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Official Statistics

# Access arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level: 2023 to 2024 academic year

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## Applies to England

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This release provides information on the number of access arrangements approved by awarding organisations for GCSE, AS and A level in England which were valid for use during the 2023 to 2024 academic year, and the number of requests granted for modified papers for the 2024 summer GCSE, AS and A level series.

# Key headlines

## Access arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level: 2023 to 2024 academic year

### Approved access arrangements

**625,000**

up 12.3% from previous academic year

### Percentage of centres with approved access arrangements

**95%**

up from 94% in previous academic year

### 25% extra time as percentage of all approved access arrangements

**67.2%**

up from 66.6% in previous academic year

### Modified paper requests granted

**69,000**

up 10% from previous summer series

The key headlines in access arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level for the 2023 to 2024 academic year in England were:

1. There were 624,975 approved access arrangements valid for use during the 2023 to 2024 academic year, increased by 12.3% compared with the 2022 to 2023 academic year. Please note that more than one type of access arrangement can be granted per candidate. Also, once granted, an access arrangement for a long term condition will be valid for up to 26 months.
2. 5,665 centres (95.0% of all centres) had approved access arrangements that were valid for use this academic year for one or more of their candidates, compared with 5,560 centres (94.0% of all centres) in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.
3. Arrangements for 25% extra time made up 67.2% of all approved access arrangements valid for use in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 66.6% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year. The next most common arrangement was for a computer reader or reader, making up 21.1% of all approved arrangements valid for use in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 21.8% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

4. The number of approved 25% extra time access arrangements valid for use during the 2023 to 2024 academic year was equivalent to 30.1% of all candidates taking exams in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 28.0% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.
5. There were 69,095 requests granted for modified papers in summer 2024, up 10% on summer 2023.

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## Total number of approved access arrangements

There were 624,975 approved access arrangements valid for use in the 2023 to 2024 academic year. The number increased by 12.3% compared with the 2022 to 2023 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. 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. Also, once granted, an access arrangement for a long term condition will be valid for up to 26 months. This means that any access arrangement approved for a long term condition may contribute to the overall figure on the number of access arrangements over multiple years.

Changes in cohort size may also affect the overall numbers of access arrangements

valid for use in each academic year. There were 1.4 million candidates taking exams in the 2023 to 2024 academic year. The number increased by 5.6% compared with the 2022 to 2023 academic year. The number of approved access arrangements as a proportion of all candidates taking exams is presented later in this report.

	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>2020 to 2021</b>	<b>2021 to 2022</b>	<b>2022 to 2023</b>	<b>2023 to 2024</b>
Number of approved access arrangements	460,750	447,555	512,085	556,435	624,975

In the 2023 to 2024 academic year, 5,665 centres (95.0% of all centres) had approved access arrangements for one or more of their candidates, compared with 5,560 centres (94.0% of all centres) in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

## Most common types of access arrangements

### Access arrangements over time

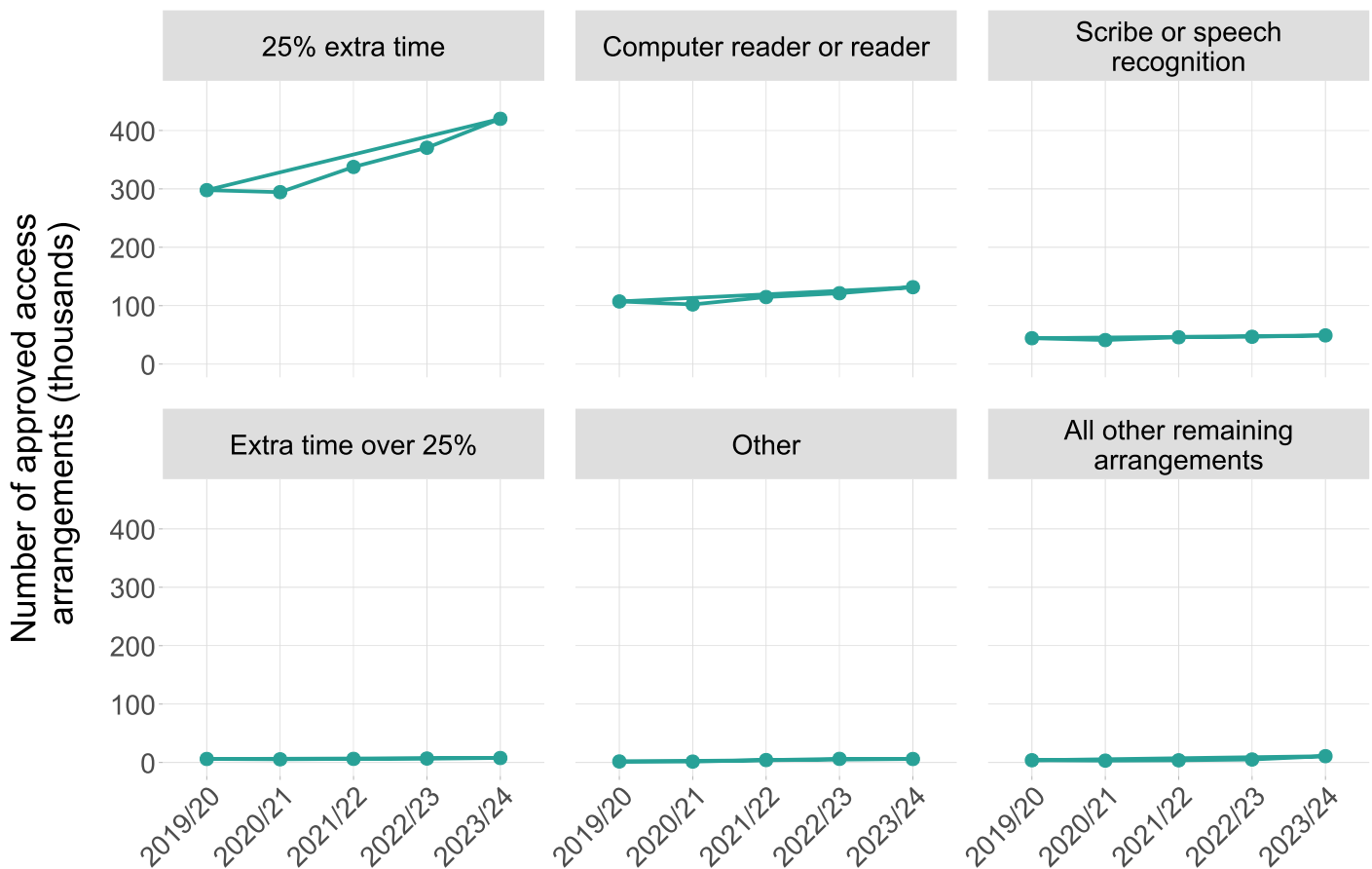
Here we report the top 5 most common types of approved access arrangements valid for use in the 2023 to 2024 academic year which were granted through the Joint Council for Qualifications' (JCQ's) Access Arrangements Online system ([detailed in JCQ's guidelines](#)).

The 5 most common types of access arrangements were: 25% extra time, computer reader or reader, scribe or speech recognition, extra time over 25%, and other.

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](#).

The number of approved access arrangements valid for use within the 2023 to 2024

academic year increased for all of the most common types of access arrangements compared with the 2022 to 2023 academic year, except for the 'Other' category, which showed a slight decrease.



<b>Access Arrangement</b>	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>2020 to 2021</b>	<b>2021 to 2022</b>	<b>2022 to 2023</b>	<b>2023 to 2024</b>
25% extra time	297,810	294,370	337,530	370,440	419,960
Computer reader or reader	107,205	102,090	114,725	121,300	131,630
Scribe or speech recognition	44,255	41,070	45,895	46,735	49,080
Extra time over 25%	5,975	5,420	6,135	6,730	7,625
Other	1,710	1,475	4,120	6,155	5,925
All other remaining arrangements	3,795	3,135	3,685	5,075	10,755

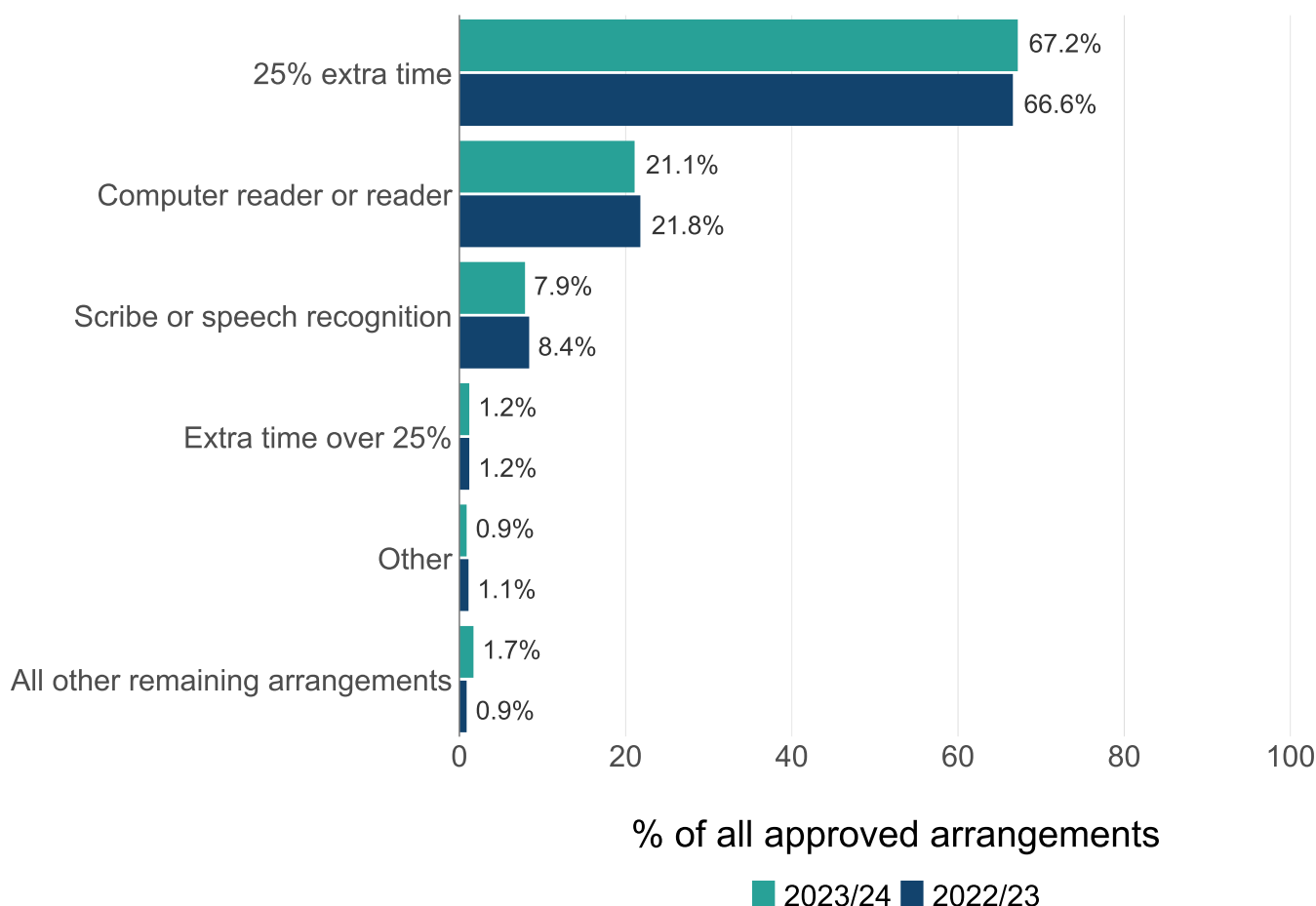
Total	460,750	447,555	512,085	556,435	624,975
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## Proportions of all approved access arrangements

25% extra time access arrangements made up 67.2% of all approved access arrangements in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 66.6% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

Computer reader or reader access arrangements made up 21.1% of all approved access arrangements in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 21.8% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

Scribe or speech recognition access arrangements made up 7.9% of all approved access arrangements in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 8.4% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.



**Access arrangement**

**% of all approved arrangements in 2022 to**

**% of all approved arrangements in 2023 to**

	2023	2024
25% extra time	66.6%	67.2%
Computer reader or reader	21.8%	21.1%
Scribe or speech recognition	8.4%	7.9%
Extra time over 25%	1.2%	1.2%
Other	1.1%	0.9%
All other remaining arrangements	0.9%	1.7%

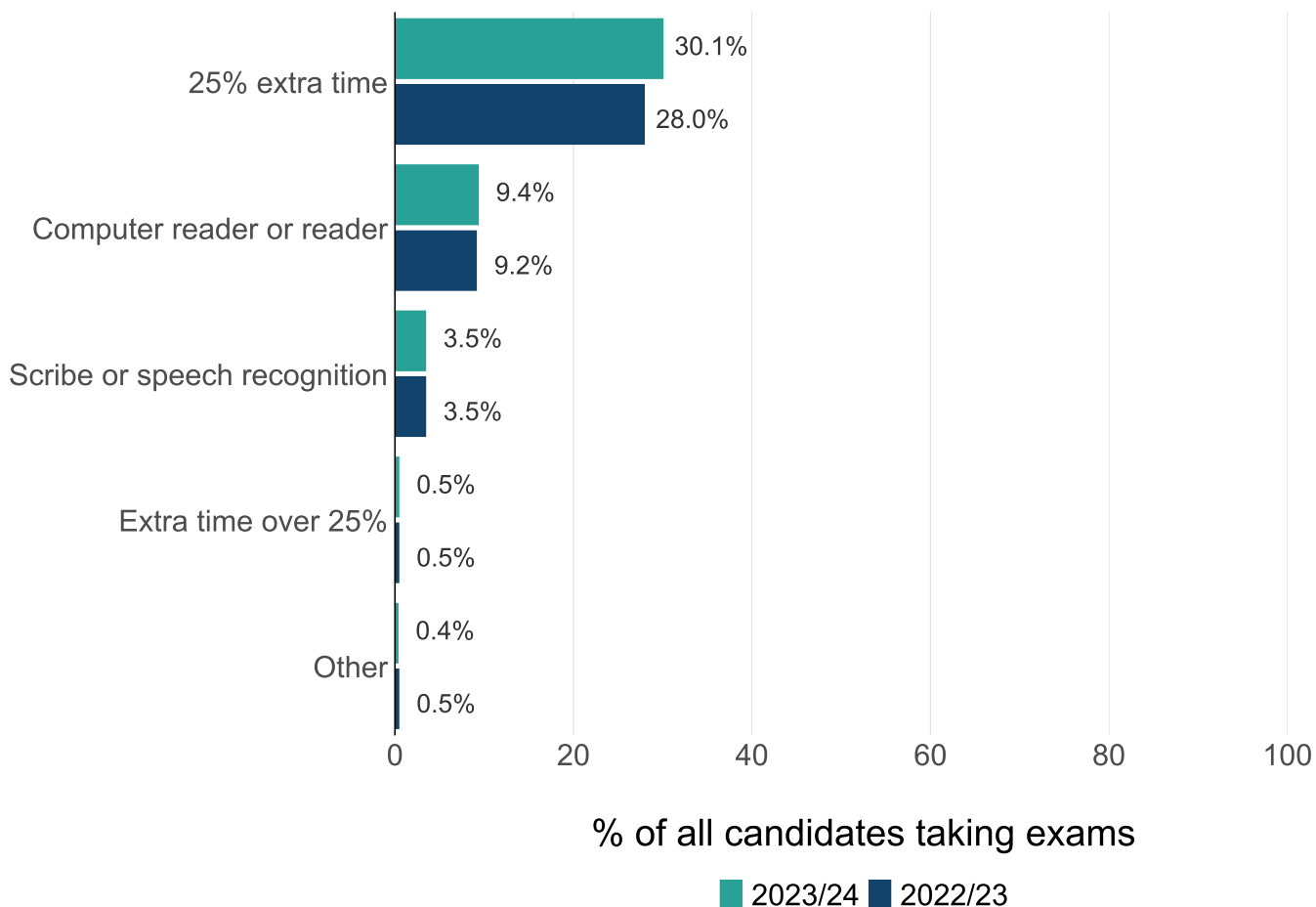
Further information on all arrangements is given in the [data tables](#).

## Approved access arrangements as a proportion of candidates

The number of approved 25% extra time access arrangements valid for use during the 2023 to 2024 academic year was equivalent to 30.1% of all candidates taking exams in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 28.0% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

The number of approved computer reader or reader access arrangements valid for use during the 2023 to 2024 academic year was equivalent to 9.4% of all candidates taking exams in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, compared with 9.2% in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

The number of approved scribe or speech recognition access arrangements valid for use during the 2023 to 2024 academic year was equivalent to 3.5% of all candidates taking exams in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, which was the same in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.



<b>Access arrangement</b>	<b>% of all candidates in 2022 to 2023</b>	<b>% of all candidates in 2023 to 2024</b>
25% extra time	28.0%	30.1%
Computer reader or reader	9.2%	9.4%
Scribe or speech recognition	3.5%	3.5%
Extra time over 25%	0.5%	0.5%
Other	0.5%	0.4%

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. For that reason, we are unable to calculate the percentage of candidates who received access arrangements covered by the 'All other remaining arrangements' category. Also, once granted, an access



arrangement for a long term condition will be valid for up to 26 months. This means that any access arrangement approved for long term condition may contribute to the overall figure of this type of access arrangement over multiple years.

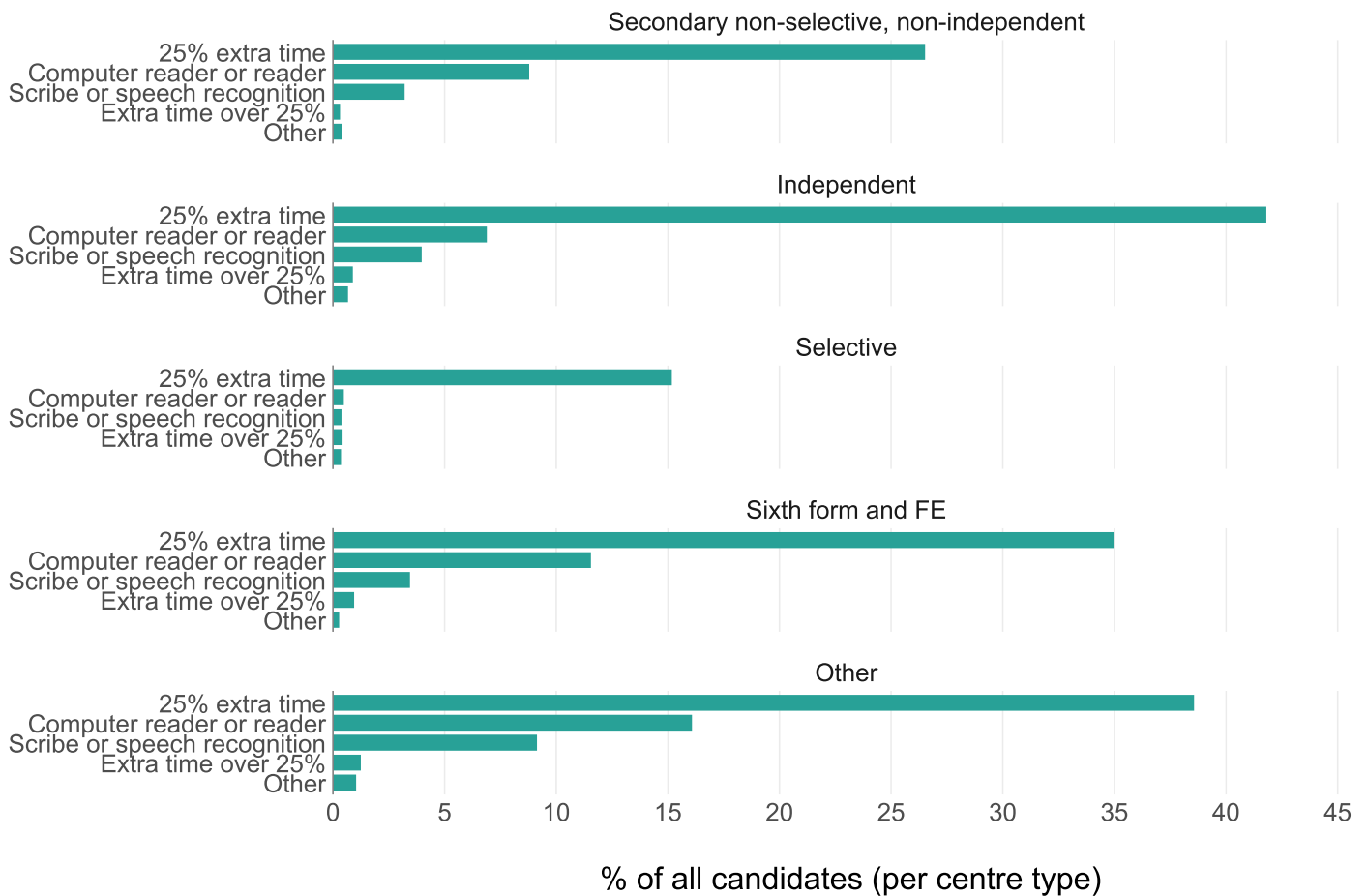
## **Proportions of all approved access arrangements by centre type**

The most common approved access arrangement in all centre types was 25% extra time (ranging from the equivalent of 15.2% of all candidates taking exams in selective centres to 41.8% of candidates in independent centres).

The second most common access arrangement for all centre types was computer reader or reader (ranging from the equivalent of 0.5% of all candidates taking exams in selective centres to 16.1% of candidates in centres defined as 'other').

Scribe or speech recognition was the third most common access arrangement for all centre types (ranging from the equivalent of 0.4% of all candidates taking exams in selective centres to 9.1% 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. For that reason, we are unable to calculate the percentage of candidates who received access arrangements under the 'All other remaining arrangements' category across centre types.



<b>Access arrangement</b>	<b>% of all candidates in secondary non-selective, non-independent centres</b>	<b>% of all candidates in independent centres</b>	<b>% of all candidates in selective centres</b>	<b>% of all candidates in sixth form and FE centres</b>	<b>% of all candidates in other centres</b>
25% extra time	26.5%	41.8%	15.2%	35.0%	38.6%
Computer reader or reader	8.8%	6.9%	0.5%	11.6%	16.1%
Scribe or speech recognition	3.2%	4.0%	0.4%	3.4%	9.1%

Extra time over 25%	0.3%	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%	1.2%
Other	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	1.0%

The 'Other' centre type includes, but is not exclusive to, pupil referral units (PRUs), prison or hospital schools, language schools, tutorials centres, higher education institutions, distance learning providers providing part-time teaching only and private examination centres accepting private candidates who they have not taught, all non-DfE registered centres and unknown centre types.

The 'independent' centre type includes centres that are not maintained by a local authority. This includes independent special schools but excludes 'non-maintained special schools'.

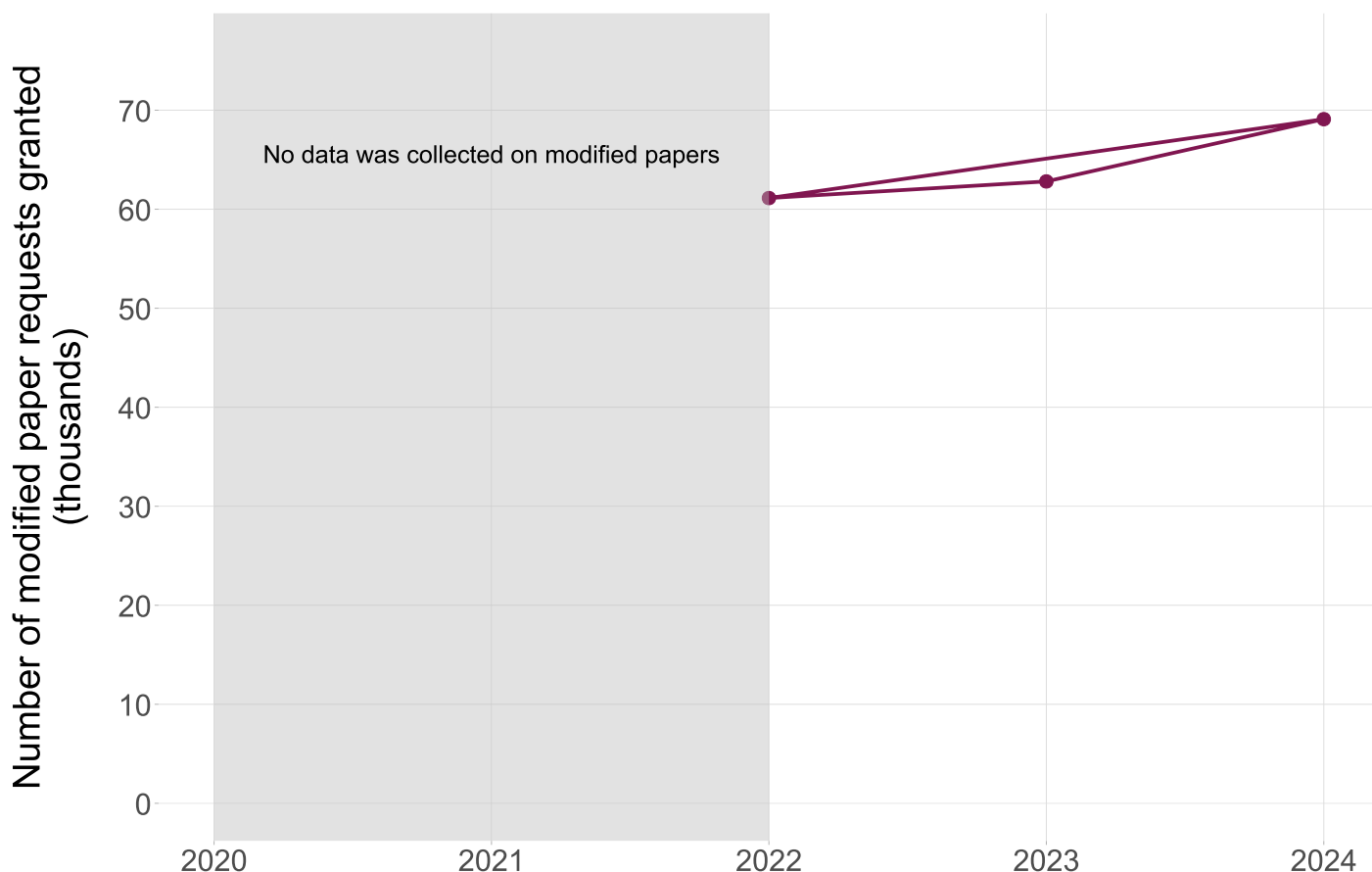
Please see the [background note](#) accompanying this report for more information on centre type categories.

## 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 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 included 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.



	2022	2023	2024
Number of modified paper requests granted	61,125	62,805	69,095

There were 69,095 requests granted for modified papers in summer 2024, an increase of 10% compared with summer 2023. The number of unique modified question papers produced by exam boards in summer 2024 was 2,555, compared with 3,780 in summer 2023.

The number of modified question paper requests granted for the summer 2024 exam series (69,095) was small in relation to the 18.1 million standard papers 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

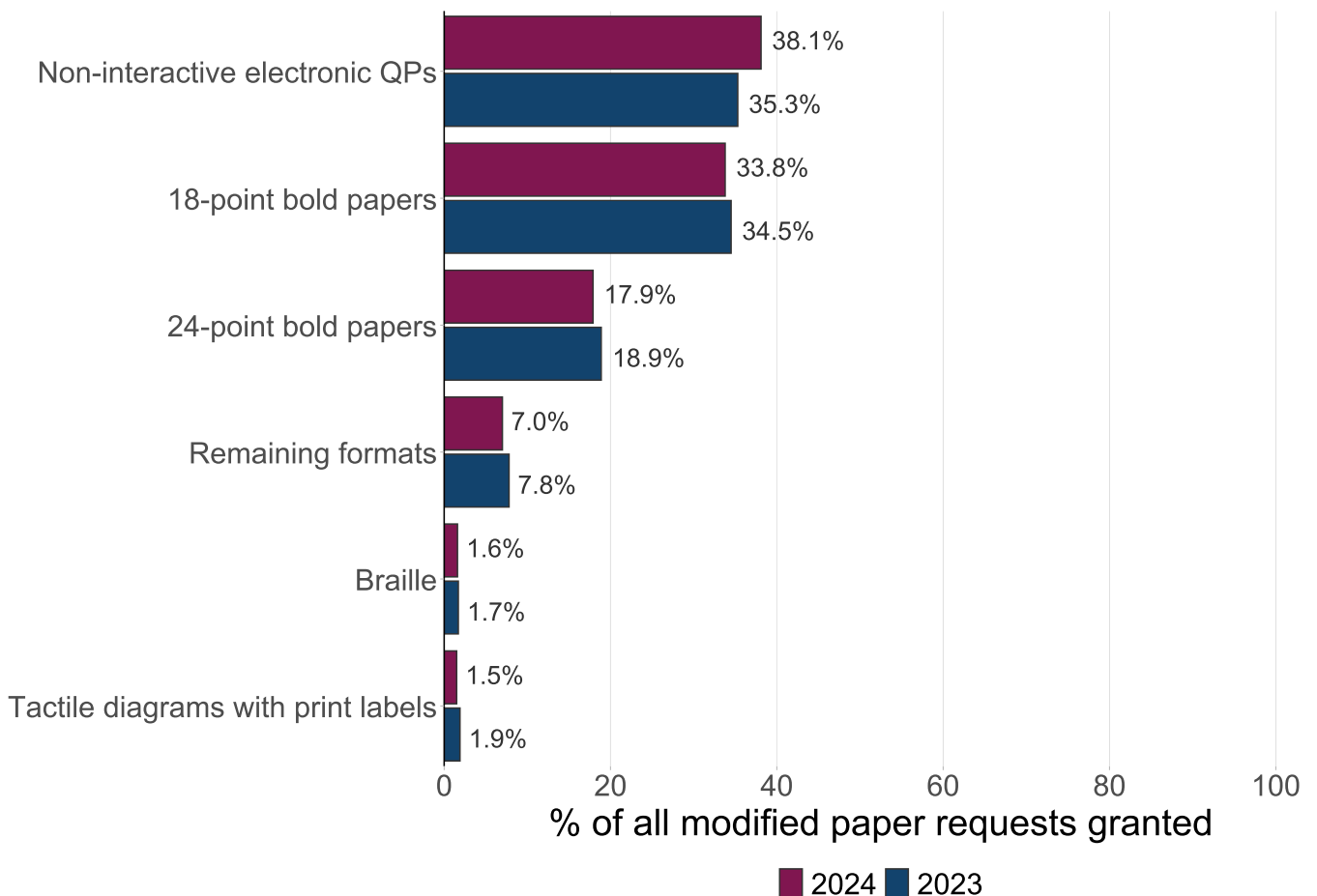
of the two.

# 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

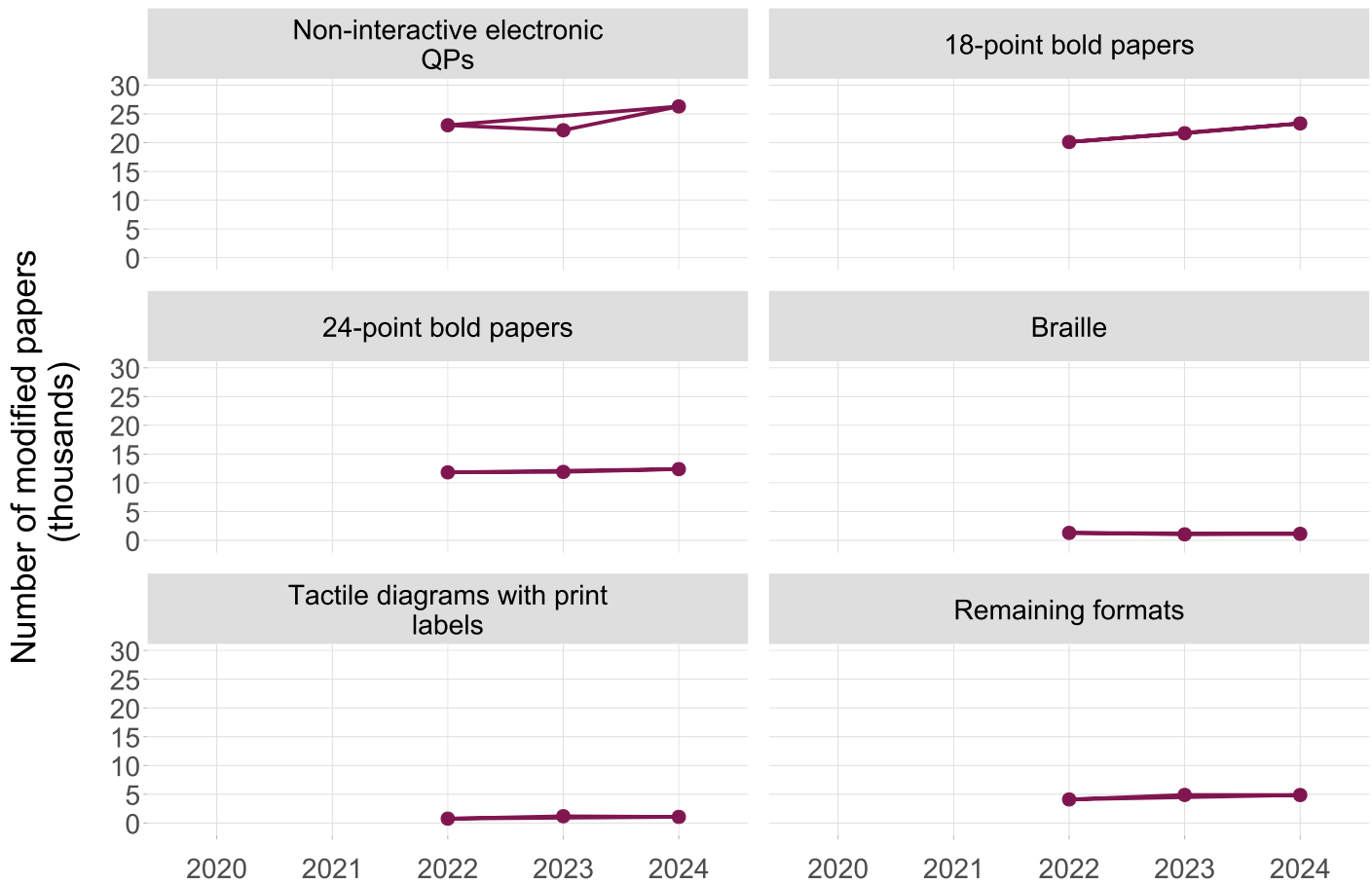
% of all modified paper

% of all modified paper

<b>type</b>	<b>requests granted in 2023</b>	<b>requests granted in 2024</b>
Non-interactive electronic QPs	35.3	38.1
18-point bold papers	34.5	33.8
24-point bold papers	18.9	17.9
Remaining formats	7.8	7.0
Tactile diagrams with print labels	1.9	1.5
Braille	1.7	1.6

## **Modified papers over time**

The numbers of requests granted for tactile diagrams with print labels and remaining formats have decreased slightly this year, whilst the number of requests granted for all other types of modified papers have risen this year compared with summer 2023.



Type of modified paper	2022	2023	2024
Non-interactive electronic QPs	23,030	22,160	26,300
18-point bold papers	20,115	21,640	23,340
24-point bold papers	11,820	11,900	12,385
Braille	1,300	1,050	1,135
Tactile diagrams with print labels	760	1,180	1,065
Remaining formats	4,100	4,880	4,870
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,125</b>	<b>62,805</b>	<b>69,095</b>

## Contextual information

In this report, Ofqual presents data on access arrangements approved for GCSE, AS and A level exams during the 2023 to 2024 academic year in England.

Pre-agreed 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 long term condition will be valid for up to 26 months, although applications based on temporary conditions will last for one exam series only.

While other types of arrangement can be implemented 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.

Head of profession: Ben Cuff

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