

Research and Analysis

# Appeals for GCSE: November 2017 exam series in England

**ofqual**

# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>November 2017 exam series.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>The number of appeals received and upheld .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Preliminary appeals and appeal hearings .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Grades challenged and changed post appeal.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Nature of appeals .....</i>	<i>4</i>

## Introduction

This report presents data on appeals made for the November 2017 GCSE exam series in England.

Appeals are part of the post-results services made available by awarding bodies offering GCSE, AS and A levels<sup>1</sup>. An appeal may be submitted by a centre if they are dissatisfied with the result of a review of marking or a review of moderation, or if they wish to contest the outcome of a reasonable adjustment, special consideration request or a malpractice decision. An appeal can represent one candidate, or several, if related to the same potential issue. The [JCQ guide](#) to the awarding bodies' appeals process describes two steps for appeals:

- preliminary appeal (previously 'stage 1' appeal): a review by an officer of the awarding body who has not previously been involved with the particular case.
- appeal hearing (previously 'stage 2' appeal): applicants and awarding bodies present their case to a panel of three or more members, one of which must be independent of the exam board.

This report gives details on the number of appeals received and upheld; preliminary appeals and appeal hearings; grades challenged and changed; and the nature of appeals, for the November 2017 series.

The data on appeals made for the summer 2017 exam series for GCSE, AS and A level, as well as background information on the appeals process, are available in our [statistical release](#).

## November 2017 exam series

The November exam series is available only for GCSE English language and mathematics and students have to be aged 16 or over to enter. This makes the November exam series primarily a re-sit opportunity in these subjects<sup>2</sup>. [Entries](#) for the November 2017 exam series were relatively small (68,000), and as such we observed a small number of related appeals (10), which was 0.01% of the total number of entries.

## The number of appeals received and upheld

An appeal can represent one candidate, or several if related to the same issue. The appeal may be allowed at either a preliminary (administrative) stage or an appeal hearing, and this may lead to a change in one or more qualification grades. If an appeal which progresses to an appeal hearing is not allowed, but was partially allowed at the preliminary stage, the appeal as a whole is reported as allowed. Table

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<sup>1</sup> AQA, OCR, Pearson, and WJEC

<sup>2</sup> In line with the [decisions on final entries to legacy GCSEs, AS and A levels](#) published by Ofqual, in November 2017, OCR provided a final resit opportunity for legacy GCSE science and additional science, for which there were no appeals.

1 shows the breakdown of appeals received and upheld by awarding organisations in the November 2017 exam series.

Table 1. Appeals received and upheld – November 2017

Awarding Organisation	Total appeals received	Total appeals upheld
AQA	1	0
OCR	2	1
Pearson	7	5
WJEC	0	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

## Preliminary appeals and appeal hearings

The number of preliminary appeals and appeal hearings and the number that were upheld in the November 2017 exam series are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Preliminary appeals and appeal hearings – November 2017

	Preliminary appeal	Appeal hearing	Total
Appeals received	9	1	<b>10</b>
Appeals upheld	6	0	<b>6</b>

## Grades challenged and changed post appeal

As appeals are made at the exam component/unit level (and not at qualification level), more than one appeal may be made against the same qualification grade. As such, the number of grades challenged may be different to the number of appeals received. An upheld appeal may lead to a change of marks awarded to a candidate, which in turn may lead to a change in the qualification grade awarded to that candidate.

Table 3 shows the number of pre-appeal grades challenged and the number of grades changed post-appeal in the November 2017 exam series.

Table 3. The number of grades challenged and changed – November 2017

	Preliminary appeal	Appeal hearing	Total
Grades challenged	8	1	<b>9</b>
Grades changed	4	0	<b>4</b>

## Nature of appeals

An appeal can be made for a range of reasons: to contest the outcome of a review of marking, a review of moderation, a malpractice decision or a decision on reasonable adjustments or special considerations. Table 4 indicates the nature of appeals for the November 2017 exam series.

Table 4. The nature of appeals – November 2017

Nature of appeal	Appeals received
Malpractice	4
Reasonable adjustment or special consideration	4
Review of marking - procedural	2



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