

Annual

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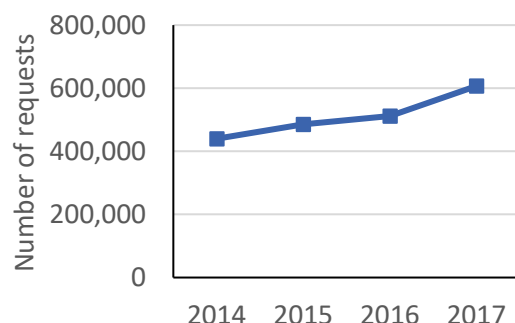
Coverage: England

Official Statistics

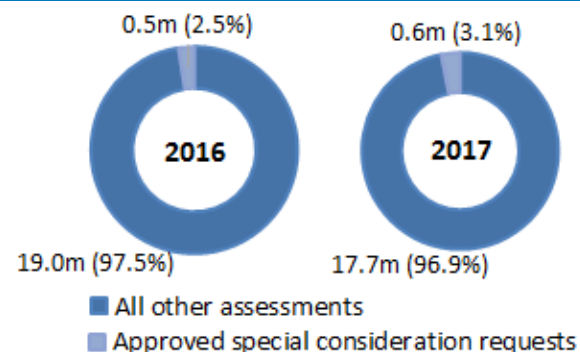
This report presents the number of special consideration requests for individual units/components within GCSEs, AS and A levels submitted by schools and colleges in England to exam boards for the exams sat in summer 2017.

Number of special consideration requests

In total, there were 606,890 special consideration requests, up 19% from 2016.



Approved requests as a proportion of the system



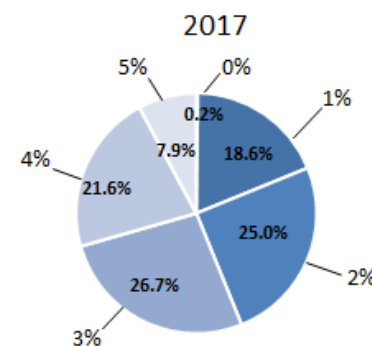
567,575 special considerations were approved in 2017. This represents 3.1% of all assessments taken which is slightly higher than 2016.

Requests approved

Almost all special consideration requests (94%) were approved, similar to last year.

94%

Distribution of mark adjustments



The most frequent mark adjustment made was 3% of the maximum mark, closely followed by 2%.

At a glance

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Comments and feedback are welcome.

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Special consideration

In this report, Ofqual presents the number of special consideration requests for GCSE, AS and A level examinations in England based on data received from exam boards for summer 2017 exam series.

A special consideration request relates to a single request for a candidate sitting a specific unit or component in an exam series. We report here on special consideration given in the form of post-examination adjustments made to marks of candidates who have not been able to demonstrate their ability in an assessment due to exceptional circumstances that have had an impact on their performance. In other cases, special consideration takes the form of an adjustment to the way an assessment is taken. We report on that form of special consideration in our statistics on access arrangements.

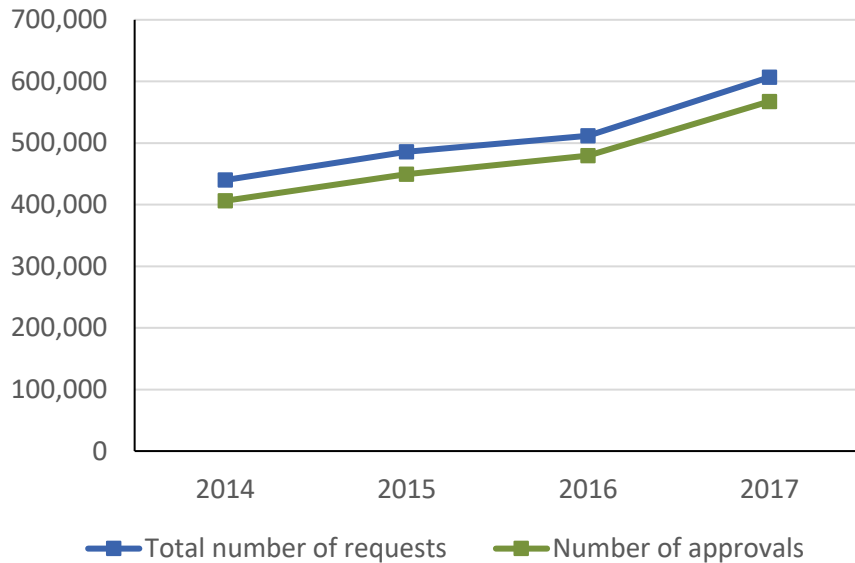
Requests for special consideration are made by schools and colleges usually after an assessment has taken place. An application for special consideration specifies which candidates and which units or components should be subject to special consideration. Applications for special consideration can be for an individual candidate, or for a group of candidates if a reason for special consideration covers all these candidates. Awarding organisations will not approve a request if they believe that the reasons given did not significantly affect the performance of the candidate.

Reports published in previous years included data for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland as well. As such, historical figures in this year's report reflect England only data and may therefore differ from previously published figures. Following a [transition arrangement](#) with Qualifications Wales (the regulator in Wales) and CCEA (the regulator in Northern Ireland), Ofqual will publish separate data tables for learners in Wales and Northern Ireland without commentary for the academic year 2016/17.

In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data. AS figures have been reported along with A level. Further information on this release is available in the [background information](#) as well as [data tables](#) accompanying this report.

Special consideration requests

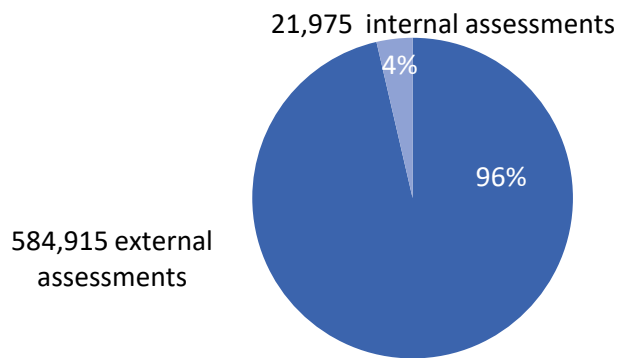
Numbers of requests made and approved have increased



Special consideration requests	2016	2017	% change
Requests made	511,915	606,890	▲ 19%
Requests approved	479,565	567,575	▲ 18%

The move towards linear assessment could, at least in part, explain the increase in requests. Because of this, candidates may apply for special consideration if there are extenuating circumstances as there is no longer a resit opportunity for individual units. GCSE English literature and English language entries have increased due to the transition of entries from level 1/2 qualifications (see [Ofqual's statistical release on summer 2017 entries](#)). This may mean there are more requests, as higher numbers are entering these subjects. See [background notes](#) for more information.

Approved examined and non-examined assessment requests

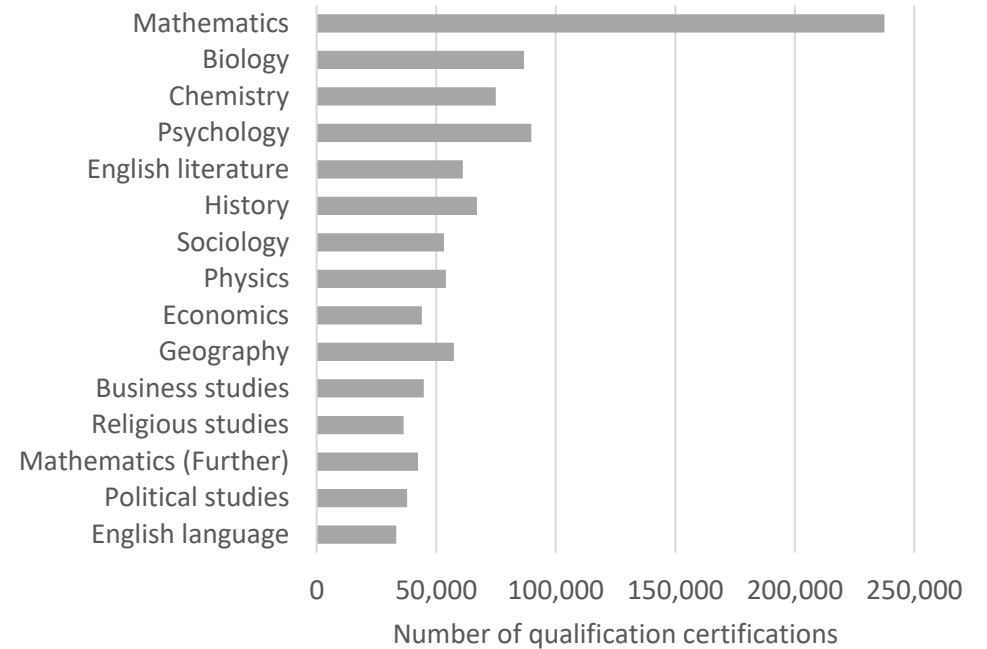
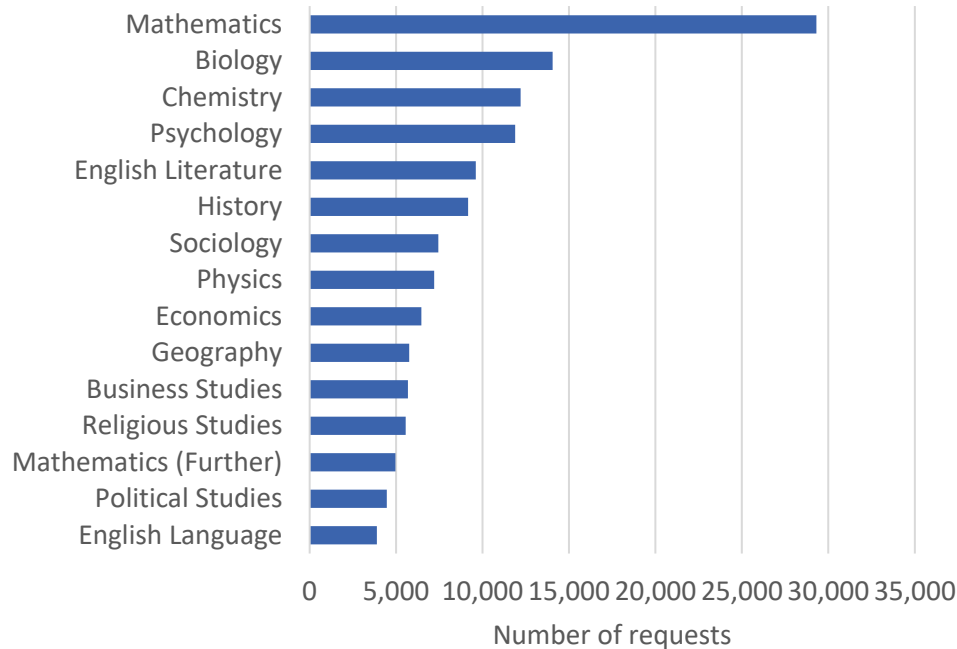


96% of requests approved in 2017 were for examined assessments (584,915 requests) and 4% were for non-examined assessments (21,975 requests).

Note: The total number of requests also includes withdrawn requests, which for 2017 were around 1% of all requests. The breakdown of requests according to examined and non-examined assessment was collected for the first time this year.

Special consideration requests by subject

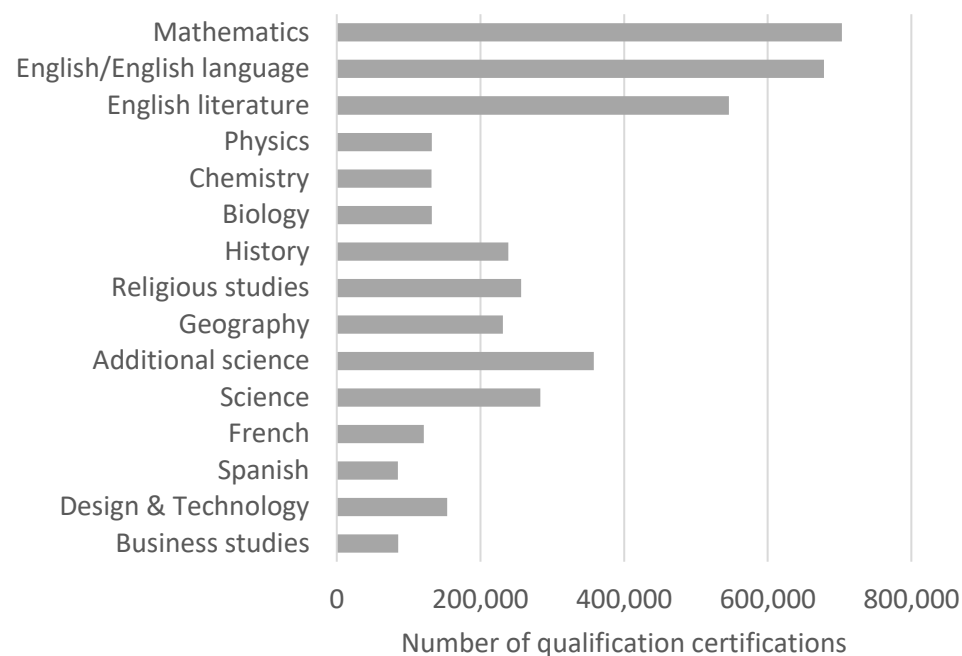
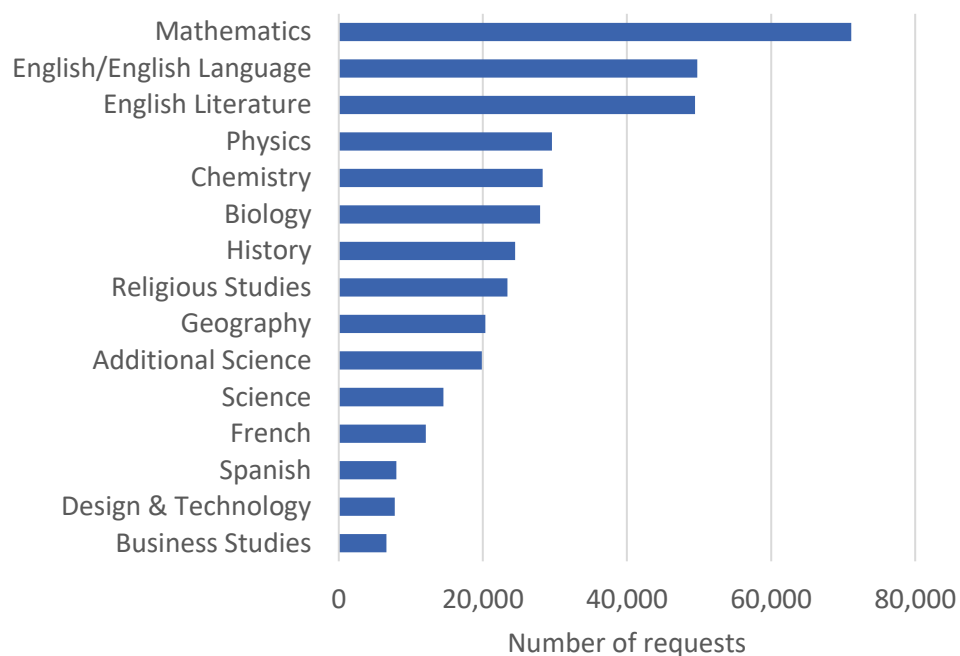
Fifteen AS & A level subjects with the highest number of requests made and their number of qualification certifications



Note: data used for the chart on the left has been collected for the first time this year. When interpreting the charts, be aware that data in the chart on the right represents qualification certifications reported in [JCQ](#) data whereas for the chart on the left, requests are at unit level. Different subjects comprise differing numbers of units.

For AS and A level, the greatest numbers of special consideration requests were made in subjects with the greatest numbers of qualification certifications (eg mathematics, biology etc).

Fifteen GCSE subjects with the highest number of requests made and their number of qualification certifications



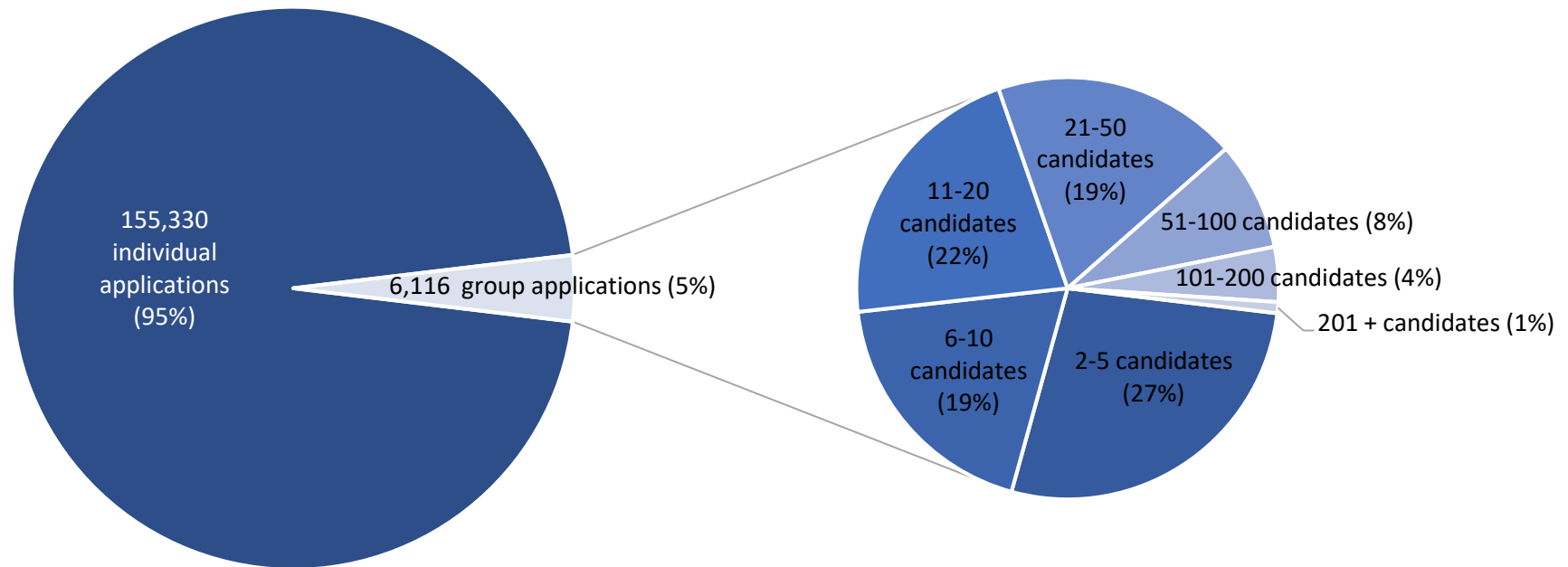
Note: data used for the chart on the left has been collected for the first time this year. When interpreting the charts, be aware that data in the chart on the right represents qualification certifications reported in [JCQ](#) data whereas for the chart on the left, requests are at unit level. Figures for all subjects can be found in the accompanying data tables. Different subjects comprise differing numbers of units.

Similar to A level, for GCSE the greatest numbers of special consideration requests were made in subjects with the greatest numbers of qualification certifications (mathematics, English language etc.).

Individual and group special consideration applications

According to [JCQ guidelines](#), applications for special consideration can be made either on an individual or group basis. An individual application involves just one candidate and can cover one or more units. However, there can also be cases where a group of learners has been affected by similar circumstances (e.g. a fire alarm during an exam), in which case a single group application can cover all candidates and the different units they are taking.

Number of individual and group applications submitted



The chart on the right shows the number of students included in a group application. For instance, in 27% of group applications, there were between 2 and 5 candidates.

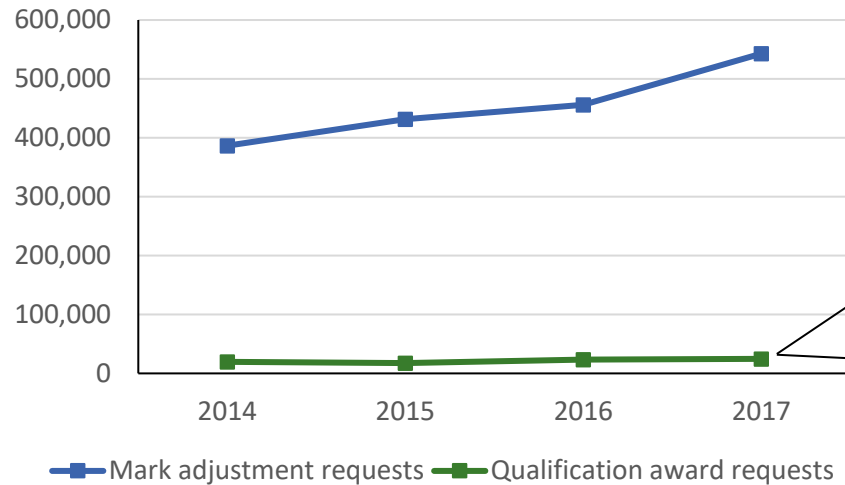
Note: data used for this chart has been collected for the first time this year. One application for special consideration, whether for an individual or a group may relate to one or more units/components. Also, a single group application encompasses several candidates. Therefore the sum of applications for individual and groups is not equal to the total number of special consideration requests (which are counted at individual candidate and component/unit).

Categories of special consideration

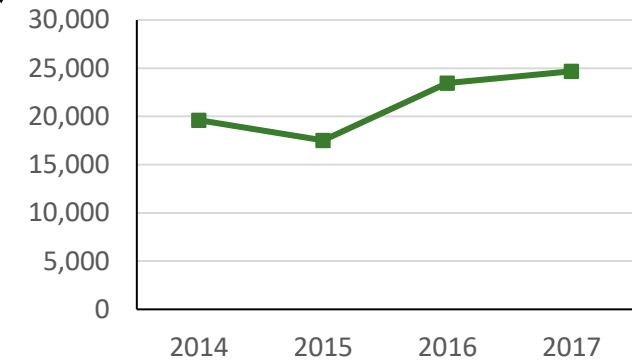
There are two categories of special consideration included in this report: mark adjustments and qualification awards. Mark adjustments are for candidates who were present for the assessment but disadvantaged in some way when taking the assessment, whereas qualification awards are for candidates who were absent with good reason and so did not complete one or more of the assessments.

Almost all approved requests were for mark adjustments

Approved mark adjustment and qualification award requests



Approved qualification award requests



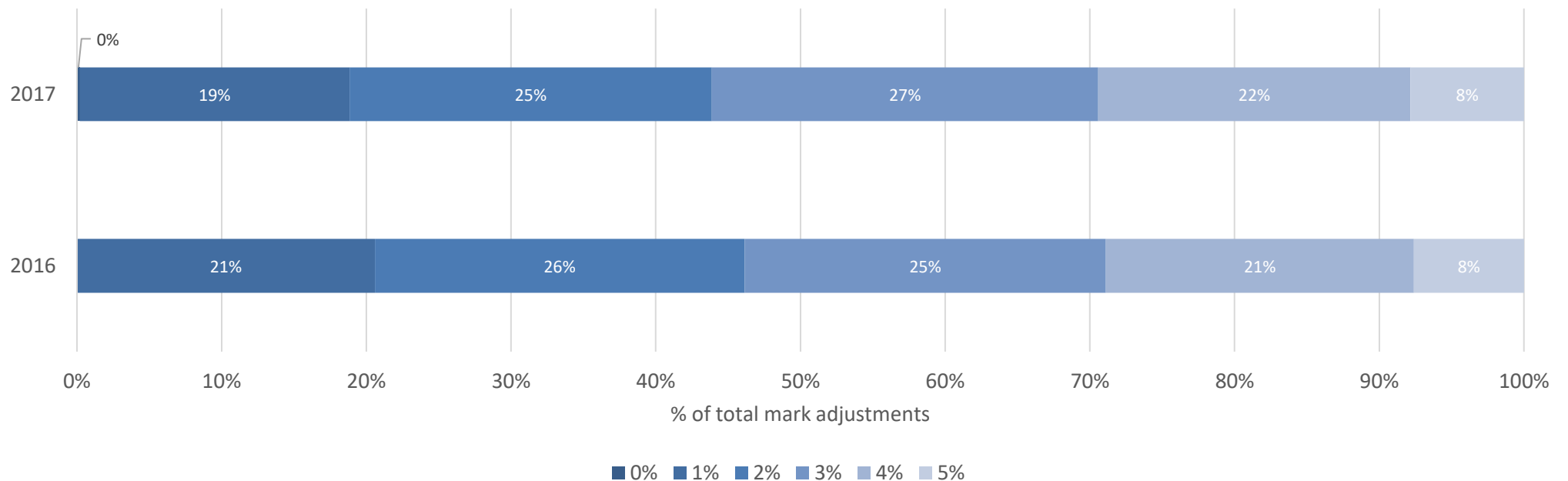
Approved mark adjustment requests have remained above 95% of the total approved requests and the rest were qualification awards (see [data table 3](#) for more information). The number of approved qualification award requests increased very slightly (from 23,470 to 24,685), despite the [changes that were made for summer 2017](#) to allow special consideration for students who had completed at least 25% of the assessment (previously the [minimum requirement was 40%](#)).

Approved mark adjustments

The [guidelines published by JCQ](#) allow for percentage adjustments to a candidate's mark. This is in addition to the mark given by the marker. The exam boards permit adjustments of up to 5% of the maximum mark of a question paper. This tariff is decided by the exam boards. If the application is reviewed but the addition of marks is considered inappropriate, exam boards may choose not to make any change to the candidate's mark (ie 0% adjustment).

The addition of 3% of the maximum mark was the most frequent mark adjustment made in 2017, closely followed by 2%. Mark adjustments of 0% were least common (for more information on 0% adjustment see [background notes](#)).

The breakdown of mark adjustments made in 2016 and 2017



Note: data was not available for '0% adjustment' in 2016.

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