

Access Arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level

2018 to 2019 academic year

Annual

Published: 21 November 2019

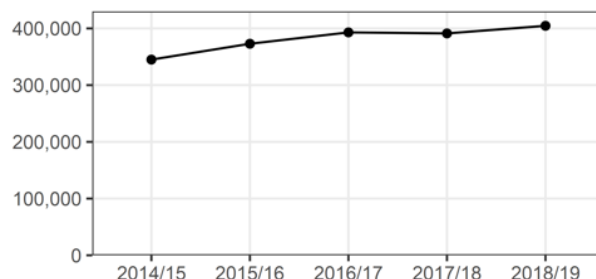
Coverage: England

Official statistics

This report provides information on the number of access arrangements approved for GCSE, AS and A level in England during the 2018/19 academic year, and the number of requests for modified papers for the 2019 summer series.

Number of approved arrangements

There were 404,600 approved access arrangements, up 3.4% on 2017/18.



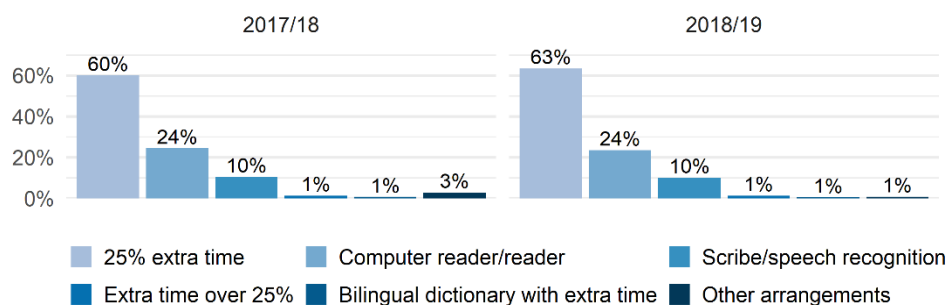
Percentage of centres with approved arrangements

91%

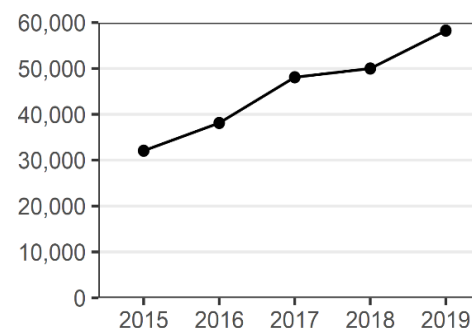
5,420 centres (91% of all centres) had approved access arrangements for one or more of their candidates this year, a similar percentage to last year.

Proportion of each type of approved arrangement

25% extra time arrangements made up 63% of all approved arrangements in 2018/19, compared to 60% in 2017/18.



Number of modified paper requests



There were 58,245 requests for modified papers in summer 2019, up 16.5% on summer 2018.

Most common types of approved access arrangements

25% extra time remains the most common type of approved arrangement

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Most common types of approved arrangements by centre type

25% extra time was the most common type of approved arrangement for all centre types

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Most common types of modified paper requests

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Comments and feedback are welcome

Access arrangements

In this report, Ofqual presents data on access arrangements approved for GCSE, AS and A level during the 2018/19 academic year in England.

Access arrangements are the provisions made for candidates, agreed before they take an assessment, to ensure that they can be validly assessed and are not unfairly disadvantaged due to a disability, temporary illness or injury. Any candidate with a disability (ie a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities as defined by the Equality Act 2010) is legally entitled to reasonable adjustments, which are administered through the exam boards' access arrangements process. Access arrangements for candidates experiencing a temporary illness or injury, or some other event outside of the learner's control, are known as special consideration. Access arrangements should not be confused with post-examination adjustments to the marks of candidates who have not been able to demonstrate their ability in an assessment due to exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement at the time of the assessment. These post-examination adjustments are also called special consideration but are covered separately in Ofqual's statistical release on [special consideration](#).

Any candidates taking GCSE, AS or A level exams or non-exam assessments who meet the exam boards' eligibility criteria can have an access arrangement. Individual candidates may require more than one form of access arrangement. According to [JCQ guidelines](#), once granted, arrangements for disabled students will apply for up to 26 months. Applications based on temporary conditions will last for one exam series only.

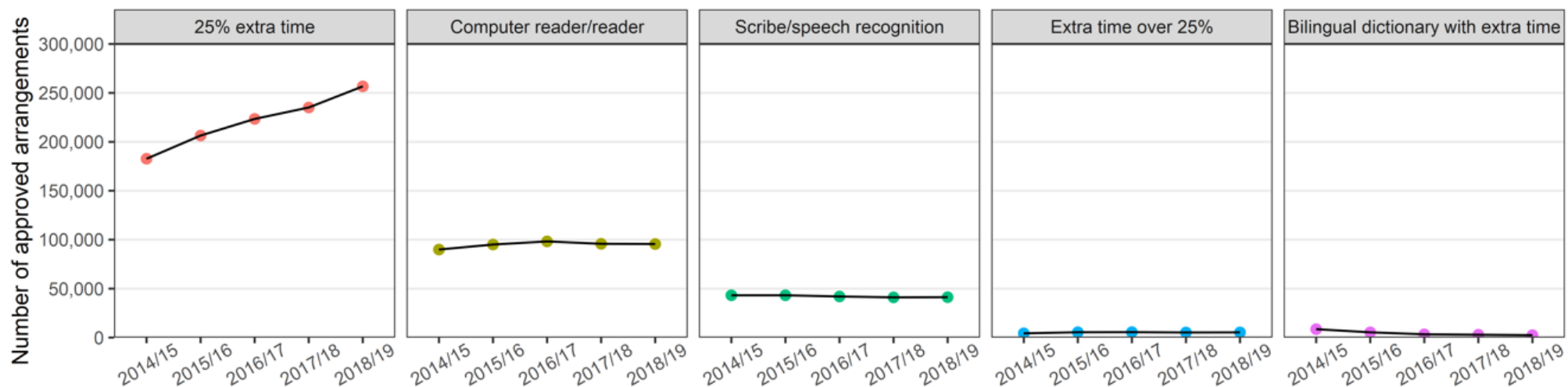
While some types of arrangements and some types of modified papers can be used without needing the approval of exam boards, the data in this release only cover those arrangements which are approved through JCQ's Access Arrangements Online system (detailed in [JCQ guidelines](#)) and those modified papers which were formally requested by centres from exam boards. Due to differences in data collection, figures for modified papers are presented separately from other types of access arrangement in this report.

In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data. Further information on this release is available in the [background information and data tables](#) accompanying this report.

Most common types of approved access arrangements

25% extra time remains the most common type of approved arrangement

The top five most common types of arrangement approved – 2014/15 to 2018/19



Number and proportion of each type of access arrangement approved for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years

Type of arrangement	Number		% change	% of candidates taking exams	
	2017/18	2018/19		2017/18 cohort	2018/19 cohort
25% extra time	235,105	256,710	▲ 9.2%	17.9	19.4
Computer reader/reader	95,795	95,570	▼ 0.2%	7.3	7.2
Scribe/speech recognition technology	41,075	41,255	▲ 0.4%	3.1	3.1
Extra time over 25%	5,190	5,300	▲ 2.1%	0.4	0.4
Bilingual dictionary with extra time	2,905	2,450	▼ 15.7%	0.2	0.2
Other arrangements	11,115	3,315	▼ 70.2%	-	-
Total	391,185	404,600	▲ 3.4%	-	-

A further breakdown of 'other arrangements' is given in the [data tables](#).

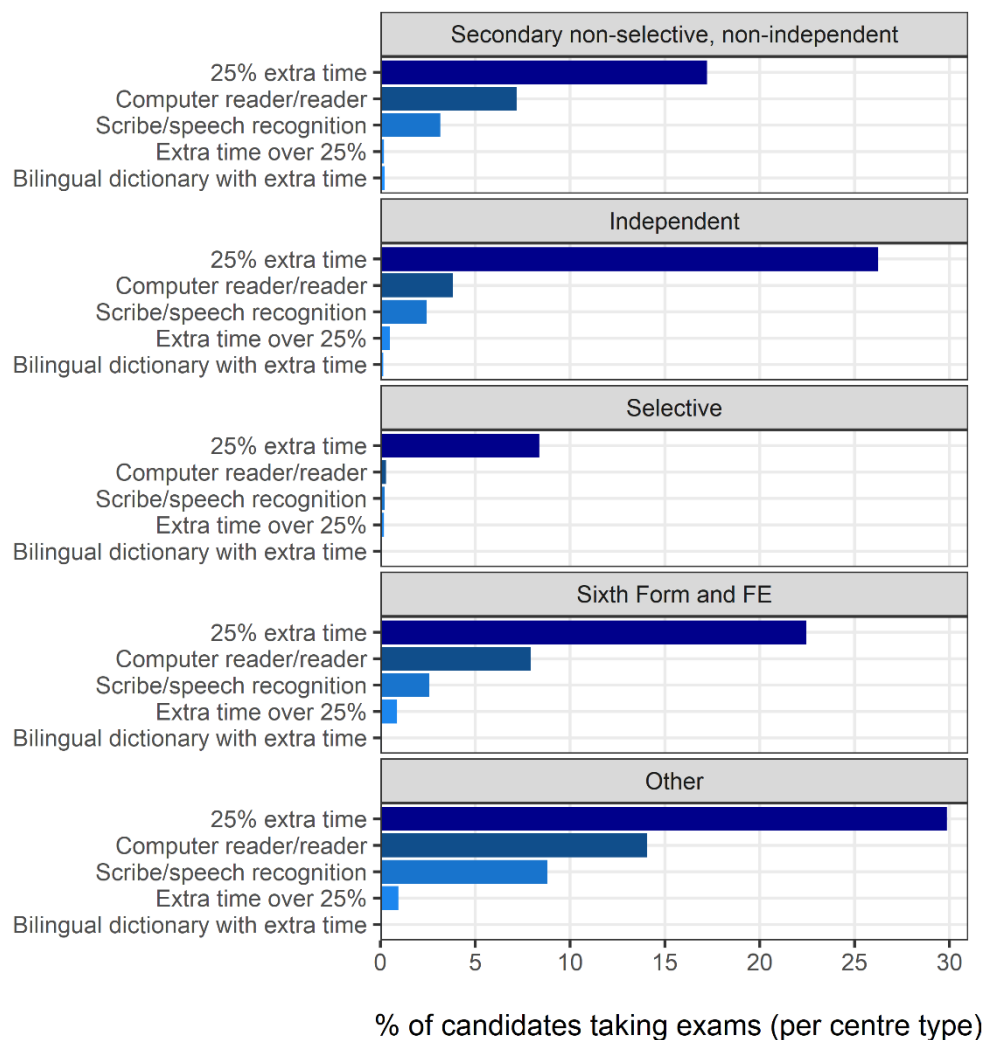
The drop in approvals for 'other arrangements' given here is mostly due to the fact that from 1 September 2018, 'coloured/enlarged paper' arrangements have been delegated to centres and so no longer require approval through Access Arrangements Online.

Please note that more than one type of access arrangement can be granted per candidate. As we do not collect access arrangements data at candidate level, we are unable to calculate the percentage of candidates taking exams for 'other arrangements' and the total figure given here.

Most common types of approved arrangements by centre type, 2018/19

25% extra time was the most common type of approved arrangement for all centre types

Percentage of all candidates with approved access arrangements by centre type, for the five most common types of access arrangement



The most common access arrangement approved in all centre types was 25% extra time (being approved from 8% of candidates in selective centres to 30% of candidates in “other” centres).

The second most common access arrangement for all centre types was a computer reader/reader (being approved from 0.3% of candidates in selective centres to 14% of candidates in “other” centres).

Scribe/speech recognition was approved from 0.2% of candidates in selective centres to 9% of candidates in “other” centres, and was the third most common access arrangement for all centre types.

The “other” centre type includes special schools, colleges of higher education, university departments, tutorial colleges, language schools, pupil referral units (PRU), HM Young Offender Institutes (HMYOI), HM Prisons, training centres, and unknown centre types.

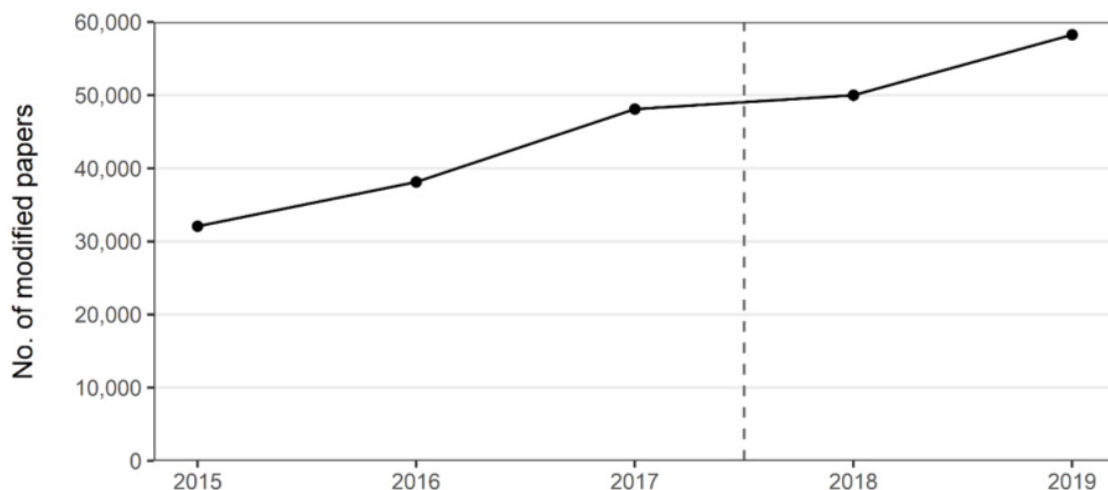
Note that an individual candidate can be granted more than one type of access arrangement, meaning that individual candidates may contribute to the figures for multiple arrangement types within a centre type.

Modified question paper requests for the summer exam series

Requests for modified question papers are made by schools and colleges in advance of a specific exam series. Modified papers are prepared for candidates with, for example, a range of visual impairments and/or significant language comprehension disorders in order to allow them to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. While modified papers can be used for exams in any assessment series, Ofqual only collects data on the summer exam series.

A request for a modified paper is made for each individual exam paper (whereas for the other types of access arrangements given in this release one request is made for each candidate across all exams). Therefore, an individual candidate may use multiple modified papers in a single exam series. The figures reported in this section are only for the summer exam series (whereas the rest of the data reported in this release covers the whole academic year). For these reasons, data for modified papers is presented separately from the other access arrangements in this report.

The number of requests for modified papers in the summer exam series has increased over time



There were 58,245 requests for modified papers in the summer 2019 exam series, an increase of 16.5% compared with 2018 (from 49,985).

The dotted line indicates a change in how centres request these papers for one board: from 2018 onwards, AQA no longer required centres to make a request for non-interactive electronic question papers (QPs), the most common type of modified paper. Centres can instead download QPs and make multiple copies as required. As such, the total number of requests is not directly comparable before and after this change.

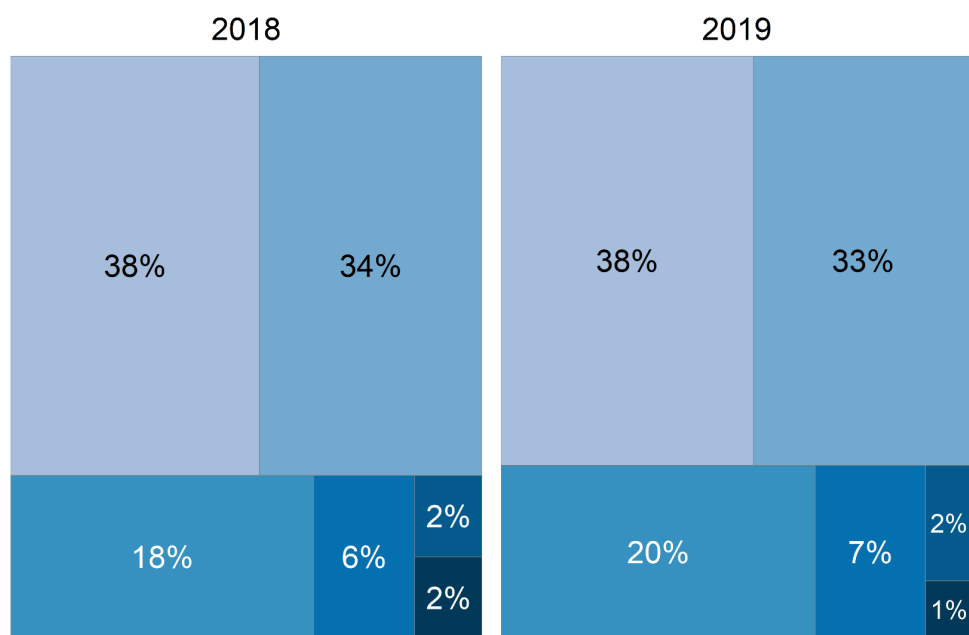
The number of modified question papers requested for the summer 2019 exam series (58,245) was small in relation to the 16.1 million standard papers produced and used in the same series. However, these figures only show the number of requests made by centres for modified papers, not the number of modified papers actually produced or used in the summer series. This is because some decisions related to modified papers are delegated to centres, meaning that formal requests are not always required. In addition, exam boards differ in how they collect the number of requests made - either at centre level or candidate level or a mixture of the two.

Most common types of modified paper requests

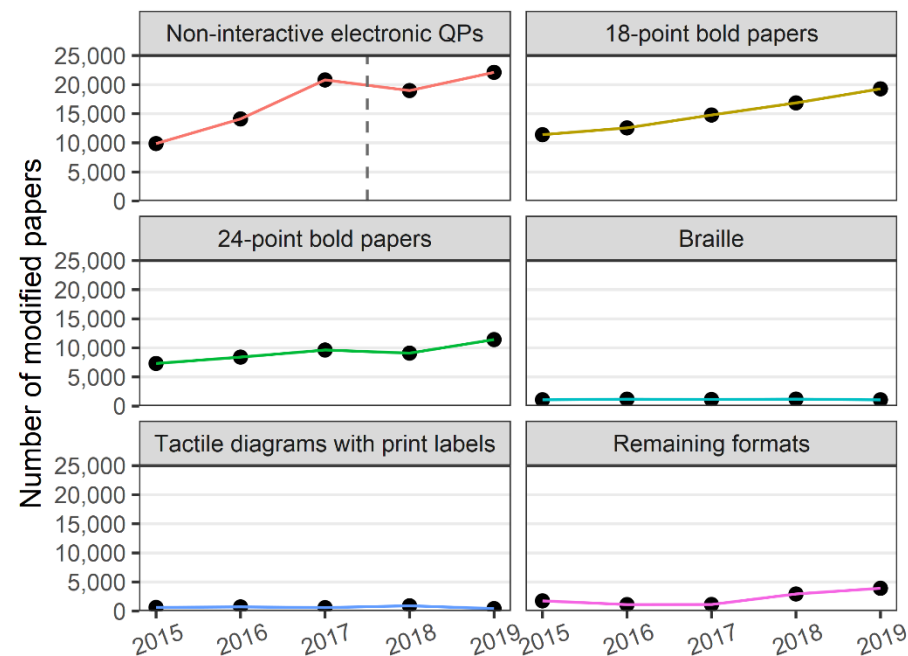
Non-interactive electronic question papers remain the most common type of modified paper requested

Number and proportion of each type of modified paper request in summer 2018 and 2019

Type of modified paper	2018	2019	% change
Non-interactive electronic QPs	18,985	22,115	▲ 16.5%
18-point bold papers	16,865	19,285	▲ 14.3%
24-point bold papers	9,095	11,425	▲ 25.6%
Braille	1,195	1,075	▼ 10.2%
Tactile diagrams with print labels	905	425	▼ 52.9%
Remaining formats ¹	2,940	3,920	▲ 33.4%
Total	49,985	58,245	▲ 16.5%



- Non-interactive electronic QPs
- 18-point bold papers
- 24-point bold papers
- Remaining formats
- Braille
- Tactile diagrams with print labels



As per the note given on the previous page, the total number of requests made for non-interactive electronic question papers is not comparable before and after the change of approach for AQA in 2018. Nevertheless, the number of requests made for this type of modified paper has continued to rise for the other exam boards.

¹ 'Remaining formats' includes less frequently used modified papers such as modified language, transcripts of listening test/video, and other formats (further breakdown is given in the [data tables](#)).



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