

REVIEWS OF MARKING AND MODERATION

in GCSE, AS and A level: summer 2018 examination series

Annual

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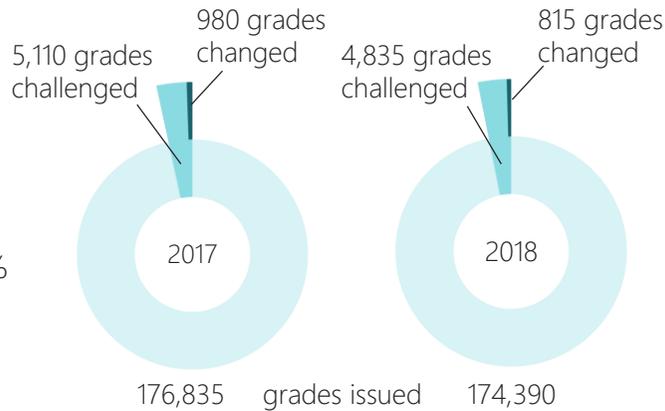
Coverage: Northern Ireland

Official Statistics

This publication presents the numbers of marking and moderation, and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to as reviews) made following the summer 2018 examination series and the resulting numbers of qualification grades challenged and changed.

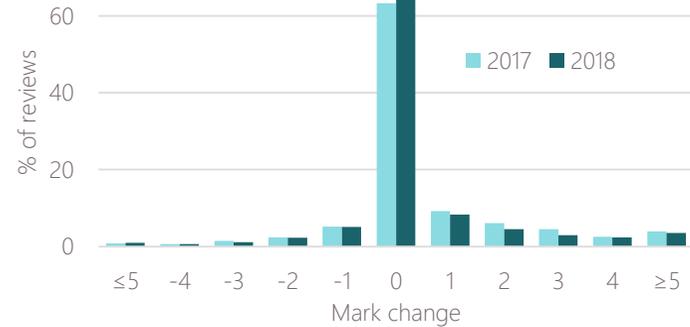
GCSE grades challenged and grades changed

In 2018 0.5% of GCSE grades issued were challenged and changed, this is a decrease from 0.6% in 2017. 2.8% of all grades awarded were challenged.



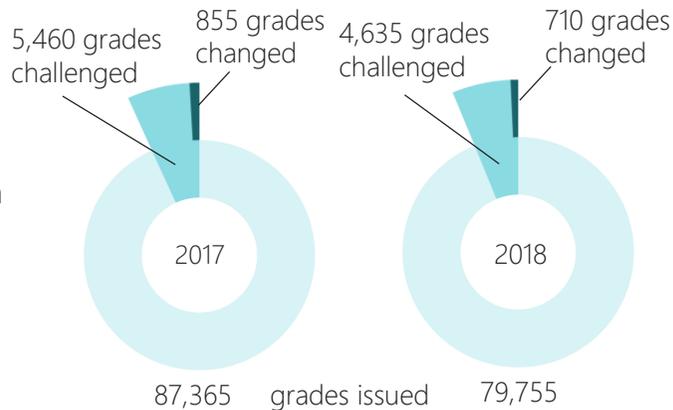
Mark changes

In 2018 65.7% of GCSE and A level reviews resulted in no mark change.



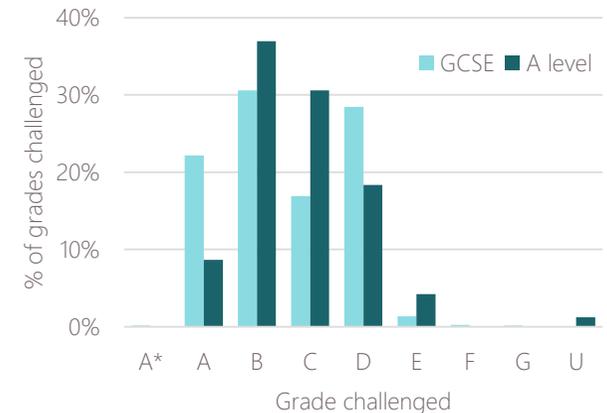
A level grades challenged and grades changed

In 2018 0.9% of A level grades issued were challenged and changed, this is a decrease from 1.0% in 2017. 5.8% of all grades awarded were challenged.



Most commonly challenged grades

The most commonly challenged grade was grade B at both GCSE and A level. In 2018, 30.6% of GCSE grades challenged were grade B and 37.0% for A level.



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REVIEWS OF MARKING AND MODERATION

In this release, CCEA Regulation presents data on all reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to as reviews and formerly known as enquiry about results) requested for all GCSE, AS and A level assessments taken during the summer 2018 examination series.

A whole GCSE or A level qualification usually comprises a number of assessments, e.g. one or more examination units, coursework, controlled assessment units (GCSE only) and sometimes a practical/oral assessment units. Reviews are requested for each assessment unit/component individually and not for the qualification as a whole. Reviews can be requested for multiple assessments that a candidate has taken for one qualification but each is processed and reported on separately. This is why the total number of qualification grades challenged is always lower than the total number of requests for reviews of marking, because more than one request can be made for each qualification. Reviews of moderation differ from reviews of marking in that they involve a number of candidates (see explanation below). Because the vast majority of reviews requested are reviews of marking the review of moderation requests do not usually impact significantly on the statistics. Each awarding organisation board offers three services for reviewing the marking of examination papers and non-examination assessment:

- An administrative error review for an individual assessment, sometimes called a clerical check (Service 1)
- A review of marking for an individual assessment (Service 2: priority or non-priority)
- A review of moderation of the centre’s internal assessment using the sample of candidates’ work that was used in the initial moderation (Service 3).

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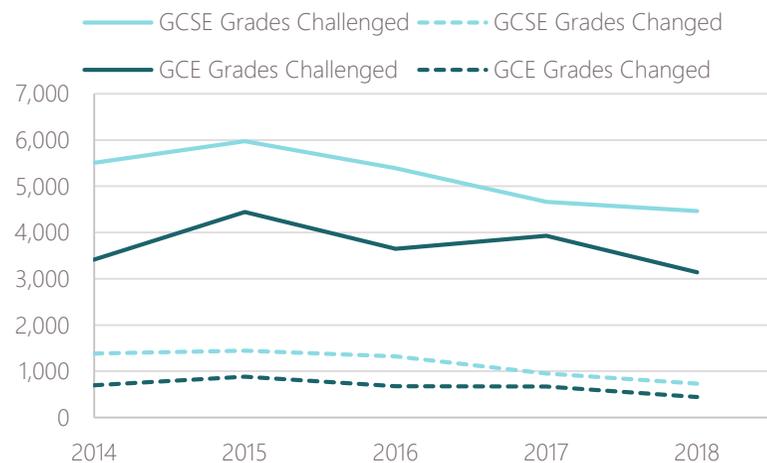
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Previously Northern Ireland reviews of marking and moderation figures were published by Ofqual. For the 2017/18 examination series onwards CCEA Regulation will be publishing all statistics for general qualifications in Northern Ireland. Historical figures in this year’s report reflect Northern Ireland only figures and may therefore differ from previously published figures. In this release all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality. Further information on this release is available in the background information as well as data tables accompanying this report.

Number of reviews, grades challenged and grades changed by service type

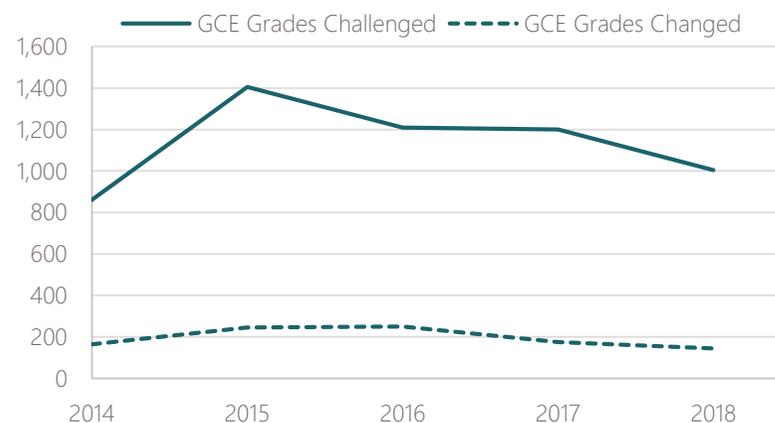
In 2018 8,265 reviews were requested for GCSE, an decrease of 9.3% from 2017 (9,110 reviews). This may be partly attributable to the 3.4% decrease in GCSE entries over the same period. At A level 7,510 reviews were requested, a decrease of 21.4% from 2017 (9,560 reviews). This reflects changes in entries which are down 7.5% at A level. The tables and charts below show the breakdown of reviews, grades challenged and grades changed by service type. There has been a year-on-year decrease in challenges to GCSE and A level grades from 2015 which continued into 2018.

Non-priority reviews of marking



	GCSE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	9,065	8,230 ▼	-9.2%
Grades challenged	4,665	4,470 ▼	-4.2%
Grades changed	955	810 ▼	-15.1%
	GCE (AS and A level)		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	7,085	5,445 ▼	-23.1%
Grades challenged	3,930	3,140 ▼	-20.1%
Grades changed	670	495 ▼	-26.0%

Priority reviews of marking

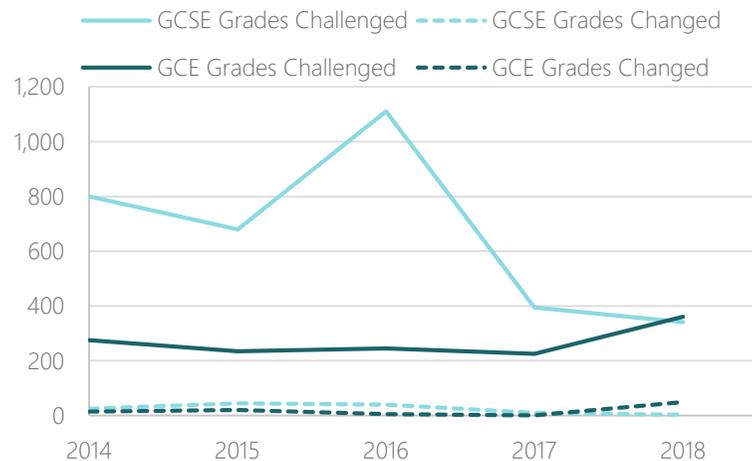


	GCE (AS and A level)		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	2,415	1,975 ▼	-18.1%
Grades challenged	1,200	1,005 ▼	-16.3%
Grades changed	175	145 ▼	-17.1%

N.B. Only Pearson and WJEC offer priority reviews at GCSE and due to very small numbers of Pearson and WJEC GCSEs in NI there were no Priority reviews at GCSE in NI in 2017 or 2018

Both the number of reviews of moderation and number of administrative reviews for GCSE have decreased from 2017 to 2018 (-24.0% and -20.0% respectively). For A level, however, the numbers of reviews have increased by 17.5% and 105.0% for both reviews of moderation and administrative reviews.

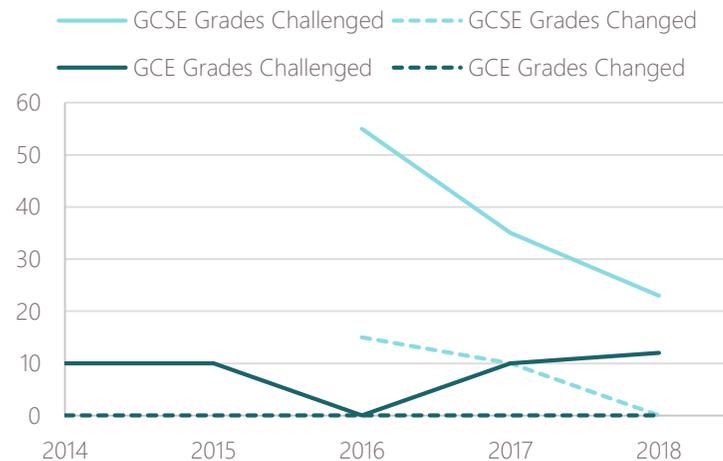
Reviews of moderation



	GCSE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	25	20	▼ -24.0%
Grades challenged	395	340	▼ -13.7%
Grades changed	10	0~	▼ -70.0%
	GCE (AS and A level)		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	40	45	▲ 17.5%
Grades challenged	225	360	▲ 60.4%
Grades changed	0~	50	–

N.B. The number of grades challenged and changed through review of moderation is higher than the number of reviews because one review of moderation is a review of all candidates taking a specific unit or component in the same centre. See the background information document for more information.

Administrative Reviews

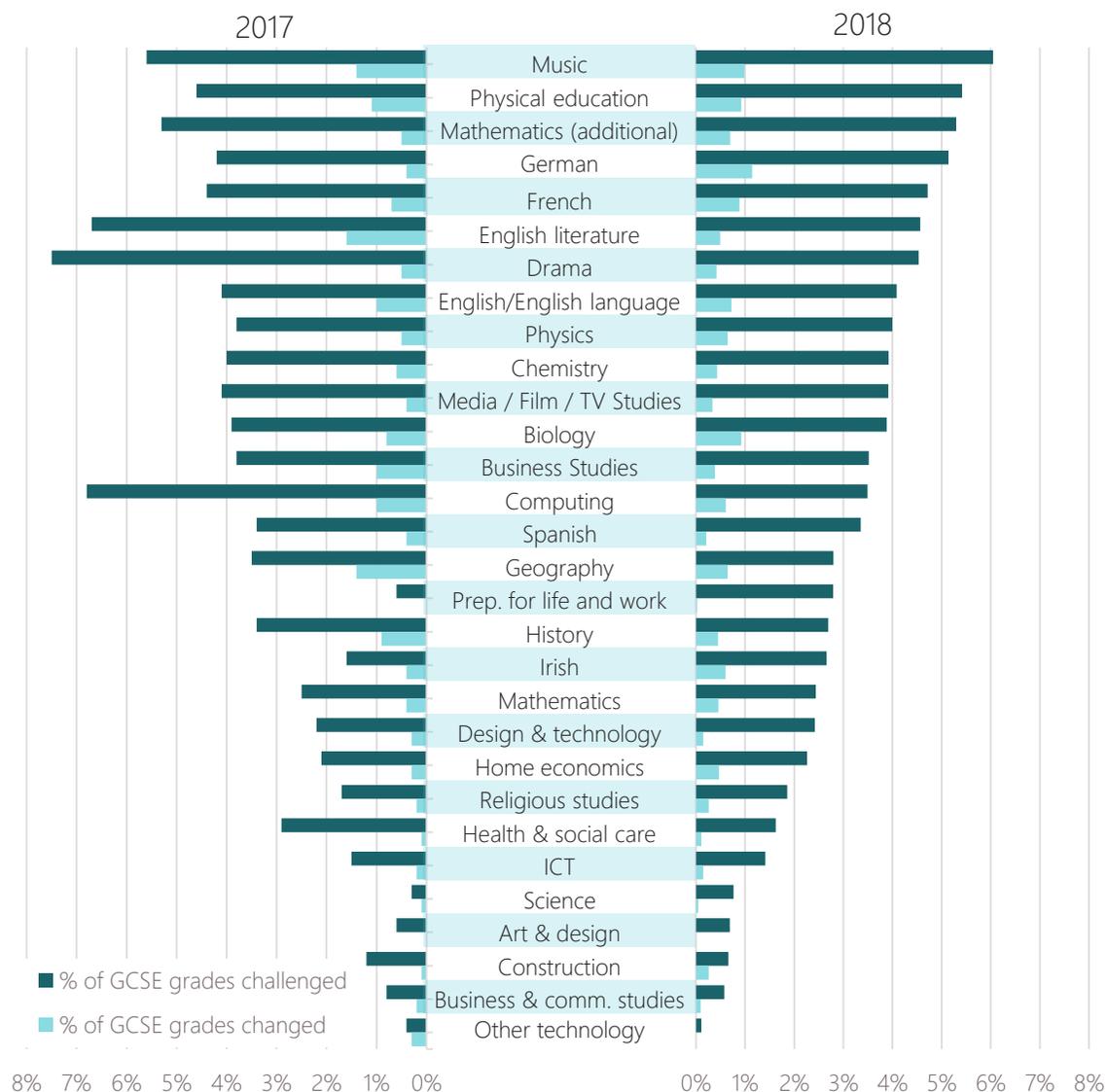


	GCSE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	20	15	▼ -20.0%
Grades challenged	10	0~	▼ -80.0%
Grades changed	0	0	–
	GCE (AS and A level)		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	20	40	▲ 105.0%
Grades challenged	10	10	▲ 20.0%
Grades changed	0	0	–

Figures presented in this section are reported in full in the accompanying data.

Grades challenged and grades changed by subject

GCSE grades challenged and changed by subject group



In 2018 the proportion of GCSE grades challenged varied between subjects from 6.1% for music to 0.1% for Other technology. There was less variation in proportion of grades changed between subjects which ranged from 1.7% for German to 0% for Prep. for life and work and Other technology. This differs from 2017 when the greatest proportion of grades challenged was in Drama (7.5%) and the lowest was Science (0.3%)

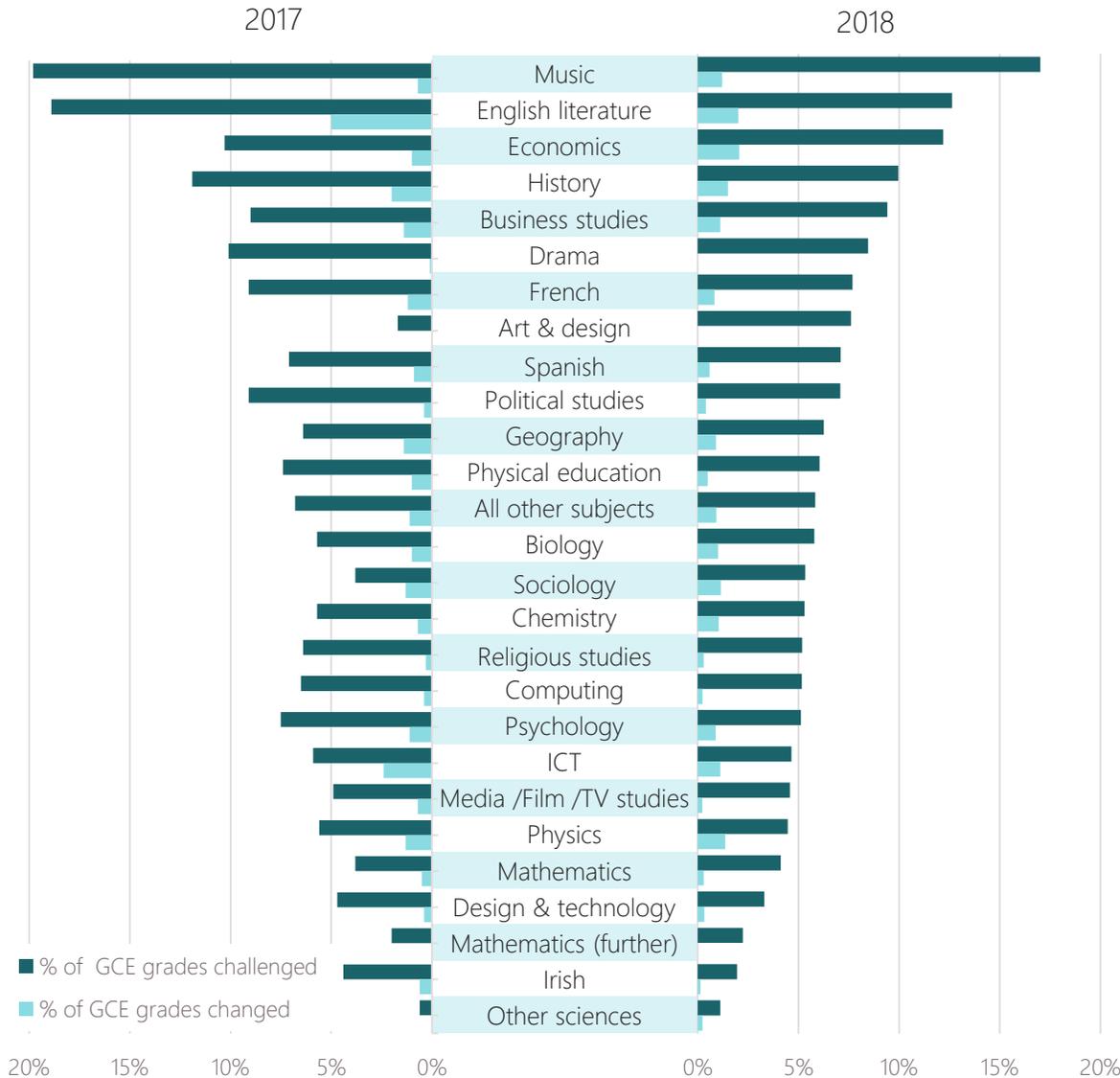
In 15 out of the 30 subjects presented here the percentage of qualification grades that were challenged and subsequently changed was lower in 2018 than in 2017.

Notable amongst these decreases is in English literature – in 2017 23.2% of the 680 grade challenges resulted in a grade change. In 2018 only 15.2% of 460 grade challenges resulted in a grade change.

Geography (-16.2%) and Business Studies (-15.9%) also had large decreases in the percentage of grades challenged that were changed. French (+8.3%) and Mathematics (additional) (+4.5%) grade changes were up as a percentage of grades challenged.

Figures presented in this section are reported in full in table 7 of the accompanying data. Only subjects with more than 500 entries in 2018 are presented in this section.⁵

A level grades challenged and changed by subject group



The proportion of A level grades challenged greatly varied between subjects in 2018 from 17.0% for music to 1.1% for Other sciences. There was less variation in proportion of grades changed between subjects which ranged from 3.2% for Drama to 0.1% for Irish which had one awarded grade changed.

Music was also the most challenged subject in 2017 with 17.0% of grades awarded challenged. The overall proportion of grades changed was smaller in 2018 (15.4%) than in 2017 (15.7%) – this was largely driven by the decrease in grade changes in English literature where the proportion of changed grades fell from 5.0% to 2.2% (a decrease of 130 grade changes).

In 14 out of the 27 subjects included in this chart the percentage of qualification grades that were challenged and subsequently changed was lower in 2018 compared to 2017.

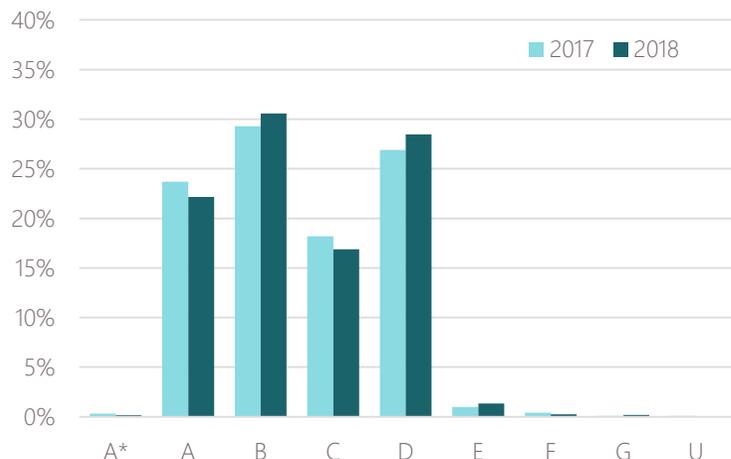
The most notable amongst these decreases is in Psychology – in 2017 39.7% of the 65 grade challenges resulted in a grade change. In 2018 28.3% of 45 grade challenges resulted in a grade change.

Figures presented in this section are reported in full in table 7 of the accompanying data. Only subjects with more than 500 entries in 2018 are presented in this section.

Original grades subject to review

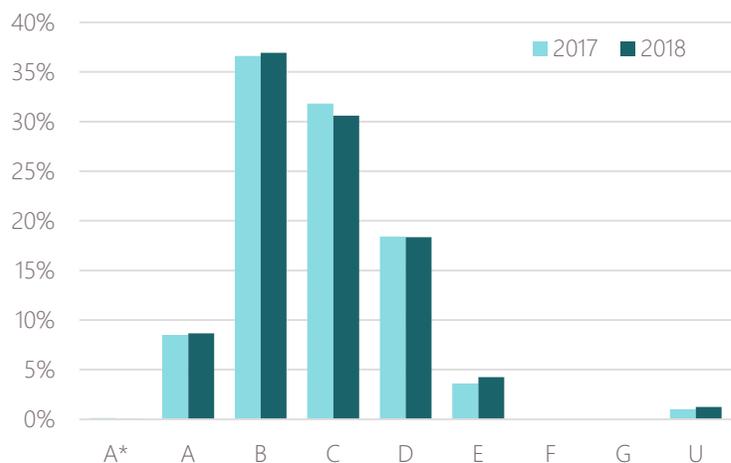
The charts below show the original grades awarded for GCSE and A level that were subject to review

GCSE A* to G



For GCSE A* to G, the most commonly challenged grade was B (1,410 or 30.6% of all GCSE grades challenged). This was true in 2017 also, however, the percentage of grades challenged with an original grade of B was lower in 2017 (29.3%). There were slight decreases in the proportion of grades challenged at grades A and C.

A level A* to E



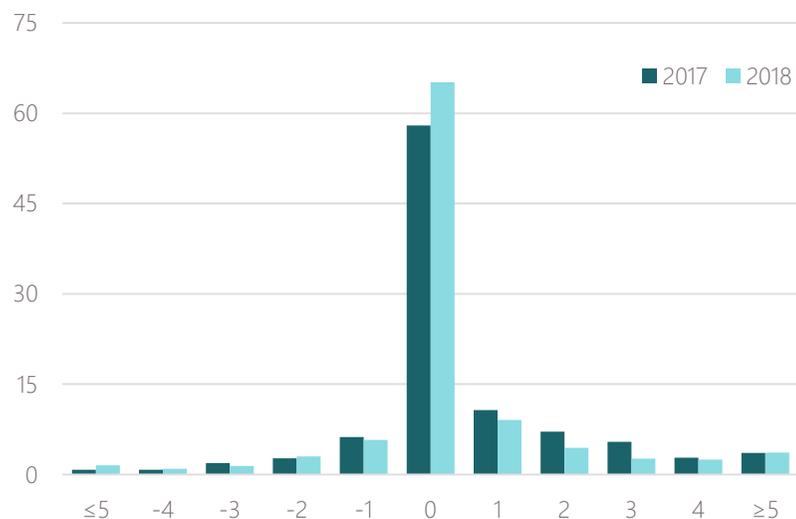
For A level, the most commonly challenged grade was B (1,630 or 37.0% of all grades challenged), followed by C (1,355 or 30.7% of all grades challenged). There was very little difference between the proportion of grades challenged at each grade between 2017 and 2018.

Raw mark changes

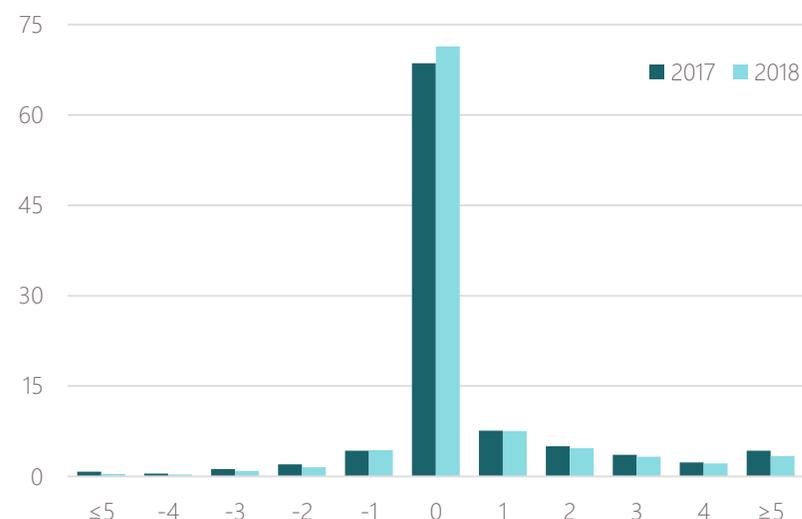
The charts below show the distribution of all raw mark changes following review. Raw mark changes described in this section relate to the difference in the mark given to a single unit, component or subcomponent before and after review.

In the majority of cases (65.7%), there was no mark change. 79.7% of all reviews resulted in either no mark change or a change of one mark, and 5.1% of reviews resulted in a mark change of five marks or more. When marks were changed, they more often went up than down, with 69.3% of reviews resulting in a mark change receiving an increase in marks.

Distribution of GCSE raw mark changes



Distribution of A level raw mark changes

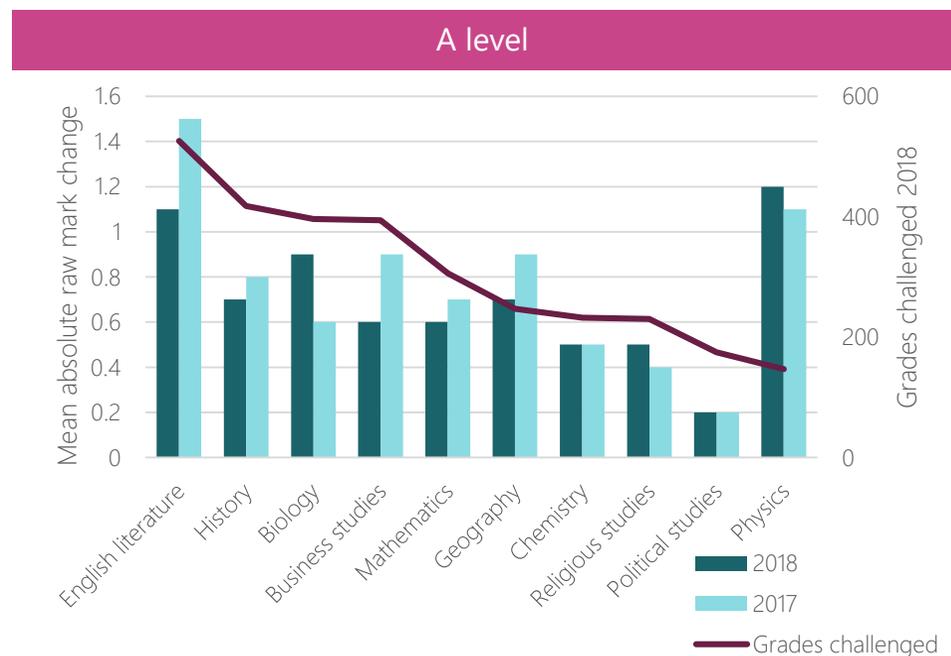
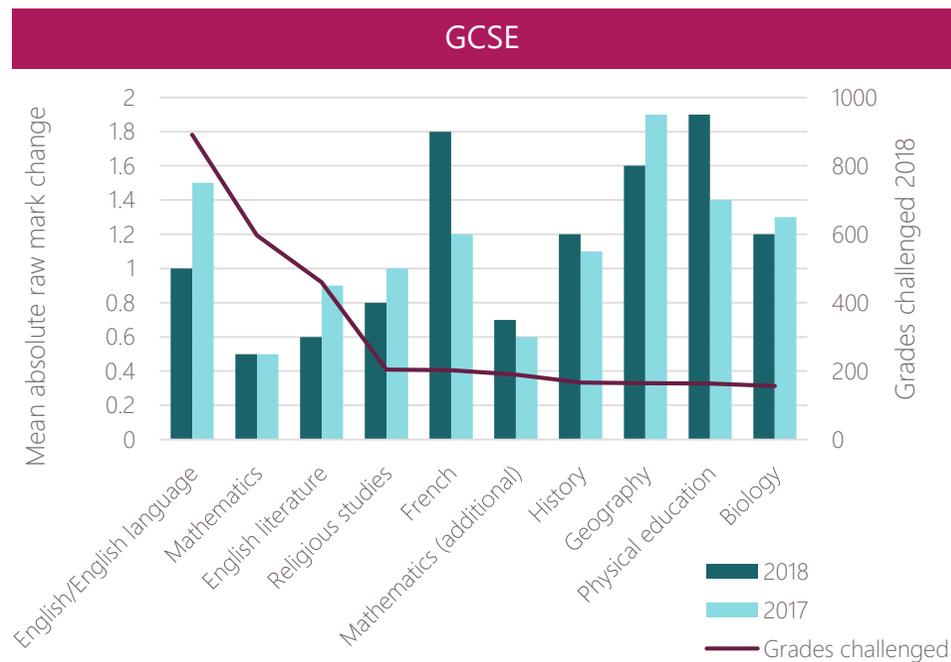


N.B. The figures underlying this section can be found in table 10 of the accompanying data.

Mean absolute raw mark change

These graphs show the mean (average) absolute raw mark change for the ten GCSE and A level subjects with the highest number of grades challenged. The subjects are ordered by number of grades challenged in 2018, the subject with the highest number of grades challenged appears first in the chart. As explained previously, raw mark changes are the differences in the mark given to a single unit, component or subcomponent before and after review. The absolute mark change is the mark change expressed as a positive value and the mean is calculated using all absolute mark changes, including mark changes of zero. The mean absolute mark change in 2018 was never greater than two marks across subjects and qualification levels. To put this in context, the average maximum mark for units, components and subcomponents that were reviewed across all subjects and qualification levels was 78 marks.

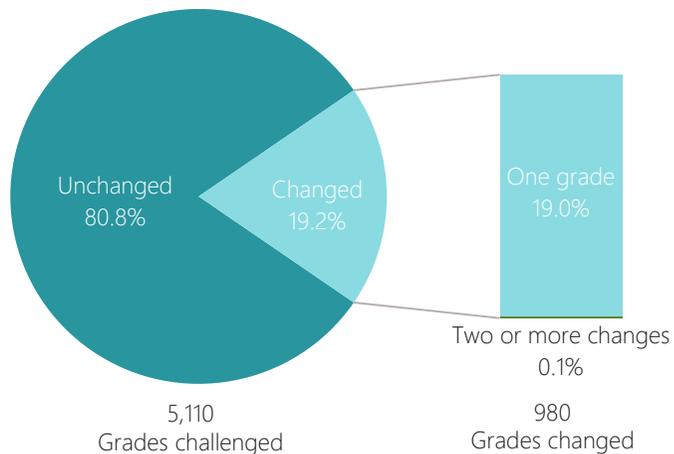
For GCSE the subject with the lowest average absolute mark changes was mathematics and those with the highest were French (1.8), Physical Education (1.9) and Geography (1.6). This is likely to reflect the nature of the assessment which is more subjective in subjects like modern foreign languages and humanities than in subjects such as mathematics and sciences.



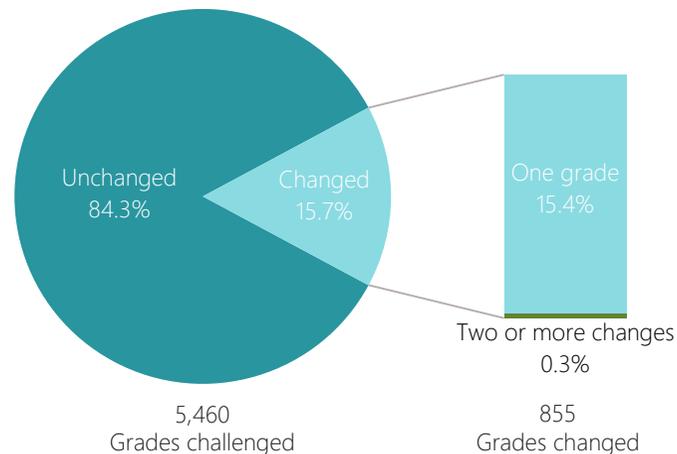
Grades changed following review

These charts show the magnitude of grade changes made following review. Most GCSE and A level reviews in 2017 and 2018 (84.2%) do not result in a grade change. When grades were changed they were usually changed by just one grade (one grade up or down), 99.0% of all grade changes were changes of one grade. In 2018 there were 16 changes of two or more grades across GCSE and A level.

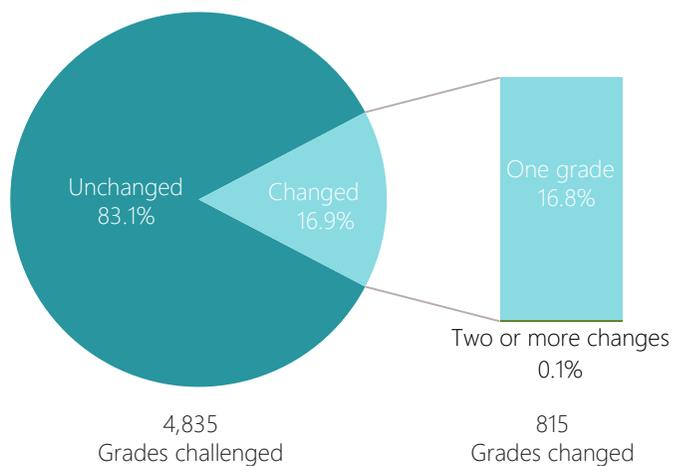
2017 GCSE



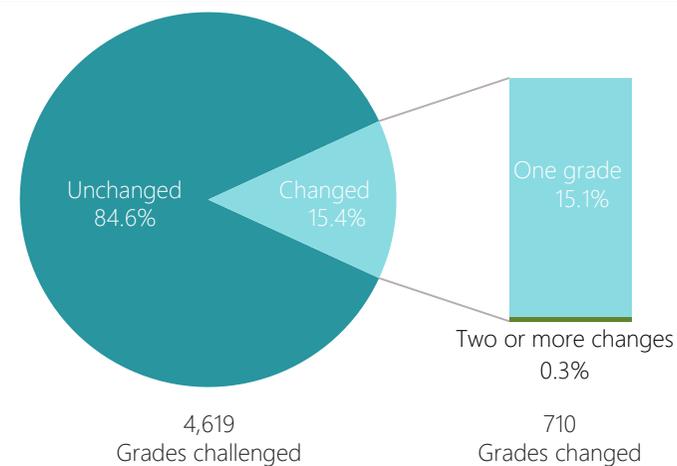
2017 A level



2018 GCSE



2018 A level



GCSE units/components with the highest percentage of entries reviewed

The table below shows the percentage of unit/component entries reviewed and the percentage of reviews resulting in a mark change for the 10 units/components taken by more than 500 candidates with the highest percentage of reviews of marking requested (99.6% of reviews are reviews of marking).

The 10 GCSE units/components with the largest proportion of entries reviewed

Exam Board	Unit code	Unit/component title	Number of reviews	% of total entries reviewed	% of reviews resulting in a mark change
CCEA	G9741 1	PHYSICAL EDUCATION PAPER 1	155	5.9	84.7
CCEA	GGE21 1	GERMAN UNIT 2:WRITING	50	5.4	68.0
CCEA	G9704 1	MUSIC PAPER 3-2 (WRITTEN EXAM)	70	4.8	64.7
CCEA	G9251 1	DRAMA PAPER 1 (EXAM)	65	4.7	15.6
CCEA	GEG21 1	ENGLISH LANG/ENGLISH UNIT 2(F)	180	4.4	42.5
CCEA	GMF21 1	FURTHER MATHS UNIT 2	155	4.3	53.9
CCEA	GFR21 1	FRENCH UNIT 2:WRITING	180	4.2	57.3
CCEA	GEG22 1	ENGLISH LANG/ENGLISH UNIT 2(H)	520	4.1	37.9
CCEA	GMF11 1	FURTHER MATHS UNIT 1	140	4.1	28.3
CCEA	GBU11 1	Business Studies Unit 1	115	4.0	71.7

Figures presented in this section are reported in full in the accompanying data.

A level units/components with the highest percentage of entries reviewed

The table below shows the percentage of unit/component entries reviewed and the percentage of reviews resulting in a mark change for the 10 units/components taken by more than 500 candidates with the highest percentage of reviews of marking requested (95.7% of reviews are reviews of marking).

At A level, the units with the highest percentage of entries reviewed are mainly English language and English literature. This likely reflects the importance of results in these subjects for candidates and centres. All of the top ten units are in humanities, the prominence of these subjects such as languages, history and economics is likely to be due to the assessments being more subjective in nature than subjects such as mathematics and the sciences. In qualifications which have a high proportion of non-exam assessment (such as music and drama), there are fewer units/components that can be subject to reviews of marking. It is therefore possible that higher rates of reviews are seen for examined units/components in these qualifications as the reviews are concentrated in one or two units/components. Even though the units/components below have the highest percentage of reviews requested, they do not necessarily have the highest percentage of mark changes.

The 10 A level units/components with the largest proportion of entries reviewed

Exam Board	Unit code	Unit/component title	Number of reviews	% of total entries reviewed	% of reviews resulting in a mark change
CCEA	SEL11 1	AS Eng Lit Unit 1 (Poetry)	265	11.5	19.3
CCEA	SEL11 2	AS Eng Lit Unit 1 (Drama)	265	11.5	23.1
CCEA	SEL21 1	AS English Literature Unit 2	235	10.5	28.8
CCEA	SEC21 1	AS Economics Unit 2	50	10.2	25.0
CCEA	AEL11 1	A2 English Literature Unit 1	135	8.0	22.6
CCEA	SEP31 1	AS Spanish Unit 3 (ExtWriting)	55	7.9	9.4
CCEA	SFR31 1	AS French Unit 3 (Ext Writing)	50	7.9	25.5
CCEA	AEL21 1	A2 English Literature Unit 2	105	6.4	17.8
CCEA	AHY21 4	Partition of Ireland 1900-1925	100	6.1	9.0
CCEA	ABU21 1	A2 Business Studies Unit 2	85	6.1	9.6

Figures presented in this section are reported in full in the accompanying data.