

# Reviews of marking and moderation GCSE, GCE and Project: summer 2018 series

Annual

Published: 13 December 2018

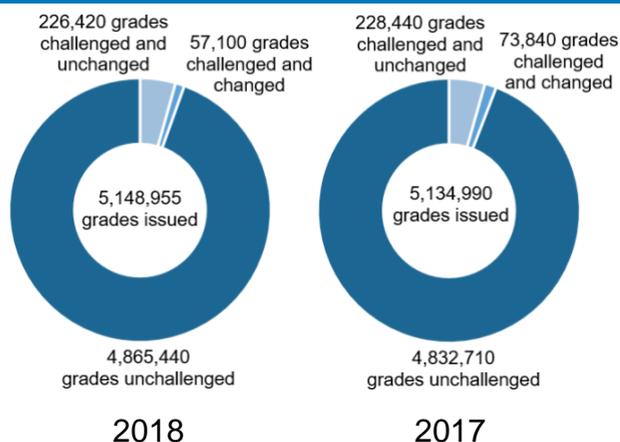
Coverage: England

Official Statistics

This release presents the number of reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to as 'reviews') for GCSE, GCE (AS and A level) and Project qualifications made following the summer 2018 exam series and the number of qualification grades challenged and changed as a result.

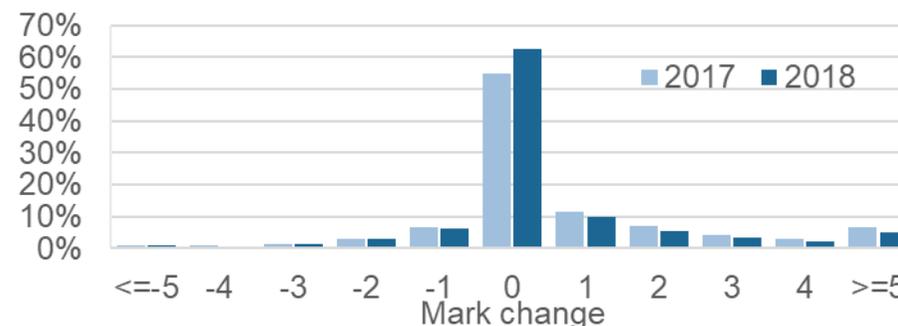
## GCSE grades challenged and changed

5.5% of all GCSE grades awarded were challenged and 1.1% of grades awarded were changed (down from 5.9% and 1.4% respectively in 2017). 20.1% of all grades challenged were changed (down from 24.4% in 2017).



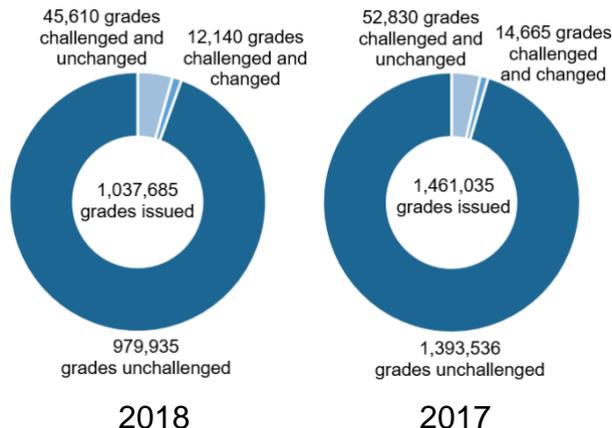
## Unit mark changes

63% of GCSE and GCE reviews resulted in no unit mark change, this has increased from 55% in 2017.



## GCE grades challenged and changed

5.6% of all GCE grades awarded were challenged and 1.2% of grades awarded were changed (up from 4.6% and 1.0% respectively in 2017). 21.0% of all grades challenged were changed (down from 21.7% in 2017).



## Most commonly challenged grades

A\* to G GCSE

D

25% of A\* to G grades challenged were grade D

9 to 1 GCSE

3

27% of 9 to 1 grades challenged were grade 3

GCE

B

33% of GCE grades challenged were grade B

## At a glance

Page

**Number of reviews, qualification grades challenged and changed by service type** 3

**Grades challenged and changed by subject** 5

**Original qualification grades subject to review** 7

**Raw mark changes following reviews** 8

**Average absolute raw mark change** 9

**Grades changed following reviews** 10

**Average review response times** 11

**Units/components with the highest percentage of reviews** 12

**Project reviews** 14

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Comments and feedback are welcome.

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## Reviews of marking and moderation

This report presents data on requests for reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to throughout this release as ‘reviews’ and formerly known as enquiries about results) made to exam boards in GCSE, GCE (AS and A level) as well as Project qualifications for the summer 2018 exam series in England.

A whole qualification (eg A level Physics) will comprise a number of assessments. Reviews are submitted for each assessment individually. Often reviews are submitted for multiple assessments that a student has taken for one qualification or, in some cases, multiple reviews are requested for the same assessment (eg an administrative error review may be requested and then a review of marking).

In 2018, 43% of students whose qualification grades were challenged had more than one review submitted for that qualification. This is why the total number of qualification grades challenged is lower than the total number of reviews. Reviews of moderation are different, as one review involves a number of students. However, the vast majority of reviews requested (99%) are reviews of marking.

Each exam board offers three services for reviewing the marking of exam papers and non-exam assessment:

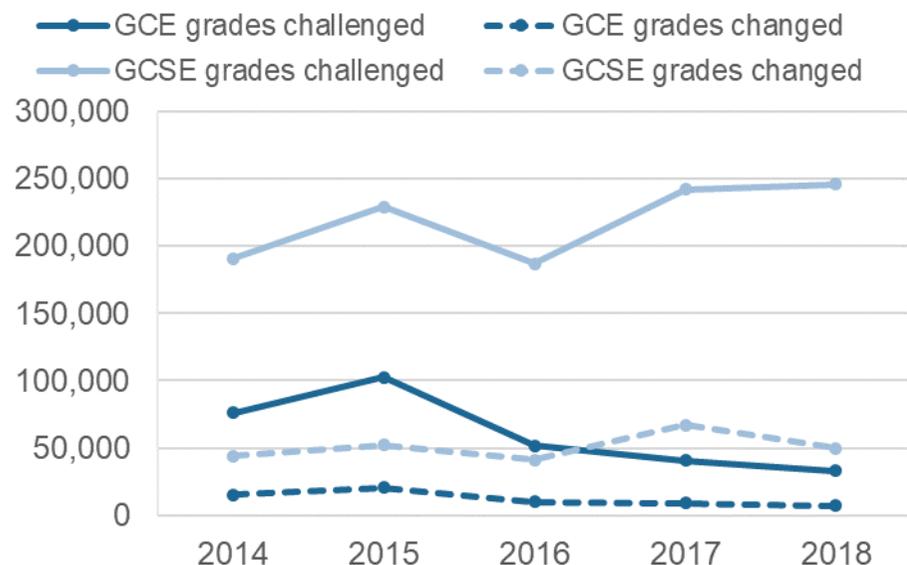
- An administrative error review for an individual assessment (“Service 1”)
- A review of marking for an individual assessment (“Service 2” priority and non-priority). This includes an administrative error review as well
- A review of moderation of the school or college’s internal assessment using the sample of students’ work that was used in the initial moderation (“Service 3”).

AS and A level reviews are presented together in this report but caution should be taken in making comparisons across time as the number of entries to AS has declined considerably over recent years (see background notes for more information). In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5. 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

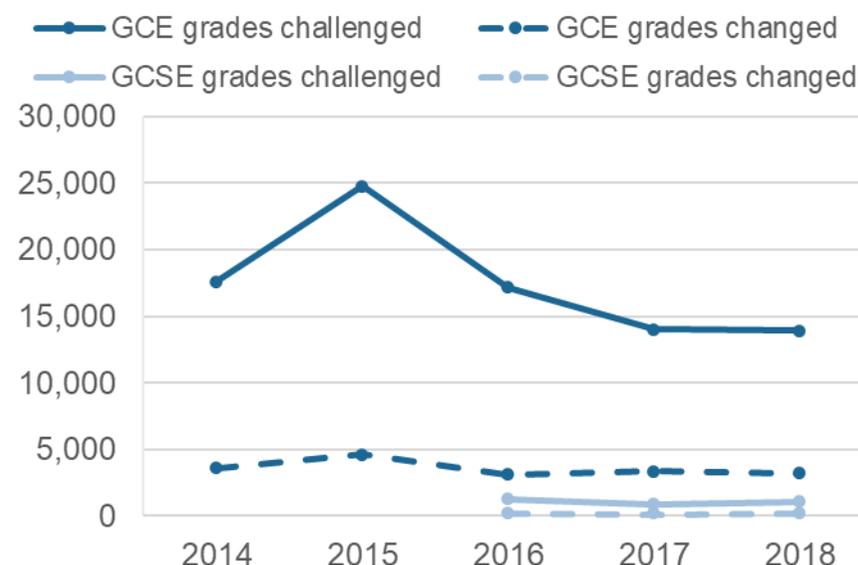
At GCSE, 442,540 reviews were requested, an increase of 4% from 2017 (425,075 reviews). At GCE 89,060 reviews were requested, a drop of 7% from 2017 (95,845 reviews). This reflects changes in entries which are down 25% at GCE, mainly due to a drop in the number of AS entries. The tables and charts below show the breakdown of reviews, grades challenged and grades changed by service type.

### Non-priority reviews of marking



	GCSE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	419,460	436,790	↑ 4%
Grades challenged	241,885	245,590	↑ 2%
Grades changed	67,210	49,920	↓ -26%
	GCE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	66,955	59,140	↓ -12%
Grades challenged	40,580	33,160	↓ -18%
Grades changed	9,370	7,345	↓ -22%

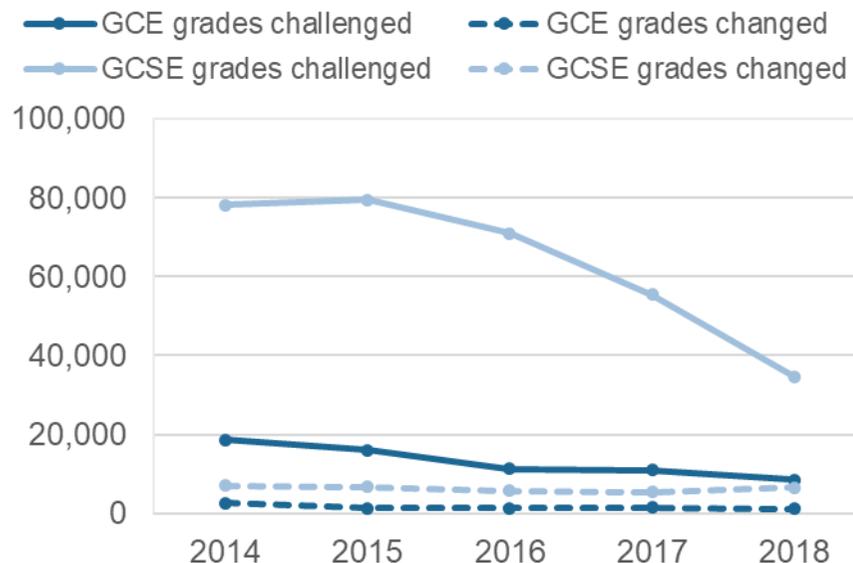
### Priority reviews of marking



	GCSE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	1,735	2,125	↑ 22%
Grades challenged	910	1,065	↑ 17%
Grades changed	195	210	↑ 8%
	GCE		
	2017	2018	% change
Reviews	27,075	28,445	↑ 5%
Grades challenged	14,025	13,920	↓ -1%
Grades changed	3,360	3,225	↓ -4%

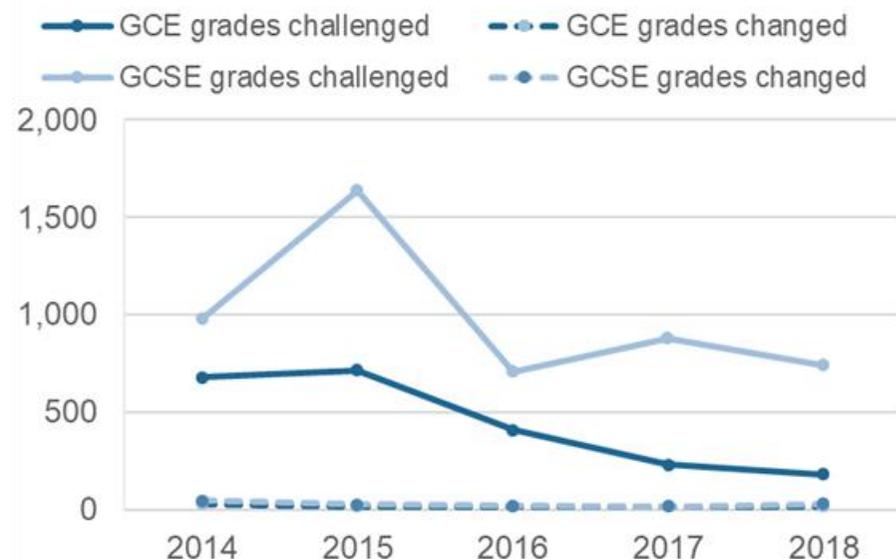
Note. Only Pearson offer priority reviews of marking at GCSE. They introduced this service in 2016.

## Reviews of moderation



	GCSE			
	2017	2018		% change
Reviews	1,765	1,660	↓	-6%
Grades challenged	55,430	34,655	↓	-37%
Grades changed	5,410	6,490	↑	20%
	GCE			
	2017	2018		% change
Reviews	1,345	1,105	↓	-18%
Grades challenged	10,845	8,425	↓	-22%
Grades changed	1,490	1,105	↓	-26%

## Administrative error reviews



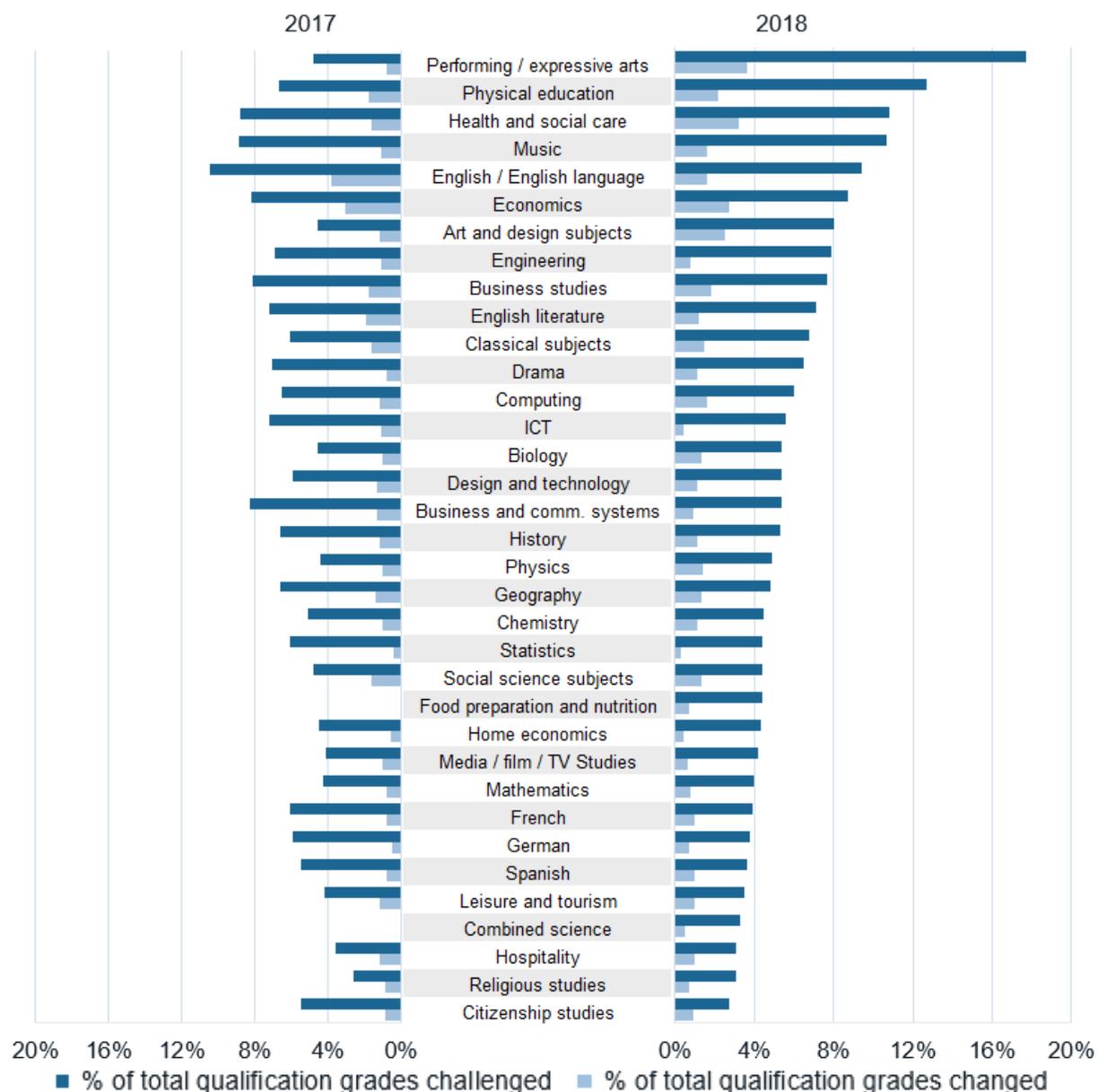
	GCSE			
	2017	2018		% change
Reviews	2,110	1,965	↓	-7%
Grades challenged	880	795	↓	-10%
Grades changed	15	40	↑	167%
	GCE			
	2017	2018		% change
Reviews	470	370	↓	-21%
Grades challenged	230	180	↓	-22%
Grades changed	15	15	→	0%

Note: The number of grades challenged and changed through reviews of moderation is higher than the number of reviews because one review involves a number of students, see [background information](#) for more details. The reduction in the number of reviews of moderation requested in recent years is likely to be due to the change to reformed qualifications which have a smaller amount of non-exam assessment and therefore fewer moderated components.

Note: Underlying figures are reported in Tables 3 to 6 in the accompanying [data](#).

# Grades challenged and grades changed by subject

## GCSE grades challenged and changed for each subject, 2017 and 2018



There is some variation in the percentage of grades challenged across GCSE subjects in 2018 (range: 2.7% to 17.7%). The percentages are shown here as dark blue bars. The percentage of GCSE qualification grades that were changed following reviews (shown here as light blue bars) varies between 3.6% and 0.3%.

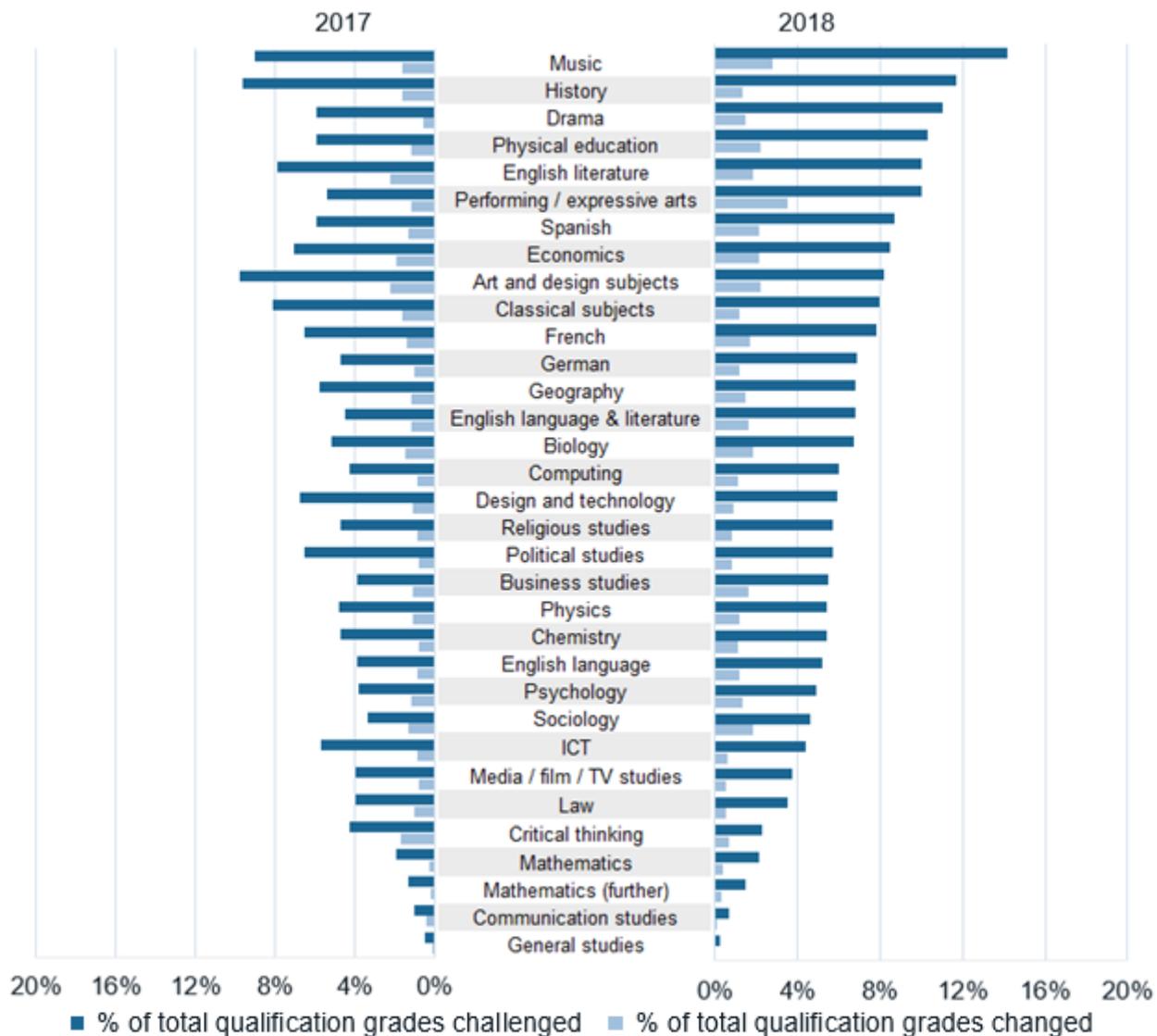
Last year, the percentage of GCSE qualification grades challenged ranged from 2.0% to 10.5% and the percentage of qualification grades changed ranged from 0.4% to 3.8%.

In 21 out of 35 subjects, the percentage of qualification grades that were challenged was lower in 2018 compared to 2017. In 18 out of 35 subjects the percentage of qualification grades changed was higher in 2018 compared to 2017.

Some of the subjects with large percentages of qualification grades challenged in 2018 are newly reformed this year and also have a non-exam assessment requirement. It is possible that insufficient familiarity with the assessment criteria led to more uncertainty in these qualifications, and a greater number of grades challenged and changed.

Note: In 2017, performing/expressive arts included specifications related to 'performing arts', 'expressive arts' and 'dance', but in 2018 contains only 'dance' specifications. Underlying figures are reported in Table 7 in the accompanying [data](#).

## GCE grades challenged and changed for each subject, 2017 and 2018



As with GCSE, there was some variation in the percentage of grades challenged across GCE subjects in 2018 (range: 0.2% to 14.2%). The percentage of GCE qualification grades that were changed following reviews varies between 3.5% and 0.0%.

Last year, the percentage of GCE qualification grades challenged ranged from 0.5% to 9.8% and the percentage of qualification grades changed ranged from 0.1% to 2.2%.

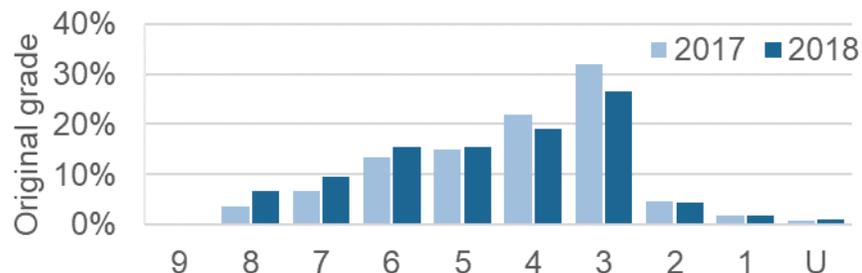
In 23 out of 33 subjects, the percentage of qualification grades that were challenged was higher in 2018 compared to 2017. In 22 out of 33 subjects the percentage of qualification grades changed was higher in 2018 compared to 2017.

Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 8 in the accompanying [data](#).

## Grades subject to review

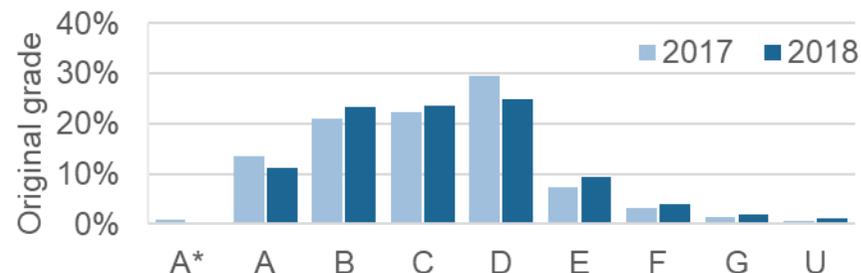
The charts below show the original qualification grades of students whose grades were subject to review. For GCSE, changes over time should be interpreted with caution as many subjects moved from GCSE A\* to G to the new GCSE 9 to 1 awards in 2018 as part of qualification reform, whereas GCSE 9 to 1 grades were only awarded in 3 subjects in summer 2017 (see background information).

### GCSE 9 to 1



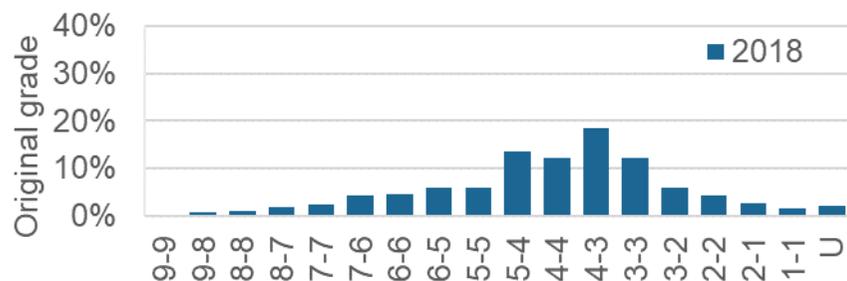
For GCSE 9 to 1, the most commonly challenged grade was 3 (62,620 or 27% of all grades challenged). This is likely to reflect the importance of attaining a “standard pass” of grade 4 or above. Comparisons over time are difficult to make as the number of 9 to 1 grades challenged in 2018 (235,120) was much higher than in 2017 (131,500) due to more 9 to 1 GCSE grades being awarded in 2018.

### GCSE A\* to G



For GCSE A\* to G, the most commonly challenged grade was D (5,870 or 25% of all grades challenged). Comparisons over time are difficult to make as the number of A\* to G grades challenged in 2018 (23,530) was much lower than in 2017 (170,570) due to the majority of GCSE grades awarded in 2018 being for reformed GCSEs on the 9 to 1 scale.

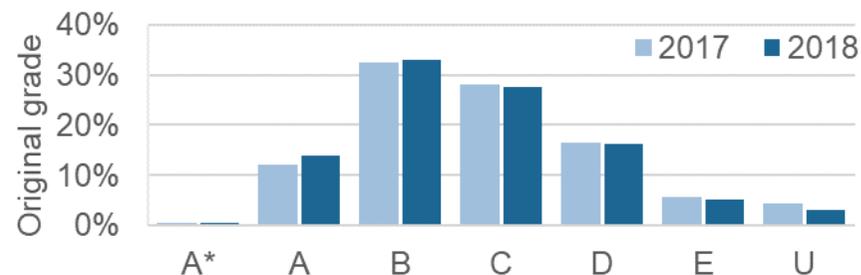
### GCSE 9-9 to 1-1



GCSE combined science was awarded for the first time in summer 2018 and has a 17-point grading scale from 9-9 to 1-1. The most commonly challenged grade was 4-3 (2,310 or 19% of all grades challenged). As with GCSE 9-1, this is likely to reflect the importance of achieving a grade 4-4 or above for certain progression destinations.

Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 9 in the accompanying [data](#).

### GCE



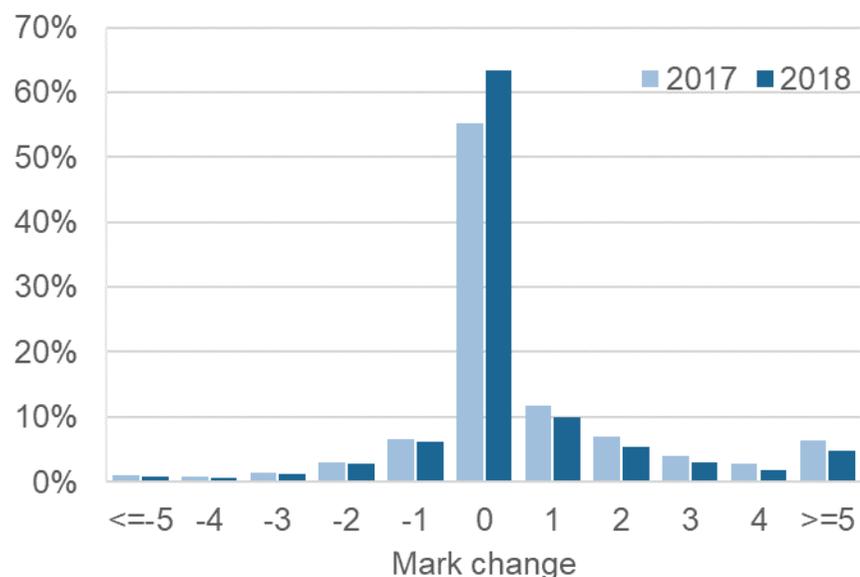
For GCE, the most commonly challenged grade was B (19,070 or 33% of all grades challenged), closely followed by C (16,000 or 28% of all grades challenged).

## Raw mark changes

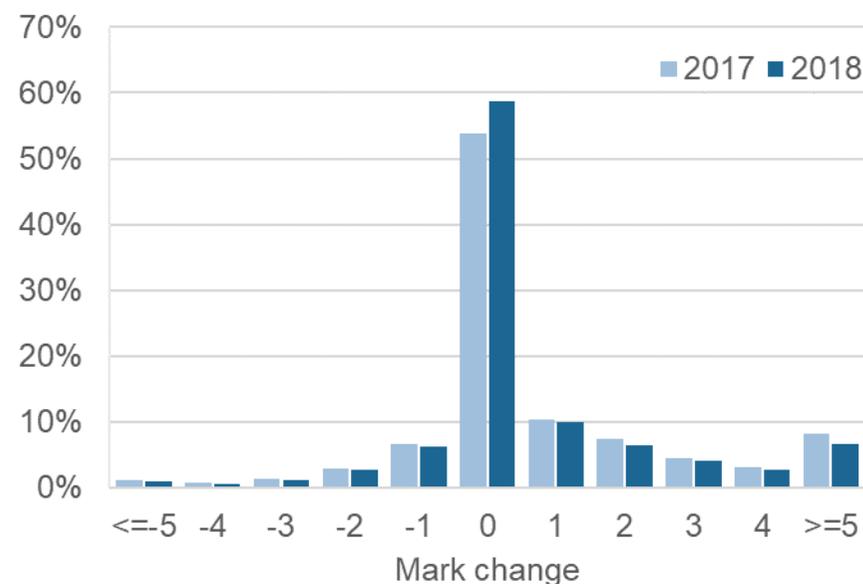
The charts below show the distribution of all raw mark changes following review. Raw mark changes described in this section relate to the difference in the mark given to a single unit, component or subcomponent before and after review.

In the majority of cases (63%), there was no mark change. Over three quarters (79%) of all reviews resulted in either no mark change or a change of one mark, and less than 6% of reviews resulted in a mark of change of five marks or more. When marks were changed, they were more likely to go up than down, with 69% of reviews that resulted in a mark change receiving an increase in marks. For both GCSE and GCE the percentage of reviews resulting in no mark change has increased in summer 2018 compared to summer 2017. This may reflect a more consistent application of revised rules around reviews by exam boards since their introduction by Ofqual in 2016 (see background information).

### Distribution of GCSE raw mark changes



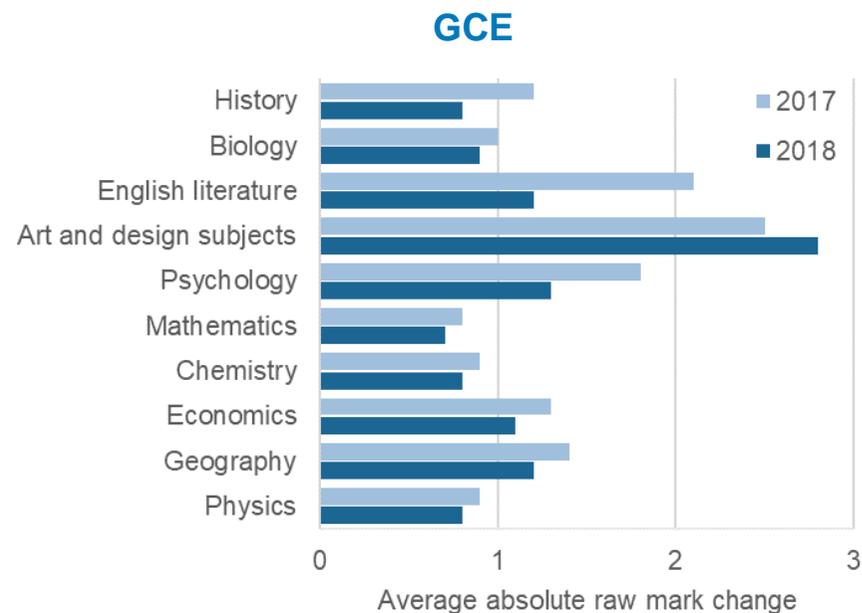
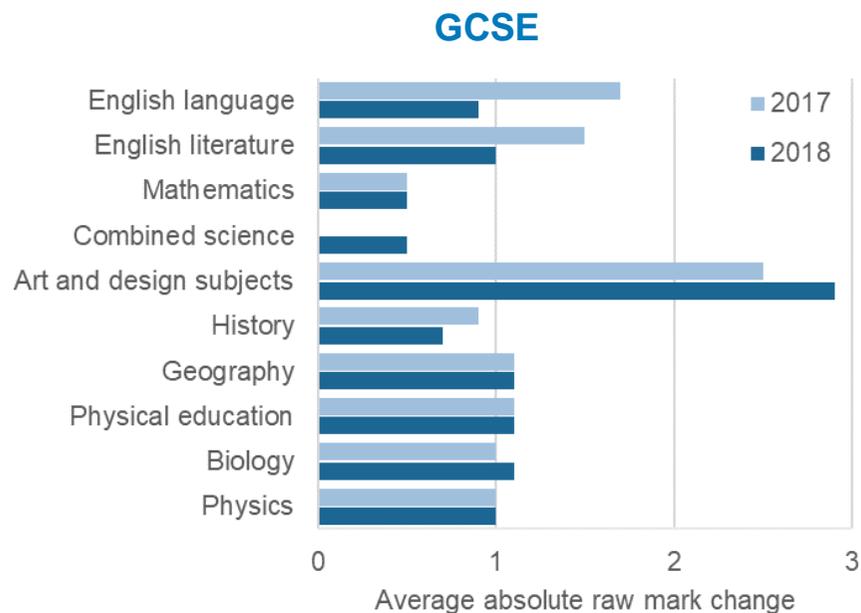
### Distribution of GCE raw mark changes



Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 10 in the accompanying [data](#).

## Average absolute raw mark change

The charts below show the average absolute raw mark change for the 10 GCSE and GCE subjects with the highest number of grades challenged. The subjects are ordered by number of grades challenged; the subject with the highest number of grades challenged appears at the top of the chart. As mentioned above, raw mark changes relate to the difference 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 average is calculated using all absolute mark changes, including mark changes of zero. The average absolute mark change in 2018 was never greater than 3 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 80 marks.



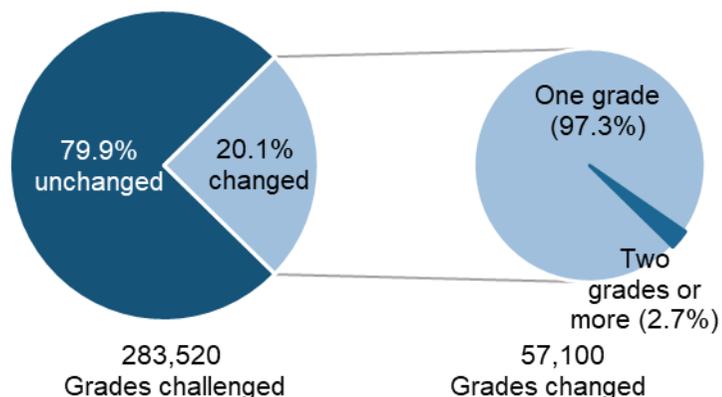
Across both qualification levels, the subjects with the lowest average absolute mark changes tend to be mathematics and the sciences and those with the highest tend to be arts subjects (and, at GCE, English subjects) with the humanities and modern foreign languages falling in between. This pattern is likely to reflect the nature of the assessment which is more subjective in the arts and English for example than in subjects like mathematics and the sciences. Generally, the average absolute mark changes presented in the charts appear to be relatively stable between years despite changes to qualifications due to reform (mainly affecting GCSE subjects in summer 2018). Reductions seen in the average absolute mark change for English subjects in 2018 compared to 2017 are likely to be due to exam boards being more consistent in applying rules for reviews this year (see the [background information](#) for more information).

Note: GCSE combined science was awarded for the first time in 2018. Underlying figures and all other subjects are reported in Table 11 in the accompanying [data](#).

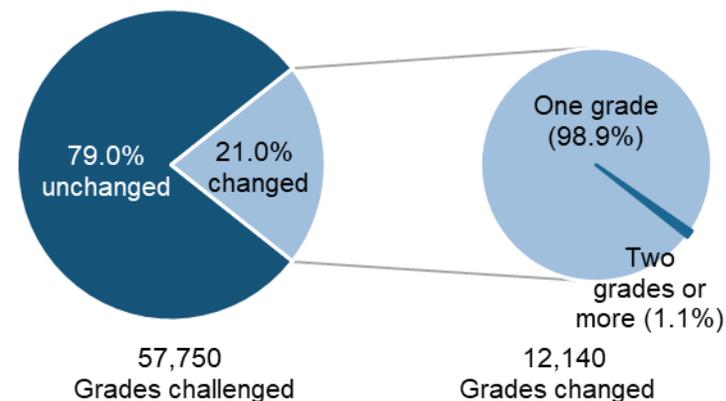
## Grades changed

The charts below show the magnitude of grade changes made following review. In the majority of cases (79% of all GCSE and GCE grades challenged), there was no grade change following review. When grades were changed, they were most commonly changed by just one grade – 98% of all grade changes were changes of one grade. Very few students had their grades changed by two grades or more – in 2018, 0.5% of all grades challenged resulted in a grade change of two grades or more, this figure was the same in 2017. This relates to 0.03% of all GCSE and GCE grades awarded. The charts below show a breakdown of grade changes by GCSE and GCE.

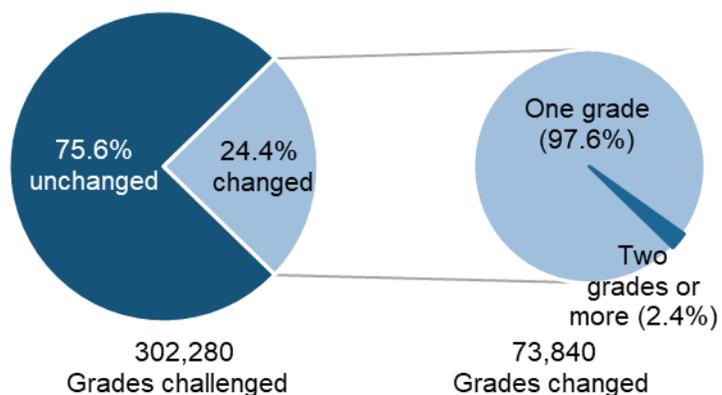
### 2018 GCSE



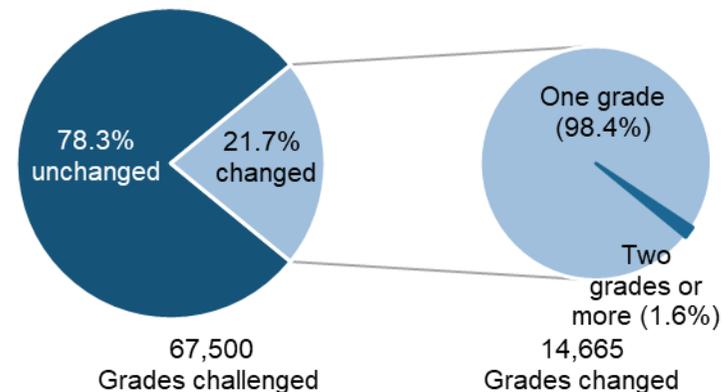
### 2018 GCE



### 2017 GCSE



### 2017 GCE

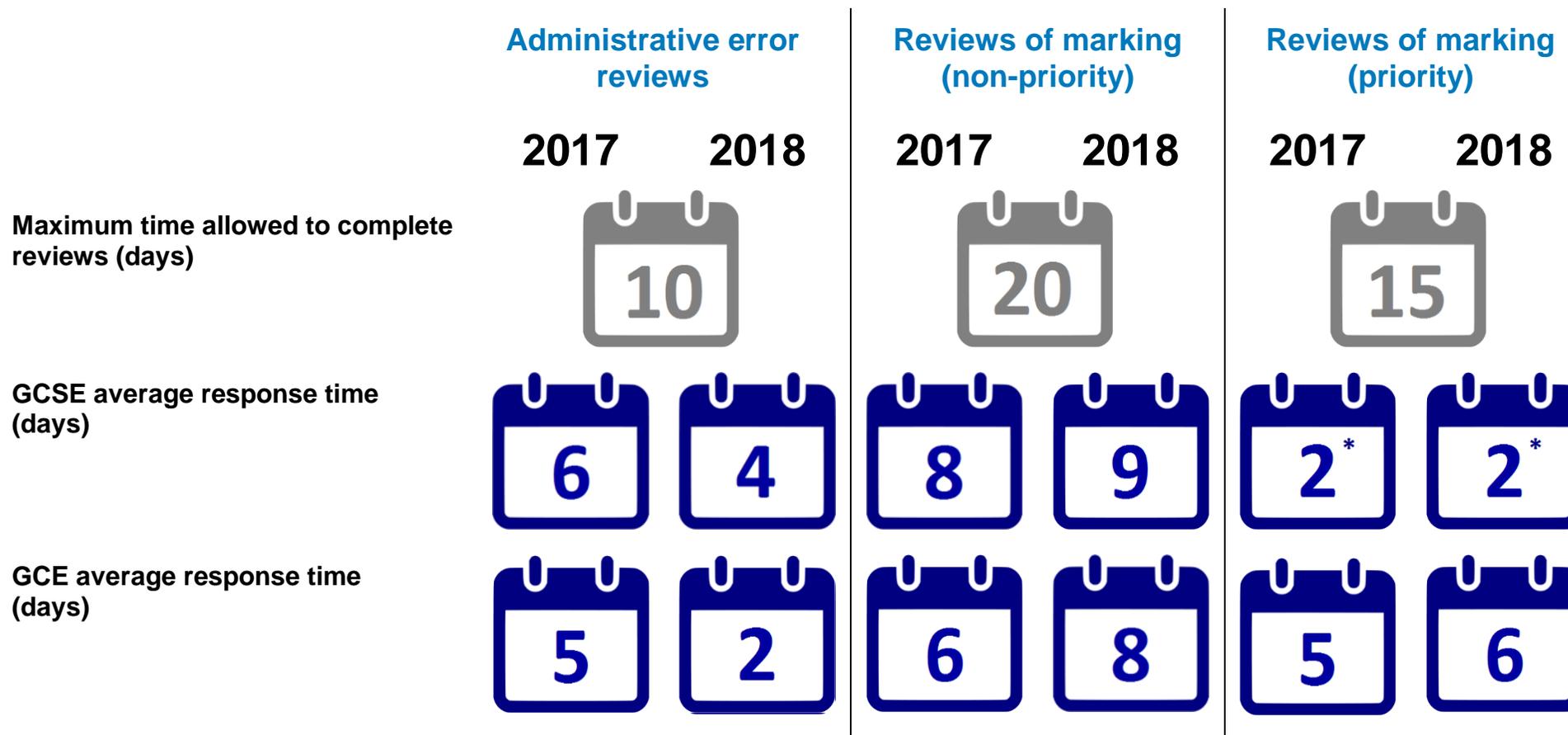


Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 12 in the accompanying [data](#).

## Average response times

In this section, the average time taken in days to respond to reviews is presented for reviews of marking (priority and non-priority) and administrative error reviews. The exam boards collectively decide their own maximum timescales for completing reviews and reporting the outcome.

In the majority of cases (99.7%), reviews were completed well within the maximum time allowed.



\*Priority reviews of marking at GCSE are only offered by Pearson.

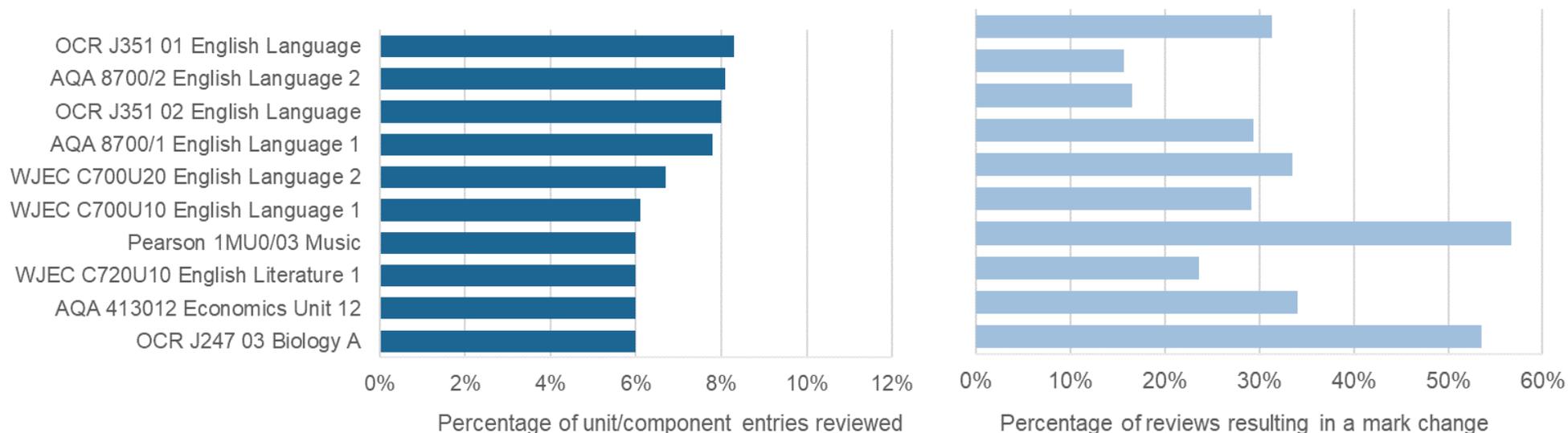
Note: The underlying figures for these charts and the breakdown of average time taken to complete reviews of moderation for each exam board are reported in Tables 3 and 4 in the accompanying [data](#).

## Units/components with the highest percentage of entries reviewed

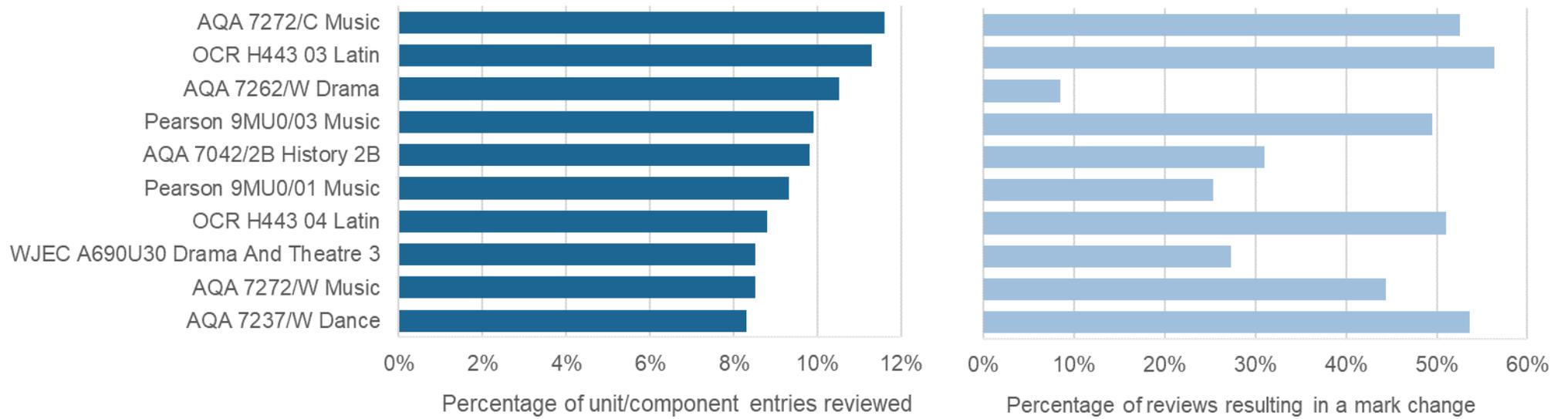
The charts below show the percentage of unit/component entries reviewed and the percentage of reviews resulting in a mark change for the 10 units/components taken by more than 1,000 students with the highest percentage of reviews of marking requested (99% of reviews are reviews of marking, priority and non-priority).

At GCSE, the units/components with the highest percentage of entries reviewed are mainly English language components. This is likely to reflect the importance of results in these subjects for students, schools and colleges. At GCE, the prominence of subjects such as Latin, music and drama 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 components that can be subject to reviews of marking as there are fewer examined components. It is therefore possible that higher rates of reviews are seen for examined components in these qualifications as the reviews are concentrated in one or two 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 GCSE units/components with the highest percentage of entries with reviews of marking requested



## The 10 GCE components with the highest percentage of entries with reviews of marking requested

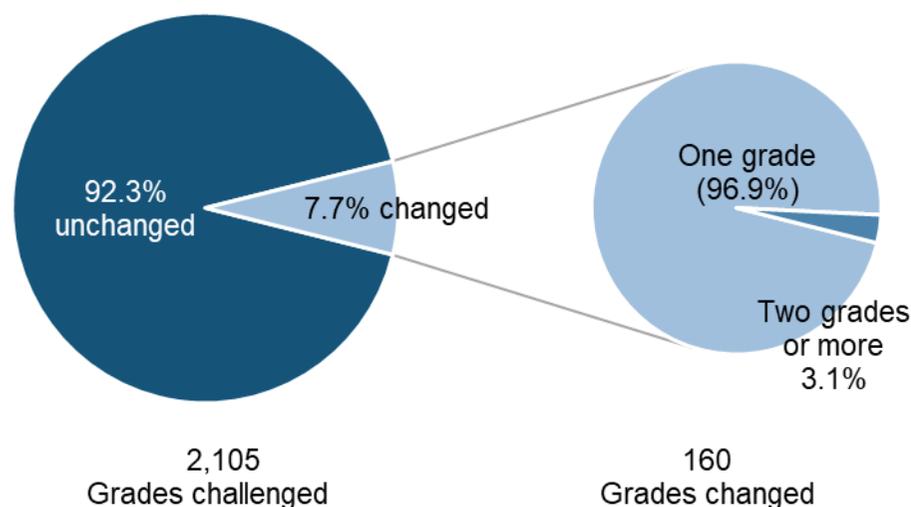


Note: Underlying figures are reported in Tables 13 and 14 in the accompanying [data](#).

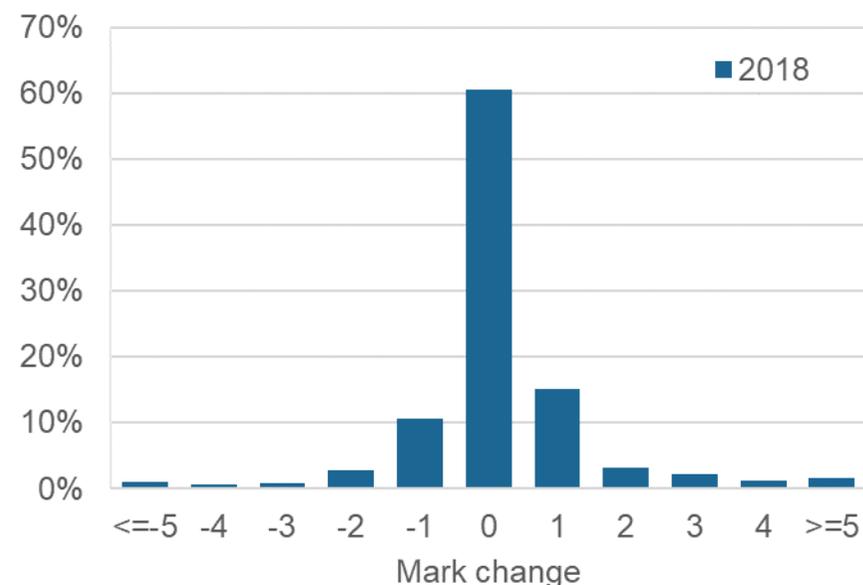
## Project reviews

Ofqual has collected data on reviews for Level 1, 2 and 3 Extended Project qualifications for the first time this year. These qualifications are assessed entirely by non-exam assessment and so all reviews requested are reviews of moderation. There were 70 reviews requested for these qualifications and the vast majority (98.6%) were for Level 3 Extended Project qualifications. These reviews relate to 2,105 qualification grades which is 4.4% of all the Project qualification grades awarded in summer 2018. Of these, 160 grades (7.7%) were changed relating to 0.3% of all Project grades awarded. When grades were changed, they were most commonly changed by just one grade – 96.9% of all grade changes were changes of one grade. In the majority of cases (60.6%), reviews resulted in no mark change.

### Project grades challenged and changed



### Distribution of Project raw mark changes



Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 15 in the accompanying [data](#).



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