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Official Statistics

Access arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level: 2022 to 2023 academic year

Published 16 November 2023

Applies to England

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This release provides information on the number of approved access arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level in England which were valid for use during the 2022 to 2023 academic year, and the number of requests granted for modified papers for the 2023 summer GCSE, AS and A level series.

Key headlines



The key headlines in access arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level for the 2022 to 2023 academic year in England were:

1. There were 556,435 approved access arrangements valid for use during the 2022 to 2023 academic year, up by 8.7% compared with the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Please note that more than one type of access arrangement can be granted per candidate.
2. 5,560 centres (94.0% of all centres) had approved access arrangements that were valid for use this year for one or more of their candidates, compared with 5,485 centres (92.9% of all centres) in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.
3. Among the types of approved access arrangements, arrangements for 25% extra time made up 65.8% of all arrangements valid for use in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 65.3% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. The next most common arrangement was for a computer reader or reader, making up 21.8% of all arrangements valid for use in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 22.4% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.
4. The number of approved 25% extra time access arrangements valid for use during the 2022 to 2023 academic year was equivalent to 27.7% of all candidates taking exams in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 26.0% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.
5. There were 62,805 requests granted for modified papers in summer 2023, up 2.7% on summer 2022.

Total number of approved access arrangements

There were 556,435 approved access arrangements valid for use in the 2022 to 2023 academic year. The number went up by 8.7% compared with the 2021 to 2022 academic year, continuing the upward trend seen before and after the 2020 to 2021 academic year. In the 2020 to 2021 academic year, [the decision to cancel summer exams and instead award teacher assessed grades \(TAGs\)](#) was announced before the deadline for submitting applications for access arrangements for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. While centres were still encouraged to apply for access arrangements for their students as normal, the 2020 to 2021 academic year figures would likely have been higher if the summer exams had gone ahead.

Please note that an individual candidate can be granted more than one type of access arrangement. This means that individual candidates may contribute to the overall figure on the number of access arrangements more than once.

Changes in cohort size may also affect the overall numbers of access arrangements valid for use in each academic year. The number of approved access arrangements as a proportion of all candidates taking exams is presented later in this report.



	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Number of approved access arrangements	404,600	460,750	447,555	512,085	556,435

In the 2022 to 2023 academic year, 5,560 centres (94.0% of all centres) had approved access arrangements for one or more of their candidates, compared with 5,485 centres (92.9% of all centres) in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Most common types of access arrangements

Access arrangements changes over time

Here we report the top 5 most common types of approved access arrangements valid for use in the 2022 to 2023 academic year which were granted through the Joint Council for Qualifications' (JCQ's) Access Arrangements Online system ([detailed in JCQ's guidelines](#)).

The most common access arrangements were: 25% extra time, computer reader or reader, and

scribe or speech recognition.

The number of approved access arrangements valid for use within the academic year increased for all the most common types of access arrangements in 2022 to 2023, compared with the 2021 to 2022 academic year.



Access Arrangement	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
25% extra time	256,710	297,810	294,370	334,375	365,915
Computer reader or reader	95,570	107,205	102,090	114,725	121,300
Scribe or speech recognition	41,255	44,255	41,070	45,895	46,735
Extra time over 25%	5,300	5,975	5,420	6,135	6,730
Other	1,515	1,710	1,475	4,120	6,155
All other remaining arrangements	4,250	3,795	3,135	6,840	9,600
Total	404,600	460,750	447,555	512,085	556,435

Please note that the 'Other' category is an access arrangement type that centres may choose when processing their applications using Access Arrangements Online. 'All other remaining arrangements' are access arrangement types that were not included in the top 5 most common types. A further breakdown of 'All other remaining arrangements' is given in the [data tables](#).

Proportions of all approved access arrangements

25% extra time access arrangements made up 65.8% of all approved access arrangements in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 65.3% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Computer reader or reader access arrangements made up 21.8% of all approved access arrangements in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 22.4% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Scribe or speech recognition access arrangements made up 8.4% of all approved access arrangements in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 9.0% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.



Access arrangement	% of all approved arrangements in 2021 to 2022	% of all approved arrangements in 2022 to 2023
25% extra time	65.3%	65.8%
Computer reader or reader	22.4%	21.8%
Scribe or speech recognition	9.0%	8.4%
Extra time over 25%	1.2%	1.2%
Other	0.8%	1.1%
All other remaining arrangements	1.3%	1.7%

Further information on all arrangements is given in the [data tables](#).

Approved access arrangements as a proportion of candidates

The number of approved 25% extra time access arrangements valid for use during the 2022 to 2023 academic year was equivalent to 27.7% of all candidates taking exams in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 26.0% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

The number of approved computer reader or reader access arrangements valid for use during the 2022 to 2023 academic year was equivalent to 9.2% of all candidates taking exams in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 8.9% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

The number of approved scribe or speech recognition access arrangements valid for use during the 2022 to 2023 academic year was equivalent to 3.5% of all candidates taking exams in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, compared with 3.6% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.



Access arrangement	% of all candidates in 2021 to 2022	% of all candidates in 2022 to 2023
25% extra time	26.0%	27.7%
Computer reader or	8.9%	9.2%

reader

Scribe or speech recognition	3.6%	3.5%
Extra time over 25%	0.5%	0.5%
Other	0.3%	0.5%

Please note that more than one type of access arrangement can be granted per candidate, meaning that individual candidates may contribute to the figures for multiple arrangement types. From the data that we collect for this release we are unable to calculate the percentage of candidates who received access arrangements covered by the 'All other remaining arrangements' category.

Proportions of all approved access arrangements by centre type

The most common approved access arrangement in all centre types was 25% extra time (ranging from 13.4% of candidates in selective centres to 41.5% of candidates in centres defined as 'other').

The second most common access arrangement for all centre types was computer reader or reader (ranging from 0.5% of candidates in selective centres to 18.4% of candidates in centres defined as 'other').

Scribe or speech recognition was the third most common access arrangement for all centre types (ranging from 0.4% of candidates in selective centres to 10.6% of candidates in centres defined as 'other').

Please 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. From the data that we collect for this release we are unable to calculate the percentage of candidates who received access arrangements under the 'All other remaining arrangements' category across centre types.



Access arrangement	% of all candidates in secondary non-selective, non-independent centres	% of all candidates in independent centres	% of all candidates in selective centres	% of all candidates in sixth form and FE centres	% of all candidates in other centres
25% extra time	24.3%	39.1%	13.4%	33.0%	41.5%

Computer reader or reader	8.5%	6.2%	0.5%	11.5%	18.4%
Scribe or speech recognition	3.2%	3.6%	0.4%	3.5%	10.6%
Extra time over 25%	0.3%	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%	1.5%
Other	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	1.1%

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

Number of modified paper requests granted

Schools and colleges request modified question papers in advance of a specific exam series. Exam boards prepare modified papers for candidates with, for example, visual impairments and/or significant language comprehension disorders to allow them to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. While modified papers can be used for exams in any assessment series, Ofqual only reports 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.

Please note, due to the cancellation of exams in summer 2020 and 2021 we did not collect data on modified paper requests for these series.



	2019	2022	2023
Number of modified paper requests granted	58,245	61,125	62,805

There were 62,805 requests granted for modified papers in summer 2023, an increase of 2.7% compared with summer 2022. The number of unique modified question papers produced by exam boards in summer 2023 was 3,780.

The number of modified question papers requests granted for the summer 2023 exam series (62,805) was small in relation to the 16.2 million standard papers produced and used in the same series. However, these figures only show the number of granted requests made by centres for modified papers, not the total 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 granted – either at centre level or candidate level or a mixture of the two.

Most common types of modified paper requests granted

Proportions of all modified paper requests granted

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

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



Modified paper type	% of all modified paper requests granted in 2022	% of all modified paper requests granted in 2023
Non-interactive electronic QPs	38	35
18-point bold papers	33	34
24-point bold papers	19	19
Remaining formats	7	8
Braille	2	2
Tactile diagrams with print labels	1	2

Modified papers changes over time

Numbers of requests granted for non-interactive electronic question papers and braille have decreased slightly this year, whilst numbers for all other types of modified papers have risen this year compared with 2022.



Type of modified paper	2019	2022	2023
Non-interactive electronic QPs	22,115	23,030	22,160
18-point bold papers	19,285	20,115	21,640
24-point bold papers	11,425	11,820	11,900
Braille	1,075	1,300	1,050
Tactile diagrams with print labels	425	760	1,180
Remaining formats	3,920	4,100	4,880
Total	58,245	61,125	62,805

Contextual information

In this report, Ofqual presents data on access arrangements approved for GCSE, AS and A level exams during the 2022 to 2023 academic year in England.

Access arrangements are the provisions made for students, agreed before they are assessed, to ensure that they can be validly assessed and are not unfairly disadvantaged due to a disability, temporary illness or injury or if their first language is not English. Any student with a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities) is legally entitled to reasonable adjustments, which are a form of access arrangement. Access arrangements should not be confused with post-examination adjustments to the marks of students who have not been able to demonstrate their ability in an assessment due to exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or illness at the time of the assessment. These post-examination adjustments are covered in a separate report on [special consideration](#).

Any students entered for GCSE, AS or A levels who meet the exam boards' eligibility criteria can receive an access arrangement. Individual students may require more than one form of access arrangement. According to JCQ guidelines, once granted, an access arrangement for a disabled student will apply for up to 26 months, although applications based on temporary conditions will last for one exam series only. In the 2020 to 2021 academic year, applications that had expired

prior to, during or after the planned dates for the summer 2020 examination series were extended until the autumn 2020 examination series.

While other types of arrangement can be requested without needing exam board approval, the data in this release only cover those arrangements granted through JCQ's Access Arrangements Online system ([detailed in JCQ guidelines](#)).

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

Figures for modified papers for summer 2020 and 2021 are not presented in this release. No GCSE, AS and A level exams took place in summer 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore data on modified papers has not been collected.

User 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 data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk.

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