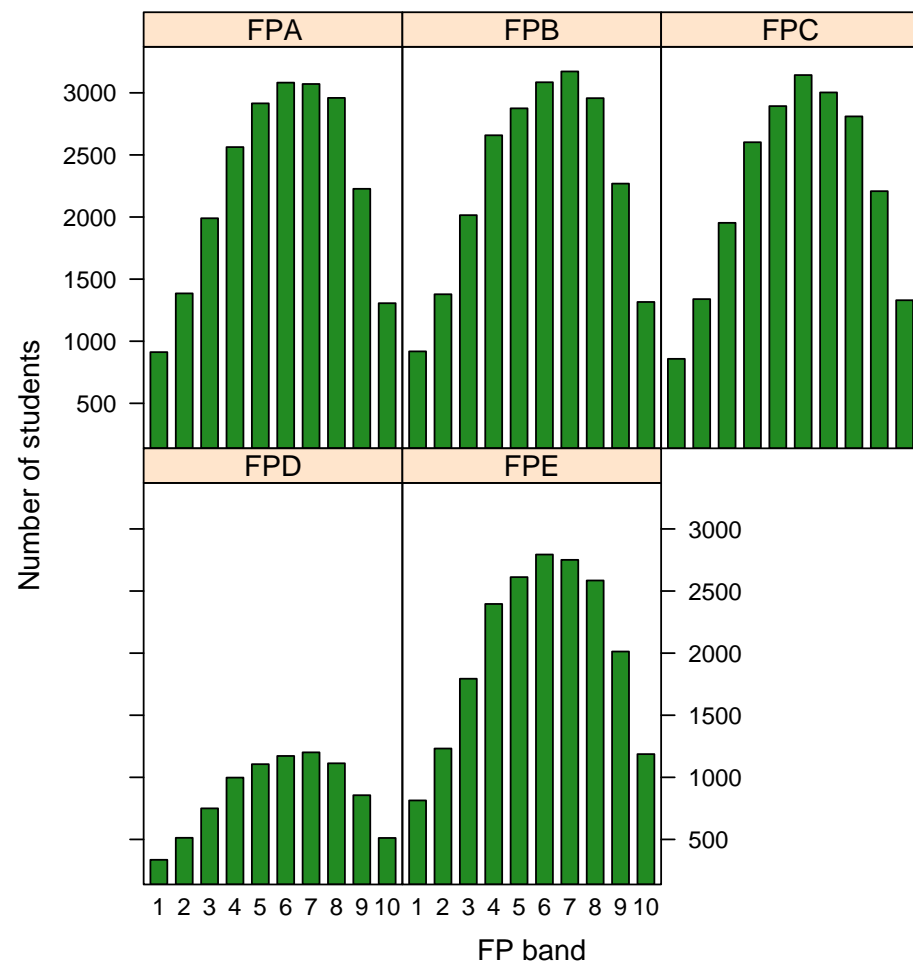
Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
A	912	1385	1990	2563	2915	3082	3071	2959	2227	1306	22410
B	918	1378	2015	2658	2875	3085	3172	2957	2269	1316	22643
C	858	1339	1953	2602	2893	3143	3003	2810	2208	1330	22139
D	336	513	750	998	1106	1172	1201	1113	856	512	8557
E	814	1232	1794	2396	2612	2794	2751	2585	2013	1187	20178

Subject Weights

While FPs are calculated using a similar process to OPs, Authority subjects are not weighted equally for the calculations of FPs. Field weights mean that different subjects contribute differently to the calculations for each field⁶. For example, English (5) is more heavily weighted than Maths B (1) when calculating its contribution to FP A. Table 5 lists all Authority subjects offered in 2008 and the weights for each field position.

⁶ For the calculation of OPs, all subjects are weighted equally.

Figure 4: 2008 FP distribution



2008 State Distribution of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs)

Table 5: Subject weights for calculating OPs and FPs

Id	Syllabus	OP	A	B	C	D	E
1	English	5	5	4	1		4
2	English Extension (Literature)	5	5	4	1		3
4	Indonesian Extension	5	3	5	1		4
5	French	5	2	5	1		4
6	German	5	2	5	1		4
7	Indonesian	5	2	5	1		4
8	Italian	5	2	5	1		4
9	Japanese	5	2	5	1		4
10	Russian	5	2	5	1		4
11	Chinese	5	2	5	1		4
12	Vietnamese	5	2	5	1		4
13	Korean	5	2	5	1		4
14	Modern Greek	5	2	5	1		4
15	French Extension	5	3	5	1		4
16	German Extension	5	3	5	1		4
17	Latin	5	3	5	1		2
18	Spanish	5	2	5	1		4
19	Polish	5	2	5	1		4
20	Ancient History	5	5	5	2		2
21	Modern History	5	5	5	2		2
22	Futures	5	5	5	3	1	3
23	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies	5	5	5	2		3
24	Geography	5	5	5	4	2	3
25	Political Studies	5	5	5	2		2
27	Economics	5	5	5	4	2	2
28	Study of Society	5	5	5	3		2
29	Legal Studies	5	5	5	2		2
33	Philosophy & Reason	5	5	5	3	2	2
36	Mathematics A	5	1	2	5	5	1
37	Mathematics B	5	1	1	5	5	1
38	Mathematics C	5	1	1	5	5	1
40	Chemistry (2004 Extended Trial-Pilot)	5	3	3	5	5	3
40	Chemistry (1995)	5	2	3	5	5	3
41	Physics (1995)	5	1	2	5	5	2
41	Physics (2004 Extended Trial-Pilot)	5	3	3	5	5	3
42	Biology	5	3	3	5	3	3
43	Earth Science	5	3	3	5	3	3
44	Multi-Strand Science	5	2	3	5	3	3
45	Marine Studies	5	3	3	5	3	4
46	Science21	5	4	3	5	3	3
51	Agricultural Science (1999)	5	3	3	5	3	3
51	Agricultural Science (2004)	5	3	3	5	3	3
55	Aerospace Studies	5	4	3	5	4	2
59	Tourism	5	3	4	3	2	3
60	Accounting	5	3	3	5	4	2
62	Business Organisation & Management	5	4	4	4	2	3
63	Business Communication & Technologies	5	3	3	5	2	3
65	Information Technology Systems	5	3	3	5	3	3
67	Health Education	5	5	4	3	2	2
68	Physical Education	5	3	3	3	2	5
71	Home Economics	5	3	3	3	2	4
72	Hospitality Studies	5	3	3	3	2	4
74	Engineering Technology	5	3	3	5	4	3
76	Graphics	5	2	3	5	4	4
78	Technology Studies (2003)	5	3	3	5	3	4
78	Technology Studies (1999)	5	3	3	5	3	4
80	Visual Art	5	4	3	2		5
85	Dance	5	3	3	2		5
86	Study of Religion	5	5	4	2		2
87	Information Processing & Technology	5	3	3	4	4	3
88	Drama	5	4	3	1		5
91	Music	5	3	3	2		5
93	Film, Television and New Media	5	4	3	2		5
94	Music Extension	5	3	2	2	1	5

FP distributions by gender

Figure 5 shows the FPs and their distributions in the state for 2008 by gender.

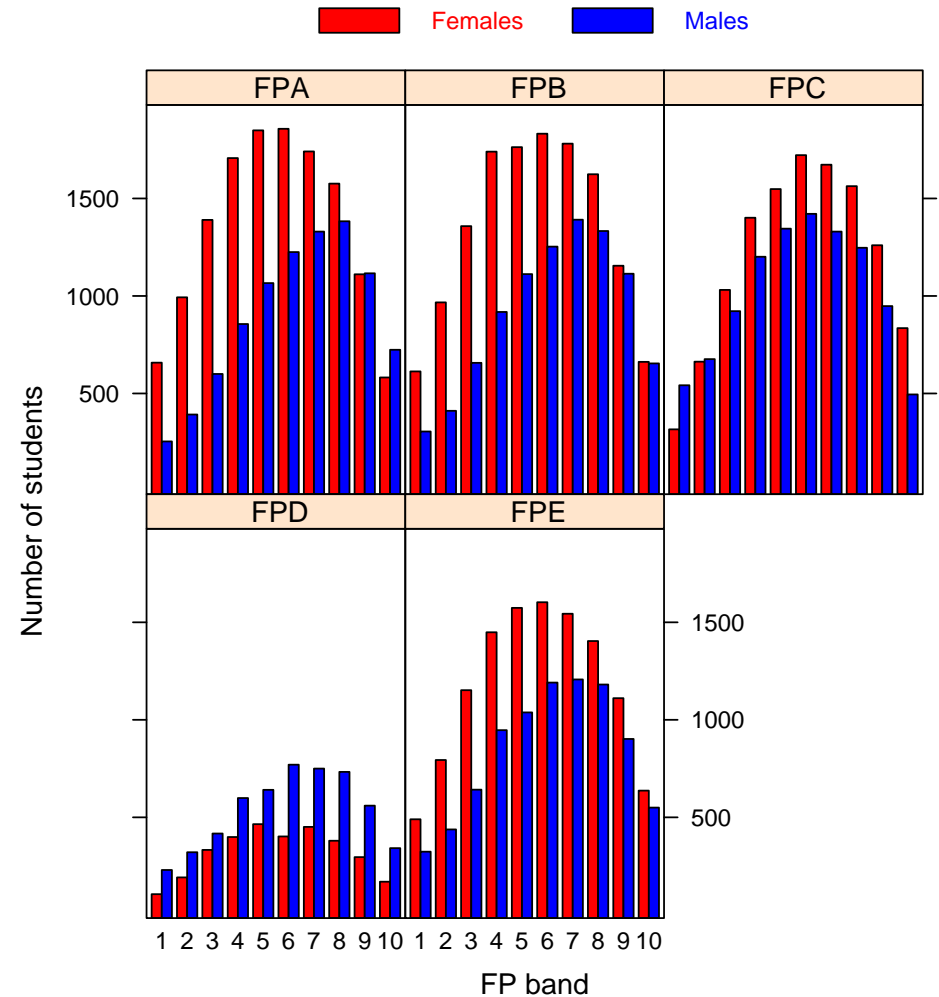
Table 6: Numbers of students eligible for each FP by gender

Gender	Field A	Field B	Field C	Field D	Field E
Female	13464	13495	12012	3194	11758
Male	8946	9148	10127	5363	8420

Table 7: Percentages of students per FP band, by gender

Field	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	All students	4.1	6.2	8.9	11.4	13.0	13.8	13.7	13.2	9.9	5.8
	Female	4.9	7.4	10.3	12.7	13.7	13.8	12.9	11.7	8.3	4.3
	Male	2.8	4.4	6.7	9.6	11.9	13.7	14.9	15.5	12.5	8.1
B	All students	4.1	6.1	8.9	11.7	12.7	13.6	14.0	13.1	10.0	5.8
	Female	4.5	7.2	10.1	12.9	13.1	13.6	13.2	12.0	8.6	4.9
	Male	3.3	4.5	7.2	10.0	12.2	13.7	15.2	14.6	12.2	7.2
C	All students	3.9	6.1	8.8	11.8	13.1	14.2	13.6	12.7	10.0	6.0
	Female	2.6	5.5	8.6	11.7	12.9	14.3	13.9	13.0	10.5	7.0
	Male	5.4	6.7	9.1	11.9	13.3	14.0	13.1	12.3	9.4	4.9
D	All students	3.9	6.0	8.8	11.7	12.9	13.7	14.0	13.0	10.0	6.0
	Female	3.3	6.0	10.4	12.5	14.6	12.6	14.1	11.9	9.3	5.3
	Male	4.3	6.0	7.8	11.2	12.0	14.4	14.0	13.7	10.4	6.4
E	All students	4.0	6.1	8.9	11.9	12.9	13.9	13.6	12.8	10.0	5.9
	Female	4.2	6.8	9.8	12.3	13.4	13.6	13.1	11.9	9.5	5.4
	Male	3.9	5.2	7.6	11.3	12.3	14.1	14.3	14.0	10.7	6.5

Figure 5: 2008 FP distribution by gender



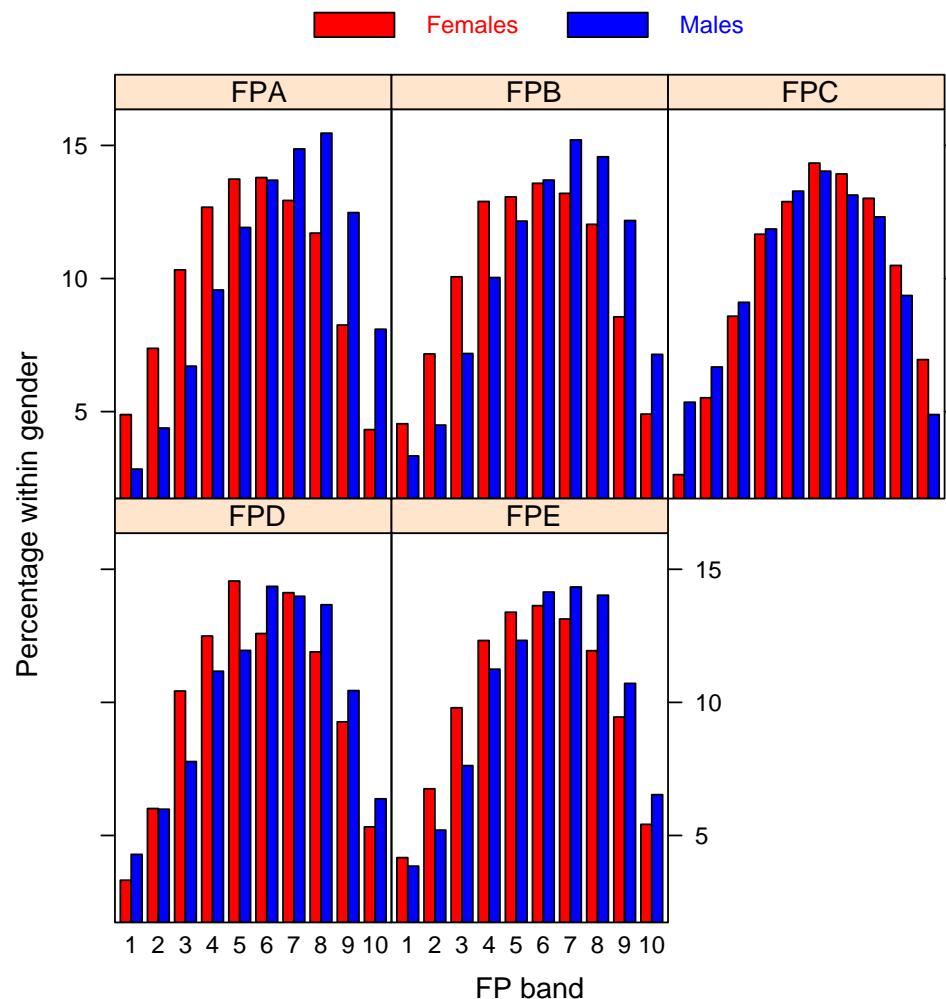
FPs percentage distribution within gender

Figure 6 shows FPs and their distributions in the state for 2008 by gender. These show the number of boys that achieved each FP as a percentage of FP-eligible boys, and the same for girls. Table 8 shows the combinations of fields for which students were eligible in 2008.

Table 8: Numbers of students per FP combination

Sets of FPs	Students	Total	Per cent	
ABCDE	5455	5 FPs	5455	21.8
ABCD	797			
ABCE	10351			
ACDE	118			
BCDE	442	4 FPs	11708	46.78
ABC	2390			
ABE	2360			
ACD	94			
ACE	292			
BCD	94			
BCE	279			
CDE	616	3 FPs	6125	24.47
AB	419			
AC	46			
AE	87			
BC	38			
BE	18			
CD	941			
CE	156	2 FPs	1705	6.81
A	1			
C	30			
E	4	1 FP	35	0.14

Figure 6: 2008 FP distribution within gender



Contact Us

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