

Ofqual



Statistical Bulletin

Access Arrangements for GCSE and GCE: 2010/11 Examination Series

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Contents

Key findings.....	2
Introduction.....	3
About access arrangements.....	4
Summer 2010/11 examination series.....	5
Access arrangements in 2010/11.....	6
Types of access arrangements.....	8
Modified question papers.....	10
Tables.....	13

Key findings

Awarding organisations must ensure that candidates with particular requirements can demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in assessments, for example by providing modified question papers for candidates with visual impairments.

For the 2010/11 examination series, a total of 271,700 requests were received for access arrangements, of which 93 per cent were approved by awarding organisations. This compares with 255,800 requests for access arrangements in the previous year – a 6 per cent increase – of which 94 per cent were approved (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

A new online system for making requests was introduced in September 2008 which may have affected the number of requests received in 2008/9, so care should be taken when comparing the figures for 2008/09 with those of other years.

Awarding organisations approved all 22,600 requests for modified question papers for the June 2011 examination series. The number of modified papers issued accounted for 0.15 per cent of the 15.1 million papers issued for GCE and GCSE examinations in June 2011 (see Table 5 and Figure 4).

Introduction

This statistical bulletin, published on behalf of the regulators for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, presents data on the access arrangements approved for GCSE and GCE examinations during the 2010/11 academic year. These qualifications are offered by six awarding organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (Northern Ireland) (CCEA)
- Edexcel
- International Curriculum & Assessment Agency (Examinations) ICAAE
- Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- WJEC.

Please note: figures within this commentary have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

Once published, data may be revised in subsequent bulletins due to late-received data or if an error is identified. In this bulletin some figures have therefore been revised since last year's report.

About access arrangements

The regulators in England (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation – Ofqual), Wales (Department for Education and Skills – DfES) and Northern Ireland (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment – CCEA) have worked together to produce the *General Conditions of Recognition* (2011). The conditions set out the requirements that all regulated awarding organisations have to meet.

Condition G6.2 states that ‘An awarding organisation must, in accordance with Equalities Law, have in place clear arrangements for making reasonable adjustments in relation to qualifications which it makes available’. In addition, the *GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice* (2011) promotes quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding of these qualifications.

Section 7 of the code of practice requires awarding organisations to make sure that candidates with particular requirements can demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding, for example by providing modified question papers for candidates with visual impairments. The code makes it clear that arrangements must be based on the needs of individual candidates, and must not give them an unfair advantage or undermine the integrity of a qualification in any way.

Candidates may have particular requirements for a number of reasons, including:

- a permanent (long-term) disability or medical condition
- a temporary (short-term) disability or medical condition
- an illness, other indisposition or unforeseen incident at time of the assessment
- where their first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.

Centres should consider the particular requirements of individual candidates and then follow the guidelines and arrangements of the awarding organisations. The evidence required to support an application will vary depending on the reasons for the particular requirement and the type(s) of arrangement being requested. The awarding organisations set out the evidence required in support of an application.

Summer 2010/11 examination series

Access arrangements can be applied to any candidates taking GCSE and GCE exams who meet the eligibility criteria. Individual candidates may require more than one access arrangement. Once granted, an arrangement will normally apply for a period of 26 months, although applications based on temporary conditions will last for one exam series only.

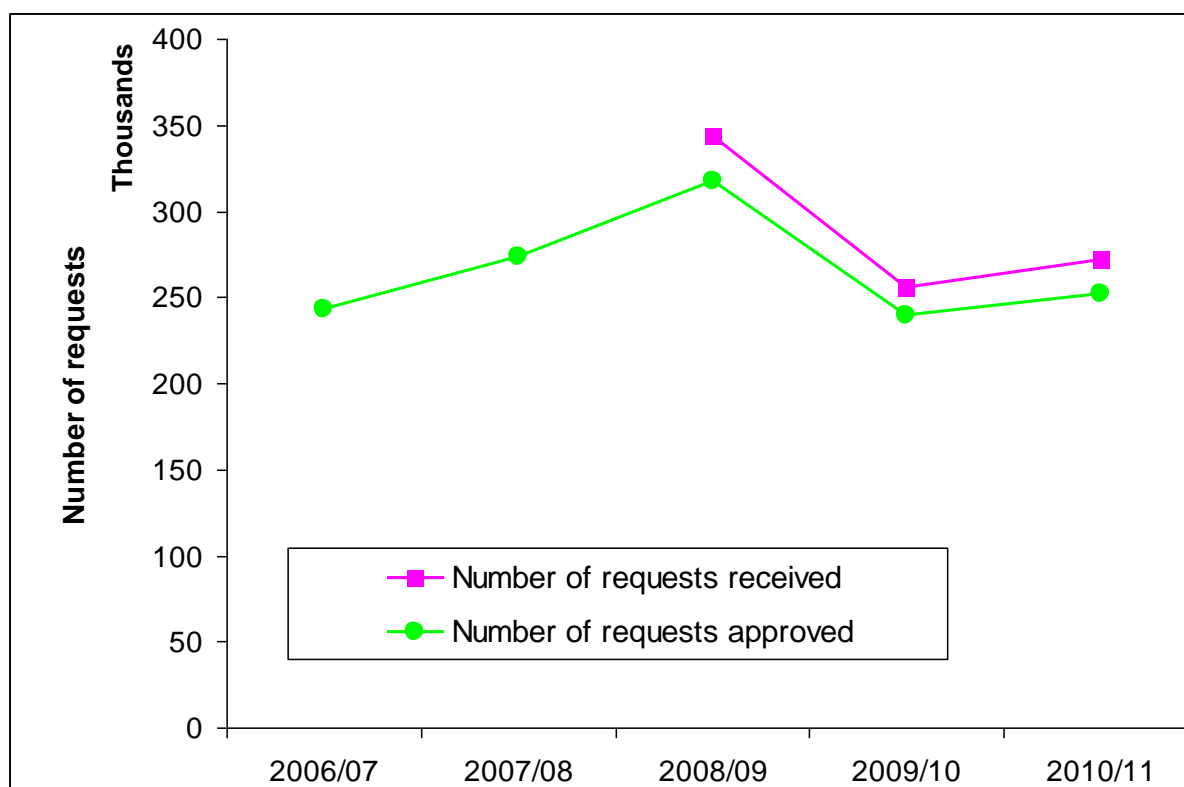
This report details the number of individual requests for access arrangements that were received and approved. Data on the number of individual candidates with agreed access arrangements is not available. Any candidates taking examinations within the first or second year of GCSE and GCE courses and who meet the eligibility criteria, may have access arrangements applied. During the 2010/11 academic year there were over one million candidates taking GCSE courses and approximately 500,000 on a GCE A level course.

Access arrangements in 2010/11

During the 2010/11 academic year, a total of 271,700 requests were received for access arrangements, of which 93 per cent were approved. This compares with 255,800 requests for access arrangements in the previous academic year, of which 94 per cent were approved (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

A new system for making requests was introduced in September 2008, which may have affected the number of requests received in 2008/9, so care should be taken when comparing the figures for 2008/9 with those of other years. In 2009 an arrangement for separate invigilation no longer had to be approved by awarding organisations and the right to approve was delegated to centres. In 2010 several further categories were delegated to centres. These categories have been removed from the data in this report for previous years to enable appropriate comparisons. The full list of categories removed from access arrangements online can be found on the following pages.

Figure 1: Number of requests for access arrangements received and approved during each academic year, 2006/07–2010/11 (NB a new system for making requests was introduced for 2008/09 so care should be taken when comparing figures over time. Prior to 2008/9 data on requests for access arrangements were not collected.)



Overall, 93 per cent of applications for access arrangements during the 2010/11 academic year were approved with a variation of approval rate across the different types of access arrangement (see Table 3).

The evidence required to support an application varies according to the arrangement being requested and the particular requirements of the candidate. Applications for particular categories of arrangement, such as practical assistants, are likely to be referred to the relevant awarding organisations as a centre would need to supply detailed information as to the precise role of the practical assistant during the assessment. The majority of requests are approved or rejected via the access arrangements online system, but during the 2010/11 academic year there were over 2,000 requests referred to awarding organisations for a decision.

Access arrangements online will reject applications if the information submitted does not meet the relevant criteria for that arrangement. Some arrangements are not allowed in combination and will be rejected. This may lead to subsequent amended applications with new or revised information/evidence for the same candidate which, if appropriate, will be approved. Both rejected applications and any subsequent approved applications for individual candidates are captured within the data in figure 1 above.

The introduction of the online system in 2008/09 may have led to centres submitting duplicate requests, which were already approved the previous year, in the belief that approval had to be sought again through the online system. The access arrangements available and which of these require approval from the awarding organisation (rather than from the centre) are regularly reviewed. Therefore the range of arrangements which centres have had to register with awarding organisations has varied over time and will to some extent account for variations in numbers over time. To improve comparisons over time, the arrangements listed are no longer represented in the data from previous years. The approval of arrangements is delegated to centres where awarding organisations judge they do not directly impact upon the assessment objectives being tested. The categories of access arrangements for which awarding organisation approval was no longer required in 2010/11 were:

- Amplification equipment
- Braille machines
- CCTV
- Colour naming

- Coloured overlays
- Low vision aid
- Prompter
- Read aloud
- Scanners
- Separate invigilation (ceased in 2009)
- Word processor.

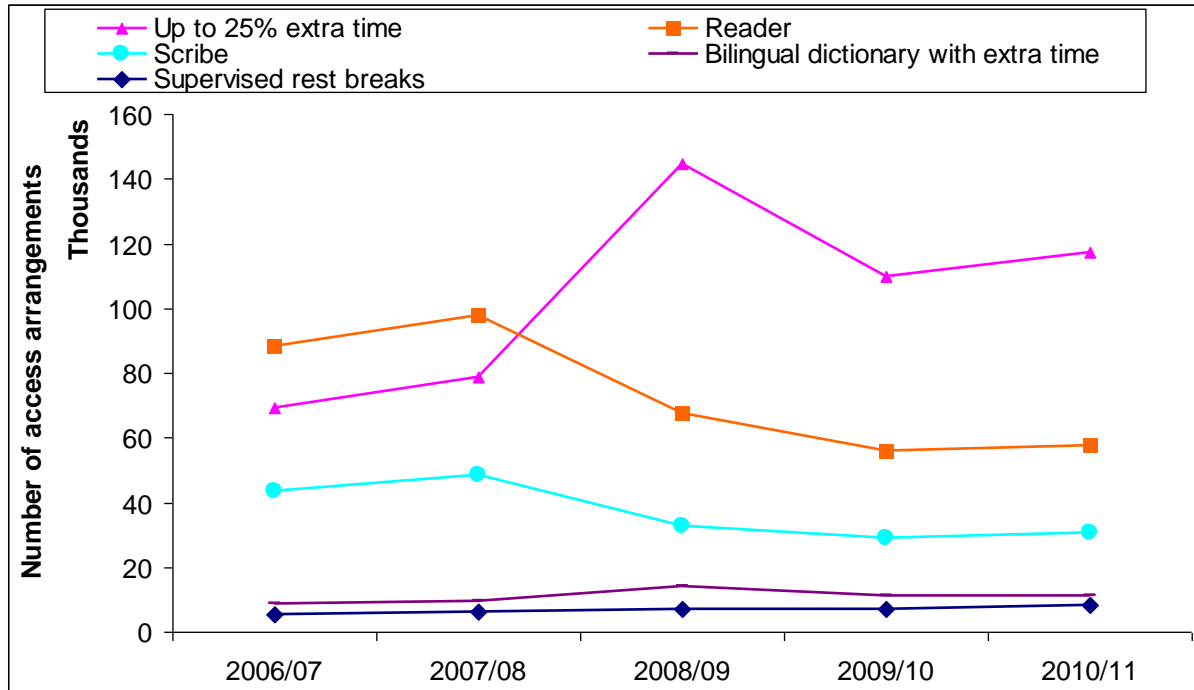
Types of access arrangements

The most frequently granted arrangement during the 2010/11 academic year was the allowance of up to 25 per cent extra time for candidates taking an examination, for which 117,200 requests were approved (constituting 46 per cent of all approved access arrangements). Compared with the previous year this is a 7 per cent increase in the number of approvals. Extra time can be given to candidates with a learning difficulty or other applicable medical, physical or psychological requirement. Up to 25 per cent extra time may be allowed, but for many candidates a smaller allowance, such as 10 per cent extra time, is appropriate.

The second most frequently granted arrangement was the use of readers for candidates with particular visual impairments or a learning difficulty that affects their reading, for which 57,700 requests were approved (23 per cent of all approved access arrangements). A reader is either a person who reads the questions to the candidate or computer software that reads out a scanned paper.

The third most common arrangement was the use of a scribe, for which 30,700 requests were approved (12 per cent of all approved access arrangements), for a candidate with learning difficulties, a medical condition, a physical disability, a severe visual impairment, or a temporary injury that affects a candidate's ability to write independently (see Tables 2 and 3, and Figure 2).

Figure 2: Approved access arrangements for the academic year for the five most common types of arrangement, 2006/07–2010/11



Modified question papers

Modified question papers are applied for in advance of a specific examination series and are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. Modified question papers allow those candidates who have a range of visual impairments and/or significant language comprehension disorders to demonstrate their attainment.

The types of modified papers that can be requested include:

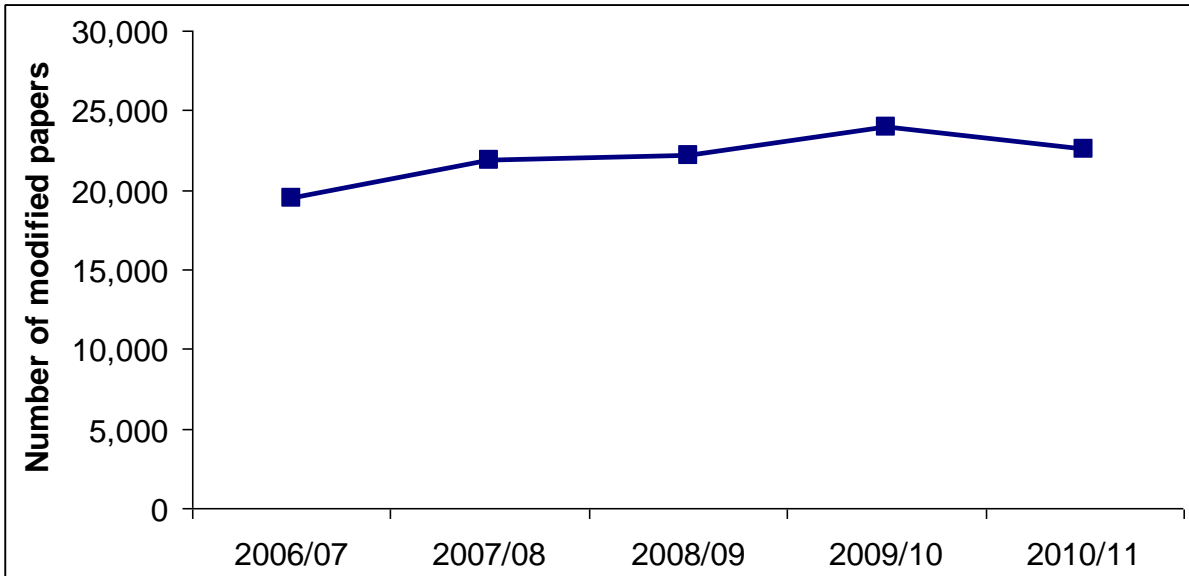
- A3 unmodified enlarged papers
- Modified enlarged papers (A4 18-point bold, A3 24-point bold)
- Braille papers
- modified language
- tactile diagrams.

Requests for modified papers are processed, and the papers produced, by the individual awarding organisations, with the exception of A3 unmodified enlarged papers. All awarding organisations have delegated the production of this type of modified paper to centres, apart from CCEA who will also cease to provide this from September 2011. Centres produce A3 unmodified enlarged papers by copying and enlarging the standard paper one hour before the starting time of the examination.

Awarding organisations approved all 22,600 requests for modified question papers for the June 2011 exam series. This was a slight decrease compared with the previous year when 24,000 modified question papers were requested and approved (see Table 5 and Figure 3).

WJEC's figures prior to 2010 were providing details of the number of papers that had requests for modification, rather than the number of individual papers provided to candidates. Figures for 2010 and 2011 are for the number of individual papers provided to candidates, in order to ensure consistent reporting across all awarding organisations. Care should therefore be taken when comparing the total figures for 2010 and 2011 with those of previous years.

Figure 3: Total number of modified papers produced for the summer examination series, 2007–2011



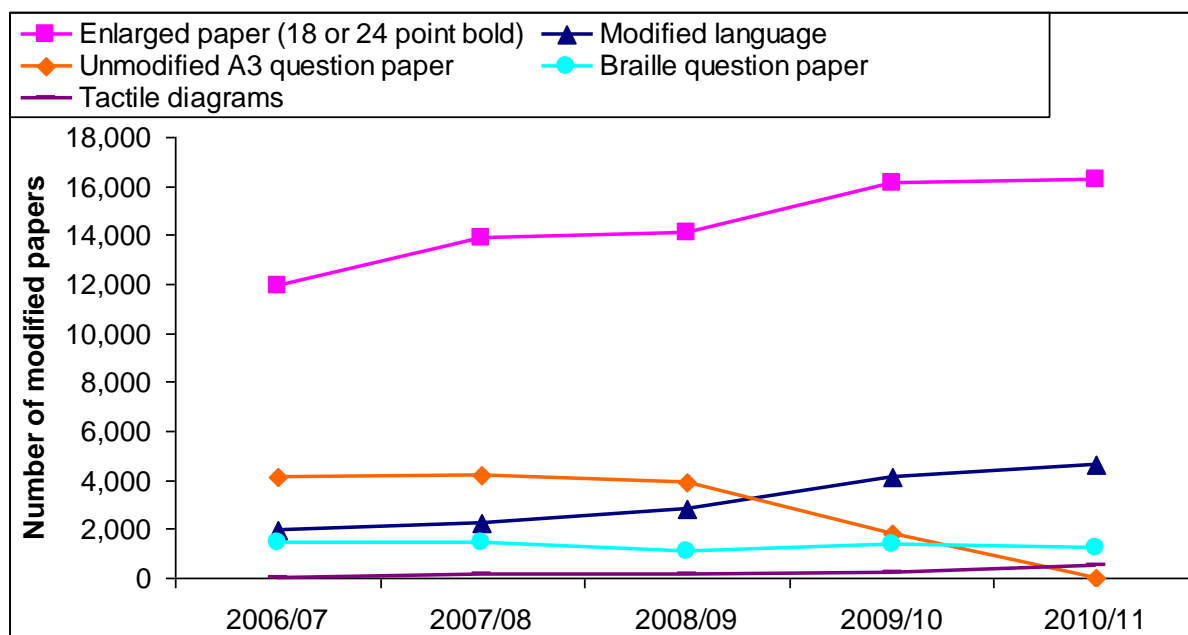
The number of modified papers issued accounted for 0.15 per cent of the 15.1 million papers issued for GCE and GCSE examinations in June 2011 (see Figure 4). This is consistent with the previous year when the proportion was 0.15 per cent.

Figure 4: Modified papers as a percentage of total scripts for the summer examination series, 2007–2011



The most common type of modified paper produced was an enlarged paper with 18- or 24-point bold print, in which 16,300 papers were produced (72 per cent of modified papers in June 2011). Over the last five years the number of enlarged papers produced has steadily increased. The second most common type was modified language, with 4,600 papers produced, representing 20 per cent of modified papers (see Table 5 and Figure 5).

Figure 5: Modified papers produced for the summer examination series, 2007–2011



Tables

Table 1: Requests received for access arrangements for the examination series, 2006/07–2010/11

England, Wales & Northern Ireland		
	Year	Requests for access arrangements
		Total
Number of requests for access arrangements	2006/07	-
	2007/08	-
	2008/09	343,384
	2009/10	255,759
	2010/11	271,702
Number of requests approved	2006/07	243,284
	2007/08	273,517
	2008/09	317,181
	2009/10	239,378
	2010/11	252,434
Percentage of requests approved ¹	2006/07	-
	2007/08	-
	2008/09	92.4%
	2009/10	93.6%
	2010/11	92.9%

Notes:

1. '-' indicates data not available. Prior to 2008/9 data on requests for access arrangements were not collected.
2. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.

Table 2: Access arrangements for the examinations series, 2009/10–2010/11

England, Wales & Northern Ireland				
	Year	Requests for access arrangements		
		Number of requests made	Number of requests approved	Approval rate
Alternative accommodation	2009/10	2,146	1,960	91%
	2010/11	2,096	1,916	91%
Bilingual dictionary	2009/10	6,074	5,885	97%
	2010/11	6,420	6,265	98%
Bilingual dictionary with extra time of up to 25%	2009/10	11,442	11,002	96%
	2010/11	11,532	11,038	96%
Computer reader	2009/10	98	92	94%
	2010/11	140	102	73%
Exam on coloured paper	2009/10	2,792	2,617	94%
	2010/11	3,457	3,233	94%
Extra time greater than 25%	2009/10	3,407	2,502	73%
	2010/11	3,658	2,324	64%
Live speaker	2009/10	492	415	84%
	2010/11	546	442	81%
Oral language modifier	2009/10	1,190	1,029	86%
	2010/11	1,301	1,109	85%
Practical assistant for practical paper	2009/10	717	470	66%
	2010/11	718	434	60%
Practical assistant for written paper	2009/10	809	613	76%
	2010/11	926	673	73%
Reader	2009/10	59,860	56,122	94%
	2010/11	61,584	57,736	94%
Scribe	2009/10	32,003	29,134	91%
	2010/11	33,930	30,673	90%
Sign language interpreter	2009/10	371	343	92%
	2010/11	375	333	89%
Supervised rest breaks	2009/10	7,683	6,952	90%
	2010/11	9,443	8,432	89%
Transcript	2009/10	4,278	3,974	93%
	2010/11	3,964	3,630	92%
Up to 25% extra time	2009/10	114,586	109,773	96%
	2010/11	122,214	117,169	96%
Up to 25% extra time with supervised rest breaks	2009/10	6,593	6,130	93%
	2010/11	6,989	6,421	92%
Other	2009/10	1,218	365	30%
	2010/11	2,409	504	21%

Source: Access arrangements online

Notes:

1. Data from ICAAE are supplied by the awarding organisation.
2. Data for the remaining organisations are supplied by centres and collated through *Access arrangements online* (AAO). This system was launched in September 2008, so comparable results are not available for previous years.

Table 3: Five types of access arrangement with the largest number of approved requests for the examinations series, 2006/07–2010/11

England, Wales & Northern Ireland

Year	Approved requests for access arrangements				
	Up to 25% extra time	Reader	Scribe	Bilingual dictionary with extra time	Supervised rest breaks
2006/07	69,226	88,083	43,648	8,859	5,385
2007/08	78,570	97,704	48,310	9,716	6,382
2008/09	144,721	67,466	32,735	14,255	7,028
2009/10	109,773	56,122	29,134	11,002	6,952
2010/11	117,169	57,736	30,673	11,038	8,432

Notes:

1. The processes for requests and approvals have changed over the period, with the introduction of online systems. This may have resulted in certain arrangements, in particular up to 25% extra time, being recorded more accurately. Care should be taken when comparing the figures over time.

Table 4: Modified question papers requested and approved for the summer examinations series, by awarding organisation, 2006/07–2010/11

England, Wales & Northern Ireland

	Year	Number of requests						Total
		AQA	Edexcel	ICAAE ³	OCR	WJEC	CCEA	
Number of requests approved	2006/07	8,737	4,198		6,139	-	427	19,501
	2007/08	9,248	3,936		8,011	-	691	21,886
	2008/09	9,924	4,447		7,126	-	619	22,116
	2009/10	8,604	4,941		7,209	2,564	640	23,958
	2010/11	7,491	5,031	42	6,598	2,727	700	22,589
Percentage of total scripts that were modified	2006/07	0.12%	0.10%		0.14%	-	0.08%	0.11%
	2007/08	0.13%	0.10%		0.19%	-	0.13%	0.13%
	2008/09	0.15%	0.12%		0.19%	-	0.13%	0.14%
	2009/10	0.13%	0.14%		0.20%	0.18%	0.12%	0.15%
	2010/11	0.12%	0.14%	0.21%	0.20%	0.17%	0.16%	0.15%

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
2. All requests for modified papers are routinely approved as this is not considered to confer an advantage on a candidate.
3. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.
4. '-' indicates data not available.

Table 5: Modified question papers produced for the summer examination series, by type of paper, 2006/07–2011

England, Wales & Northern Ireland

	Year	Number of modified papers produced					Total	
		AQA	Edexcel	ICAAE	OCR	WJEC		CCEA
Braille question paper	2006/07	680	235		552	-	4	1,471
	2007/08	647	219		529	-	22	1,417
	2008/09	636	174		289	-	0	1,099
	2009/10	635	264		373	92	1	1,365
	2010/11	538	235	0	318	149	1	1,241
Enlarged paper (18 or 24 point bold)	2006/07	5,489	2,490		3,674	-	287	11,940
	2007/08	6,304	2,677		4,510	-	366	13,857
	2008/09	7,072	2,942		3,747	-	370	14,131
	2009/10	7,509	3,357		3,500	1,407	354	16,127
	2010/11	6,846	3,726	14	3,489	1,814	361	16,250
Modified language	2006/07	600	454		800	-	97	1,951
	2007/08	454	93		1,455	-	228	2,230
	2008/09	301	236		2,119	-	152	2,808
	2009/10	378	373		2,523	643	195	4,112
	2010/11	44	828	28	2,639	740	319	4,598
Tactile diagrams ¹	2006/07	-	-		-	-	-	-
	2007/08	48	15		48	0	0	111
	2008/09	43	51		79	0	0	173
	2009/10	82	55		68	6	0	211
	2010/11	63	242	0	152	24	0	481
Unmodified A3 question paper ³	2006/07	1,968	1,019		1,113	-	39	4,139
	2007/08	1,795	932		1,399	-	75	4,201
	2008/09	1,872	1,044		892	-	97	3,905
	2009/10	0	785		745	186	90	1,806
	2010/11	0	0	0	0	0	19	19

Source: EPG exams monitoring data

Notes:

1. Requests for tactile diagrams were not recorded prior to 2008.
2. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.
3. All awarding organisations have delegated the production of unmodified A3 question papers to centres. CCEA ceased providing this in September 2011.
4. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.
5. '-' indicates data not available.

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