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Official Statistics

Special consideration in GCSE, AS and A level: summer 2024 exam series

Published 28 November 2024

Applies to England

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Introduction

This release provides information on special consideration for GCSE, AS and A levels for the summer 2024 exam series.

There are 2 categories of special consideration included in this report: mark adjustments and qualification awards. Mark adjustments are for students who were present for the assessment but who might not have been able to demonstrate their ability due to exceptional circumstances occurring at the time of their assessment. Qualification awards are for students who were absent from the assessment for reasons which meet [JCQ's eligibility criteria](#). To be eligible for special consideration, students must have been fully prepared for the assessment and have covered the whole course.

Special consideration requests for exams and non-examination assessments are submitted by schools and colleges to exam boards.

A single special consideration request relates to an individual student and a specific component in an exam series.

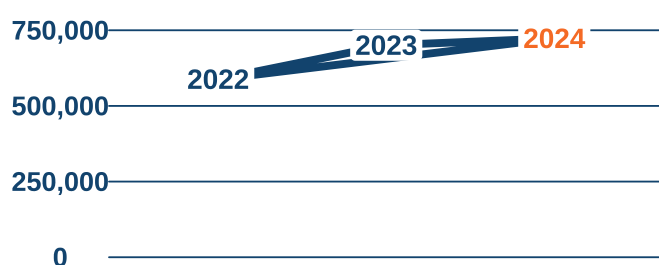
Post-assessment special consideration differs from access arrangements, which are adjustments that are made to the way an assessment is taken. We report on data for pre-assessment access arrangement in our [statistics on access arrangements](#).

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to the cancellation of exams in [summer 2020](#) and [summer 2021](#). As a result, there were no special consideration requests for those series. Exams and assessments resumed in summer 2022. Therefore, this report contains information on special consideration for the summer 2022 to summer 2024 series.

Key headlines

Special consideration in GCSE, AS and A level: summer 2024 exam series

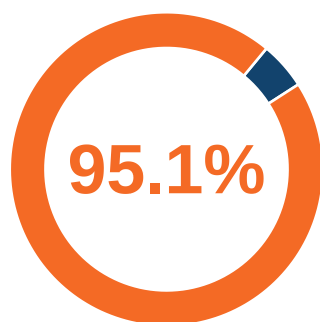
Special consideration requests



**723,220
requests**

an increase of 3% from summer 2023

Approved special consideration requests



**687,855
approved**

percentage of approved requests the same as summer 2023 (95.1%)

1. In summer 2024, there were 723,220 GCSE, AS and A level special consideration requests, an increase of 3.0% from summer 2023. In summer 2024, special consideration requests were submitted for 4.3% of all assessments, similar to summer 2023 (4.4%).
2. The majority of special consideration requests (95.1%) were approved, the same as summer 2023 (95.1%). In summer 2024, there were 687,855 special consideration requests approved, representing an approved special consideration request for 4.1% of all assessments, similar to summer 2023 (4.2%).
3. Most approved requests in summer 2024 were for mark adjustments (95.2%) rather than qualification awards (4.8%), similar to summer 2023 (where mark adjustments and qualification awards constituted 95.1% and 4.9% of approved

requests respectively).

Provide your feedback

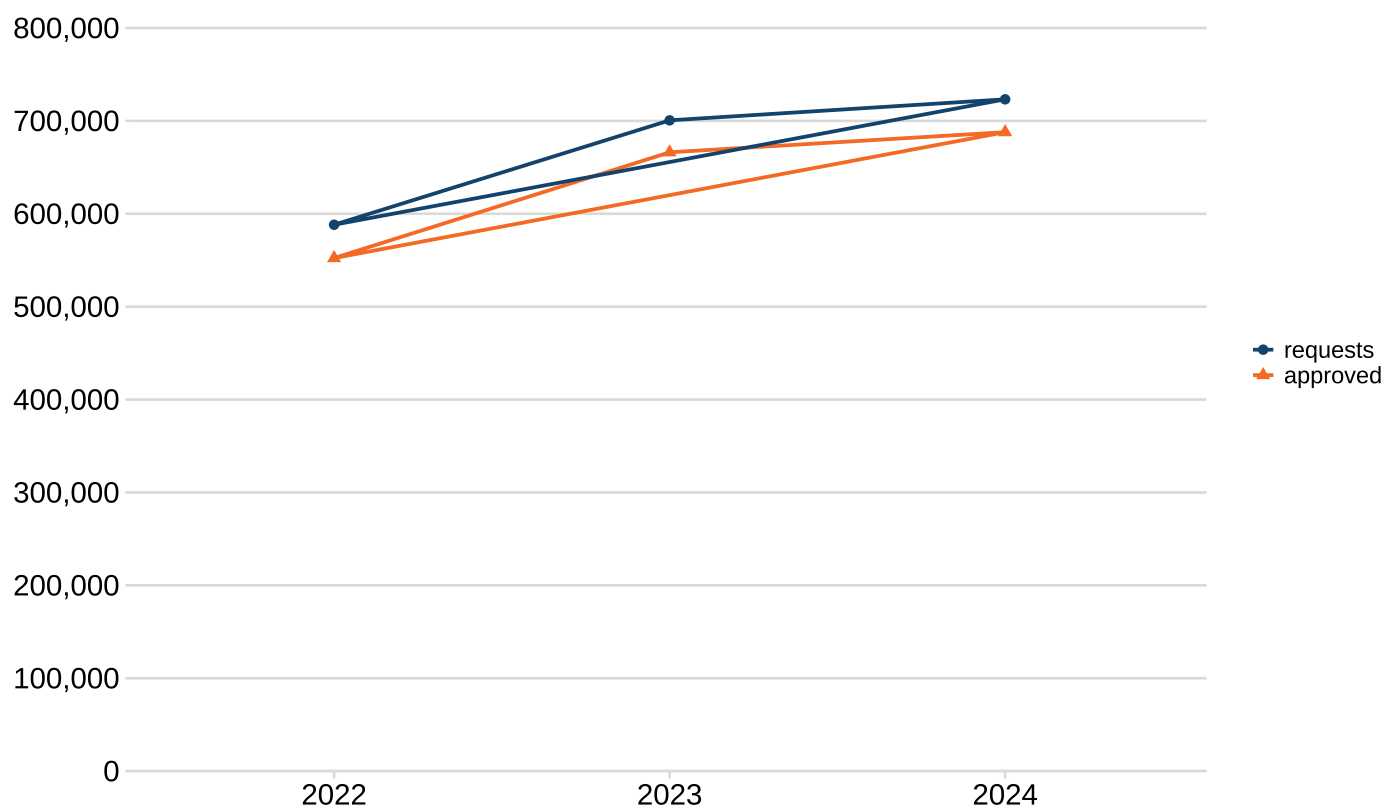
We welcome your feedback on our publications. If you have any comments on this statistical release, or how to improve it to meet your needs, please complete our [short survey](#) or [email our statistics team](#).

Total number of special consideration requests

There were 723,220 special consideration requests for GCSE, AS and A level in summer 2024, an increase of 3.0% from summer 2023 (700,600 requests). Out of all special consideration requests in summer 2024, 95.1% were approved (687,855), the same as the proportion of requests approved in summer 2023 (95.1%).

The number of special consideration requests may be affected by the total number of scripts and non-examination assessments marked in a summer series. In summer 2024 there were 16.7 million GCSE, AS and A level scripts and non-examination assessments marked, an increase of 4.5% from summer 2023 (16.0 million).

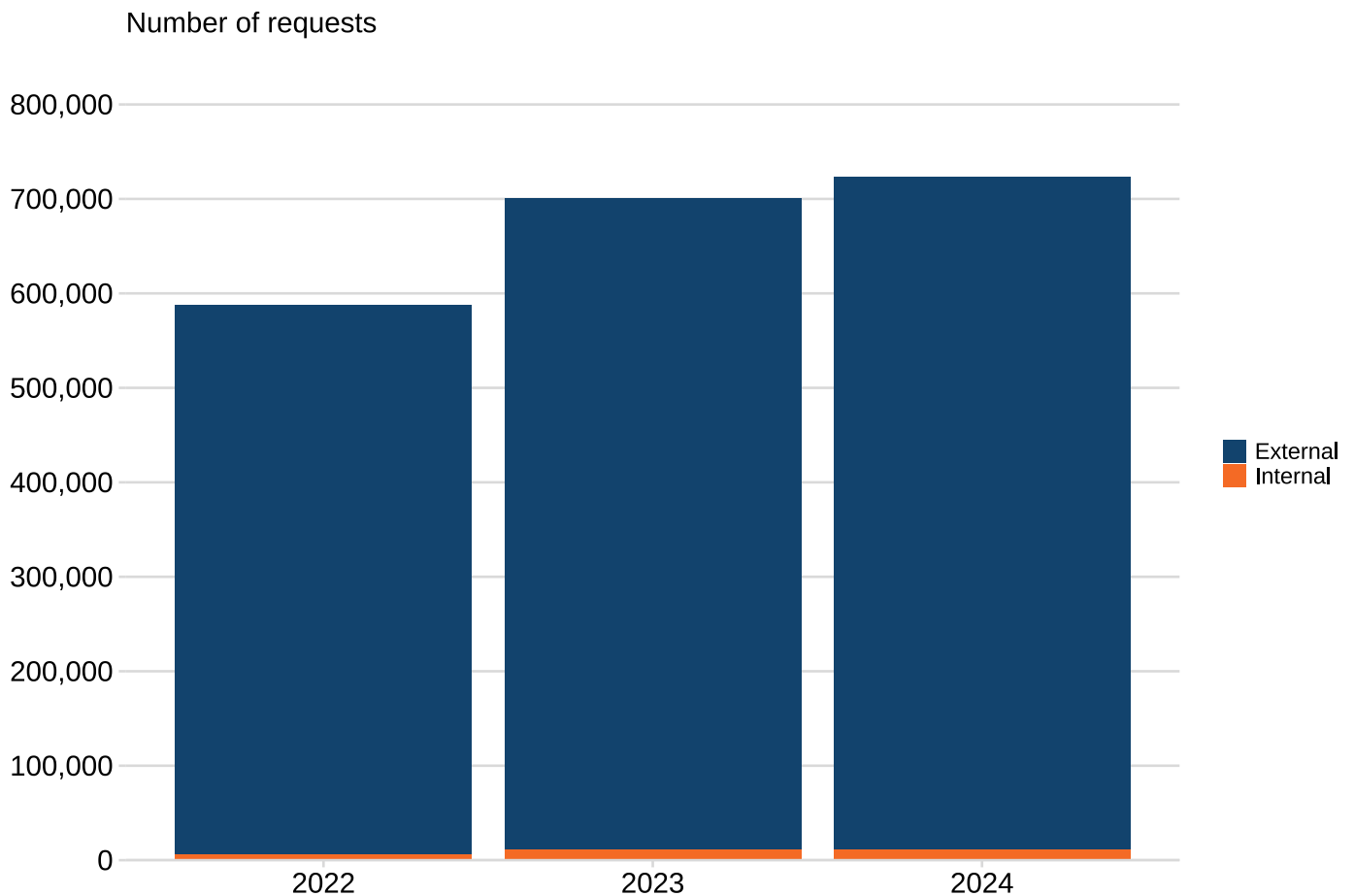
Number of requests and approved requests



Special consideration requests	Level	2022	2023	2024
Requests made	AS and A level	122,500	139,185	140,875
Requests made	GCSE	465,670	561,415	582,345
Requests made	Total	588,170	700,600	723,220
Requests approved	AS and A level	116,475	133,590	134,685
Requests approved	GCSE	435,825	532,585	553,165
Requests approved	Total	552,300	666,175	687,855

Special consideration requests for external and internal assessments

Requests relating to internal assessments (for example non-examination assessments) represent a small proportion of the total number of requests. In summer 2024, 1.5% of requests were for internal assessments (11,125 requests) and 98.5% of requests were for external assessments (712,095 requests). The proportions of requests were similar to 2023, where 1.6% of requests were for internal assessments (11,400 requests) and 98.4% were for external assessments (689,200 requests).

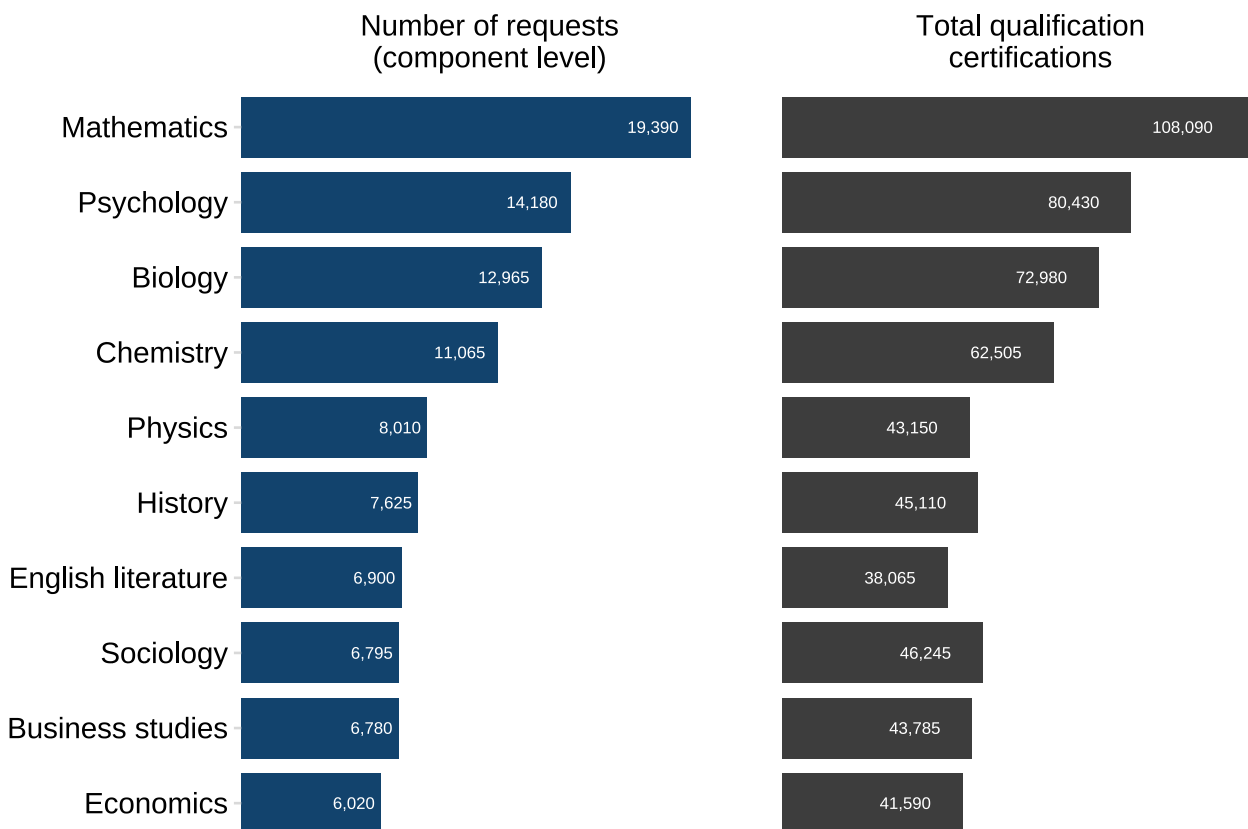


Assessment type	2022	2023	2024
External	582,290	689,200	712,095
Internal	5,880	11,400	11,125

Special consideration requests by subject

The charts in this section present 2 sets of data by subject: special consideration requests at a component level and the number of qualification certifications. Statistics on the number of certifications are based on [data published by JCQ](#). The certification chart is provided to show the relative size of subjects according to certificate volumes. Typically, we would anticipate a relationship between the number of special consideration requests and the number of qualification certifications. However, because special consideration requests are at component level, subjects that include more components may also have more special consideration requests. Please note, therefore, that it is not appropriate to calculate proportions between these figures.

AS and A level subjects with the highest number of requests made in summer 2024 with number of qualification certifications



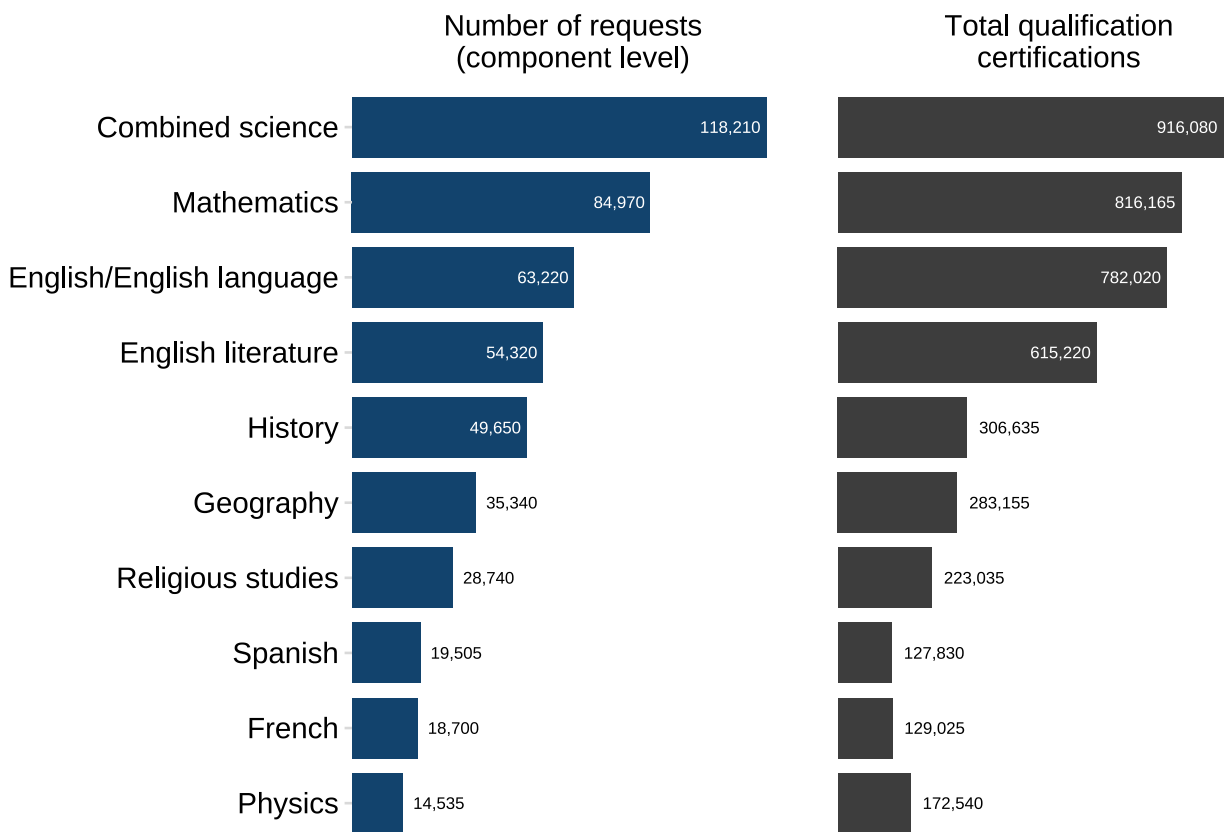
Subject	Number of requests (component level)	Total qualification certifications
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Mathematics	19,390	108,090
Psychology	14,180	80,430
Biology	12,965	72,980
Chemistry	11,065	62,505
Physics	8,010	43,150
History	7,625	45,110
English literature	6,900	38,065
Sociology	6,795	46,245
Business studies	6,780	43,785
Economics	6,020	41,590

For AS and A level, the subjects with the most special consideration requests were generally those with the largest number of qualification certifications. Figures for all subjects can be found in the [accompanying data tables](#).

GCSE subjects with the highest number of requests made in summer 2024 with number of qualification certifications

Please note that certifications in combined science are double counted because combined science is the equivalent of 2 GCSE grades.



Subject	Number of requests (component level)	Total qualification certifications
Combined science	118,210	916,080
Mathematics	84,970	816,165
English/English language	63,220	782,020
English literature	54,320	615,220
History	49,650	306,635
Geography	35,340	283,155
Religious studies	28,740	223,035
Spanish	19,505	127,830
French	18,700	129,025

Physics

14,535

172,540

Similar to AS and A level, for GCSE the subjects with the most special consideration requests were those with the largest number of qualification certifications. Figures for all subjects can be found in the [accompanying data tables](#).

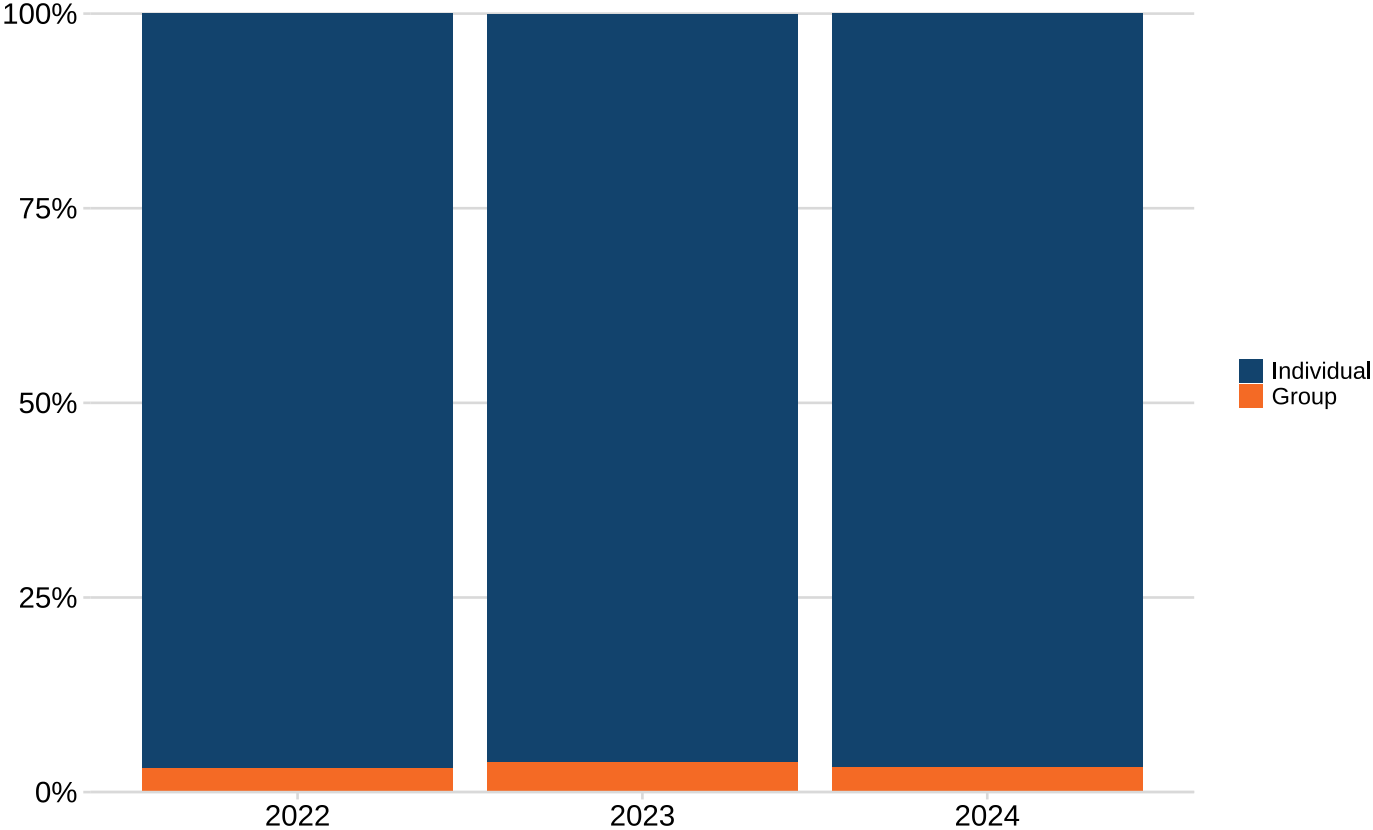
Special consideration applications for individuals and groups

According to [JCQ guidelines](#), special consideration applications can be made either on an individual or group basis. An individual application involves just one student but can relate to one or more assessment components. In cases where a group of students has been affected by the same issue (for example, a fire alarm during an exam), a group application can cover all students and any components affected by the issue.

The total number of applications for individuals and groups is not the same as the total number of special consideration requests. For instance, a group application can represent more than a hundred requests, because requests are counted at individual student and component level.

The chart and table show the percentage of applications relating to individuals or groups as a percentage of all special consideration applications.

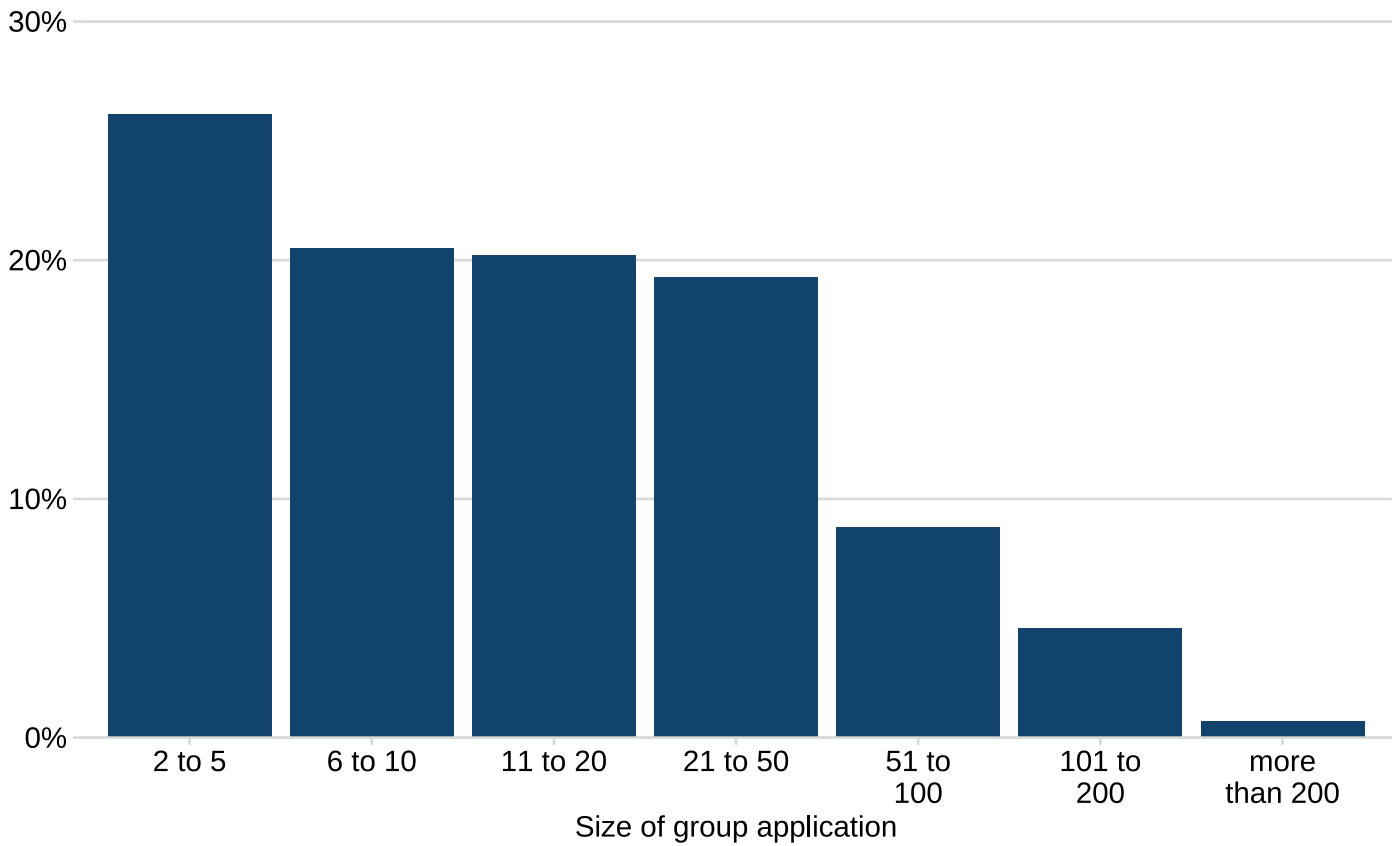
Percentage of applications



Application type	2022	2023	2024
Individual	97.0%	96.2%	96.8%
Group	3.0%	3.8%	3.2%

The chart and table below give a breakdown of group applications in summer 2024 by number of students in the group. For instance, 26.1% of group applications included between 2 and 5 students.

Percentage of group applications

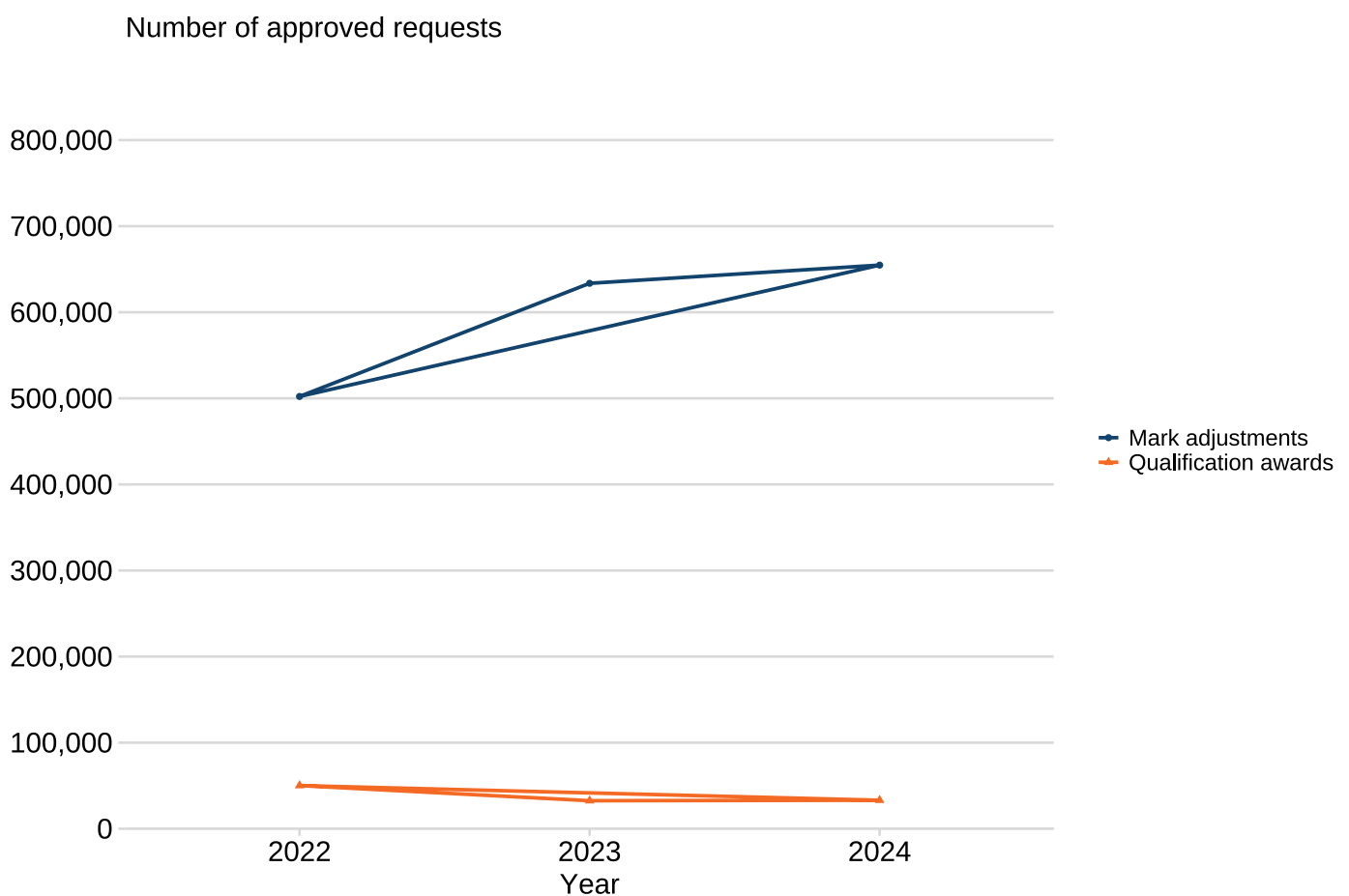


Size of group application	Percentage of all applications	Percentage of group applications
2 to 5	0.8%	26.1%
6 to 10	0.7%	20.5%
11 to 20	0.6%	20.2%
21 to 50	0.6%	19.3%
51 to 100	0.3%	8.8%
101 to 200	0.1%	4.6%
more than 200	less than 0.1%	0.7%

Categories of special consideration

There are 2 categories of special consideration included in this report: mark adjustments and qualification awards. Mark adjustments are for students who were present for the assessment but who might not have been able to demonstrate their ability due to exceptional circumstances occurring at the time of their assessment. Qualification awards are for students who were absent from the assessment for reasons which meet [JCQ's eligibility criteria](#). Further information is provided in the [JCQ guidelines](#).

Most approved requests in summer 2024 were for mark adjustments (95.2%) rather than qualification awards (4.8%), similar to summer 2023 (where mark adjustments and qualification awards constituted 95.1% and 4.9% of approved requests respectively).

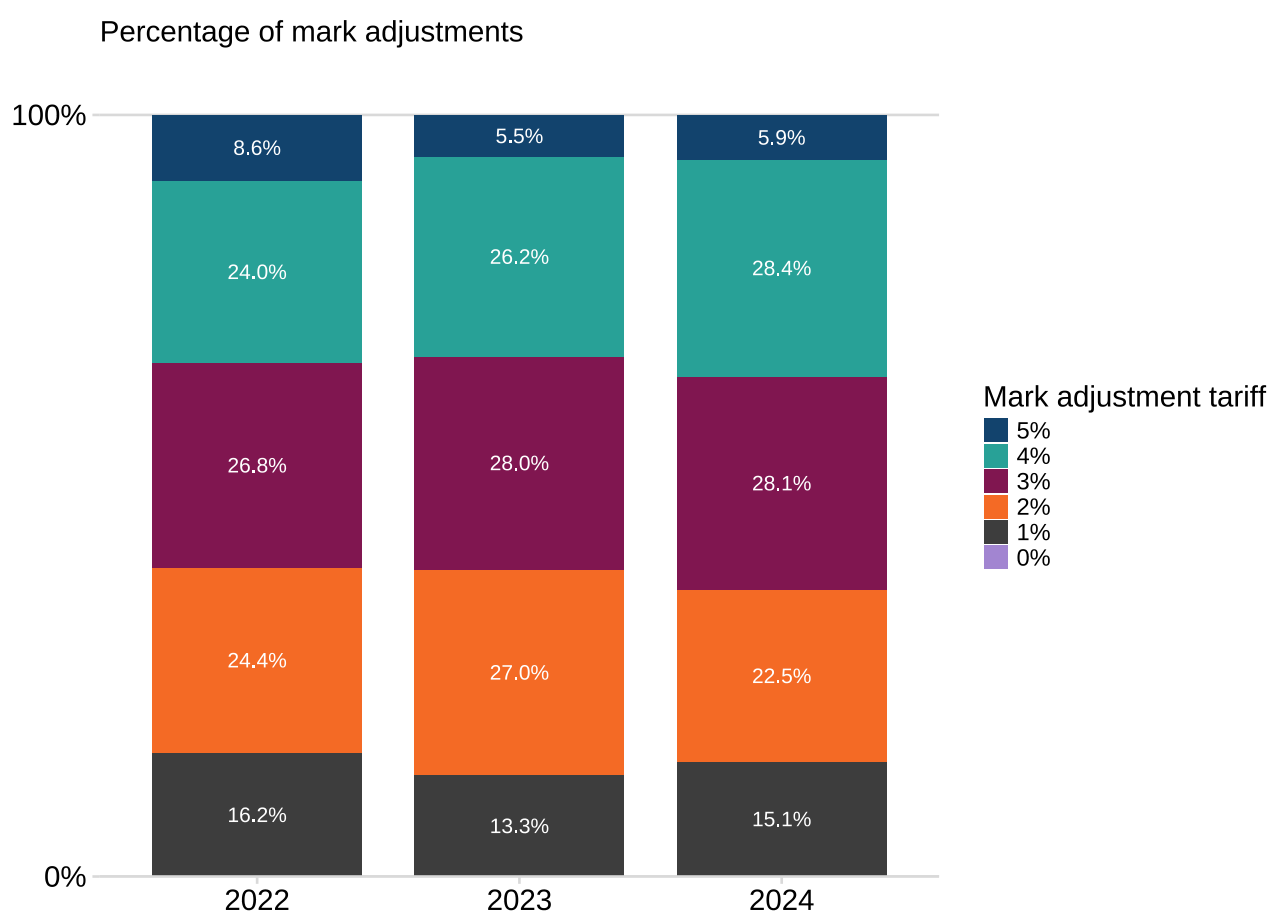


Special consideration type	2022	2023	2024
Number of approved requests for qualification awards	50,135	32,565	33,105
Number of approved requests for mark adjustments	502,165	633,610	654,745

Approved special consideration requests for mark adjustments by tariff

The [guidelines published by JCQ](#) allow for percentage adjustments to the mark given for a student's work according to a tariff of up to 5% of the maximum mark of a question paper.

Mark adjustments in summer 2024 were most frequently made at the 4% tariff (28.4% of mark adjustments), compared to summer 2023 where mark adjustments were most frequently made at the 3% tariff (28.0% of mark adjustments). The chart and table below show the percentage of mark adjustments by tariff.



More information on the 0% tariff can be found in the [accompanying background notes](#).

Mark adjustment tariff	Percentage of mark adjustments in 2022	Percentage of mark adjustments in 2023	Percentage of mark adjustments in 2024
0%	less than 0.1	0.0	less than 0.1

1%	16.2	13.3	15.1
2%	24.4	27.0	22.5
3%	26.8	28.0	28.1
4%	24.0	26.2	28.4
5%	8.6	5.5	5.9

Contextual information

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), a membership organisation of 8 providers of qualifications, including the 4 exam boards offering GCSE, AS and A levels in England, publishes [guidelines and procedures on special consideration](#). There may be small changes year-on-year to this document that reflect the procedures in place for a particular exam series.

Special consideration applications are made by schools and colleges to exam boards, usually after an assessment has taken place. Requests specify which students and which components the application is for. In cases where a group of students has been affected by the same issue (for example, a fire alarm during an exam), a group application can cover all students and any components affected by the issue.

In this release, all values are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data. Data for AS and A level has been combined in this release.

Further information on this release is available in the [background information and data tables accompanying this report](#).

Head of profession: Ben Cuff

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