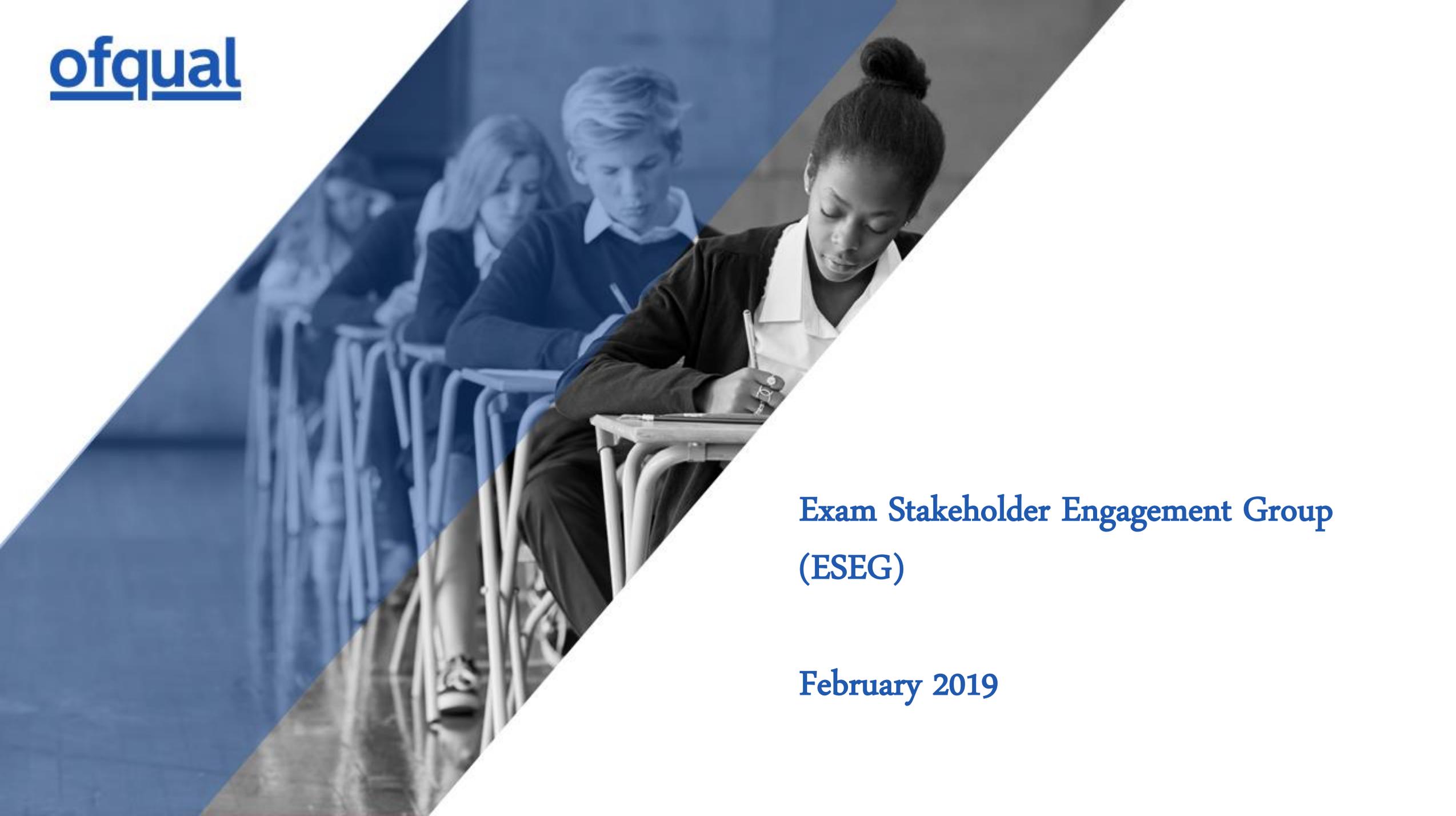


ofqual

A photograph of students sitting at desks in a classroom, focused on their work. The image is partially obscured by a diagonal blue and white graphic overlay. The students are wearing school uniforms, and the setting appears to be a typical classroom environment.

**Exam Stakeholder Engagement Group
(ESEG)**

February 2019

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Follow up points from previous meeting
3. GCSE, AS & A level Summer Report 2018 (Emma Scott)
4. Summer 2019 - Our approach to monitoring summer delivery and maintaining standards (Emma Scott/Rachel Taylor)
5. Evaluation of GCSE, AS & A level reform (Sarah Old)
6. Ofqual update
7. JCQ update (Andy Walls)
8. Member requested topics
9. Terms of reference
10. Any other business, date of next meeting

**GCSE, AS & A level
Summer Report 2018**

Summer 2018 exam series publications

Phase 1
Exam planning

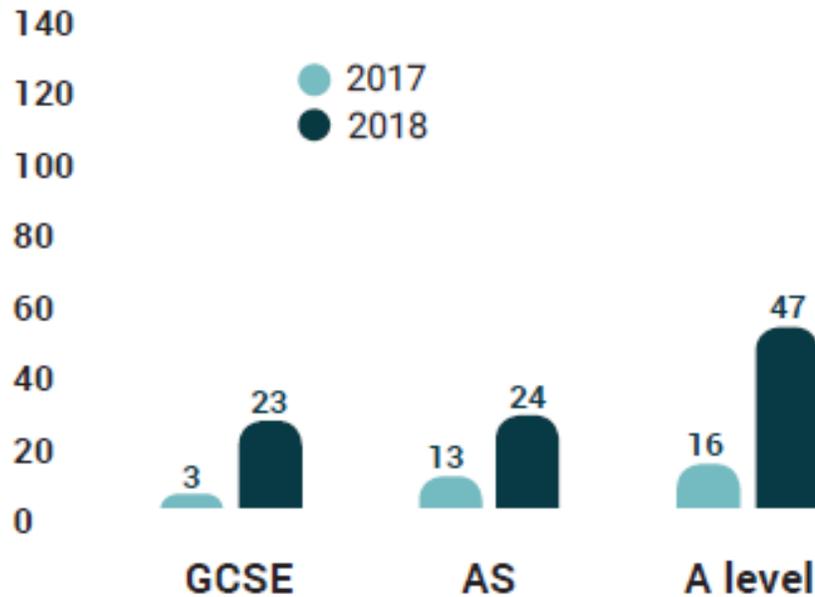
Phase 2
Exam administration

Phase 3
Marking

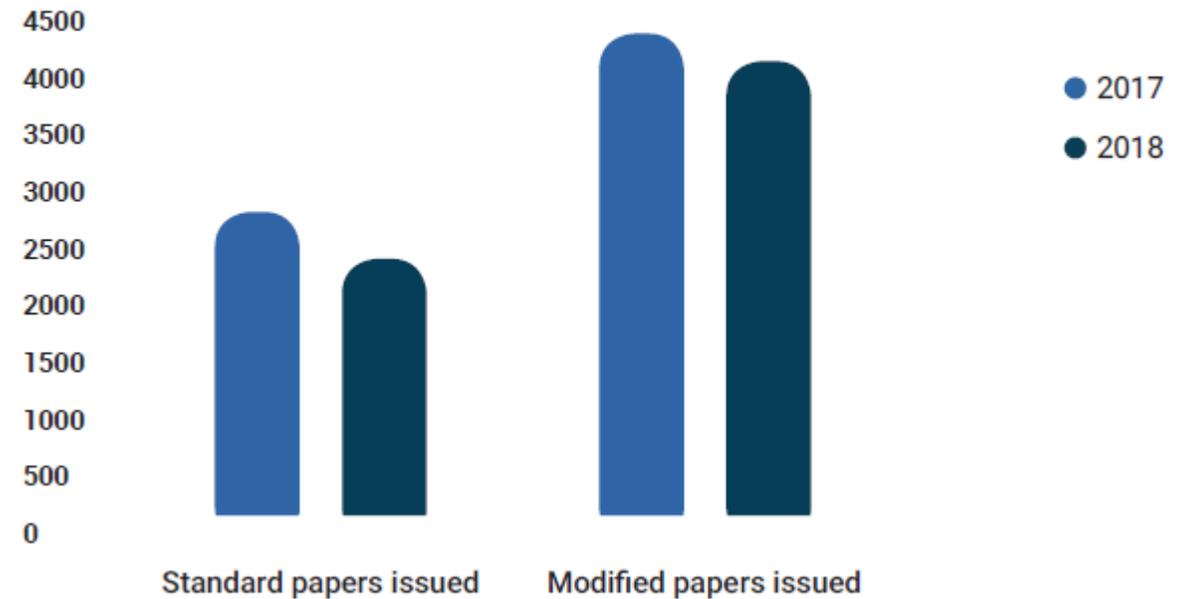
Phase 4
Setting standards

Phase 5
Post-results

Number of reformed subjects awarded for first time



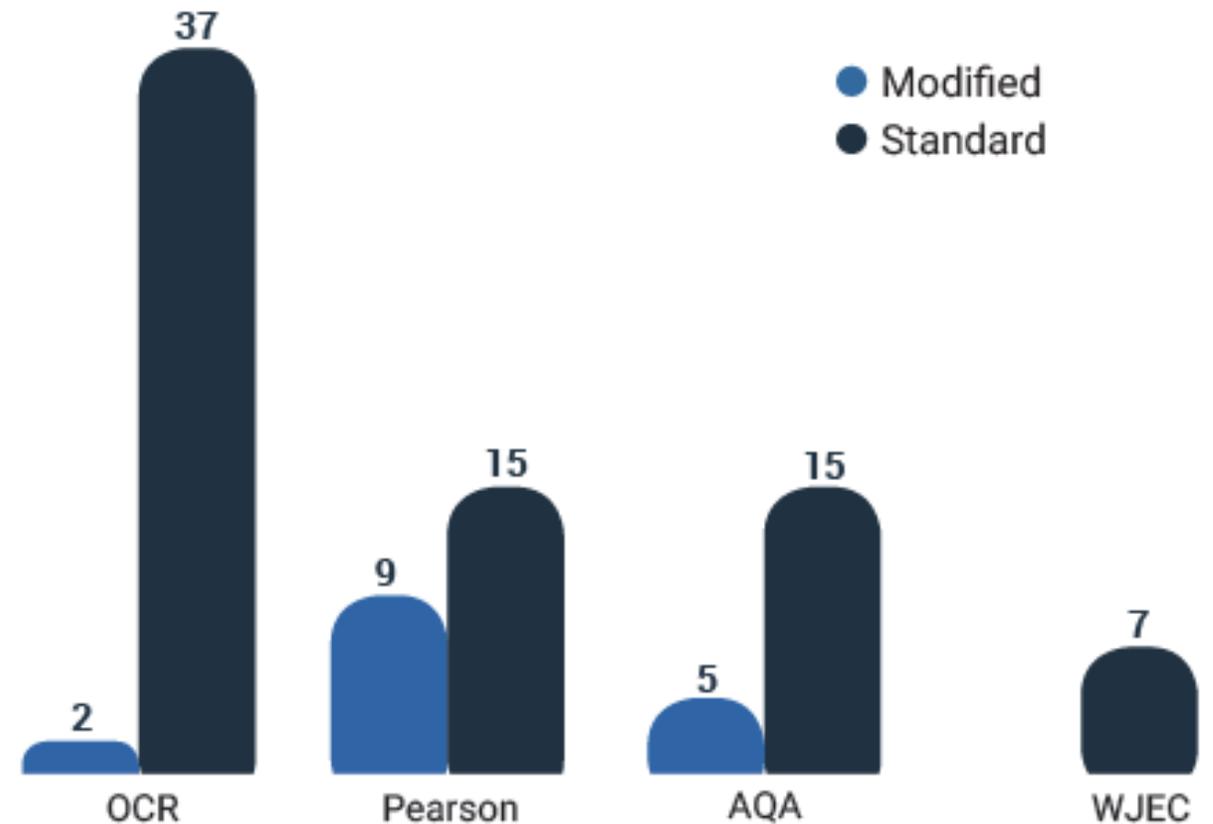
6,598 standard and discrete modified question papers



Phase 1 – Exam planning

- Entries
- Access arrangements
- Question paper errors
 - Standard papers
 - Modified papers

Question paper error by type and exam board

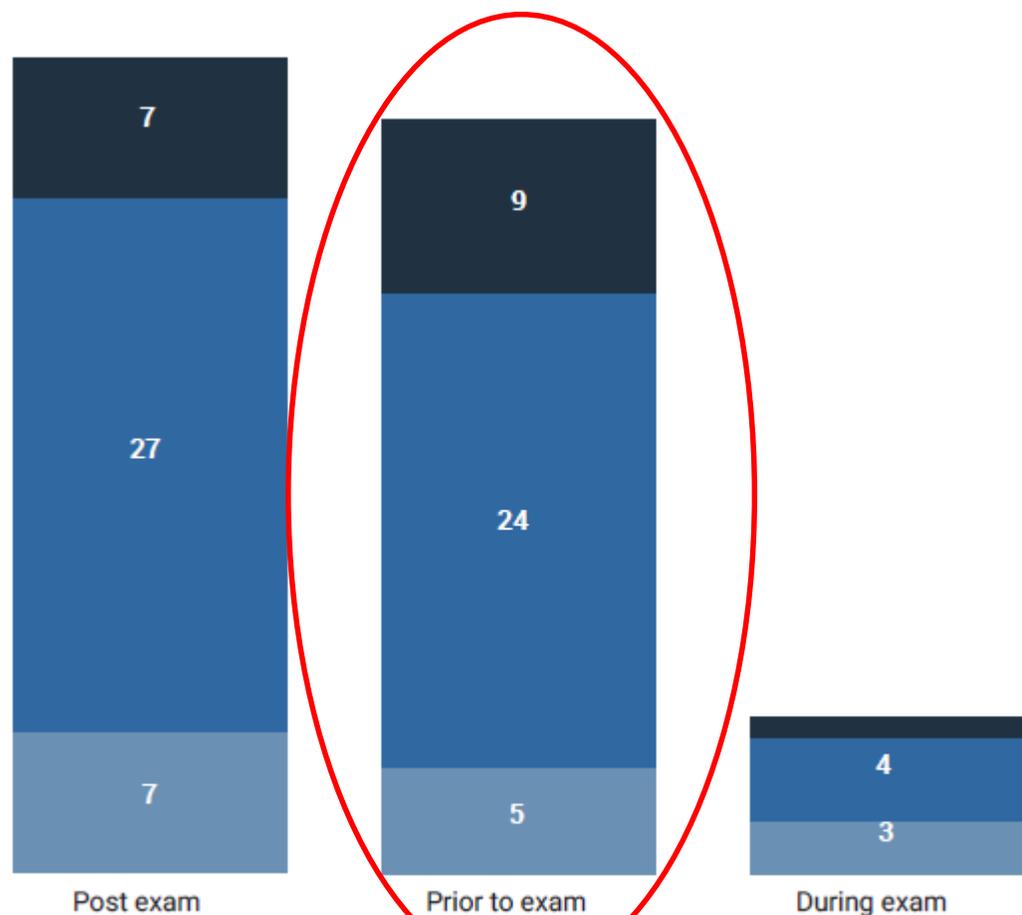


Summer 2018 headlines – AS

- Entries continue to decline for stand-alone AS
- Most now reformed
- Entries for many subjects too small to look at centre level variability
- Number of students taking an AS declined sharply in 2018

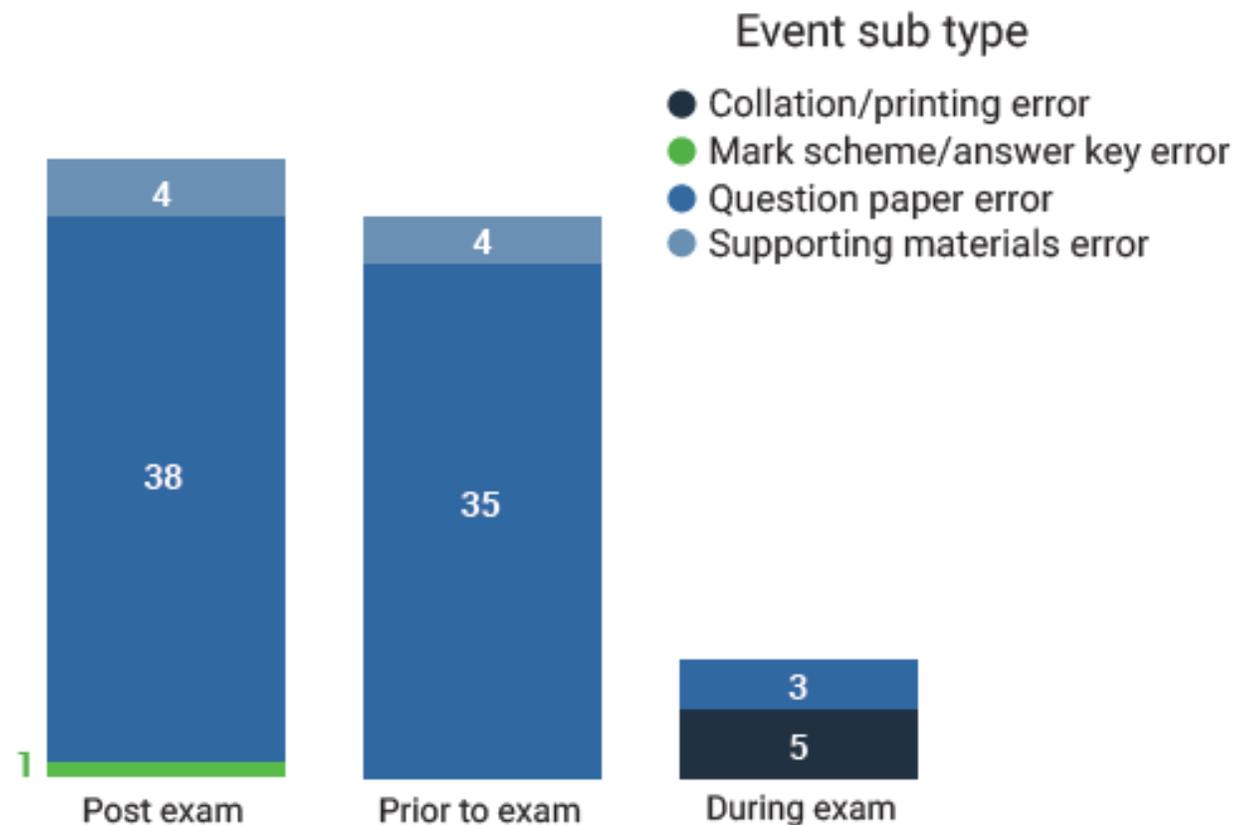
Number of students taking at least one AS qualification (17-year-olds in England)				
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Students	282,000	271,000	210,000	65,000

Question paper errors



Category ● 1 ● 2 ● 3

When question paper error was identified, by type



Event sub type

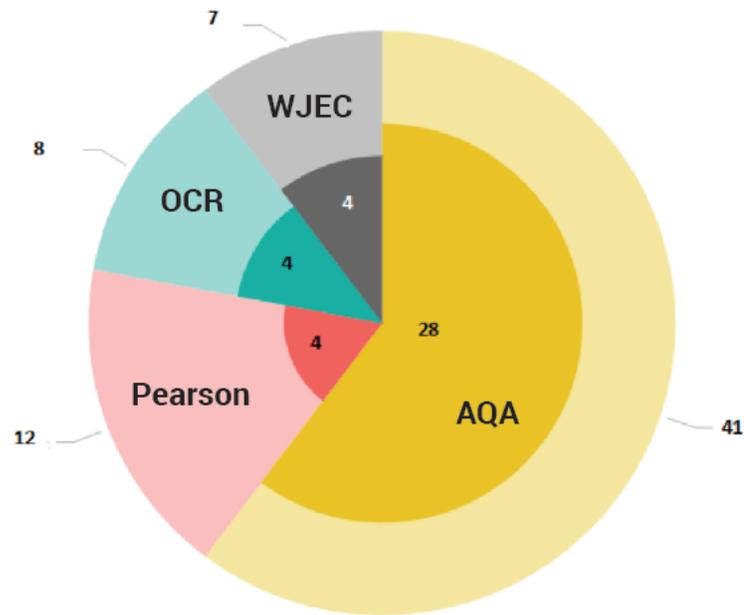
- Collation/printing error
- Mark scheme/answer key error
- Question paper error
- Supporting materials error

Phase 2 – Exam administration

■ Security breaches

□ Pearson maths

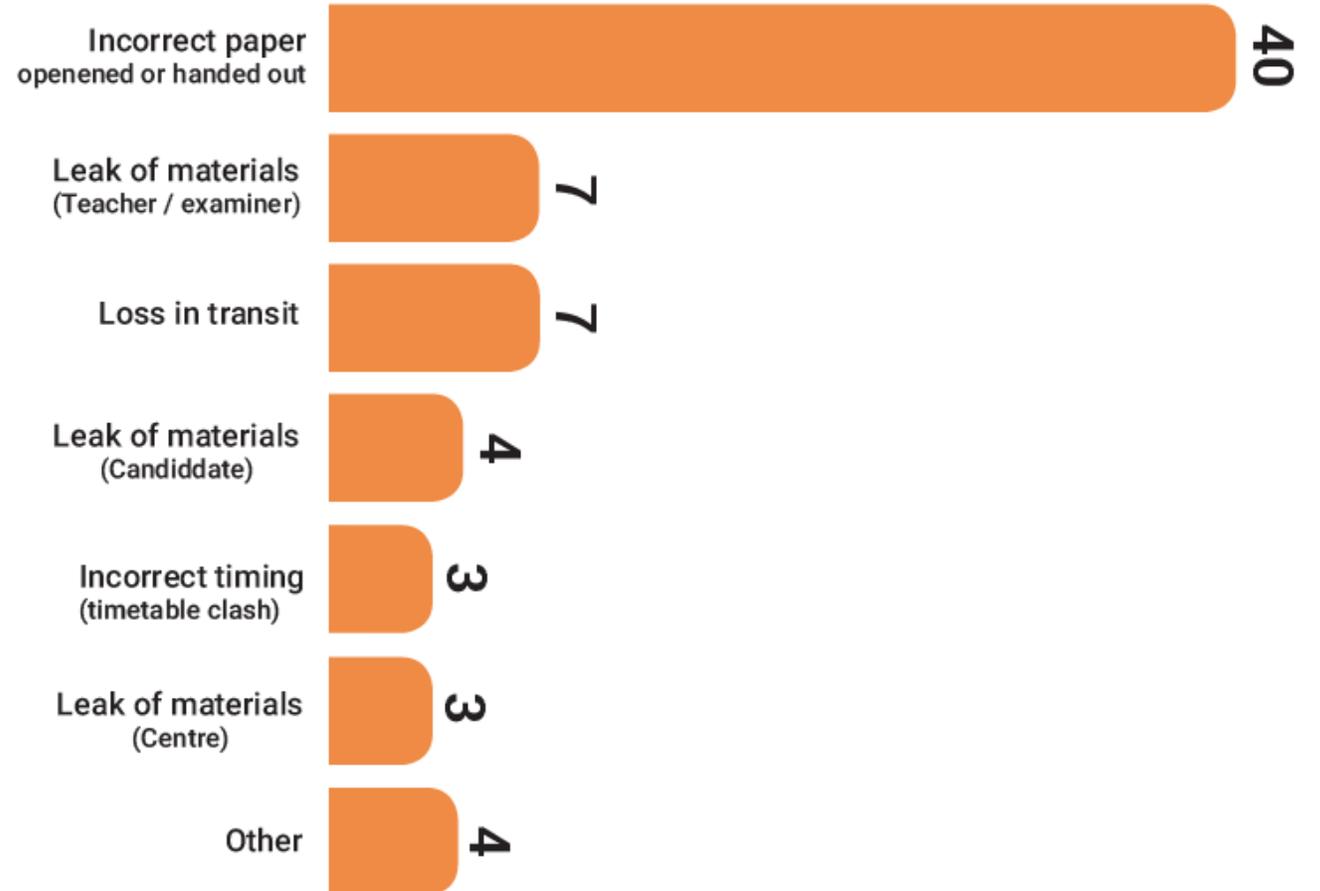
■ Malpractice



Other types of security breach



Incorrect question papers handed out



Malpractice campaign – exam officers



Let's have a successful exam series

If you're not sure about exam procedures, ask...



Summer 2018 Examinations checklist

- No phones in exam hall
- At least 2 present when opening exam papers
- Right paper for right exam
- Supervision for students with timetable clashes
- Preparations for supervision for fire alarm/emergency



Office of Qualifications
and Examinations Regulation
Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344

publicenquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

April 2018

Dear Head teacher,

Let's have a successful exam series

As we move closer to the 2018 exams, I wanted to share with you some feedback from previous exam years to help make sure this summer series is a success for you, your colleagues and your students.

Most exams go to plan, and most schools will have an event-free exam series. We want this to be the case for you this summer. But sometimes things go wrong, which cause avoidable distress and lead to penalties for students and even teachers. I'd like to draw a few of these to your attention:

MOBILE PHONES

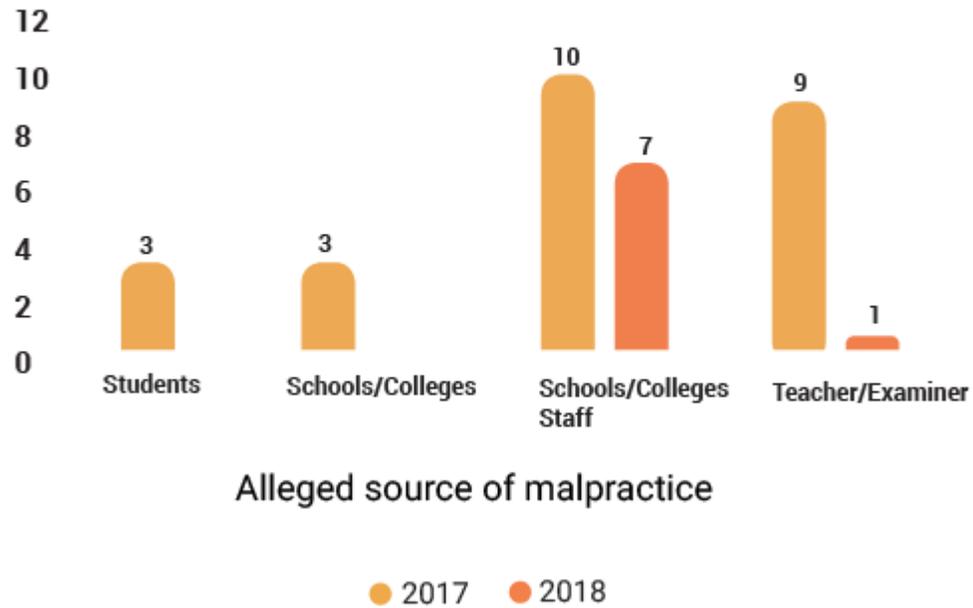
- It is clearly important that candidates do not have access to mobile phones during exams, and we are grateful to centres for implementing the rules on this. We have seen an increase in the number of students being issued with a penalty for breaching the rules, albeit that they might not have intended to use their phone during the exam. We have asked students why this is happening and some have told us they are unwilling to hand in their phones in case they are lost or damaged. We are encouraging centres to reflect on how they can best assure their students their phones will be safe and that students understand the risk of being found with a phone during an exam.

EXAM PACKAGE SECURITY

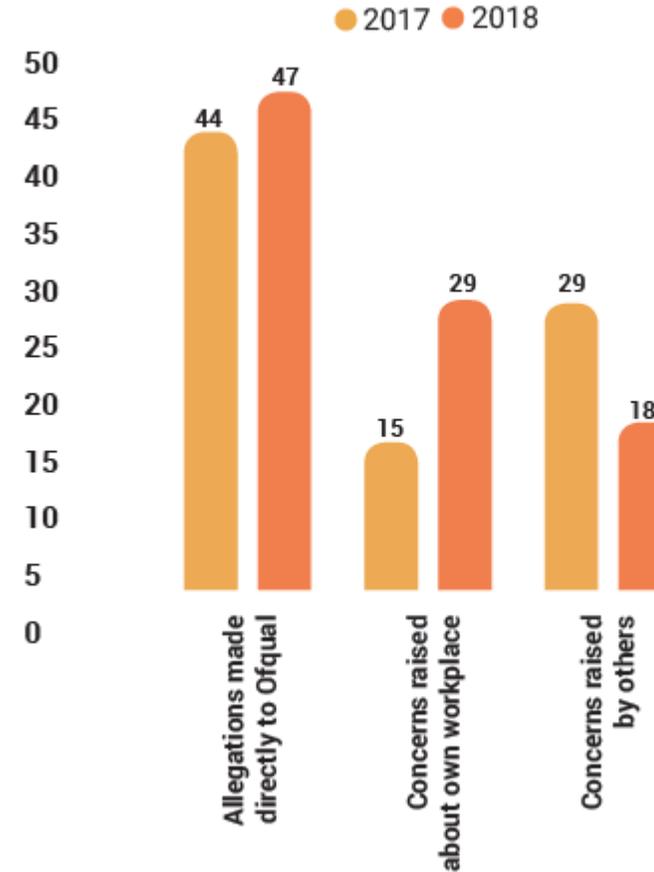
- Each year some mistakes are made when storing or opening exam packages. This can cause disruption. May I remind you that packages from exam boards must be stored securely and at least two members of staff must be present to check the right packages are opened before papers are handed to students.

Malpractice

Malpractice notifications



Allegations received



Looking forward

ofqual

Centre practices to help keep mobile phones out of the exam room

The following are responses to the question of what centres do to keep mobile phones out of the exam hall, put to Exams Officers during a webinar in November 2018.

These responses were given following a discussion about candidates in light of research that students don't necessarily intend to come taking their mobile phones into the exam hall. They may simply say their phones will remain safe when not in their possession.

These responses are not endorsed by Ofqual, but are simply provided in response to requests from webinar attendees to understand more about what is going on at this point.

Leave outside room

"We just use coin operated lockers outside the exam rooms so that they are secure."

"Empty pocket policy in all exams."

"We get students to leave their phones in their bags in the corridor, which is permanently staffed during the exam to prevent anything going wrong. Students are happy that they don't have to give their phone in to the invigilator."

"We ask students to leave them in their bags, switched off, at the start of the exam."

"As a 6th form we have hardly any issue with mobile phones in exams because they have been through school and already understand the rules. We run two full mock exam sessions in Feb & March, and full exam sessions, including no mobiles. We've had no issues with mobile phones in exams."

ofqual When things go right: A wider perspective of the e... Watch later Share

When things go right: A wider perspective of the exams system

YouTube

00:00:00 100% Mute

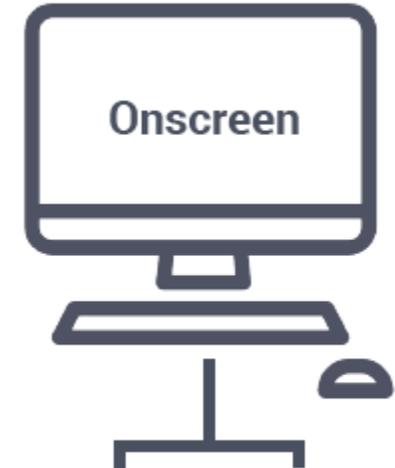
ofqual

Phase 3 - marking

- Quality of marking
 - Exam board improvements
 - OCR undertaking
- Marking delays
- Adjustments to marks



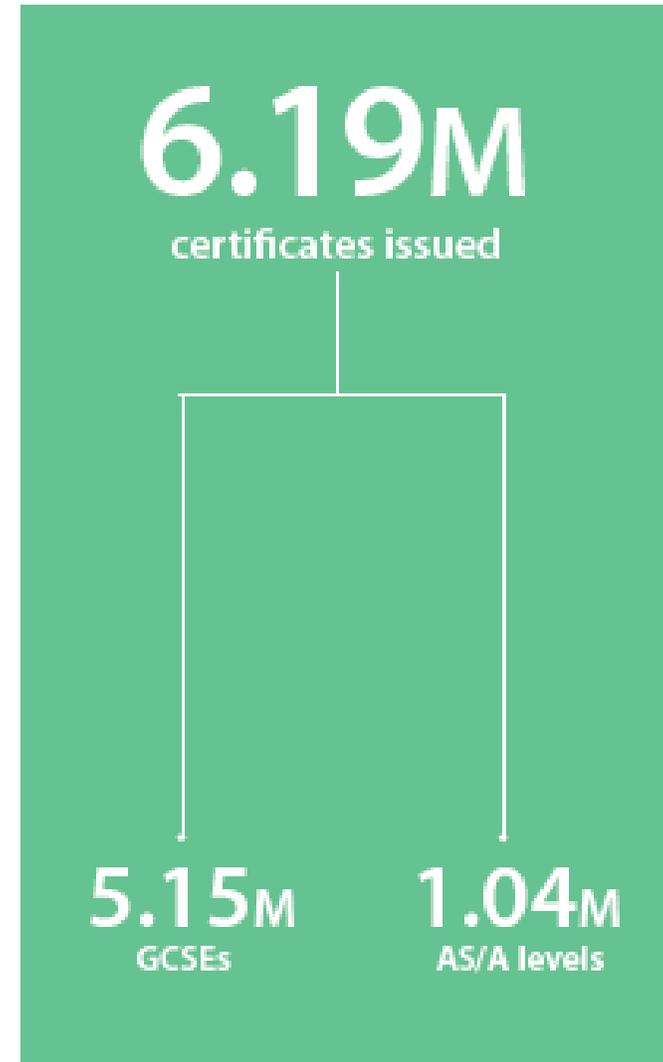
Paper
level



Item
level Paper
level

Phase 4 – setting standards

- Maintenance of standards
- GCSE Combined science



Summer 2018 headlines – GCSE

- 23 reformed GCSEs awarded (20 new + 3 from 2017)
- Overall results were stable
- Grade boundaries in English language, English literature and maths went up slightly on average (to be expected)
- Some changes in post-16 results in English language and maths

Post-16 outcomes in English language and maths					
Subject	Age	7/A 2017	7/A 2018	4/C 2017	4/C 2018
English language	17	1.1%	1.2%	29.1%	32.0%
	18	0.3%	0.5%	24.6%	27.7%
	19+	2.7%	2.7%	39.4%	39.8%
Maths	17	1.5%	1.5%	24.6%	22.3%
	18	0.4%	0.3%	16.5%	14.3%
	19+	2.4%	1.8%	33.9%	29.7%

Summer 2018 headlines – A level

- 25 reformed A level subjects awarded in 2018
- A level results stable
- Variability at centre level in line with previous years
- Number of A levels taken by 18-year-old students unchanged over recent years

Average number of A level qualifications per student (18-year-olds in England)				
	2015	2016	2017	2018
A levels	2.71	2.68	2.67	2.68

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guide-to-as-and-a-level-results-for-england-2018>

Phase 5 – post results

■ Incorrect results

□ Processing errors

□ Reviews of marking & moderation

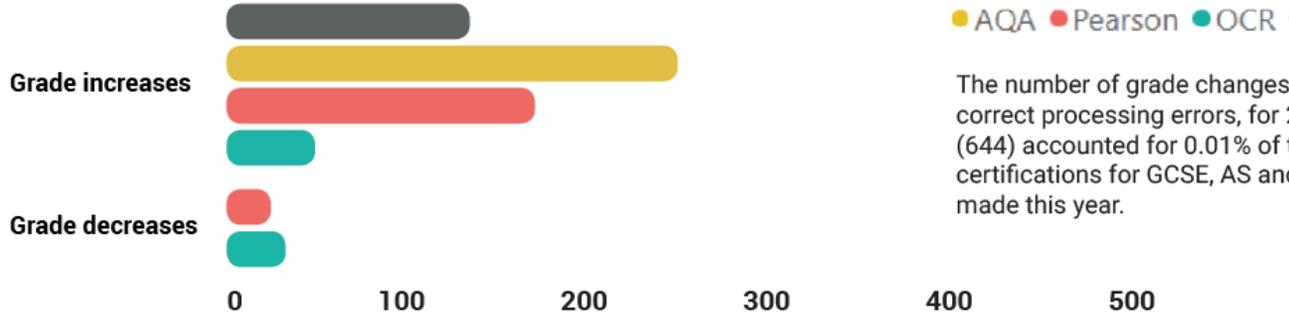
■ AQA undertaking 2017

■ OCR undertaking 2018

2017



2018



Grade changes

● AQA ● Pearson ● OCR ● WJEC

The number of grade changes, to correct processing errors, for 2018 (644) accounted for 0.01% of the total certifications for GCSE, AS and A levels made this year.

Incorrect results: cause of processing errors*



*cause of 3 instances of incorrect results issued to be determined

Conclusion & next steps

- Successful summer – small number of issues, minimal impact

We plan to carry out reviews of:

- the summer 2018 assessment materials for reformed GCSE and A level qualifications
- optionality and predictability in reformed qualifications
- how exam boards are using their assessment strategies in the ongoing delivery of their qualifications
- the extent to which exam boards have fully embedded improvements in their quality of marking and reviews of marking
- those subjects where there is a particular pattern of grade changes following requests for a review or marking or moderation
- exam boards' investigation and management of malpractice allegations
- the extent to which exam boards have made improvements to their safeguards around teacher involvement in the development of confidential assessment materials.

Asked exam boards to consider:

- the use and content of erratum notices
- ensuring 2 people are present when opening papers
- instructions they might issue to ensure any potential security breach is effectively contained
- how they might better coordinate their packaging and dispatch dates

Summer 2018 headlines – GCSE combined science

- Exceptional arrangement made for summer 2018 awarding
- Exam boards making contact with schools with higher tier students who received 3-3s in 2018
- Consider tier entry carefully ahead of 2019
- Explained here: <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2018/08/20/gcse-results-day-what-to-expect/>
- GCSE tiering decisions for summer 2019: <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/15/gcse-tiering-decisions-for-summer-2019/>

Higher tier combined science grades

Our rules	Summer 2018
Grade 9-9	Grade 9-9
...	...
Grade 4-4	Grade 4-4
Grade 4-3	Grade 4-3
Ungraded	Grade 3-3
	Ungraded

**Summer 2019 –
Our approach to monitoring summer
delivery and maintaining standards**

Looking ahead to summer 2019 - Our approach to regulating summer delivery

Before Summer

- Ensure AOs are managing risks to safe delivery

During Summer

- Ensuring the AOs manage events to the point where it is safe - prevent / minimise harm

After summer

- Taking actions (regulatory or otherwise) to address non-compliance - look at underlying causes

Approach to monitoring summer delivery

- Maintaining overall approach used in previous years
- Focus on specific risks
 - Issues in 2018
 - Assessment material errors
 - Security of question papers
 - Issue of erratums
 - Malpractice
 - Cyber security
 - Exit from EU

What are we doing (1) - preparation

- Readiness reviews and pre-summer meetings with GQ boards and VTQ AOs
- Background briefings for media to improve understanding and manage expectations
- Actively communicate reforms and expectations to stakeholders (blogs, letters, films, social media promotion)
- Publication of early entry statistics to highlight any changes that might affect headline results (May 2019)
- Engagement with JCQ on contingency planning for major events
- Social media monitoring

What are we doing (2) - mitigation

- Monitor exam boards' management of issues
- Communicate with exam boards throughout the summer
- Observe a number of awards and standardisation meetings in new qualifications (GQ and VTQ)
- Reactive communications
- Take appropriate regulatory action where exam boards/AOs are not managing issues effectively
- Analyse events to take further action if necessary and/or to inform our ongoing monitoring plan

Before exams start (1)

- Blogs on key messages already published:
 - New A level maths in 2019 <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2019/02/08/new-a-level-maths-in-2019/>
 - GCSE and A level reform is nearly complete <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2019/02/01/gcse-and-a-level-reform-is-nearly-complete/>
 - GCSE and A level exam contingency day 2019 <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/25/be-prepared-gcse-and-a-level-exam-contingency-day-2019/>
 - GCSE tiering decisions for summer 2019 <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/15/gcse-tiering-decisions-for-summer-2019/>
 - Mobile phones in exams: behind the malpractice stats <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/11/behind-the-malpractice-stats-mobile-phones-in-exams/>

Before exams start (2)

- More communications planned, including:
 - Blogs – further detail on this later
 - Provisional entry statistics in May
 - Open letter to schools
 - Our approach to monitoring the summer exams
 - Technical rules for exam boards to follow during awarding

During exams

- We will be generally silent
- But dealing with issues if they arise to minimise the impact on students
 - Assessment errors
 - Potential security breaches
 - Social media comments

- Questions?

Awarding: AS and A levels

- Most students will take all reformed AS and A levels this summer (except those taking smaller entry language A levels that are first awarded in 2020)
- The standards of AS and A levels are not being changed; if the cohort for a subject hasn't changed, we expect national results to be similar
- Exam boards will use predictions (based on GCSE prior attainment) to guide their awards
- Key grade boundaries (A*, A and E) will be set using predictions, but senior examiners will review student work
- Greater role for examiner judgement in the third year onwards
- The effect of decoupling on AS entries – likely further decreases?

Awarding: GCSEs

- Most students will take all reformed 9 to 1 GCSEs this summer (except those taking smaller entry languages that are first awarded in 2020)
- New 9-1 GCSEs
 - Aim is to align standards between boards (and between tiers)
 - Exam boards will use predictions (based on key stage 2 prior attainment) to guide their awards
 - Greater role for examiner judgement in the third year onwards
- Tiered 9 to 1 GCSEs
 - Arrangements in summer 2018 for combined science, separate sciences, French, German and Spanish were exceptional
 - Communications (blog and letters) about our approach in summer 2019

National Reference Test (NRT)

- Third sitting of the NRT in English language and mathematics (following the preliminary reference test in 2016)
- NRT being taken in around 350 schools between 25th February and 8th March
- Test will provide information on changes in performance over time and will provide an additional source of evidence for awarding GCSE English language and mathematics
- We will review the information from the test with exam boards ahead of awarding this summer
- Summer 2019 is the earliest we will consider making an adjustment
- If an adjustment is made the details will be published in August
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-reference-test-information>

Evaluation of GCSE, AS & A level reform

Evaluation Workshops, Autumn 2019

Outline of events

- 237 teachers attended feedback events in October and November 2018.
- 21 HEI / Subject Association delegates attended events in December 2018 and January 2019 and feedback was provided about Geography, RS and MFL.

Context of comments

- Comments on these slides reflect the views of a small sample of the teaching population.
- Some of the comments and feedback relate specifically to the work of exam boards – they may be applicable to one or more exam board.
- Some feedback is to do with subject content (remit of DfE) and Ofqual Conditions.

Comments – Subject Content

Teachers told us that:

- In many cases, the volume of subject content at GCSE is having an impact on their ability to deliver a two year GCSE course.
- They had far fewer comments about subject content at A level, although RS and geography have seen an increase that is difficult to get through.

Comments – Assessment Objectives

Teachers told us that:

- AOs are used in different ways depending on the level and subject.
- They know about AOs and, for many subjects, use them routinely in their teaching.
- Some parts of the reformed qualifications are more of a struggle due to the requirements of a specific AO.

Comments – 2018 Question Papers

Teachers had many comments about question papers, providing examples to support their feedback. Themes included:

- In A level geography, time in the exams was an issue for students.
- Live papers being similar to the specimen assessment materials.
- Better differentiation in question papers.
- The narrow focus of questions e.g. in GCSE history and A level RS.
- The amount that students have to do in the allowed time.
- In GCSE Science, there was a good balance of the new content, practical questions, hierarchical marking (6 markers) in the question papers.
- In GCSE MFL, the new assessment arrangements for speaking are resulting in better linguists, although they do cause anxiety for some students. Students struggled with the listening assessments.

Comments – Level of demand

Teachers told us that:

- For GCSE chemistry, even if students were not able to answer all of the questions, there were generally parts to each question that they could do.
- GCSE combined science is too hard for the majority of the cohort, particularly foundation tier due to the required literacy level (technical language) in the exams.
- Technical language requirements (content) raised the level of demand in GCSE geography.
- GCSE PE is now only suitable for high ability students – scientific content, extended writing.
- Increased subject content in A level RS, linked to no short cuts through content, has had a huge impact on the level of demand.

Comments – Marking

Teachers told us that:

- Online standardisation did not provide the confidence needed to mark and in many subjects, the training was not sufficient.
- Mark schemes were rigid, requiring very specific answers and terminology.

Comments – Tiering in GCSE Science & MFL

Teachers told us that:

- In French, some would like mixed tiering between the different elements.
- There is a lack of understanding about grade 5 and that it is equivalent to part of the legacy grade B.
- There can be a disparity between a student's aspirational target grade and their realistic ability and tier entry decisions are particularly difficult if a student has a target grade of 6.

Comments – NEA

Teachers told us that:

- In all subjects, they would like more helpful feedback on their marking of NEA.
- They like the NEA in GCSE food preparation and nutrition, believing that the practical element engages students.
- Not having NEA in GCSE history results in more time to get on with the history.

Comments – Practical Skills in GCSE Science

Teachers told us that:

- The assessment of practical skills is much better than controlled assessment.
- 15% of marks to this assessment across the three AOs is reasonable and different practicals lend themselves to different skills.
- Excessive content prevents them delivering practical work as they would like.

Comments – Mathematical Skills

Teachers told us that:

- The mathematical skills in the GCSE sciences link to the skills needed at A level.
- The mathematical skills were “bolted on” and not necessarily driven by the subject e.g. in GCSE science and GCSE geography.
- Students are put off GCSE geography because of the mathematical skills needed which go beyond those in GCSE mathematics.

Comments – Fieldwork in Geography

Teachers told us that:

- At GCSE, students are doing more and better fieldwork now.
- They need more guidance about the fieldwork requirements.
- They are not sure that fieldwork is necessary to answer the questions based on it.
- At A level, students are enthusiastic about doing their own research project.

Comments – Resources

Teachers told us that:

- In some subjects, exemplar materials have been scarce or unhelpful.
- Some exam boards are more helpful than others e.g. web based, on the telephone.
- They have to pay for CPD to access important information from exam boards which is then not made available to other teachers who cannot attend.

Comments – Progression

Teachers told us that:

- In most subjects, the reformed GCSE is better preparation for A level.
- Low grade boundaries meant students had an unreasonable expectation of their abilities. This has had a knock-on effect on how they are coping with A level.
- There is a big jump between GCSE and A level German and geography.
- Lack of time in GCSE history to develop skills does not help prepare students for further study at A level.

Comments – Equalities

Themes included:

- Increase in demand.
- Language as a barrier.
- The requirements for the application of knowledge for students with ASD
- Concern for the mental health and welfare of students.

Other Comments

Teachers told us that:

- In GCSE MFL, linear assessments are better for language development.
- AS is not used by many schools.
- The exam timetable causes problems in some subjects e.g. when there is a big gap between exams, when an option subject is timetabled on the same day, after a core subject.
- GCSE courses are routinely being delivered over more than 2 years.

Reviewing our regulations

- The evaluation will also feed into our ongoing review of our regulatory requirements for GCSE, AS and A level, particularly the rules in place for each subject.
- Of course, at the time we set our regulations, we reflected very carefully on the impact we expected them to have. But we could not know exactly how well they would work in practice.
- Generally our requirements seem to be working well. We have though already seen a small number of issues which have meant our requirements have needed to be changed, notably in GCSE computer science and in GCSE, AS and A level dance and music. We have also made other limited changes in some other subjects to address small inconsistencies and inaccuracies.
- We have addressed these issues as they have arisen, but will now complete a review of our regulations systematically based on the evidence from at least two years of delivery and award. We plan to do this over the next two years.

Reviewing our regulations

- Our aim in doing this is to make sure our rules are fit for purpose. We do not plan to *require* change to qualifications, unless we encounter specific significant issues.
- This work is part of our activity to review and evaluate the reforms. It is not designed to begin a new process of ‘reform’ of these qualifications or to seek to unpick issues considered at the time of reform – unless in this case there is evidence of particular issues that need to be addressed.
- As we have evidence from our evaluative work, and you have all been involved in that, we do not plan to ask specific input to this work from you or other stakeholders. We will use the wide range of information we have gathered through the evaluation. But of course if you have concerns about any aspect of our rules you should feel able to raise them at any time.

Reviewing our regulations

- We will not review subject content, which is set by DfE. In the event that issues with subject content are felt to be causing significant issues, we might decide to raise this with DfE, but we will not routinely seek to review the content.
- If we decide to make any changes to our regulations we would consult publicly, and as part of this process carefully consider the timing of any changes.

Ofqual update

■ Recent publications:

- Revisions to performance rules for music and dance GCSE, AS & A levels
- Confirmation of the long-term future of computer science assessment arrangements
- Arrangements for awarding higher tier GCSEs in combined science and modern foreign languages (MFL)
- Consultation on proposed changes to the way awarding organisations manage and oversee centre assessments.

Ofqual update

- Current consultations: Reform of the Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS)
- Consultation now open, closes on 8 March 2019
- Summary of proposals:
 - The service covers GCSE, A level, AS, and Project qualifications.
 - At present, the panel which considers EPRS applications comprises one Ofqual member and two external members. Experience has shown that the service can be provided more efficiently using only Ofqual staff.
 - We propose to retain the EPRS and the practice of allowing applicants to have face to face discussions with Ofqual. We propose to change the process by:
 - removing the routine use of ‘formal’ hearings in EPRS cases from summer 2019
 - removing the requirement for the EPRS panel to include external members from summer 2019
 - extending the EPRS to cover Technical Qualifications as they become available.

Ofqual update - Forthcoming publications:

- Exams Officer communication products: mid March
 - EO video (on the importance of the EO role and support they need to be effective)
 - Student video for EOs to use
 - Posters plus student check list.
- Weekly Blogs on various topics including: National Reference Test, Exam anxiety, marking, National Assessments
- Modular/Linear research (end of Apr)
- Review of Marking and Moderation consultation: decisions due to be published April
- Any questions?

Understanding examination and test anxiety

Recent media coverage

Exam stress creating 'troubled generation', says ex-civil service chief

Gus O'Donnell warns Britain is 'sleepwalking into a deepening crisis' of mental health

'No evidence more testing drives pupil anxiety,' says Pisa boss

Andreas Schleicher says anxiety more linked to 'how we use' tests and 'the extent to which students feel supported'

Exam stress is parents' biggest worry for 2019

School stress tops Brexit as parents' biggest concern for their children in the year ahead

Stress and serious anxiety: how the new GCSE is affecting mental health

Understanding examination and test anxiety

- Like in previous years, we may expect to see, reports and stories about students experiencing test anxiety.
- Nobody likes to hear of students being anxious and, like others, we want to play our part in helping young people through the exam period which some will, inevitably, find worrying.
- In March, we will be launching a short series of blogs for teachers and guidance for students. The information provides practical advice for:
 - teachers, on how they can support their students to manage test anxiety in the lead up to, and during, the exam period; and
 - students, on managing any anxiety they feel and on supporting their friends.
- The blogs have been written by researchers and practitioners who work together through the University of Manchester's Institute of Education.

Ofqual's role and what we are doing

- These evidence-based materials are a response to on-going discussions about exam stress and concerns about the mental well-being of young people more generally.
- We hope they will support teachers in responding constructively to concerns about exam anxiety and help their students to engage positively with their revision and with the exams themselves.
- Literature review: We are also in the process of writing a literature review in which we are pulling together what is currently known about emotional responses to assessments, known as test anxiety in the literature. We anticipate that this review will inform future research that we may wish to undertake on this issue.

JCQ update

Member requested topics

Terms of reference

- Last updated in January 2018
- We are interested in your views on any potential changes you would like to see to the format of ESEG as we move from GQ 'reform' to a more stable and consolidating period.
- We would welcome any comments/reflections for us to consider following this meeting
- Any comments now?

Any other Business

Thank you for attending

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 4 July, 13.15