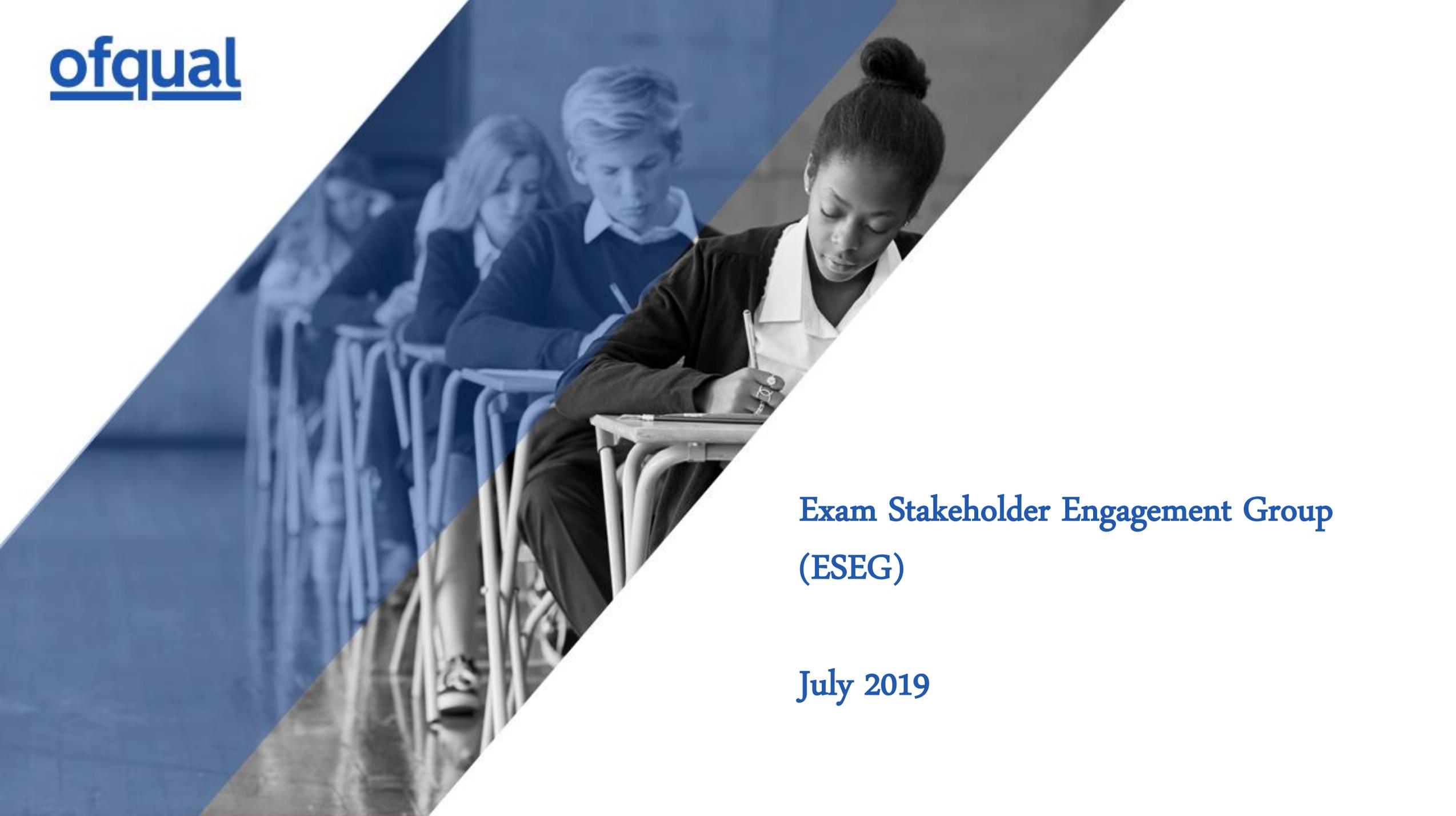


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**Exam Stakeholder Engagement Group  
(ESEG)**

**July 2019**

## Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Summer 2019 update - Emma Scott/Richard Garrett
3. Awarding summer series 2019 – Cath Jadhav
4. Ofqual's summer symposium - Richard Garrett
5. JCQ/Exam boards update
6. Member requested topics
7. Ofqual update
8. Terms of reference
9. Any other business, date of next meeting



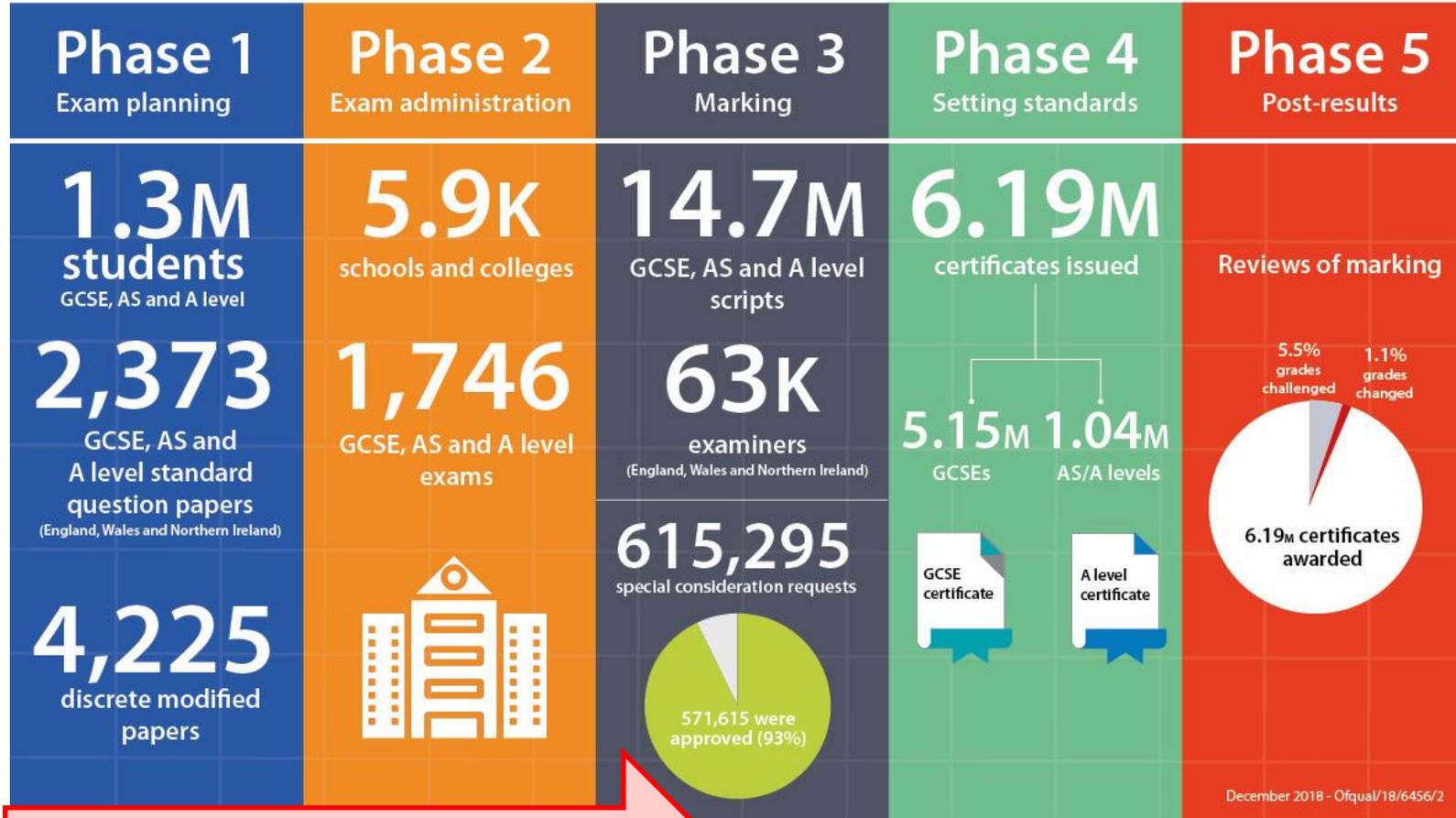
## Summer 2019 update

Emma Scott, Associate Director, Standards for Delivery &  
Performance

Richard Garrett, Director of Policy & Strategic Relationships for  
GQ

# Summer exam series 2018

Data are for England only unless otherwise stated



Currently half way through the 2019 series

## Themes from this summer – Assessment material errors

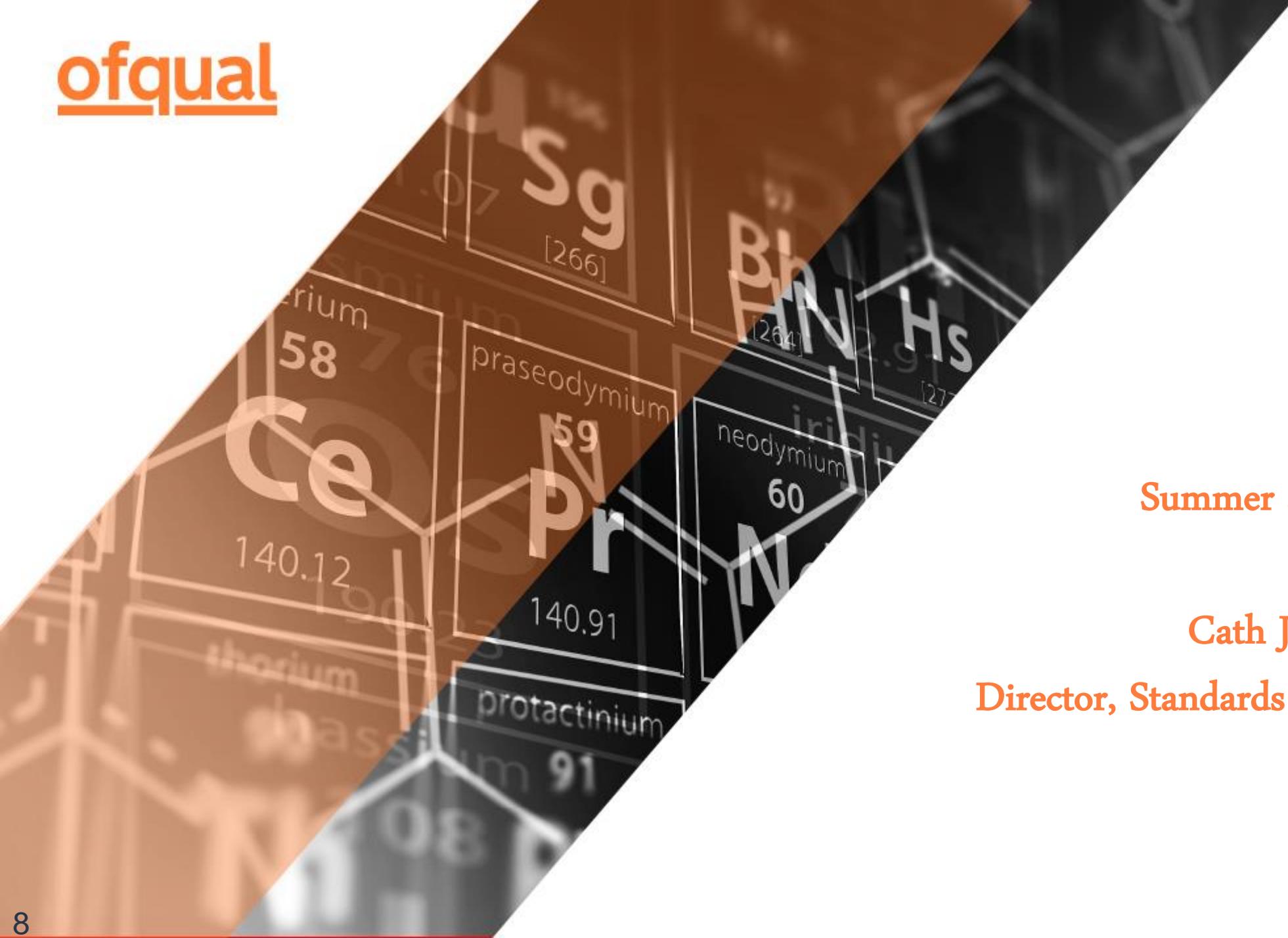
- We expect all errors to be reported
- Seen significantly fewer assessment material errors than last year which suggests that exam boards' work to improve their systems is working
- Have been some errors on modified papers. We are aware that errors in modified papers can compound the challenges that these students may already face and are currently carrying out further research and monitoring in this area.
- We are not complacent – our aim is for all papers to be error free and we will continue to monitor the work of exam boards very closely

## Themes from this summer - Security breaches/malpractice

- Less reported security breaches overall this year
- Instances of incorrect papers handed out down 50%
  - Formalisation of 'two pair of eyes check' appears to have reduced risk
- Hoax claims of leaked exam papers on the rise
- Confirmed leaked exam papers: Pearson A level Maths, AQA GCSE Religious Studies
  - Monitoring how they are being handled
  - Where malpractice does occur, we have rules in place to ensure that exam boards identify and deal with it effectively, including ensuring that, as far as is possible, no student is advantaged or disadvantaged.
- Recognise important role that people play in the safe running of the exam system, and exams officers in particular.

## Student wellbeing

- Before summer, we published a series of resources that help students in navigating the particular stress and pressure caused by exams.
- We have worked in partnership with academics at the University of Manchester to develop resources around test anxiety, including producing a guide for students about coping with exam pressure.
- Important that we can all identify when normal exam pressure tips over into stress. We know that schools and colleges already use a range of approaches to support students, but we hope this will be a useful additional resource.
- We will continue to play our part in supporting schools and colleges with this important issue.



**Summer awarding**

**Cath Jadhav**

**Director, Standards and Comparability**

## Implications for results – AS and A level

- Generally A level entries are very stable...
- ...so we expect results to be stable nationally
- But for AS, the continued decline could mean national results look quite different from previous years
- In subjects being awarded for the first time this year (including maths\*, further maths and D & T), individual schools and colleges might see more year-on-year variation in their results than in previous years

\* A level maths was available for the first time in 2018 but 2019 is the first full cohort

## A level maths – some things to bear in mind

- Content no longer optional, so some schools and colleges could be teaching ‘new’ material
- Linear structure for maths and further maths means they are now distinct qualifications with no shared units
- Awarding approach as for previous new A levels – prioritise comparable outcomes at cohort level, so this year’s students are not disadvantaged by being the first (full) cohort to sit these new A levels
- A point of detail – predictions (based on GCSE prior attainment) to be used for maths-only students (ie not also taking further maths), as was previously done in the legacy qualifications

## Implications for results - GCSE

- Most students this year will have all 9 to 1 results
- Generally entries are very stable...
- ...so we expect results to be stable nationally
- But in the reformed subjects being awarded for the first this year, individual schools/colleges might see more year-on-year variation in results than in recent years
- Some changes to tier entry patterns, with more students this year entered for foundation tier
- Exceptional arrangements for 2018 re safety net grades on higher tier will not apply this year

## National Reference Test

- 300+ schools, 20,000 students, 2 subjects – English and maths
- Results are reported as the expected % of students who achieve the same level of proficiency as those students in the 2017 baseline year at:
  - grade 4 and above
  - grade 5 and above
  - grade 7 and above
- 2019 is the third year of NRT, and the first year that we said we will feed the NRT results into awarding of GCSE English language and maths
- This could mean an adjustment made at one or more grade boundaries, where we believe that there is a change in the performance of students
- Other subjects?

## How we will use NRT evidence

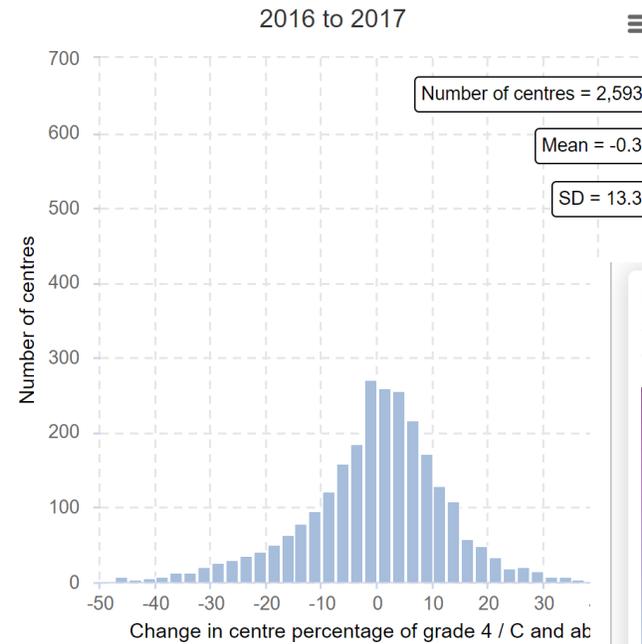
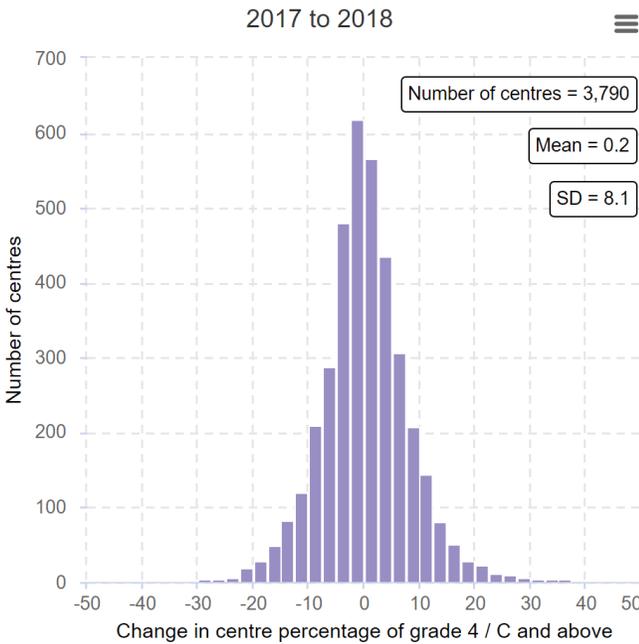
- If there is a change in NRT results, do we believe it's a genuine change, or statistical noise?
- Is there sufficient evidence to justify an adjustment at one or more grades?
- Not an automatic process – a judgement is required
- Principles to guide our decision
  - Caution in making any adjustments – GCSE results are high stakes for students and schools/colleges
  - Consistency between years, subjects and grade boundaries, as well as in the direction of any adjustment
  - Generally we will seek to make relatively small adjustments, to minimise the impact on standards over time
- Advice to GCSE English language and GCSE maths awarders

## NRT – what we will be publishing on results day

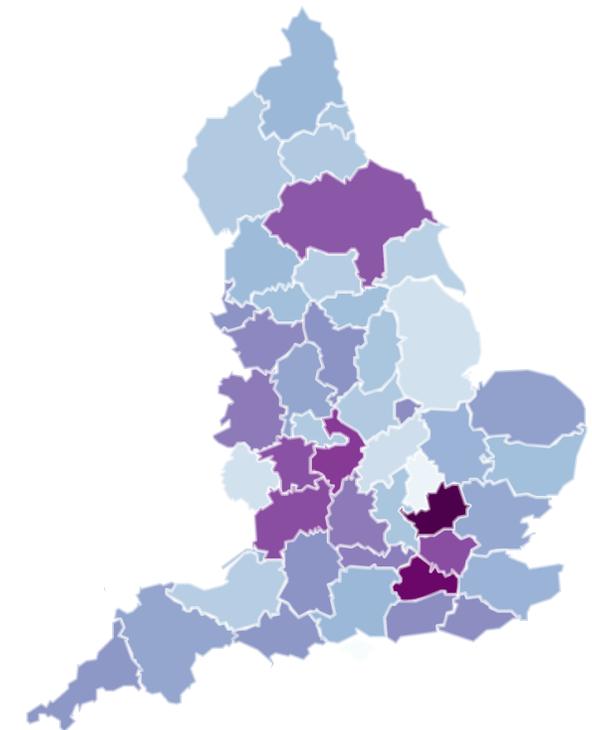
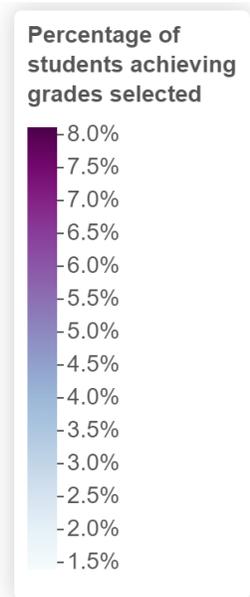
- NFER's Results Digest – NRT results for 2019 compared with results in 2017 and 2018
- Ofqual's Annual Statement which will set out our decision and the rationale for that
- Updated Background report

# Results apps (Ofqual analytics)

Centre variability for all ages in GCSE English language for grades 4 / C and above for all centres with 25+ students



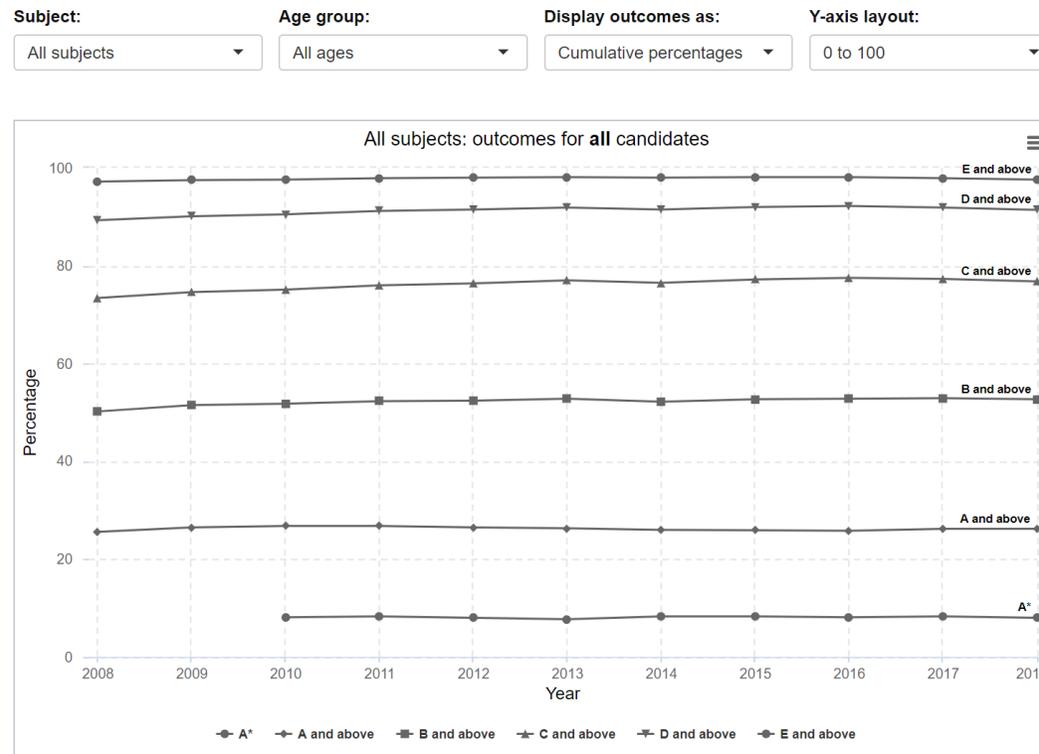
- Centre variability in results
- Results by county
- Grade distributions (9 to 1)



**Updated with 2019 on results days**  
[Analytics.ofqual.gov.uk](https://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk)

## Results apps (Ofqual analytics) – new for 2019

**Historic results over time, by subject, for all students, male/female, separate age groups...**



Questions?



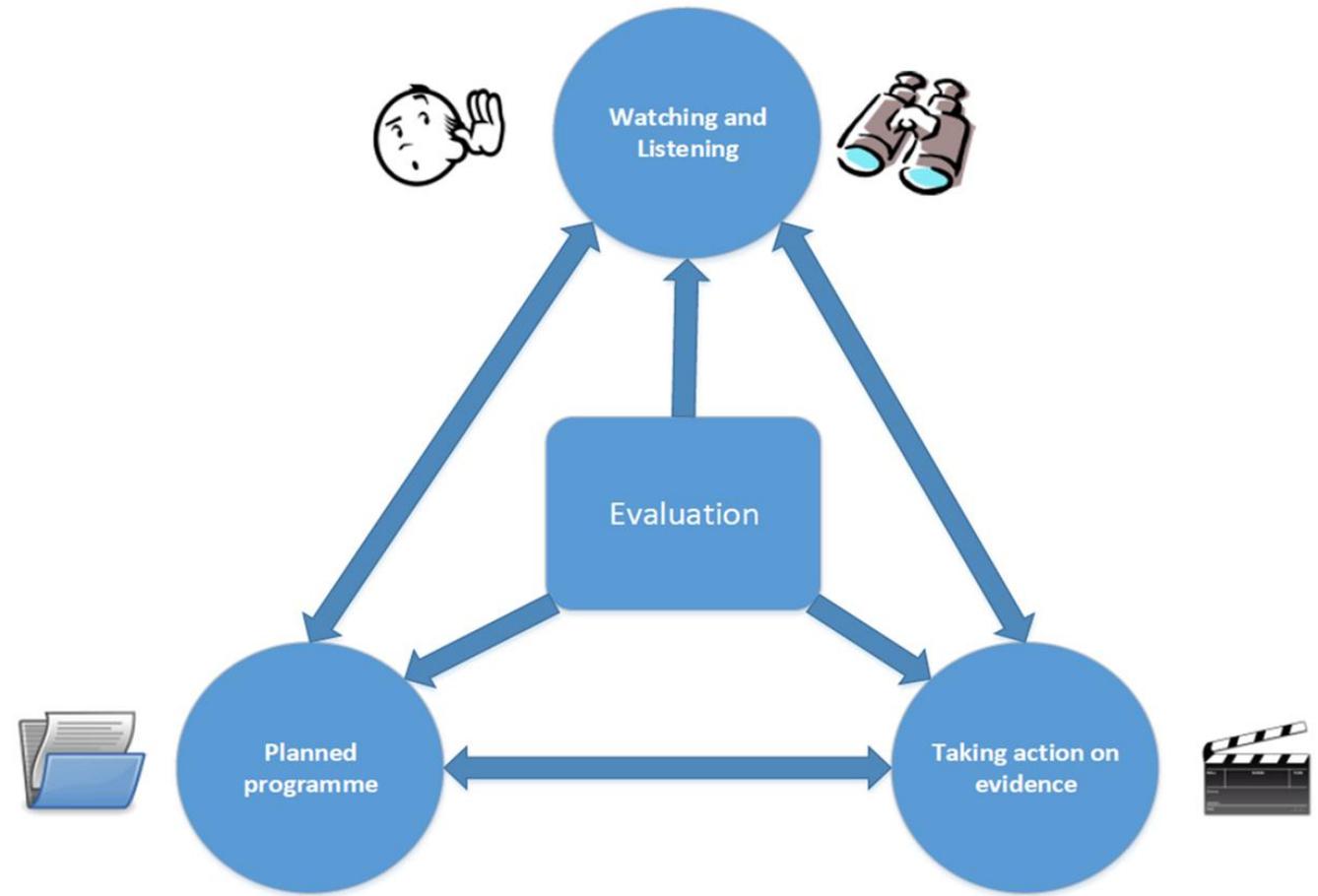
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## Summer symposium

Richard Garrett,  
Director of Policy & Strategic Relationships for GQ

## Evaluation of reform

- Any reflections from attendees at the symposium?
- Key areas discussed:
  - Evaluation of reforms
  - Research



## Listening

- Series of meetings following the first examinations and will continue this year and next
- Spoken to more than 440 teachers, 60 HE and Subject Association representatives
- Attended a range of meetings. For example, GCSE science: 14 meetings in one year involving approximately 390 teachers

## Taking action

- Sharing feedback
  - Direct action
  - Wider action and influence
- 
- Future focus

### Mathematical Skills Working Group Report

The assessment of mathematical skills in AS/A level business and AS/A level psychology

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### Indirect Assessment of Practical Skills Working Group Report

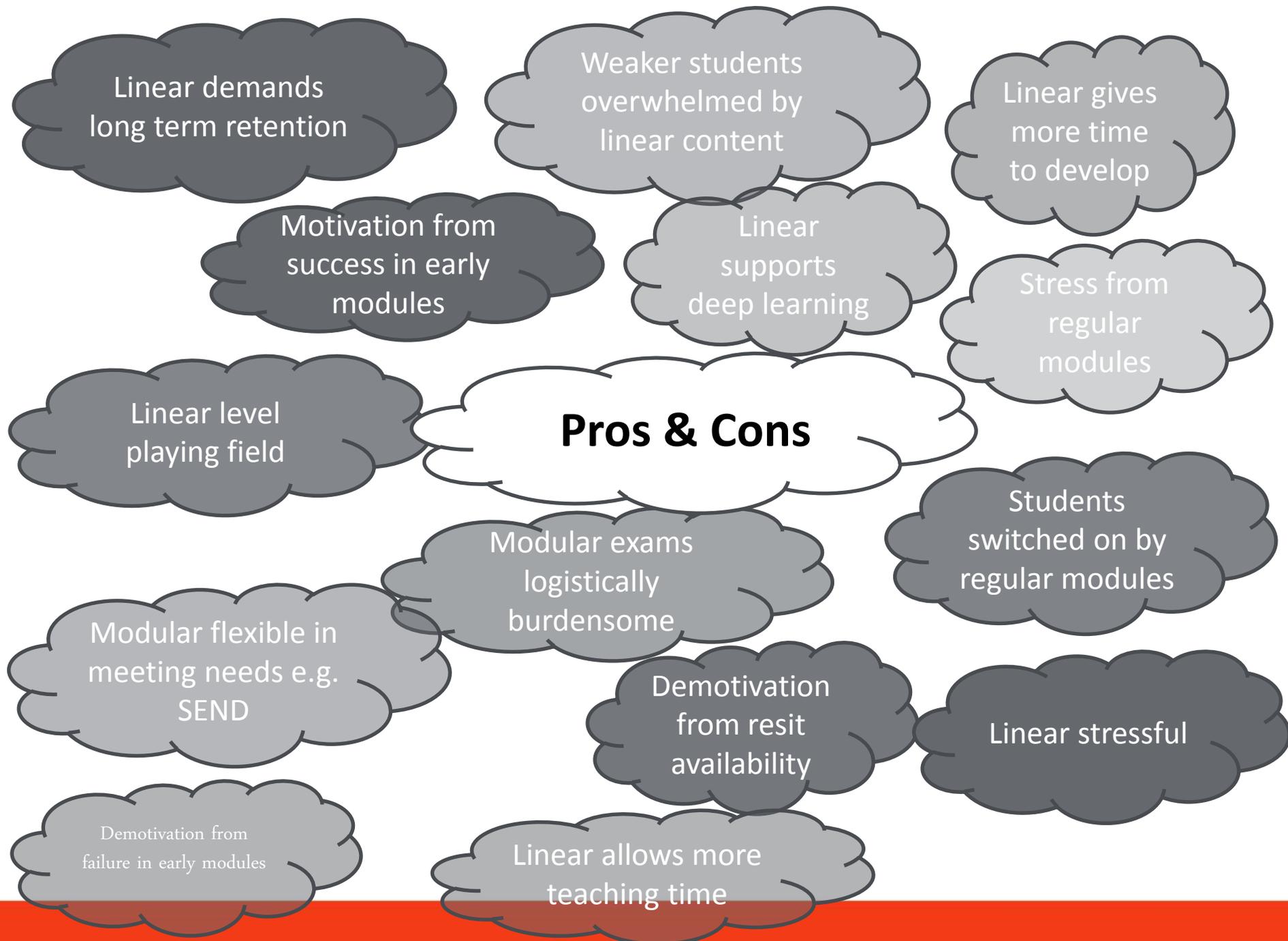
Exemplifying the indirect assessment of practical skills in AS/A level biology, chemistry and physics

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## Evaluation - Research based evaluation of reform

- Four research & evaluation activities already published:
  - Practicals and A level Science (*research published 2016 onwards*)
  - GCSEs Modern Foreign Languages (*Blog published Feb 2019*)
  - Modular versus linear (*research published Apr 2019*)
  - GCSE mathematics & problem solving (*evaluation published Apr 2019*)
- Research-based evaluation can take many forms – match the research method to the research questions
  - Experts and methods of capturing expert judgement
  - Assessment data
  - Experimental work
- Today – just a quick overview of one of these elements

**Evaluation of  
modular versus linear  
GCSEs**



## Were GCSE modular exams easier?

English	-0.001	0.002	0.001
Mathematics	<b>-0.034</b>	0.002	0.032
Science	0.001	0.003	0.001
Separate	<b>0.087</b>	0.003	0.091

- Linear multilevel model analyses of GCSE grades
- In the context of the other variables in the models (age, gender, SES, SEN, prior attainment, interaction effects)
- Reflects the success of standards maintenance to keep a level playing field
- Additionally, no overall differential impacts by gender or SES.
- **No overall effect of linear or modular exams in GCSE**

Questions?

# JCQ/Exam Boards update

## Member requested topics

## Ofqual update

- Extended grounds of appeal available for all GCSEs, AS and A levels for this summer
- Exam procedure review service (EPRS)
- Review of the General Conditions of Recognition and Qualifications Wales review.
- GCSE MFL – inter-subject comparability work
- Accessibility
  - RNIB joint work
  - Assistive technology research
  - Plans for accessibility guidance

## ESEG Terms of reference

- Slight changes made to the TOR to reflect the journey from starting on reform towards business as usual
- Update made to organisations invited and number of attendees suggested
- The TOR will be reviewed on a regular basis

**AOB**

**Date of next ESEG meeting:  
Weds 6 November 2019, afternoon**