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## **Statistical Bulletin**

### Appeals Against Results for GCSE and GCE: Summer 2011 Examination Series

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## **Key findings**

During the summer 2011 examination series, over 5.8 million GCSE and over 2.5 million GCE AS and A level awards were made in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some 15.1 million GCSE and GCE scripts were marked by the awarding organisations.

If an examination centre is concerned about a candidate's grade, it can ask the awarding organisation to investigate the grade through the enquiries about results process. Following the release of results for the summer 2011 examination series there were 204,600 enquiries about results. For GCE, there were a total of 12,250 subject grade changes following enquiries and for GCSE a total of 26,270.

If a centre still believes a result to be inaccurate after an enquiry, it can appeal to the awarding organisation. Two post-results stages are available for appeals:

### **Stage 1: review by senior member of the awarding organisation**

Following the summer 2011 examination series there were 401 stage 1 appeals made against results. This compares with 333 in 2010 and represents an increase of 20 per cent.

Of the 401 stage 1 appeals, 71 were upheld by the awarding organisations.

### **Stage 2: appeals panel**

A centre may progress an appeal to stage 2 if it still believes a result to be inaccurate after a stage 1 appeal. Of the stage 1 appeals following the summer 2011 examination series, 40 went to a stage 2 appeal. This compares with 29 in 2010 and represents an increase of 38 per cent, but is consistent with the 41 stage 2 appeals received in 2009.

There were 12 stage 2 appeals that were not completed within the target timeline of 50 days from initial receipt.

Forty-eight of the 401 appeals made resulted in changes to candidate grades. This compares with 24 in 2010.

The number of appeals received and those resulting in grade changes have increased from 2010. But when looking at the last five years, there has been a downward trend in the number of appeals received. The number of successful appeals resulting in grade changes has remained fairly consistent.

## **Introduction**

This statistical bulletin, published by the regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, presents data on appeals made to awarding organisations for the summer 2011 GCSE and GCE examination series. The report summarises the performance of the 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) and
- WJEC.

The awarding organisations provide the regulators – in England the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), in Wales the Welsh Government, and in Northern Ireland the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) – with statistical data on appeals against results.

The report:

- Details the processes and 2011 reporting arrangements for appeals against results
- Gives data for the six awarding organisations in terms of the two stages for appeals
- Gives data on the number of appeals received, the number resulting in subject grade changes and the performance of awarding organisations in meeting agreed timelines.

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

## **The post-results appeals process**

### **Enquiries about results**

Every year, the GCSE and GCE awarding organisations publish information and guidance for centres on making use of the post-results services following examinations and the issue of results.

Awarding organisations issue the results of summer examinations in August. If an examination centre (usually a school or college) is concerned about a candidate's grade, it can make an enquiry about the result to the awarding organisation, which will then review the accuracy of the grade. Candidates cannot make an enquiry about a result directly; they must ask through their centre. This is because centres have responsibility for entering candidates for examinations. Private candidates are an exception; they can ask the awarding organisations directly.

If the review of the result shows that marking or processing errors have been made and the candidate's grade is incorrect, the awarding organisation will change the result to the appropriate grade. Since 2001, grades have been reduced as well as increased, where appropriate.

A report called *Enquiries About Results for GCSE and GCE: Summer 2011 Examination Series* was published in December 2011 and is available at [www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2011-12-07-enquiries-about-results-2011.pdf](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2011-12-07-enquiries-about-results-2011.pdf)

### **Appeals**

If a centre has gone through the enquiries about results process and still believes a candidate's result is inaccurate, it can appeal to the awarding organisation. An appeal can be in relation to one or more candidates' grades, if they are all thought to be impacted by the same issue.

A centre must make an appeal within 14 days of receiving the outcome of the enquiry about results.

There are two stages in the appeals process:

- Stage 1 is a review of the case by a senior member of the awarding organisation who has not been involved previously with the particular case.
- Stage 2 is a presentation of the case to an appeals panel. The awarding organisation convenes the panel. It will comprise at least three members, one who must be independent (that means someone who is not, and has not been, a member of the awarding organisation's board or committees, or an employee

or examiner at the awarding organisation, at any time during the previous five years). A centre can take the appeal to stage 2 only after going through stage 1.

Both stages should be completed within 50 working days of being lodged with the awarding organisation. But in some cases appeals are not resolved until after 50 days from initial receipt to allow a fair appeal hearing with appropriate evidence and individuals present from both the centre and awarding organisation.

### **Data source**

The data are provided by the awarding organisations. The awarding organisations and regulators have a formal and agreed schedule for reporting on enquiries about results and appeals, which was introduced in 2003.

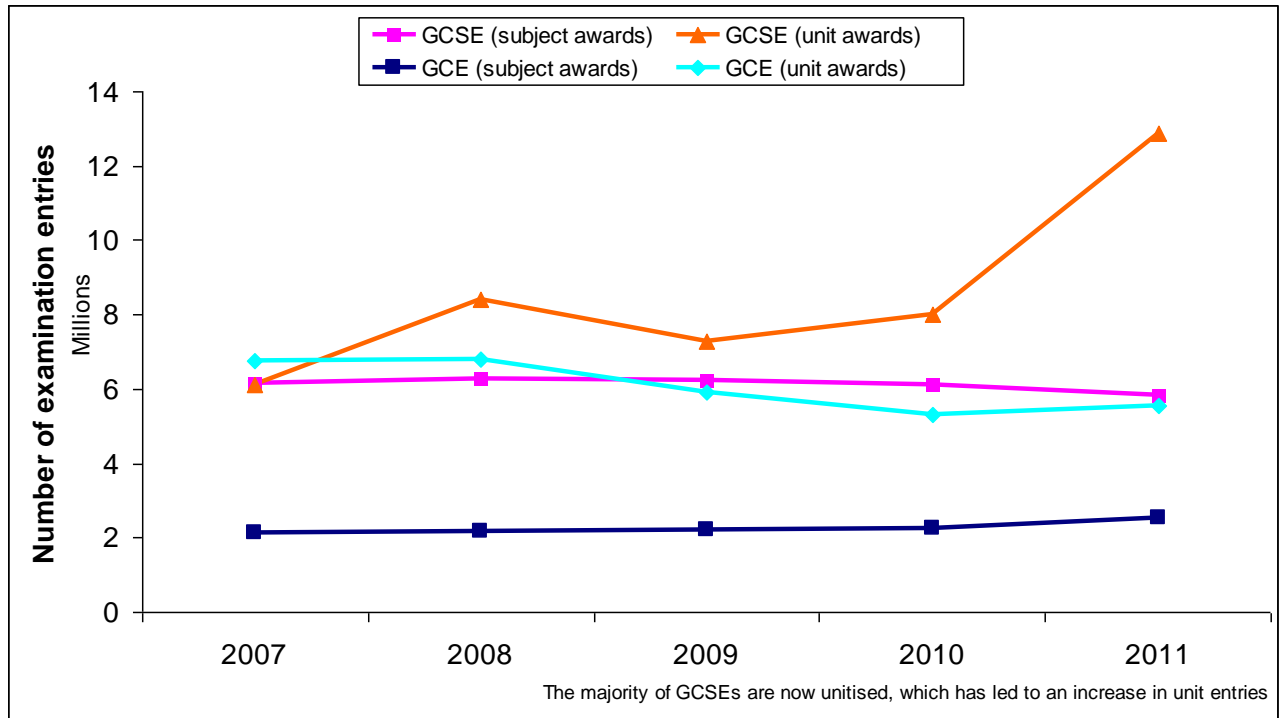
### **The Examinations Appeals Board**

If a centre is dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage 2 appeal, it can apply to the Examinations Appeals Board (EAB) for a hearing. The EAB is independent of the awarding organisations and the regulators, and details of its work can be found at [www.theeab.org.uk](http://www.theeab.org.uk)

## Summer 2011 examination series

During the summer 2011 examination series, there were over 5.8 million GCSE subject entries and over 2.5 million GCE subject entries. At unit level, there were 12.9 million GCSE unit entries and 5.5 million GCE unit entries (see table 1 and figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Total entries for GCSE and GCE, summer examination series, 2007–2011



Following the summer 2011 examination series, appeals were received for the two qualification types as shown below:

	GCSE appeals	GCE appeals
Stage 1 (review)	177	224
Stage 2 (appeals panel)	16	24

### Stage 1 and stage 2 appeals

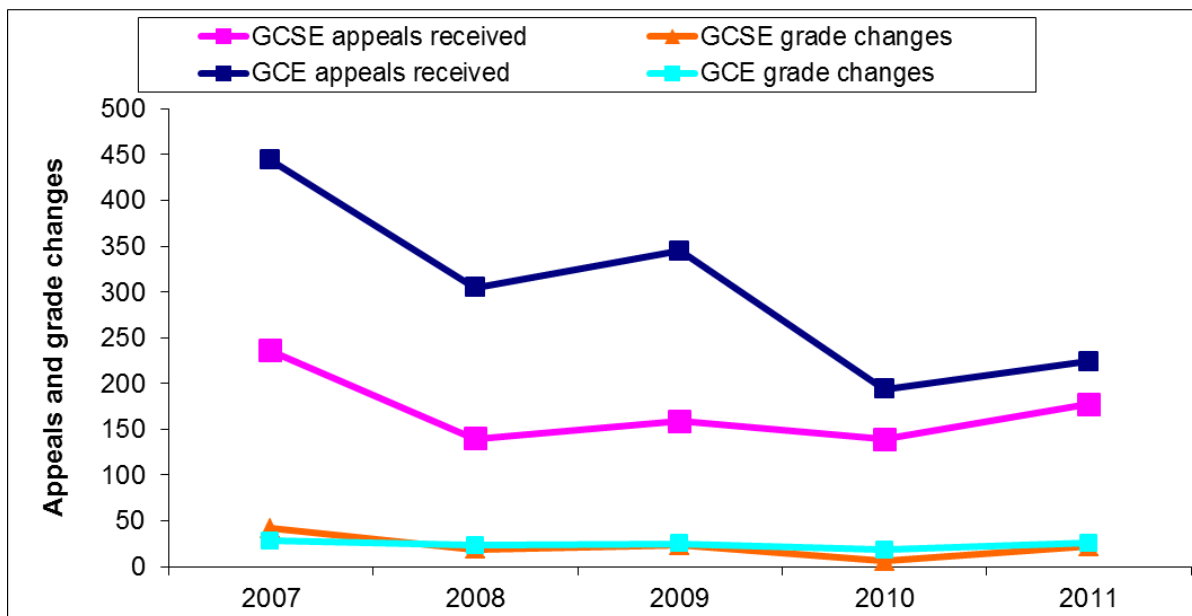
(See tables 2, 3 and 4, and figure 2)

Following the summer 2011 examination series there were 401 stage 1 appeals made against results, an increase of 20 per cent from 2010. At the time of writing 99 per cent of stage 1 appeals were completed. Seventy-one appeals were upheld by awarding organisations at stage 1. Of these, 44 resulted in changes to subject grades.

Of the stage 1 appeals, 40 went to a stage 2 appeal, an increase of 38 per cent from 2010. But this is consistent with the 41 stage 2 appeals received in 2009. Six of the stage 2 appeals were upheld in 2011, four of which resulted in changes to subject grades. When looking at the last five years, there has been a downward trend in the number of appeals received. The number of successful appeals resulting in grade changes has remained fairly consistent.

There were 12 stage 2 appeals that were not completed within the target timeline of 50 days from initial receipt.

**Figure 2:** Appeals received and grade changes, summer examination series, 2007–2011





## Tables

**Table 1: Total entries for GCSE and GCE summer examination series, 2007–2011**

England, Wales & Northern Ireland								
	Year	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA	WJEC	ICAAE	Total
GCSE (awards)	2007	2,870,400	1,354,300	1,228,700	177,600	520,100		<b>6,151,100</b>
	2008	2,951,100	1,365,500	1,224,000	163,700	564,000		<b>6,268,200</b>
	2009	2,800,900	1,372,100	1,299,700	168,900	581,800		<b>6,223,400</b>
	2010	2,708,000	1,383,700	1,256,400	175,200	602,200		<b>6,125,600</b>
	2011	2,537,600	1,439,200	1,059,400	149,400	622,500	16,200	<b>5,824,300</b>
GCE (awards) <sup>1</sup>	2007	868,400	549,600	570,600	20,800	110,900		<b>2,120,200</b>
	2008	885,000	571,000	558,700	48,500	125,100		<b>2,188,300</b>
	2009	913,400	518,600	570,500	57,100	157,800		<b>2,217,400</b>
	2010	942,900	470,300	596,100	58,000	182,500		<b>2,249,700</b>
	2011	1,041,300	605,100	630,600	60,400	199,000		<b>2,536,400</b>
<b>Total awards</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>3,738,700</b>	<b>1,903,900</b>	<b>1,799,300</b>	<b>198,400</b>	<b>631,000</b>		<b>8,271,300</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>3,836,100</b>	<b>1,936,500</b>	<b>1,782,600</b>	<b>212,200</b>	<b>689,100</b>		<b>8,456,500</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>3,714,300</b>	<b>1,890,600</b>	<b>1,870,200</b>	<b>226,000</b>	<b>739,700</b>		<b>8,440,900</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>3,650,900</b>	<b>1,854,000</b>	<b>1,852,500</b>	<b>233,200</b>	<b>784,600</b>		<b>8,375,200</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>3,578,900</b>	<b>2,044,300</b>	<b>1,690,000</b>	<b>209,800</b>	<b>821,500</b>	<b>16,200</b>	<b>8,360,700</b>
GCSE (unit entry)	2007	1,567,800	1,991,400	2,405,300	66,100	83,700		<b>6,114,400</b>
	2008	2,973,800	2,442,900	2,737,800	72,200	169,000		<b>8,395,800</b>
	2009	2,826,800	1,700,900	2,494,000	88,800	167,500		<b>7,278,000</b>
	2010	2,948,800	2,166,200	2,544,900	108,600	229,100		<b>7,997,600</b>
	2011	5,062,300	3,522,600	3,129,600	228,500	908,600	16,300	<b>12,867,900</b>
GCE (unit entry) <sup>1</sup>	2007	2,692,400	1,856,800	1,720,900	137,100	364,900		<b>6,772,000</b>
	2008	2,684,700	1,874,100	1,697,700	138,800	391,100		<b>6,786,300</b>
	2009	2,348,300	1,473,400	1,546,900	150,100	409,200		<b>5,927,900</b>
	2010	2,103,600	1,231,800	1,429,000	134,700	412,400		<b>5,311,400</b>
	2011	2,095,200	1,488,900	1,399,400	139,700	424,600		<b>5,547,800</b>
<b>Total unit entries</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>4,260,200</b>	<b>3,848,200</b>	<b>4,126,200</b>	<b>203,200</b>	<b>448,600</b>		<b>12,886,400</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>5,658,400</b>	<b>4,317,000</b>	<b>4,435,500</b>	<b>211,000</b>	<b>560,100</b>		<b>15,182,100</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>5,175,000</b>	<b>3,174,300</b>	<b>4,040,900</b>	<b>238,900</b>	<b>576,600</b>		<b>13,205,800</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>5,052,400</b>	<b>3,398,100</b>	<b>3,973,900</b>	<b>243,200</b>	<b>641,500</b>		<b>13,309,200</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>7,157,500</b>	<b>5,011,500</b>	<b>4,529,000</b>	<b>368,200</b>	<b>1,333,200</b>	<b>16,300</b>	<b>18,415,700</b>

*Source: EPG exams monitoring data*

Notes:

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations
2. All figures are rounded to the nearest hundred
3. Figures have been rounded independently so may not sum to the total
4. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. In previous years specifications were delivered in conjunction with CCEA.

**Table 2:** Appeals that resulted in a grade change for GCSE and GCE, summer examination series, 2007–2011

England, Wales & Northern Ireland				
Number of appeals resulting in grade changes <sup>1</sup>				
	Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
GCSE	2007	39	3	<b>42</b>
	2008	19	0	<b>19</b>
	2009	20	3	<b>23</b>
	2010	6	0	<b>6</b>
	2011	21	1	<b>22</b>
GCE	2007	24	4	<b>28</b>
	2008	22	1	<b>23</b>
	2009	24	1	<b>25</b>
	2010	18	0	<b>18</b>
	2011	23	3	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	63	7	<b>70</b>
	<b>2008</b>	41	1	<b>42</b>
	<b>2009</b>	44	4	<b>48</b>
	<b>2010</b>	24	0	<b>24</b>
	<b>2011</b>	44	4	<b>48</b>

Notes:

1. Grades may go up or down following an appeal
2. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.

**Table 3:** Appeals against results for GCSE and GCE, by appeal type, summer examination series, 2007–2011

England, Wales & Northern Ireland					
Number of appeals					
	Year	Stage 1 appeals received	Stage 2 appeals received	Stage 2 appeals completed within 50 days of receipt	% of stage 2 appeals completed within 50 days of receipt
GCSE	2007	236	23	12	52%
	2008	140	11	9	82%
	2009	159	22	17	77%
	2010	139	11	11	100%
	2011	177	16	9	56%
GCE	2007	444	32	15	47%
	2008	305	28	24	86%
	2009	345	19	14	74%
	2010	194	18	17	94%
	2011	224	24	19	79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>49%</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>85%</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>76%</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97%</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>70%</b>

*Source: EPG exams monitoring data*

Notes:

1. Data are supplied by awarding organisations.

**Table 4:** Total appeals against results by awarding organisation, summer examination series, 2007–2011

England, Wales & Northern Ireland					
	Year	Total enquiries received <sup>1</sup>	Appeals		
			Stage 1 appeals received	Stage 2 appeals received	Appeals that resulted in a change to an overall grade <sup>2</sup>
AQA	2007	58,700	126	14	10
	2008	69,800	77	5	6
	2009	71,300	75	18	2
	2010	73,800	60	12	4
	2011	90,200	80	18	1
Edexcel	2007	33,300	288	13	30
	2008	38,800	272	17	26
	2009	43,600	314	10	32
	2010	41,900	165	7	15
	2011	51,100	199	10	14
OCR	2007	32,900	257	28	26
	2008	38,300	85	17	9
	2009	38,000	106	11	12
	2010	38,200	96	10	2
	2011	40,500	103	12	24
CCEA	2007	5,700	8	0	4
	2008	6,400	8	0	1
	2009	6,200	7	1	2
	2010	7,600	12	0	3
	2011	8,200	16	0	7
WJEC	2007	4,100	1	0	0
	2008	6,200	3	0	0
	2009	8,300	2	1	0
	2010	10,200	0	0	0
	2011	14,500	3	0	2
ICAAE	2007				
	2008				
	2009				
	2010				
	2011	170	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>134,600</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>70</b>
	<b>2008</b>	<b>159,600</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>42</b>
	<b>2009</b>	<b>167,400</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>171,700</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>204,600</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>

Notes:

1. Figures for enquiries cover all services, and have been rounded to the nearest hundred
2. Grades may go up or down following an appeal
3. Data are supplied by awarding organisations
4. ICAAE awarded GCSEs for the first time in 2011. Its figure has been rounded to the nearest ten.

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