

Background

Overall Positions (OPs) provide a statewide rank order of students from 1 (highest) to 25 (lowest) based on students' achievement in Authority subjects. 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 Queensland Core Skills 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 five FPs and most students qualifying for three or four fields.

OP distribution

Figure 1 represents the distribution of the 25 944 Queensland students¹ who received an OP in 2011. 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.

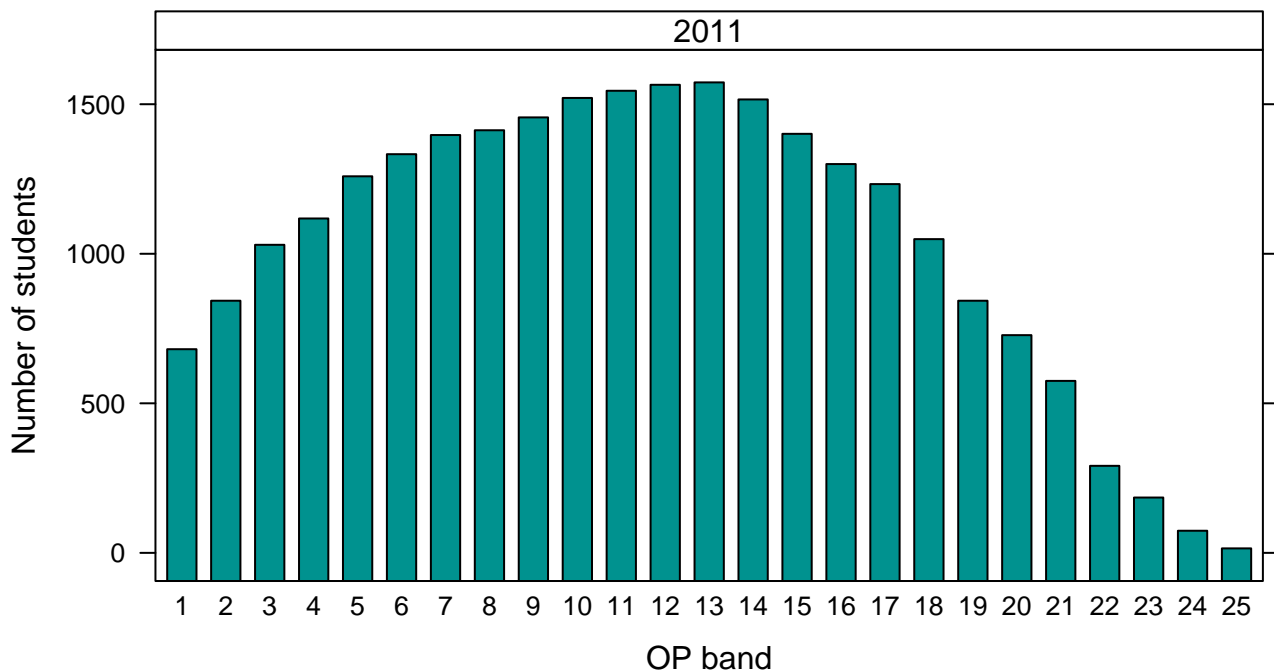


Figure 1: 2011 OP distribution

¹ Visa 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 equivalent-OPs/FPs.

Table 1: 2011 OP distribution, cumulative percentages

OP band	All students	%	Cumulative	Cumulative %
1	681	2.62	681	2.62
2	843	3.25	1524	5.87
3	1030	3.97	2554	9.84
4	1118	4.31	3672	14.15
5	1259	4.85	4931	19.01
6	1333	5.14	6264	24.14
7	1397	5.38	7661	29.53
8	1413	5.45	9074	34.98
9	1456	5.61	10530	40.59
10	1521	5.86	12051	46.45
11	1545	5.96	13596	52.41
12	1565	6.03	15161	58.44
13	1573	6.06	16734	64.50
14	1516	5.84	18250	70.34
15	1401	5.40	19651	75.74
16	1300	5.01	20951	80.75
17	1233	4.75	22184	85.51
18	1049	4.04	23233	89.55
19	843	3.25	24076	92.80
20	728	2.81	24804	95.61
21	575	2.22	25379	97.82
22	291	1.12	25670	98.94
23	185	0.71	25855	99.66
24	74	0.29	25929	99.94
25	15	0.06	25944	100.00
Total	25944			

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 Overall Positions (OPs): The basic principles*, available at www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/te_op_basics.pdf.

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 within gender

Figure 2 and Table 2 show the distribution of OPs within 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 while 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%. 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.

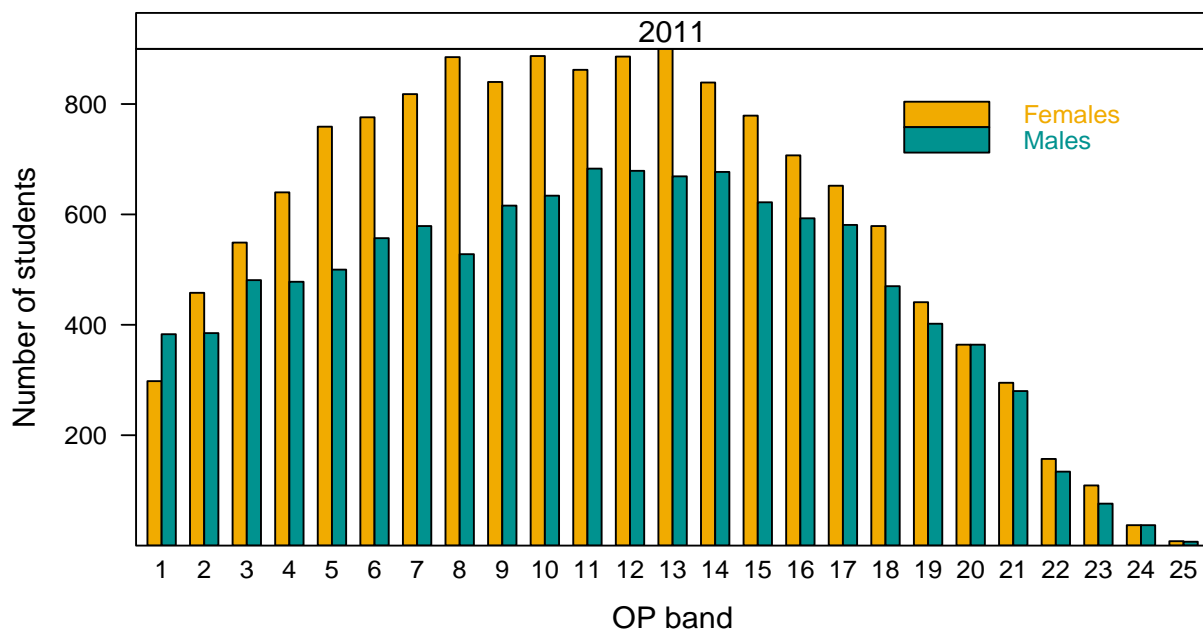


Figure 2: 2011 OP distribution within gender

Table 2: 2011 OP distribution, within gender

OP band	Females	Females %	Males	Males %
1	298	2.05	383	3.36
2	458	3.15	385	3.37
3	549	3.78	481	4.21
4	640	4.40	478	4.19
5	759	5.22	500	4.38
6	776	5.34	557	4.88
7	818	5.63	579	5.07
8	885	6.09	528	4.63
9	840	5.78	616	5.40
10	887	6.11	634	5.55
11	862	5.93	683	5.98
12	886	6.10	679	5.95
13	904	6.22	669	5.86
14	839	5.77	677	5.93
15	779	5.36	622	5.45
16	707	4.87	593	5.19
17	652	4.49	581	5.09
18	579	3.99	470	4.12
19	441	3.04	402	3.52
20	364	2.51	364	3.19
21	295	2.03	280	2.45
22	157	1.08	134	1.17
23	109	0.75	76	0.67
24	37	0.25	37	0.32
25	8	0.06	7	0.06
Total	14529		11415	

OP percentage distribution within gender

Figure 3 and Table 2 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.

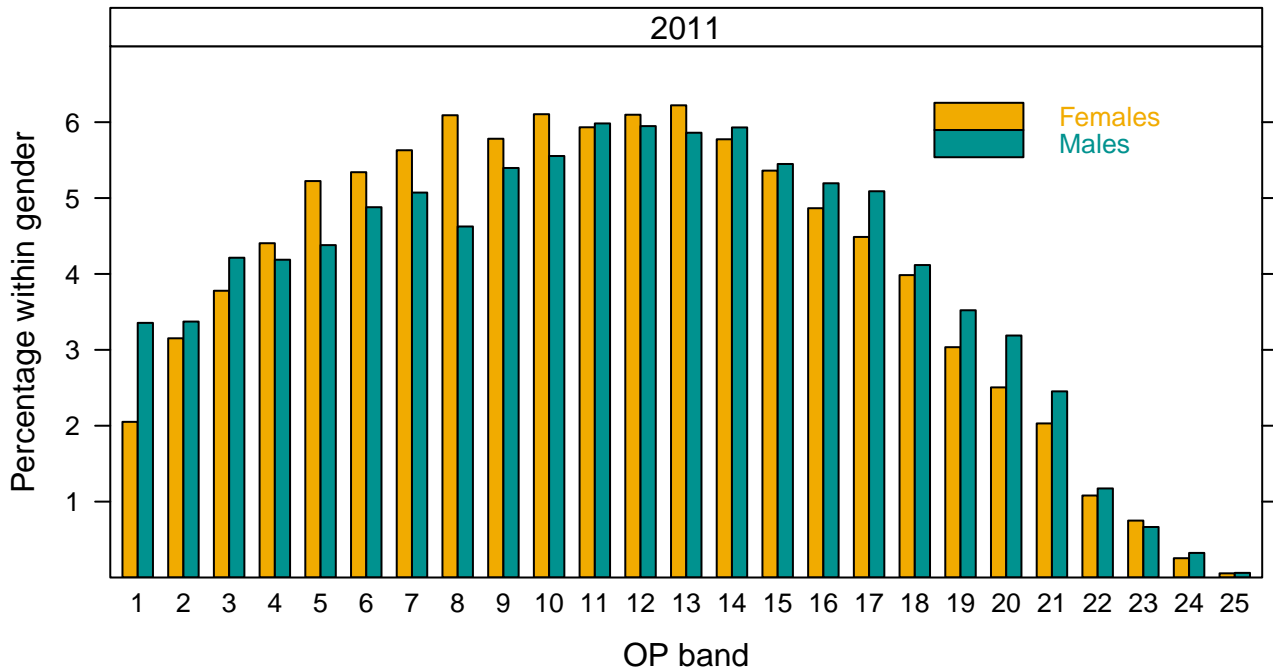


Figure 3: 2011 OP percentage distribution within gender

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

FP distributions

Figure 4 and Table 3 show the FP distributions for 2011. Table 4 shows the combinations of fields for which students were eligible in 2011. 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 3: 2011 FP distributions

Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
A	1032	1579	2267	3038	3253	3488	3491	3298	2524	1466	25436
B	891	1360	1969	2651	2860	3025	3040	2845	2226	1298	22165
C	924	1438	2081	2792	3073	3244	3241	3032	2382	1408	23615
D	358	574	812	1139	1189	1247	1292	1159	923	558	9251
E	899	1371	1981	2654	2920	3012	3099	2830	2217	1321	22304

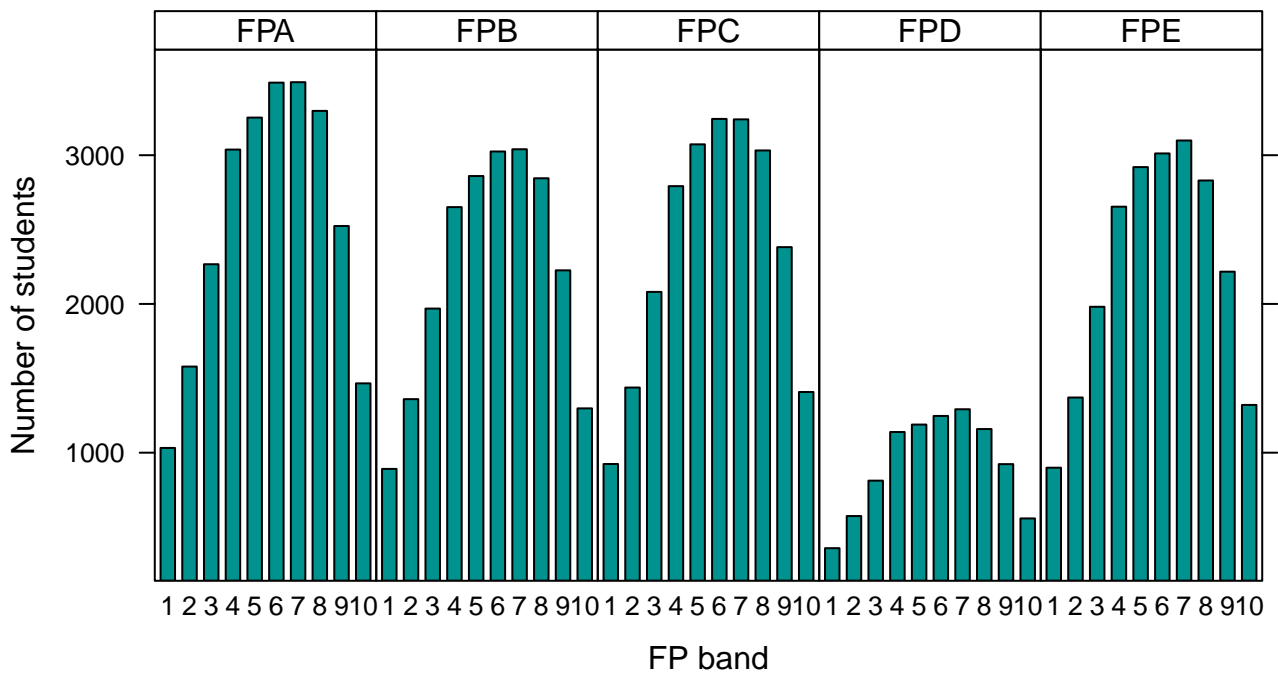


Figure 4: 2011 FP distribution

Table 4: Numbers of students per FP combination, 2011

Sets of FPs	Students		Total	%
ABCDE	7300	5 FPs	7300	28.14
ABCD	831			
ABCE	10393			
ACDE	540			
BCDE	33	4 FPs	11797	45.47
ABC	1879			
ABE	1246			
ACD	363			
ACE	1767			
BCD	27			
BCE	95			
CDE	32	3 FPs	5409	20.85
AB	267			
AC	102			
BC	31			
CD	125			
CE	90	2 FPs	1418	5.47
A	5			
B	3			
C	7			
E	5	1 FP	20	0.08

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 2011 and the weights for each field position.

Table 5: 2011 subject weights for calculating OPs and FPs

Syllabus	OP	A	B	C	D	E	Syllabus	OP	A	B	C	D	E
1 English (2008 Trial)	5	5	3	1	0	4	37 Mathematics B	5	1	2	5	5	1
1 English (2002)	5	5	3	1	0	4	38 Mathematics C	5	1	2	5	5	1
2 English Extension (Literature)	5	5	3	1	0	3	40 Chemistry	5	4	3	5	5	3
3 English for ESL Learners	5	5	4	1	0	3	41 Physics	5	4	3	5	5	3
4 Indonesian Extension (2009)	5	2	5	1	0	4	42 Biology	5	4	3	5	3	3
4 Indonesian Extension (2003)	5	2	5	1	0	4	43 Earth Science	5	3	4	5	3	3
5 French	5	1	5	1	0	4	44 Multi-Strand Science	5	2	3	5	3	3
6 German	5	1	5	1	0	4	45 Marine Studies	5	3	3	5	3	4
7 Indonesian	5	1	5	1	0	4	46 Science21	5	3	3	5	3	3
8 Italian	5	1	5	1	0	4	51 Agricultural Science	5	3	3	5	3	4
9 Japanese	5	1	5	1	0	4	55 Aerospace Studies	5	4	4	5	4	2
10 Russian	5	1	5	1	0	4	56 Chinese Extension	5	5	2	5	1	0
11 Chinese	5	1	5	1	0	4	59 Tourism	5	3	4	3	1	3
12 Vietnamese	5	1	5	1	0	4	60 Accounting	5	3	3	5	4	2
13 Korean	5	1	5	1	0	4	62 Business Organisation & Management	5	4	3	4	2	3
14 Modern Greek	5	1	5	1	0	4	63 Business Communication & Technologies	5	3	4	4	2	3
15 French Extension (2002)	5	2	5	1	0	4	65 Information Technology Systems	5	4	3	5	3	4
15 French Extension (2009)	5	2	5	1	0	4	67 Health Education	5	5	3	3	2	2
16 German Extension (2002)	5	2	5	1	0	4	68 Physical Education	5	4	3	3	2	5
16 German Extension (2009)	5	2	5	1	0	4	71 Home Economics	5	3	3	3	2	4
17 Latin	5	3	5	1	0	2	72 Hospitality Studies	5	3	3	3	1	4
18 Spanish	5	1	5	1	0	4	74 Engineering Technology	5	3	3	5	4	3
19 Polish	5	1	5	1	0	4	76 Graphics	5	2	3	5	4	4
20 Ancient History	5	5	4	2	0	2	78 Technology Studies	5	4	3	4	3	4
21 Modern History	5	5	4	2	0	2	80 Visual Art	5	3	2	2	0	5
22 Futures	5	5	4	3	1	3	85 Dance	5	3	3	2	0	5
23 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies	5	4	4	2	0	3	86 Study of Religion	5	5	4	2	0	3
24 Geography	5	5	5	4	2	3	87 Information Processing & Technology	5	3	3	4	4	3
25 Political Studies	5	5	5	3	0	2	88 Drama	5	4	3	2	0	5
27 Economics	5	5	5	5	3	2	91 Music	5	3	2	2	2	5
28 Study of Society	5	5	5	3	0	2	93 Film, Television and New Media	5	4	3	2	0	5
29 Legal Studies	5	5	5	3	0	2	94 Music Extension	5	3	2	2	2	5
33 Philosophy & Reason	5	5	4	3	3	2	95 English Extension	5	5	3	1	0	3
36 Mathematics A	5	1	2	5	5	1							

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

FP distributions within gender

Figure 5 and Table 6 show the FPs and their distributions in the State for 2011 within gender.

Table 6: Numbers of students eligible for each FP within gender, 2011

Field	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	All students	1032	1579	2267	3038	3253	3488	3491	3298	2524	1466
	Female	664	1005	1459	1891	1896	2009	1912	1653	1155	628
	Male	368	574	808	1147	1357	1479	1579	1645	1369	838
B	All students	891	1360	1969	2651	2860	3025	3040	2845	2226	1298
	Female	539	824	1237	1638	1743	1722	1687	1501	1039	557
	Male	352	536	732	1013	1117	1303	1353	1344	1187	741
C	All students	924	1438	2081	2792	3073	3244	3241	3032	2382	1408
	Female	381	701	1109	1562	1715	1787	1793	1615	1303	800
	Male	543	737	972	1230	1358	1457	1448	1417	1079	608
D	All students	358	574	812	1139	1189	1247	1292	1159	923	558
	Female	91	210	322	444	450	510	474	441	306	189
	Male	267	364	490	695	739	737	818	718	617	369
E	All students	899	1371	1981	2654	2920	3012	3099	2830	2217	1321
	Female	481	781	1185	1606	1710	1699	1715	1494	1139	655
	Male	418	590	796	1048	1210	1313	1384	1336	1078	666

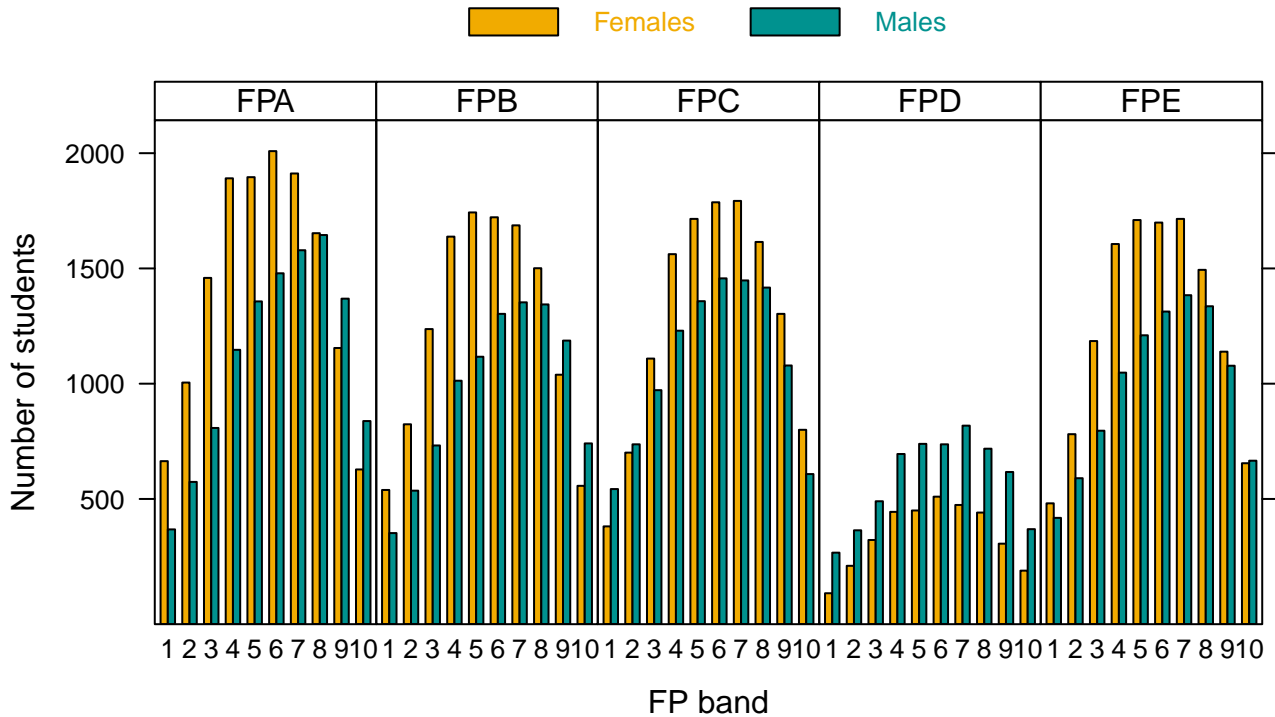


Figure 5: 2011 FP distribution by gender

FPs percentage distribution within gender

Figure 6 and Table 7 show FPs and their distributions in the State for 2011 within gender. These show the number of boys that achieved each FP as a percentage of FP-eligible boys, and the same for girls.

Table 7: Percentages of students per FP band, within gender, 2011

Field	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	All students	4.1	6.2	8.9	11.9	12.8	13.7	13.7	13.0	9.9	5.8
	Female	4.7	7.0	10.2	13.3	13.3	14.1	13.4	11.6	8.1	4.4
	Male	3.3	5.1	7.2	10.3	12.2	13.3	14.1	14.7	12.3	7.5
B	All students	4.0	6.1	8.9	12.0	12.9	13.7	13.7	12.8	10.0	5.9
	Female	4.3	6.6	9.9	13.1	14.0	13.8	13.5	12.0	8.3	4.5
	Male	3.6	5.5	7.6	10.5	11.5	13.5	14.0	13.9	12.3	7.7
C	All students	3.9	6.1	8.8	11.8	13.0	13.7	13.7	12.8	10.1	6.0
	Female	3.0	5.5	8.7	12.2	13.4	14.0	14.1	12.7	10.2	6.3
	Male	5.0	6.8	9.0	11.3	12.5	13.4	13.4	13.1	10.0	5.6
D	All students	3.9	6.2	8.8	12.3	12.9	13.5	14.0	12.5	10.0	6.0
	Female	2.7	6.1	9.4	12.9	13.1	14.8	13.8	12.8	8.9	5.5
	Male	4.6	6.3	8.4	12.0	12.7	12.7	14.1	12.4	10.6	6.4
E	All students	4.0	6.2	8.9	11.9	13.1	13.5	13.9	12.7	9.9	5.9
	Female	3.9	6.3	9.5	12.9	13.7	13.6	13.8	12.0	9.1	5.3
	Male	4.3	6.0	8.1	10.7	12.3	13.3	14.1	13.6	11.0	6.8

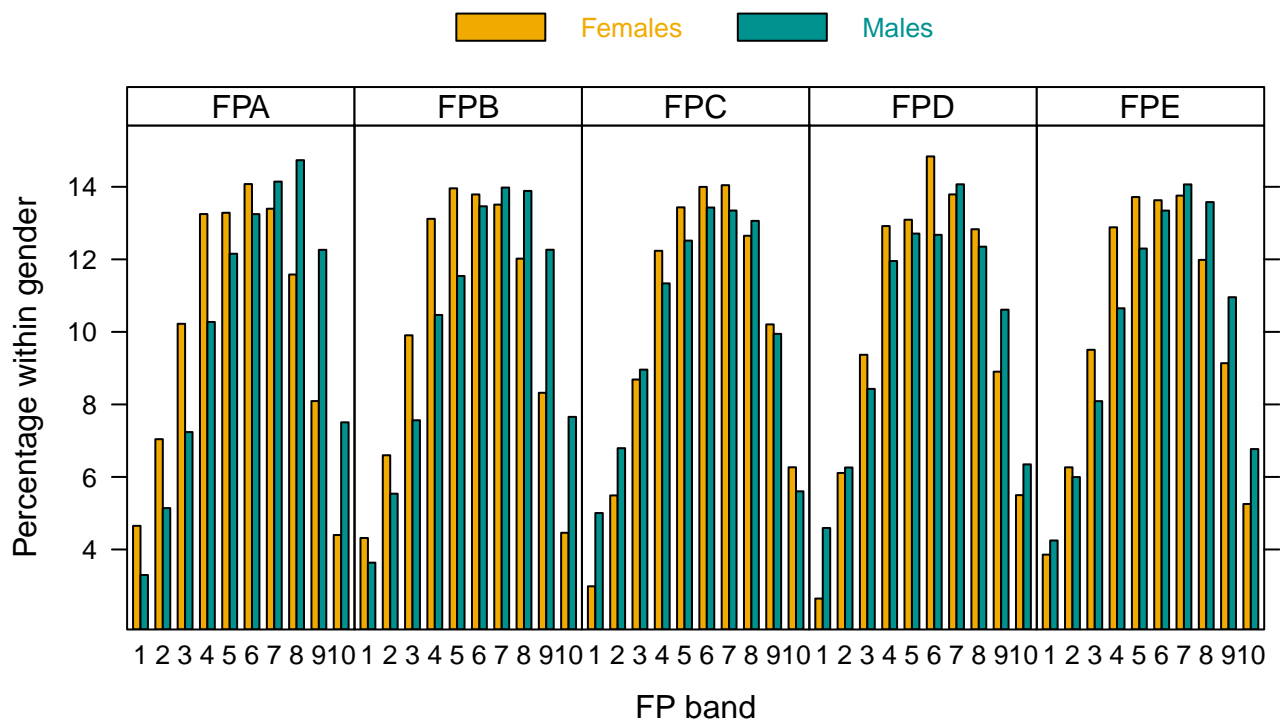


Figure 6: 2011 FP percentage distribution by gender

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