



Special Consideration for GCSE, AS and A level:

**Background information accompanying statistical release for
summer 2018 examination series – Northern Ireland**

Information about the statistics

Purpose

This release presents figures on the number of special consideration requests for GCSE, AS and A levels submitted by centres¹ to awarding organisations for examinations and non-timetabled assessments sat in summer 2018.

Geographical coverage

This report presents data on special consideration in Northern Ireland (NI). Five awarding organisations offer GCSE and A level qualifications in Northern Ireland:

- AQA Education (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson)
- WJEC-CBAC Ltd. (WJEC)²

These five awarding organisations are members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) which closely monitors examination administration and conduct in England, Wales and NI.

Description

The qualifications covered in this release are regulated by CCEA Regulation. CCEA Regulation [publishes conditions](#) that set out the requirements the awarding organisations it regulates have to meet. These conditions state that an awarding organisation must have in place clear arrangements for Special Consideration to be given to learners in relation to qualifications which it makes available. In this release, special consideration refers to a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness or injury, or some other event outside their control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on their ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration requests relate to a single request for a candidate sitting a specific unit or component in an examination/assessment. In this release, individual applications refer to an application from one candidate, which can encompass either one or more units for that candidate. Group applications refer to an application, which can encompass more than one candidate if they have been affected by the same circumstance. In this case, a group application can cover all the candidates and the potentially affected assessments. The Joint

¹ A centre is a school, college or training organisation which enters candidates for qualifications

² Schools were [issued guidance](#) by the Department of Education informing centres that WJEC GCSEs and A levels would not be available for schools in NI to use from September 2017. This is the last summer series for which schools would have entered candidates for WJEC GCSEs or A levels in NI.

Council for Qualifications (JCQ) provides a [guide](#) to applying for Special Consideration for GCSEs, AS and A levels and this highlights the types of special consideration, which include:

- extra marks for a candidate whose examination performance is affected by temporary illness, injury or unforeseen incident; and
- awarding the qualification even though the candidate has not completed all the assessments that would normally be required.

Adjustments reported on in this release may be given to candidates who were present for an assessment but disadvantaged due to temporary injury, illness, indisposition or other unforeseen incident occurring immediately before or during the assessment period. JCQ's procedures allow for only relatively minor adjustments to a candidate's mark: up to 5% of the maximum mark of a unit/component.

For a list of criteria and corresponding tariffs, please see JCQ's [Guide to Special Consideration](#).

External Influences

There are various factors which over time which might influence the number of special consideration requests made for GCSE and A level assessments. These should be considered when making comparisons between the data in this release and those in previous years. Factors which may influence the numbers of special consideration requests:

- The introduction of new GCSE specifications (first examined 2018) and A level specifications (first examined 2017) has meant some changes in structure and the balance of non-examined assessment and examinations. Some have additional units/components. Therefore, data between years may not be comparable.
- Changes to the minimum completed assessment requirement to qualify for an enhanced grade award

Data source

Awarding organisations submit data to Ofqual for GCSEs, AS and A levels they award. Ofqual process these data returns and share them with CCEA regulation. The first year Ofqual collected data at candidate level and by subject for special consideration requests was 2017. Because of this, candidate level data tables include data for 2017 and 2018 only. Data on individual and group applications were also collected for the first time in 2017.

From 2016 onwards, the number of non-timetabled assessments have also been reported along with the number of scripts marked.

Data for AS and A level have been combined in this release. To aid comparison with previous years, withdrawn requests have been kept in the total number of requests. Withdrawn requests refer to instances where centres have withdrawn the original application and have

reapplied, at which point it is treated as a new application. In 2018, only 10 of the 39,030 requests were withdrawn.

Limitations

There is potential for error in the information provided in that CCEA Regulation cannot guarantee that the information received from awarding organisations is correct. However, summary data are sent back to awarding organisations for checking and confirmation before publishing. In addition, Ofqual compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues

Revisions

Once published, data are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or to correct an error.

Confidentiality and rounding

To ensure confidentiality of the accompanying data, all figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. If the value is less than 5 (1 to 4), it is represented as 0~ and 0 represents zero values.

Total values of rows or columns are calculated using unrounded figures; the sum of rounded figures may differ from the total reported.

All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, except where smaller magnitudes are needed for meaningful interpretation. As a result of rounded figures, the percentages (calculated on actual figures) shown in tables may not necessarily add up to 100.

Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

Useful links

Previous releases of Special Consideration statistics for Northern Ireland as well as those for England and Wales can be found [here](#).

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 ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk.

We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us at ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

This publication is available at ccea.org.uk/regulation/statistics.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

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