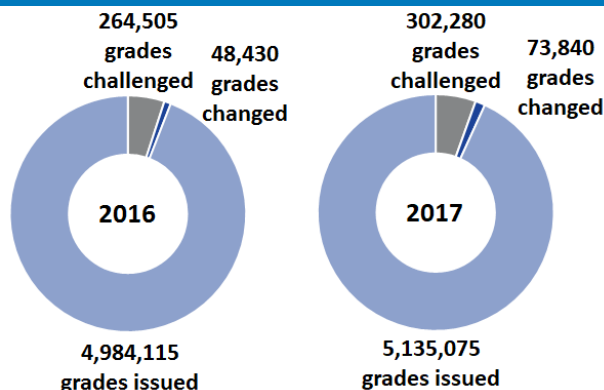


This release presents the number of reviews of marking and moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to as 'reviews') made following the summer 2017 exam series and the number of qualification grades challenged and changed as a result.

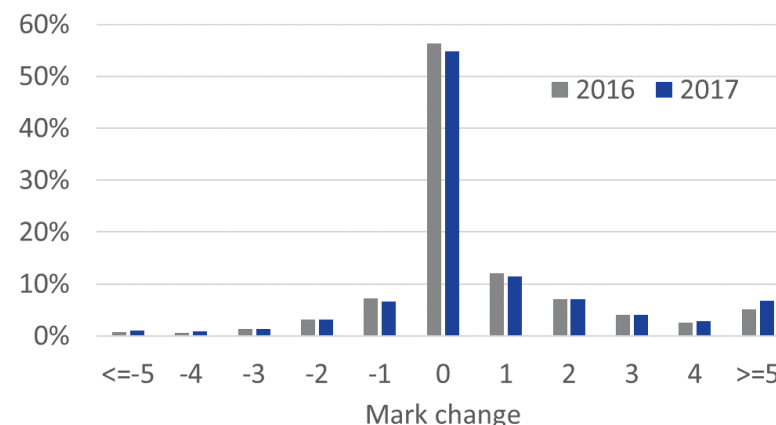
### GCSE grades challenged and grades changed

5.9% of all GCSE grades awarded were challenged and 1.4% were changed, up from 5.3% and 1.0% respectively in 2016.



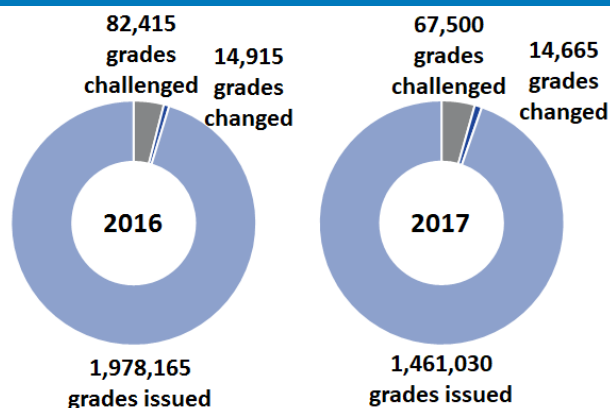
### Mark changes

55% of GCSE and GCE reviews resulted in no mark change



### GCE grades challenged and grades changed

4.6% of all GCE grades awarded were challenged and 1.0% were changed, up from 4.2% and 0.8% respectively in 2016.



### Most commonly challenged grades

A\*-G GCSE

D

29% of A\*-G grades challenged were grade D

9-1 GCSE

3

32% of 9-1 grades challenged were grade 3

GCE

B

32% of GCE grades challenged were grade B

## At a glance

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Published: 14 December 2017  
Ofqual/17/6311/1

## Reviews of marking and moderation

This report presents data on requests for reviews of marking and moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to throughout this release as ‘reviews’ and formerly known as enquiries about results) made to exam boards for the summer 2017 GCSE and GCE (AS and A level) exam series in England.

A whole qualification (eg AS 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 2017, 49% 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.

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”).

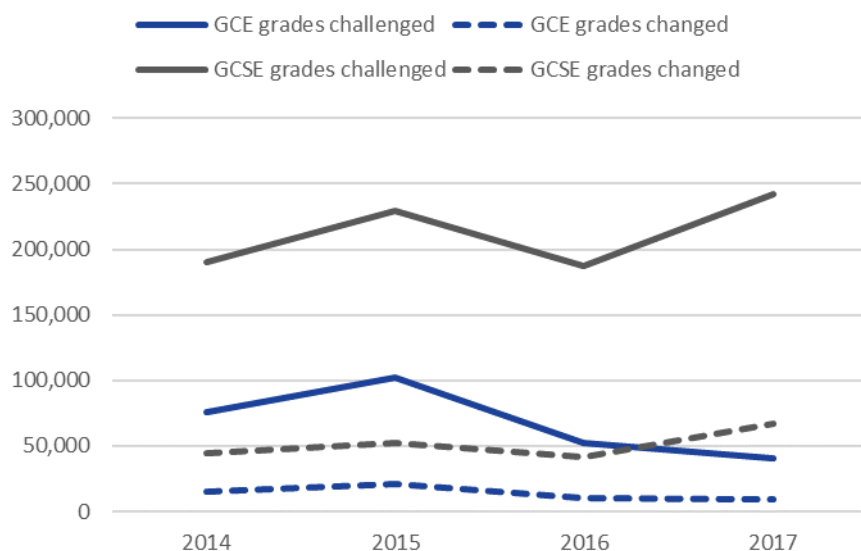
Reports published in previous years included data for students in Wales and Northern Ireland as well. Historical figures in this year’s report reflect England only figures and may therefore differ from previously published figures. Following a [transition arrangement](#) with Qualifications Wales (the regulator in Wales) and CCEA (the regulator in Northern Ireland), Ofqual will publish separate data tables for students in Wales and Northern Ireland without commentary for the academic year 2016/17.

In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data. 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

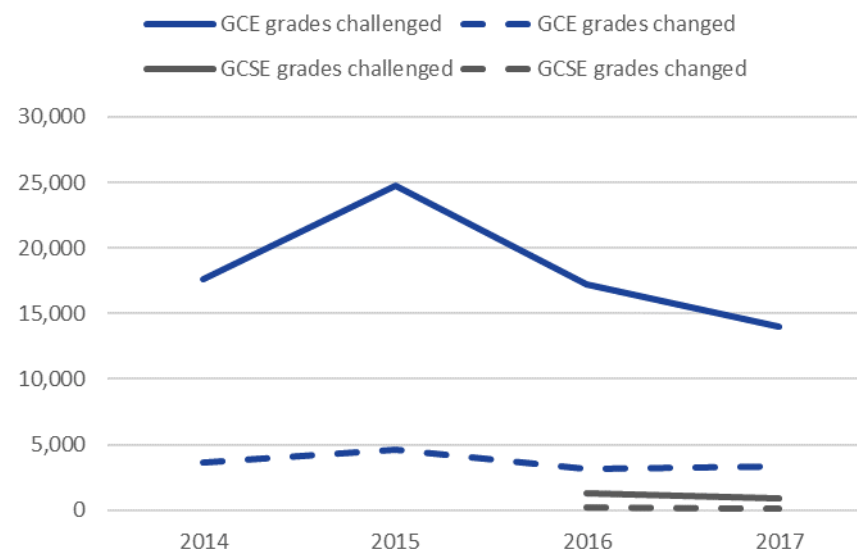
At GCSE, 425,075 reviews were requested, an increase of 44% from 2016 (294,870 reviews). This is mainly due to increases in the number of English/ English language and English literature reviews; a result of increases in both the number of exams taken in reformed qualifications and candidates certificating in these subjects. At GCE 95,845 reviews were requested, a drop of 8% from 2016 (103,790 reviews). This reflects changes in assessment entries which are down 12% 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		
	2016	2017	% change
Reviews	289,335	419,460	▲ 45%
Grades challenged	187,030	241,885	▲ 29%
Grades changed	41,400	67,210	▲ 62%
	GCE		
	2016	2017	% change
Reviews	74,995	66,955	▼ -11%
Grades challenged	51,990	40,580	▼ -22%
Grades changed	10,290	9,370	▼ -9%

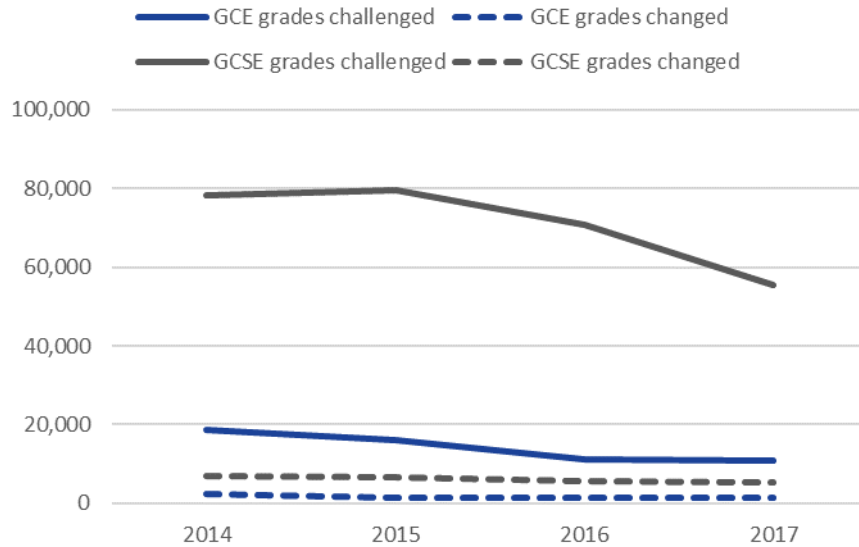
### Priority reviews of marking



	GCSE		
	2016	2017	% change
Reviews	2,210	1,735	▼ -21%
Grades challenged	1,280	910	▼ -29%
Grades changed	225	195	▼ -13%
	GCE		
	2016	2017	% change
Reviews	26,700	27,075	▲ 1%
Grades challenged	17,185	14,025	▼ -18%
Grades changed	3,110	3,360	▲ 8%

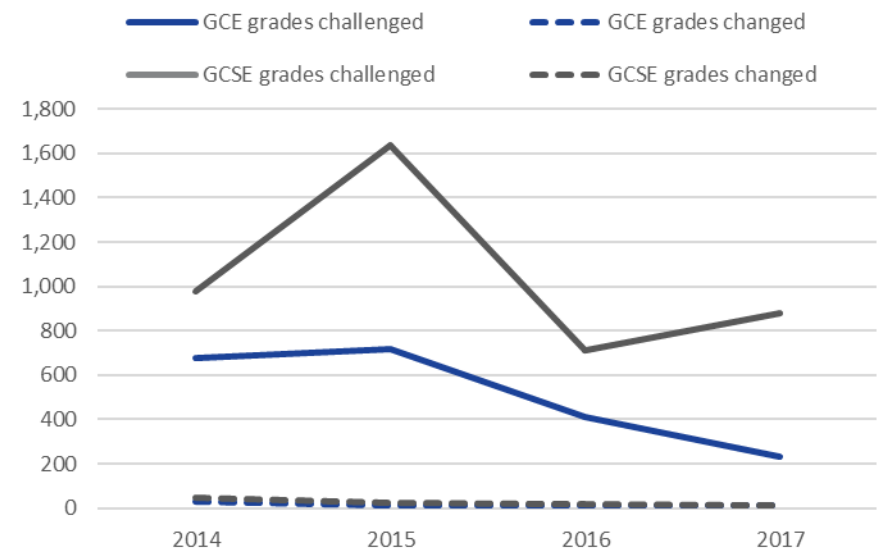
Note. Only Pearson offer priority reviews of marking at GCSE.

## Reviews of moderation



	GCSE			
	2016	2017		% change
Reviews	1,865	1,765	▼	-5%
Grades challenged	70,955	55,430	▼	-22%
Grades changed	5,600	5,410	▼	-3%
	GCE			
	2016	2017		% change
Reviews	1,290	1,345	▲	4%
Grades challenged	11,235	10,845	▼	-3%
Grades changed	1,200	1,490	▲	24%

## Administrative error reviews



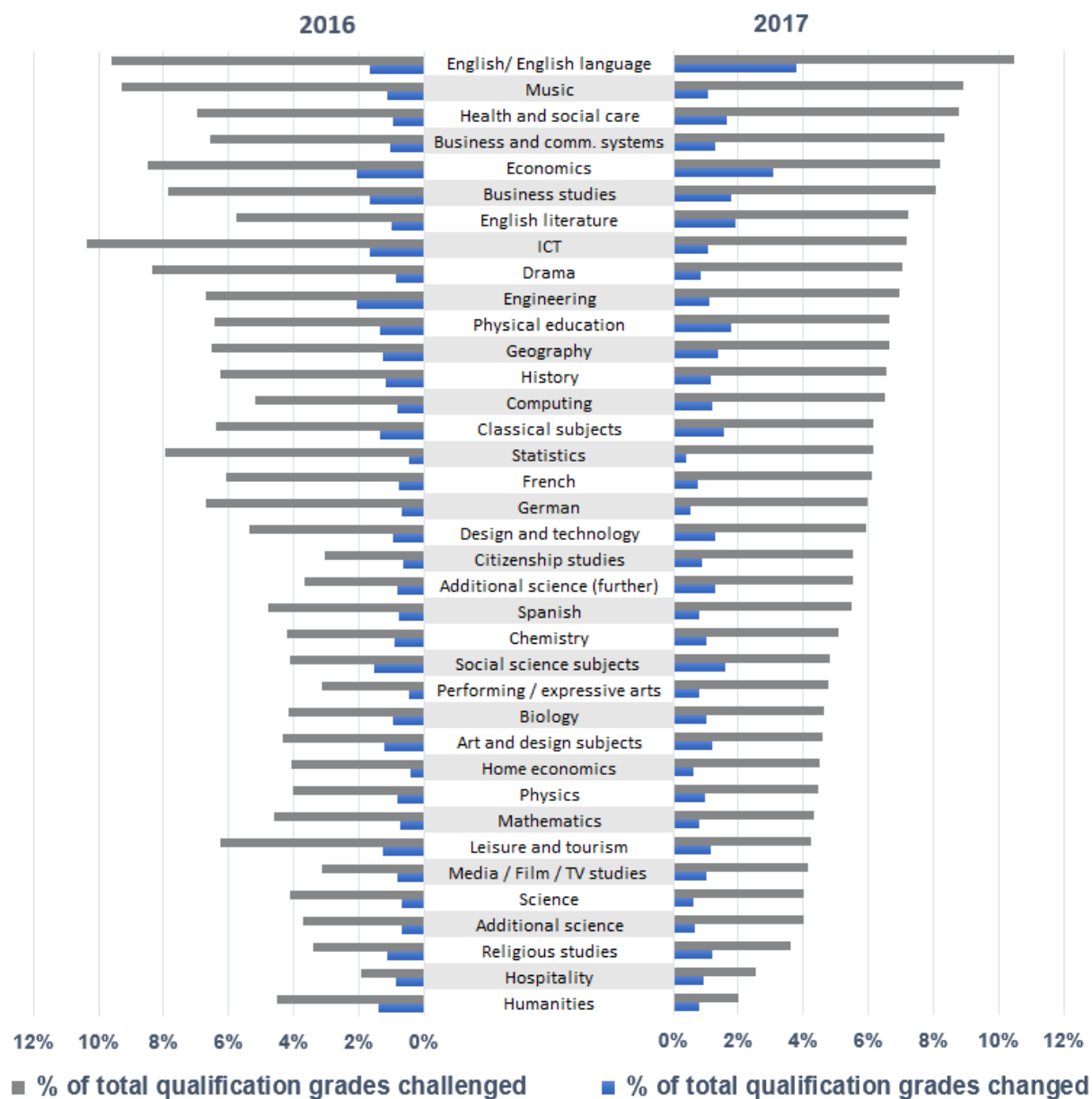
	GCSE			
	2016	2017		% change
Reviews	1,460	2,110	▲	45%
Grades challenged	710	880	▲	24%
Grades changed	20	15	▼	-25%
	GCE			
	2016	2017		% change
Reviews	805	470	▼	-42%
Grades challenged	410	230	▼	-44%
Grades changed	15	15	■	0%

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.

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, 2016 and 2017



There is some variation in the percentage of grades challenged across GCSE subjects in 2017 (range: 2.0% to 10.5%). The percentages are shown here as grey bars.

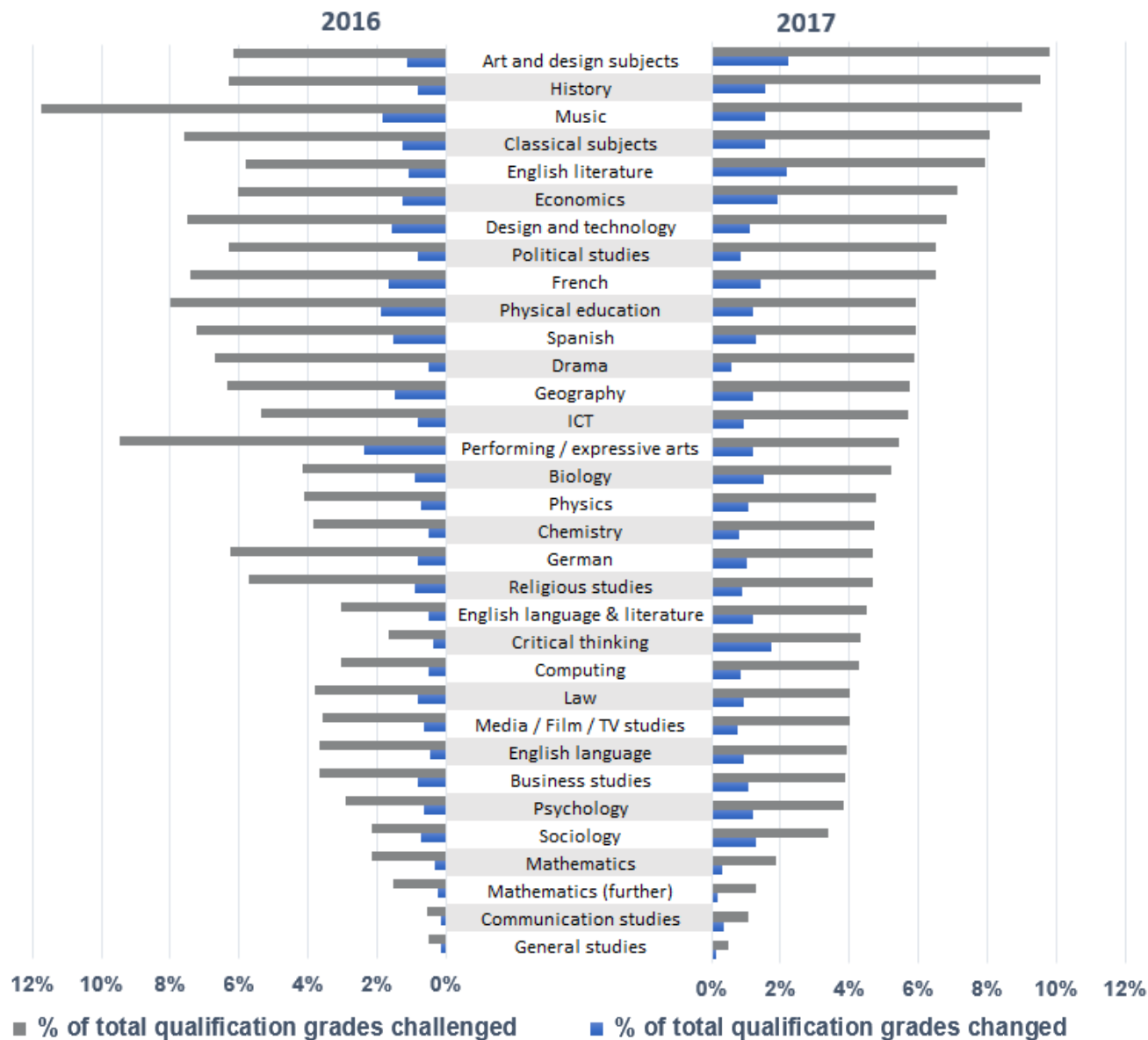
There is less variation in the percentage of GCSE qualification grades that were changed following reviews (shown here as blue bars) across subjects, never rising above 4% of the total number of qualifications awarded (range: 0.4% to 3.8%). Last year, the percentage of GCSE qualification grades challenged ranged from 1.9% to 10.4% and the percentage of qualification grades changed ranged from 0.4% to 2.1%.

In 26 out of 37 subjects, the percentage of qualification grades that were challenged and changed was higher in 2017 compared to 2016.

The most notable amongst these increases is in English language and English literature, contributing to the overall increase in the proportion of successful challenges in GCSE. It seems efforts to embed the revised rules for reviews (see [background information](#) for the rules) have varied by exam board and subject and that some reviewers changed marks where there was no error with original marking.

Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 7 in the accompanying [data](#).

## GCE grades challenged and changed for each subject, 2016 and 2017



As with GCSE, there was some variation in the percentage of grades challenged across subjects in 2017 (range: 0.5% to 9.8%). However, the percentage of qualification grades awarded that were changed following reviews is much more consistent across subjects, never rising above 2.5% of the total number of qualifications awarded (range: 0.1% to 2.2%).

This pattern is similar to last year where the percentage of GCE qualification grades challenged ranged from 0.5% to 11.7% and the percentage of qualification grades changed ranged from 0.1% to 2.4%.

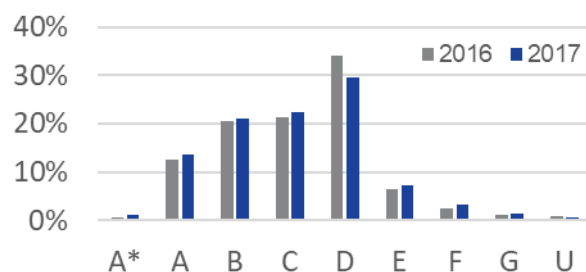
In 20 out of 33 subjects, the percentage of qualification grades awarded that were challenged and changed was higher in 2017 compared to 2016.

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

## Grades subject to review

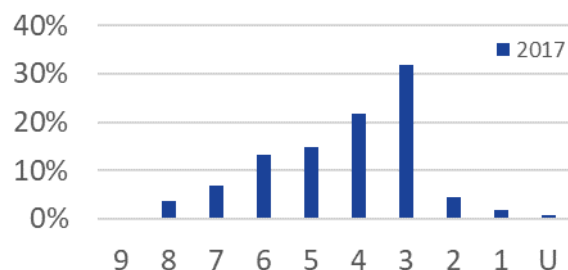
The charts below show the original qualification grades of students whose grades were subject to review.

### GCSE A\* to G



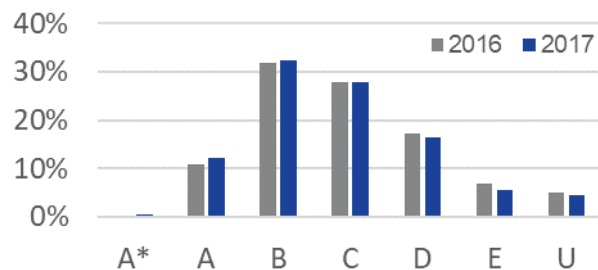
For GCSE A\* to G, the most commonly challenged grade was D (50,225 or 29% of all grades challenged). This was the same last year. However, the percentage of grades challenged with an original grade of D has fallen by 4.7 percentage points in 2017 and by 7.7 percentage points in total since 2015. There were slight increases in the percentage of grades challenged on other grades. These differences may reflect usual year-on-year variation or they could possibly be due to changes in key stage 4 accountability measures (for further details please see the accompanying [background information](#)). However, it should be noted that it is not possible to compare like with like between 2016 and 2017 due to the majority of grades challenged in English language, English literature and mathematics in 2017 being 9-1 grades.

### GCSE 9 to 1



For GCSE 9 to 1, the most commonly challenged grade was 3 (42,010 or 32% of all grades challenged). This is likely to reflect the importance of attaining a “standard pass” of grade 4 in English language and mathematics GCSEs. It is a condition of funding that students continuing in programmes of study without a grade 4 or above in these subjects are required to resit or take other English or mathematics qualifications in their continuing programmes of study. Furthermore, grades of 4 or above count towards the English Baccalaureate accountability measure.

### GCE



For GCE, the most commonly challenged grade was B (21,825 or 32% of all grades challenged), closely followed by C (18,865 or 28% of all grades challenged). This year there was a slight increase in the proportion of students with an original grade of A, B and C whilst the proportion of students with an original grade of D, E and U all decreased slightly.

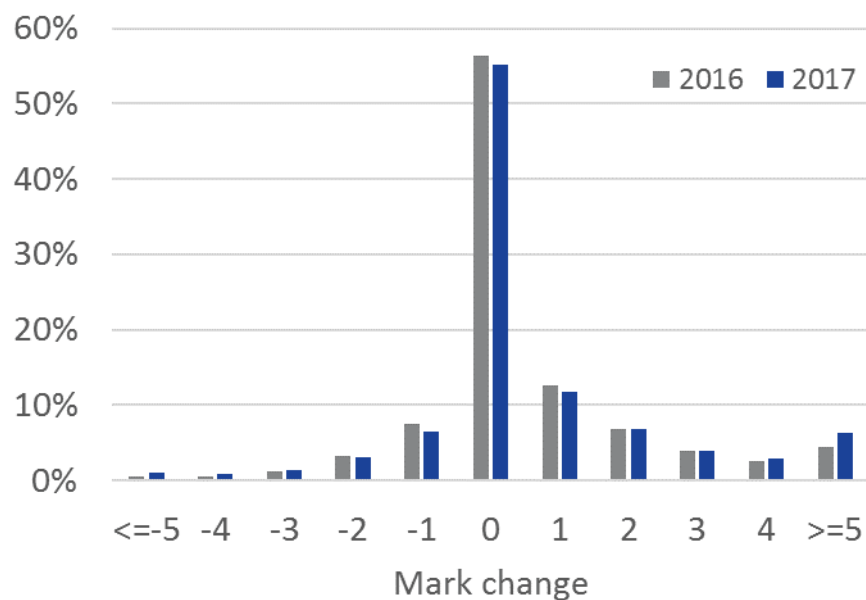
Note. Underlying figures are reported in Table 9 in the accompanying [data](#).

## Raw mark changes

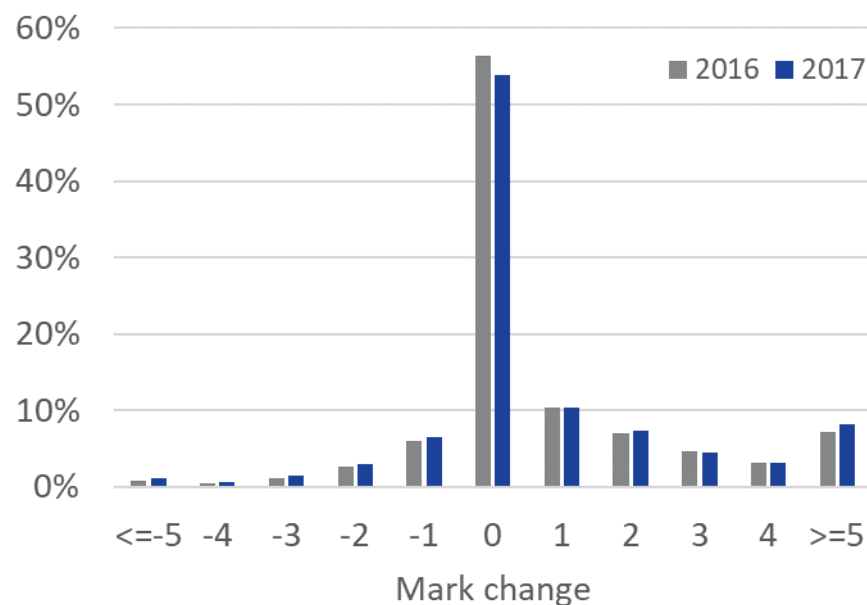
The charts below show the distribution of all raw mark changes following review. Raw mark changes described in this section relate to the difference in the mark given to a single unit, component or subcomponent before and after review.

In the majority of cases (55%), there was no mark change. Nearly three quarters (73%) of all reviews resulted in either no mark change or a change of one mark, and less than 8% 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 72% of reviews resulting in a mark change receiving an increase in marks.

### Distribution of GCSE raw mark changes



### Distribution of GCE raw mark changes



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

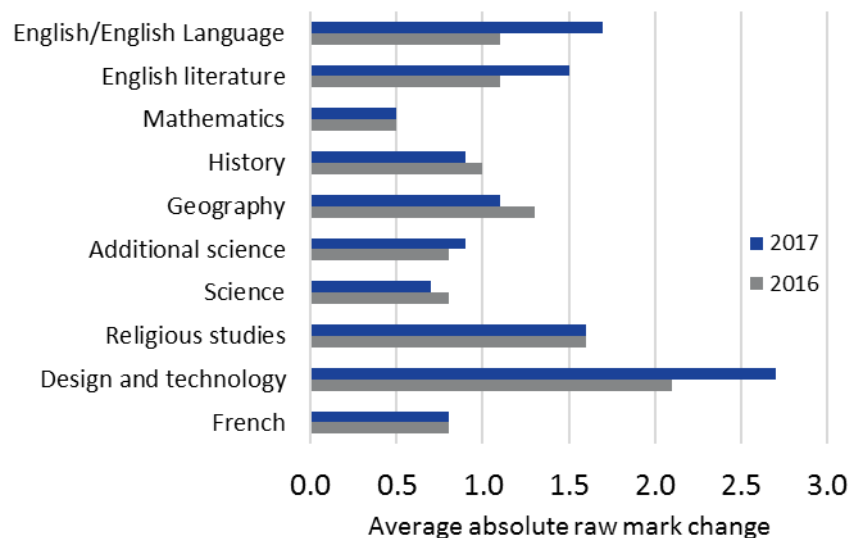


## Average absolute raw mark change

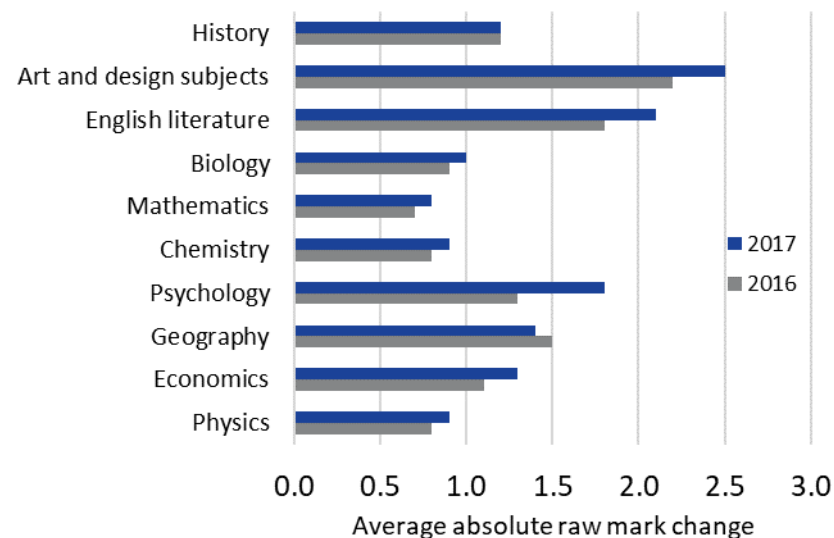
The charts below show the average absolute raw mark change for the ten GCSE and GCE subjects with the highest number of grades challenged. The subjects are ordered by number of grades challenged, the subject with the highest number of grades challenged appears at the top of the chart. As above, raw mark 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 2017 was never greater than three 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 73 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 English, arts subjects and religious studies 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 subjects like English and the arts than in subjects like mathematics and the sciences. Increases in the average absolute mark changes seen in 2017 may reflect the reduction in the number of reviews resulting in no mark change and/or components from reformed specifications generally having a higher maximum mark, meaning that mark changes of greater magnitudes may be more likely. It is therefore difficult to compare like with like between 2016 and 2017 in reformed subjects.

### GCSE



### GCE

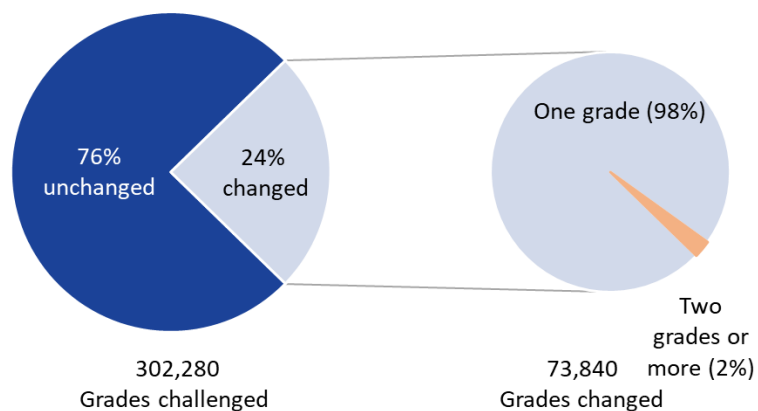


Note. Underlying figures are reported in Table 11 in the accompanying [data](#).

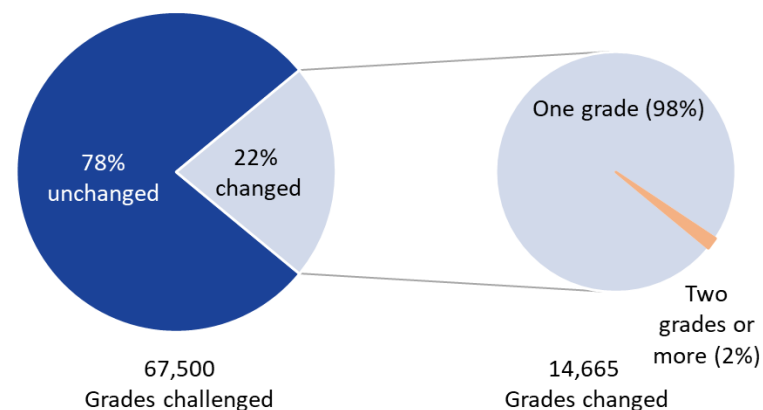
## Grades changed

The charts below show the magnitude of grade changes made following review. In the majority of cases (76% of 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 2017, 0.5% of all grades challenged resulted in a grade change of two grades or more, this figure was 0.1% in 2016.

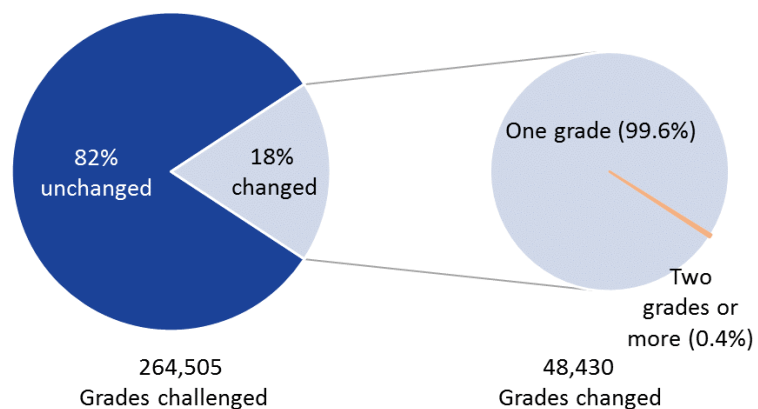
### 2017 GCSE



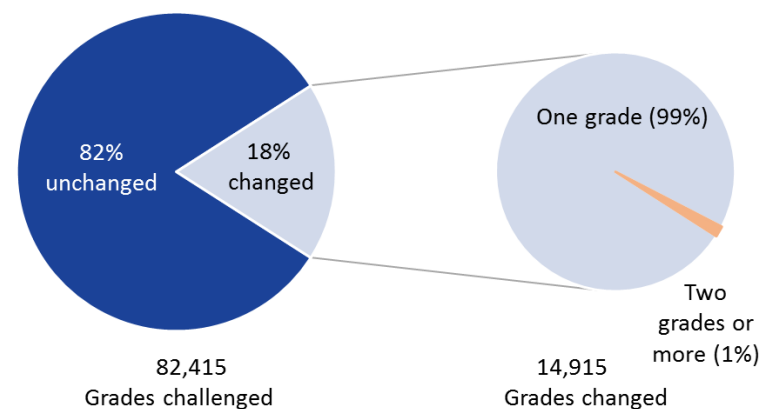
### 2017 GCE



### 2016 GCSE



### 2016 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. Exam boards decide their own maximum timescales for completing reviews and reporting the outcome.

In the majority of cases (99.9%), reviews were completed well within the maximum time allowed. At the time of data collection, 265 reviews were still being processed and 86% of these (227 reviews) were within the agreed turnaround times at that point in time.

	Administrative error reviews		Reviews of marking (non-priority)		Reviews of marking (priority)	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
Maximum time to complete reviews (days)						
GCSE average response time (days)						
GCE average response time (days)						

\*Only Pearson offer priority reviews of marking at GCSE.

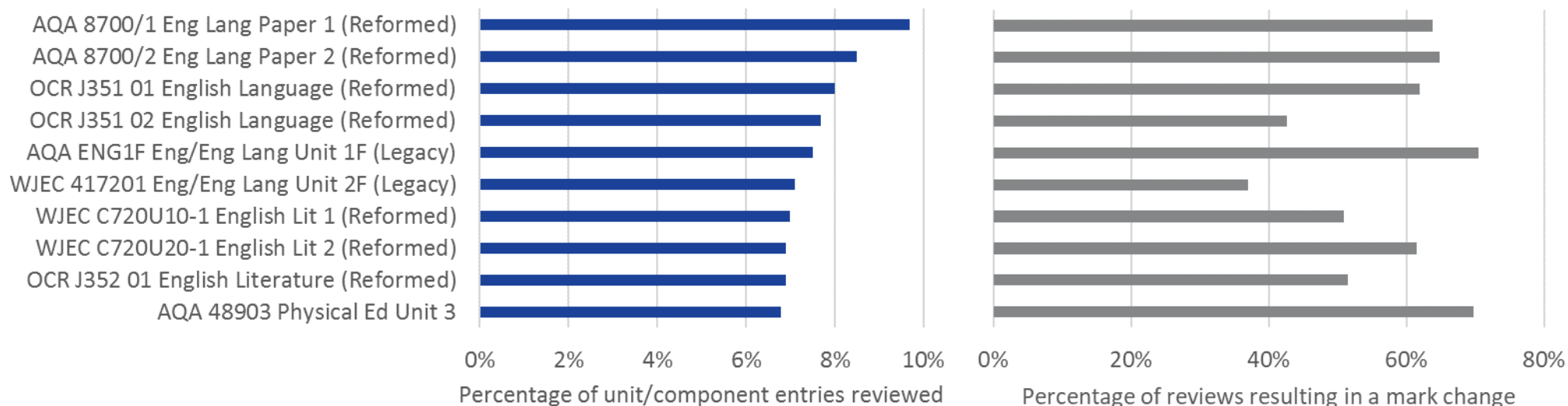
Note. We do not have data on the average time taken to respond to reviews of moderation. Underlying figures are reported in Tables 3 and 4 in the accompanying [data](#).

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

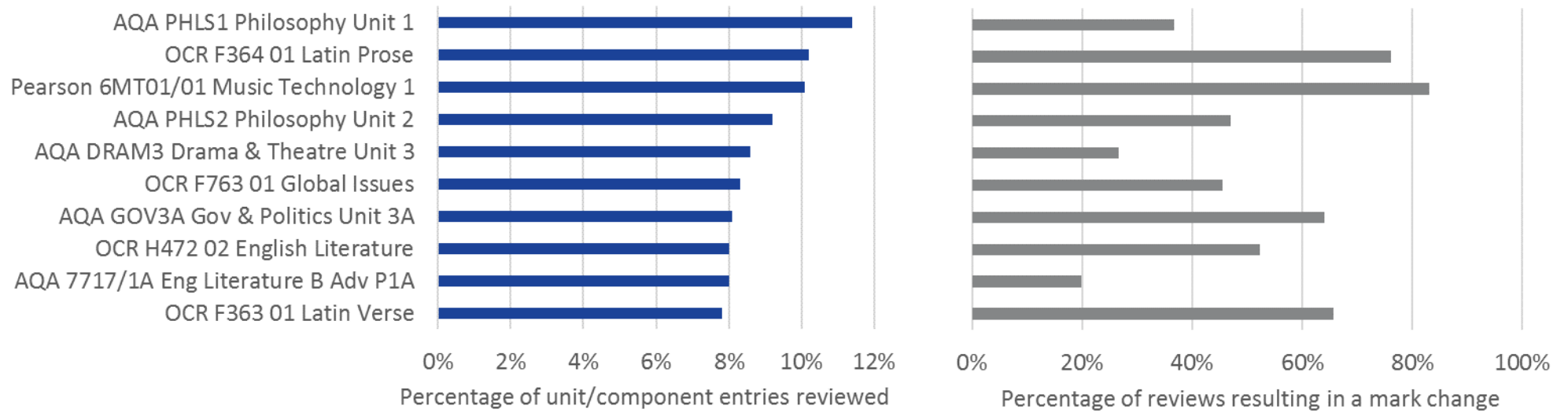
The charts below show the percentage of unit/component entries reviewed and the percentage of reviews resulting in a mark change for the 10 units/components taken by more than 1,000 students with the highest percentage of reviews of marking requested (99% of reviews are reviews of marking, priority and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

At GCSE, the units with the highest percentage of entries reviewed are mainly English language and English literature units (both legacy and reformed units). 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 philosophy, Latin, music, drama and English literature 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 ten GCSE units/components with the highest percentage of entries subject to reviews of marking



## The ten GCE units/components with the highest percentage of entries subject to reviews of marking



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

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