



# Reviews of Marking and Moderation in GCSE, AS and A level

**Background information accompanying statistical release for:**

Summer 2019 examination series – Northern Ireland

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## Information about the statistics

### Purpose

In this release, CCEA Regulation presents data on all reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to as reviews and formerly known as enquiry about results) requested for all GCSE, AS and A level assessments taken during the summer 2019 examination series.

Previously, statistics for reviews of marking and moderation for Northern Ireland (NI) candidates<sup>1</sup> were published by Ofqual. Commencing with the summer 2019 series, the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Regulation (CCEA Regulation) will publish these statistics for Northern Ireland. Ofqual will publish statistics for England only.

### Geographical coverage

This report presents data on reviews requested in Northern Ireland. Five awarding organisations offer GCSE and A level qualifications in Northern Ireland:

- AQA Education (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson)
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- WJEC-CBAC Ltd. (WJEC)<sup>2</sup>

These five awarding organisations are members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), which closely monitors examination administration and conduct in England, Wales and NI.

### The review of marking process

[The Qualification Level Conditions for GCE and GCSE](#) (the Conditions) published by CCEA Regulation outlines the requirements for reviews of marking, reviews of moderation, and administrative error reviews that CCEA Awarding Organisation must follow for GCSE and A level. The three English awarding organisations (AQA, Pearson and OCR) follow conditions published by Ofqual and the Welsh regulator publishes conditions for the Welsh awarding organisation, WJEC. Further information on reviews of marking in England is available [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A candidate is a learner who has been entered for a unit or component

<sup>2</sup> Schools were [issued guidance](#) by the Department of Education informing centres that WJEC GCSEs would not be available for schools in NI to use from September 2017. This is the last summer series for which schools in NI would have entered candidates for WJEC GCSEs

Each year JCQ publishes [information and guidance](#) for centres<sup>1</sup> on making use of the post-results services. These reflect the regulatory conditions.

If a centre or an individual candidate is concerned that an error may have occurred when assessment material has been marked, the centre may request a review of marking from the awarding organisation. Awarding Organisations only accept review requests through centres on behalf of candidates. A centre must have the candidate's permission before submitting the request. Private candidates are the exception; the Conditions require awarding organisations to accept review requests directly from private candidates.

A whole GCSE or A level qualification usually comprises a number of assessment units/components, e.g. one or more examinations, coursework, controlled assessment (GCSE only), practical assessment and oral assessment.

Reviews are requested for each assessment unit/component individually and not for the qualification as a whole. Reviews can be requested for multiple assessments that a candidate has taken for one qualification but each is processed and reported on separately. This is why the total number of qualification grades challenged is always lower than the total number of requests for reviews of marking, because more than one request can be made for each qualification. Reviews of moderation differ from reviews of marking in that they involve a number of candidates (see explanation below). Because the vast majority of reviews requested are reviews of marking, the review of moderation requests do not usually impact significantly on the statistics.

In some cases, more than one review can be requested for the same assessment unit/component. For example, an administrative error review (service 1) may be requested and then subsequently a review of marking (service 2) on the same unit/component. Where an assessment component is made up of more than one part (known as subcomponents) and a candidate must complete all subcomponents to complete the assessment (for example, an examination with a multiple-choice element and a written element), a review can be made on an individual subcomponent in some cases, depending on the specification.

If the review shows that marking or administrative errors have been made and the candidate's result is incorrect, the awarding organisation is required to change the mark to correct the error. In some cases, this may affect the overall qualification grade, which will then also be adjusted. Grades can be adjusted downwards as well as upwards.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A centre is a school, college or training organisation which enters candidates for qualifications

<sup>2</sup> For reviews of moderation grades can only be confirmed or raised, although this may change in future series.

The Conditions state that awarding organisations must set their own timescales within which reviews should be completed and outcomes reported. JCQ agrees key dates and timescales with its members and so the dates and timescales are common to the awarding organisations operating general qualifications in NI.

Each awarding organisation offers three post-results services for reviewing examination papers and internal assessment:

- An administrative error review for an individual assessment, sometimes called a clerical check (Service 1)
- A review of marking for an individual assessment (Service 2: priority or non-priority)
- A review of moderation of the centre's internal assessment using the sample of candidates' work that was used in the initial moderation (Service 3).

### **Administrative error review of an individual candidate's script**

The awarding organisation checks the script to make sure that every question has been marked and the marks are totalled correctly.

### **Review of marking for an individual assessment**

A reviewer considers the marking of the original examiner to determine whether the original marking included any marking errors. The awarding organisation also completes an administrative error review (clerical check) of the assessment if one has not already been requested. The administrative error reviews conducted as part of the review of marking process are not counted in the administrative error figures.

### **Priority levels**

- Non-priority – JCQ stipulated that centres must have requested this service by 19 September 2019.
- Priority – JCQ stipulated that centres must have requested this service by 22 August 2019 for GCE qualifications and GCSE qualifications. (CCEA operates this service at GCSE for English Language and Mathematics only).

The deadline set by awarding organisations by which they must notify schools and colleges about the outcomes of reviews of marking is 20 calendar days for the non-priority service and 15 calendar days for the priority service from the date of receipt.

### **Review of moderation**

This service is not available for individual candidates as the review of moderation is usually undertaken on a sample of candidates' work (as is the case with the moderation process itself) to judge if there were any errors with the initial moderation or with any adjustments made to the centre's original marks as a result of the moderation.

The awarding organisation reviews the initial moderation to make sure that it was carried out correctly and in accordance with the instructions and marking criteria. If an error in the moderation process is found (including adjustments), it is corrected. JCQ stipulated that this service must have been requested by 19 September 2019. The deadline set by awarding organisations by which they must notify centres about the outcomes of reviews of moderation is 35 calendar days from the moderator receiving the original sample of work.

## **Appeals**

If a centre has requested a review but is still dissatisfied with the outcome, it can make an appeal to the awarding organisation. Awarding organisations offer a two-stage appeals process. There is also a final stage available through the Examination Procedures Review Service (EPRS). A report presenting the data on appeals for the summer 2019 examination series will be published by CCEA Regulation in spring 2020.

## **Context**

When considering the data presented in this release, it is important to note a number of recent changes to the requirements of conducting reviews of marking that are likely to have impacted on these figures in comparison with those produced in earlier series.

## **Changes to the review of marking process**

CCEA Regulation and Ofqual introduced Conditions which specified the requirements under which a review/moderation must take place. The approach to the review of marking/moderation process was changed in response to this, so that a mark must only be changed following a review if an error was judged to have occurred. The reason for change must be recorded.

These new requirements are likely to have impacted the number of reviews requested and the outcomes of the reviews from summer 2016 onwards.

## **Data source**

Data used in this release were submitted in the first instance to Ofqual by AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC and subsequently shared with CCEA Regulation. Prior to summer 2016, the awarding organisations provided aggregated data on reviews to Ofqual. This means that the figures reported for 2015 were calculated by each awarding organisation and Ofqual calculated the totals reported across all awarding organisations. However, from the summer 2016 series onwards, the awarding organisations have started to provide disaggregated data according to each review received. Therefore, Ofqual calculated all figures in 2016 and 2017, but from 2018 onwards, CCEA Regulation will calculate them. The process of submission, however, remains the same in that data will continue to be submitted in the first instance to Ofqual as before.

The change in data collection has enabled Ofqual and CCEA Regulation to conduct further analyses on reviews such as exploring patterns of review requests across subjects. Corresponding data tables only report figures back to summer 2016, as this is when the data were first collected.

Data for AS and A levels are presented jointly as GCE.

Data on the total number of GCE and GCSE unit/component entries and qualification certifications presented in table 1 of the [data tables accompanying this release](#) are collected each examination series from awarding organisations in a separate data return. Data on the number of qualification certificates awarded in each subject presented in tables 7 and 8 were supplied by the JCQ and is published in their GCSE and AS and A level results day reports.

## Limitations

Reviews are conducted on individual assessment units/components and so it is possible to request more than one review for a single qualification that a candidate has taken. It is therefore possible that, where more than one review has been requested for the same candidate and qualification, more than one service may have been used.

For example, consider a candidate who has taken GCSE biology and whose centre has decided to request a review for two assessment units/components that the candidate has taken for this qualification. The school may decide to submit both assessments for a review of marking or they may decide to submit one assessment for an administrative error review (service 1) and one assessment for a review of marking (service 2).

Breaking down the number of grades challenged and changed by service becomes problematic when schools submit more than one review request and more than one service for the same candidate and qualification. In the example given above, only one grade is challenged, but two services are used to do this. Counting the grade challenged in both administrative error review and review of marking figures would mean double counting, and therefore would be incorrect. In the breakdown of reviews requested and grades challenged and changed by service, candidates who have had their grades challenged through more than one service have not been included in the grades challenged and changed figures. These candidates are however, included in all other figures reported; and Tables 5 and 6 in the data tables published along with the report include a breakdown of the number of grades challenged and changed through multiple services by awarding organisation.

This information is only available from 2016 onwards due to the different way in which data were collected previously, as mentioned earlier. In previous years, the awarding organisations counted grades challenged and changed through multiple services in different ways but all allocated them to one service type so the figures for 2015 are included within the different service types. Only a small number of grades challenged (around 1%) are challenged through more than one service.

CCEA Regulation cannot guarantee that the data collected from awarding organisations are correct, although it expects awarding organisations to submit correct data. Before publishing, summary data are sent to awarding organisations for final checking and confirmation. The figures reported in this release reflect the status of reviews at the data cut-off date - 12 November 2019. Prior to 2017, the data cut-off date was a week later and so there may be a slight difference in the number of completed reviews reported from 2017 due to the data being collected a week earlier.

## **Revisions**

Once published, data are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to update data that were previously unavailable or subject to change.

## **Confidentiality and rounding**

To ensure confidentiality of the published accompanying data, figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. If the value is less than 5, it is represented as 0~ and 0 represents zero reviews, grades challenged or grades changed.

As a result of rounding figures, the percentages (calculated from unrounded figures) shown in tables may not necessarily add up to 100.

## **Status**

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

## **Useful links**

The [dataset](#) accompanying this release is available separately.

## Feedback

We welcome your feedback on our publications. Should you have any comments on this statistical release and how to improve it to meet your needs please contact us at [ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk](mailto:ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk).

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