

National Reference Test

Your information and your privacy



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1. Why we process your personal data

The National Reference Test (NRT) will provide additional information to support the awarding of GCSEs in England, specifically in English language and maths. Results from the tests you take will provide information to Ofqual and the exam boards on changes in overall performance standards over time. They will be based on results from a nationally representative sample of students who will take the test shortly before taking their GCSEs.

Ofqual will process personal data in line with its statutory objectives and duties and in the exercise of its public task.¹ In addition, most schools are subject to legislation, which, if selected, makes state school participation mandatory.²

Ofqual has appointed the [National Foundation for Educational Research](#) (NFER) to develop, administer and analyse the NRT on its behalf. Ofqual is the data controller and NFER is the data processor for the purposes of the data protection legislation.

Please refer to Ofqual's personal information charter at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/personal-information-charter> for more information about how Ofqual processes personal data.

2. How we will use your personal data

Results from the National Reference Test (NRT) will only be used to measure changes in performance nationally and we intend to publish information after each year's test on our website www.ofqual.gov.uk. There will be no results published for individual students or schools nor will it be possible to identify individuals from the published data.

We expect all students in the selected group of students to take the test in order to avoid bias in the sample. However, the legislation passed by the government gives head teachers the right to withdraw students in exceptional circumstances.

NFER carries out the testing in each school, and marks and analyses the students' papers.

¹ Our statutory objectives and duties are set out in the **Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009**. They are: 1. to secure qualification standards; 2. to promote National Assessment standards; 3. to promote public confidence in regulated qualifications and National Assessment arrangements; 4. to promote awareness of the range and benefits of regulated qualifications; 5. to secure that regulated qualifications are provided efficiently.

² **The Education (National Curriculum) (key stage 4 Assessment Arrangements) (England) Order 2016**.

Ofqual and NFER will analyse the data obtained from individual students' papers and use it each year to produce a measure of national performance in maths and English language. This data is also combined with data from key stage 2 and GCSE results to help us to better understand trends in performance over time.

3. What personal data will we collect?

Schools who have been selected, or who have volunteered, to participate in the NRT will supply the following personal data to NFER for all students in year 11 who will be entered for either GCSE maths or GCSE English language, or both subjects:

- forename(s) and surname
- gender
- date of birth
- whether you will be entered for GCSE maths and/or GCSE English language.

At each school, NFER will select 30 students at random to take the maths test and another 30 students to take the English test. No student takes a test in both subjects.

Your school will inform you directly if you have been selected to participate in the NRT.

In addition, if you require specific access arrangements³, these will be recorded to help with the administration of the test. All data collected on access arrangements will be securely destroyed by NFER after the testing has been completed.

4. Who we may share your personal data with

If selected to take the test, NFER will process, store and analyse your personal data in order to administer the NRT in fulfillment of their contractual obligations. NFER will share:

- the completed test scripts with its team of trained markers. The markers will not have access to the students' names or the school they attend. NFER assigns each student script with a number to assist with identification.

³ Special category information may be collected in order to administer the test. Under the GDPR, the lawful basis for this is covered by article 9. 2(g) – processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest, on the basis of Union or Member state law which shall be proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and interests if the data subject.

- anonymised test data with [CITO](#), a Dutch-based educational assessment and testing organisation, to help it complete the analysis of the test data.
- test data, including your personal data that NFER collects with Ofqual for the purposes of analysis.

Individual student data from the test will not be provided to the Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted or local authorities, and your individual NRT results will **not** be used in the awarding of your GCSEs. The individual NRT test results will not be used in any measures of your individual performance or your school's overall performance. It is only the overall, aggregated national test results, which will be used in the awarding of GCSEs.

All data relating to the NRT is kept confidential by NFER and Ofqual, and no individual student or school can be identified in any way in any subsequent reports or publications about the NRT.

Your individual responses to the test will be stored securely by NFER and Ofqual. The data will not be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

5. How long will your personal data be kept?

Ofqual owns the outcomes of the NRT, including the test materials and completed test scripts. These will be kept for long-term comparison to inform our understanding of the performance of GCSEs over time.

Data is held by NFER and CITO for the duration of the contract with Ofqual and then deleted or returned to Ofqual.

6. Individual rights

The GDPR provides the following rights for individuals:

- the right to be informed
- the right of access
- the right to rectification
- the right to erasure
- the right to restrict processing
- the right to data portability
- the right to object
- rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

For more information regarding individual rights, or to contact Ofqual to make a request regarding your individual rights, please go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/personal-information-charter> to contact Ofqual using the information provided below.

Further information is also available from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/>

The NRT was not designed to measure the performance of individual students. The information it provides relates to a national sample of students. Therefore, neither NFER nor Ofqual can provide test results for individual students. Also, we cannot provide feedback on how you have responded to individual questions because we have to keep the test questions confidential in order to be able to re-use them for future tests.

For similar reasons, we cannot provide an overall result for individual schools.

If NFER is alerted by a marker to a potential safeguarding concern based on the responses given by a student during the NRT, it will contact your school.

7. Contact information

- Should you require any information about the administration of the NRT, please contact NFER by telephone on 01753 637 383 or by email to NRTkeystage4@nfer.ac.uk
- Alternatively, you can contact Ofqual by email public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk or by telephone on 0300 303 3344
- To contact Ofqual's Data Protection Officer, email dprequests@ofqual.gov.uk
- If you wish to make a complaint about Ofqual's handling of your personal data, please follow our [complaints procedure](#)
- If you are not happy with the response you receive from us you have the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) by telephone on 0303 123 1113 or by using the contact details at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/>

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Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344