

Reviews of marking and moderation for GCSE and GCE: summer 2019 series

Annual

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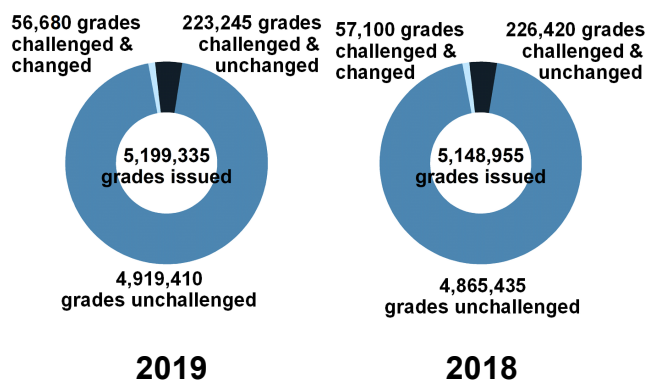
Official Statistics

This release presents the number of reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and administrative error reviews (collectively referred to as 'reviews') for GCSE and GCE (AS and A level) qualifications made following the summer 2019 exam series and the number of qualification grades challenged and changed as a result.

GCSE grades challenged and changed

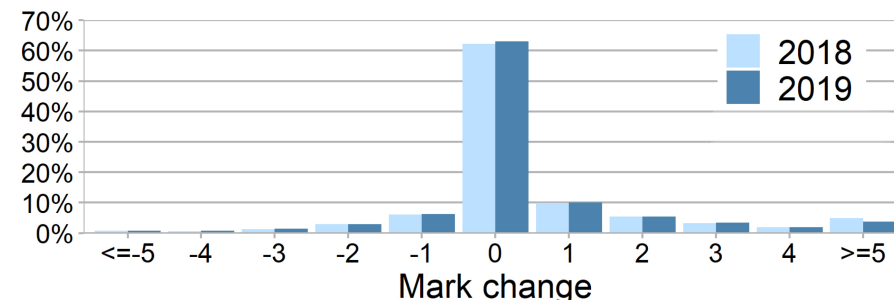
5.4% of all GCSE grades awarded were challenged and 1.1% of grades awarded were changed (similar to 5.5% and 1.1%, respectively, in 2018).

20.2% of all grades challenged were changed (similar to 20.1% in 2018).



Component mark changes

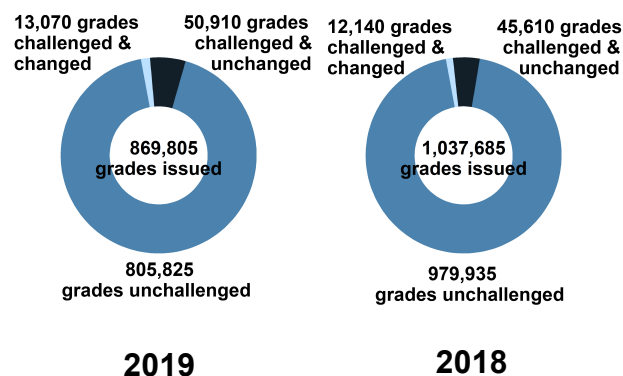
63.0% of GCSE and GCE reviews resulted in no component mark change, similar to 62.3% in 2018.



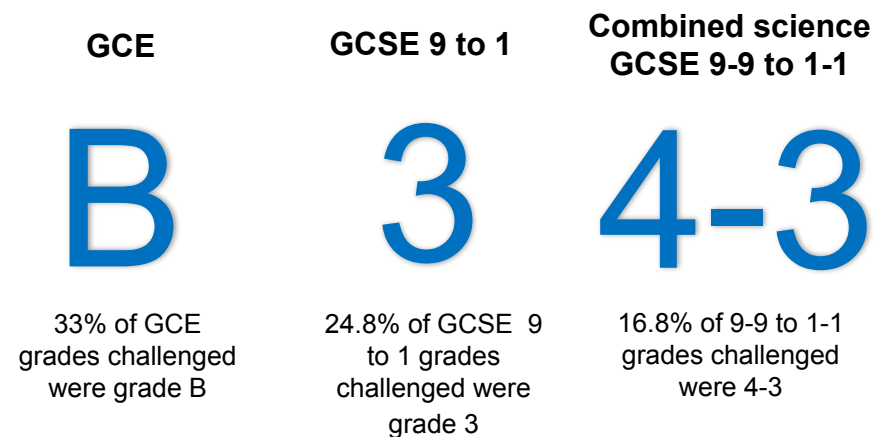
GCE grades challenged and changed

2019 saw a 14.7% increase in A level grades challenged from 2018, and a reduction of 35% in AS level grades challenged.

At A level, 1.7% of all grades awarded were changed in 2019, up from 1.5% in 2018. At AS level, 0.6% of all grades issued were changed in 2019, up from 0.4% in 2018.



Most commonly challenged grades



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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 and GCE (AS and A level) qualifications for the summer 2019 exam series in England.

A whole qualification (e.g. 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 (e.g. an administrative error review may be requested and then a review of marking).

In 2019, 54.8% 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 (93%) 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 service also includes an administrative error review.
- 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").

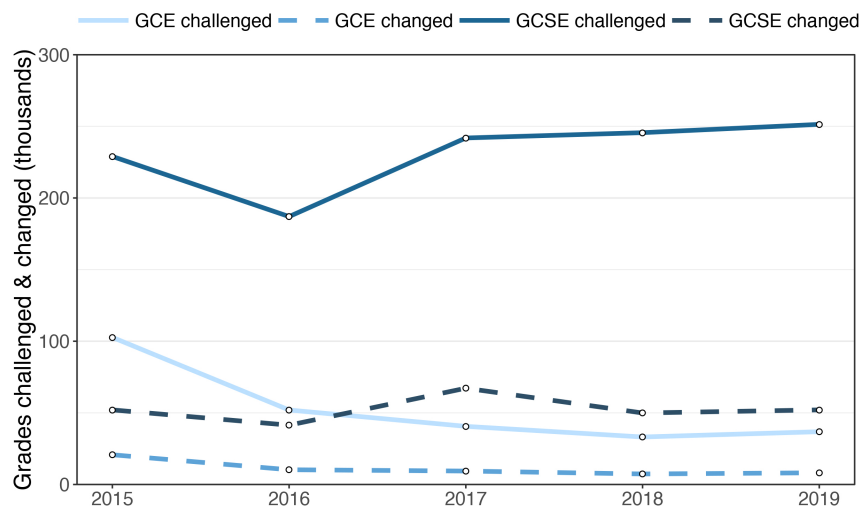
AS and A level reviews are presented together in this report but caution should be taken in making comparisons across time as the number of entries to AS has declined considerably over recent years (see background notes for more information).

In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5. Further information on this release is available in the [background information and data tables](#) accompanying this report.

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

At GCSE, 451,835 reviews were requested in total, an increase of 2.1% from 2018 (442,545 reviews). At A level, there was a 24.9% increase in review requests, from 82,490 in 2018 to 103,010 in 2019. There was a 1.9% decrease in A levels awarded (from 763,735 in 2018 to 749,285 in 2019). AS qualifications saw a 27.2% decrease in review requests, from 6,565 in 2018 to 4,780 in 2019. There was a 56% decrease in AS qualification awards this year (from 273,950 in 2018 to 120,520 in 2019). The following tables break down the changes in GCSE and GCE reviews requested by service type.

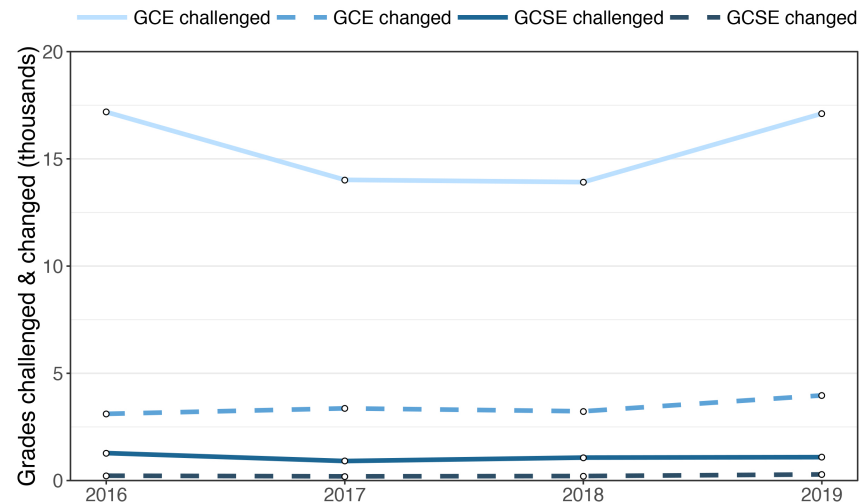
Non-priority reviews of marking



GCSE				
	2018	2019	Change	
Reviews	436,795	446,315	2.2%	↑
Grades Challenged	245,590	251,385	2.4%	↑
Grades Changed	49,920	52,070	4.3%	↑

GCE				
	2018	2019	Change	
Reviews	59,140	69,925	18.2%	↑
Grades Challenged	33,155	36,835	11.1%	↑
Grades Changed	7,345	8,155	11.0%	↑

Priority reviews of marking

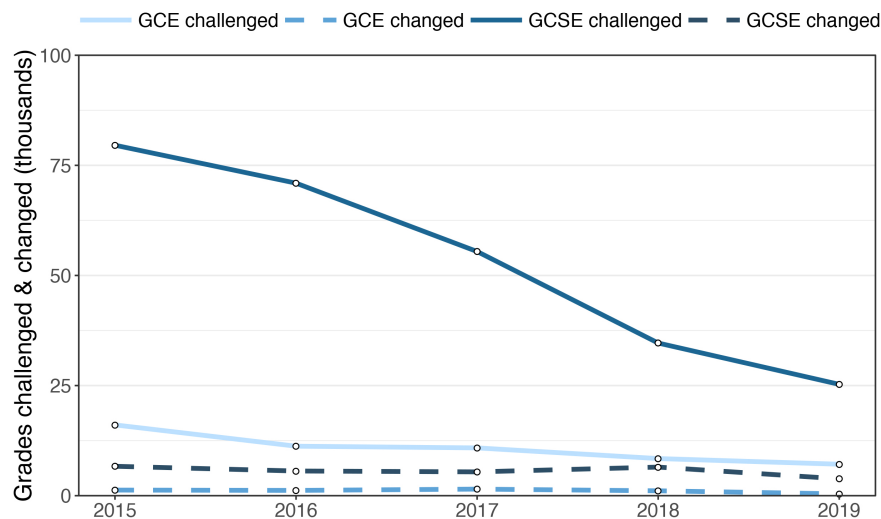


GCSE				
	2018	2019	Change	
Reviews	2,125	2,330	9.6%	↑
Grades Challenged	1,065	1,090	2.3%	↑
Grades Changed	210	285	35.1%	↑

GCE				
	2018	2019	Change	
Reviews	28,445	36,545	28.5%	↑
Grades Challenged	13,915	17,110	22.9%	↑
Grades Changed	3,230	3,970	23.0%	↑

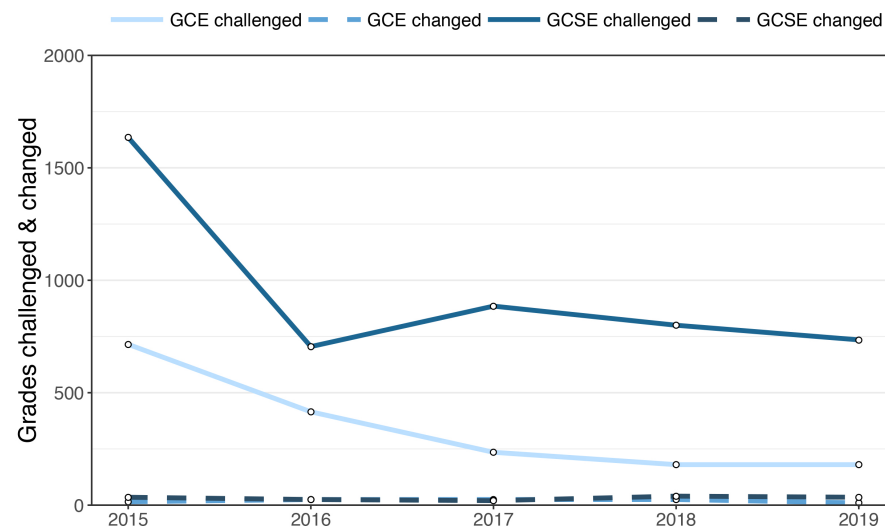
Note: Only Pearson offer priority reviews of marking at GCSE.

Reviews of moderation



	GCSE		
	2018	2019	Change
Reviews	1,660	1,260	-24.1% ↓
Grades Challenged	34,655	25,270	-27.1% ↓
Grades Changed	6,490	3,830	-41.0% ↓
	GCE		
	2018	2019	Change
Reviews	1,105	900	-18.6% ↓
Grades Challenged	8,425	7,140	-15.2% ↓
Grades Changed	1,105	410	-63.2% ↓

Administrative error reviews



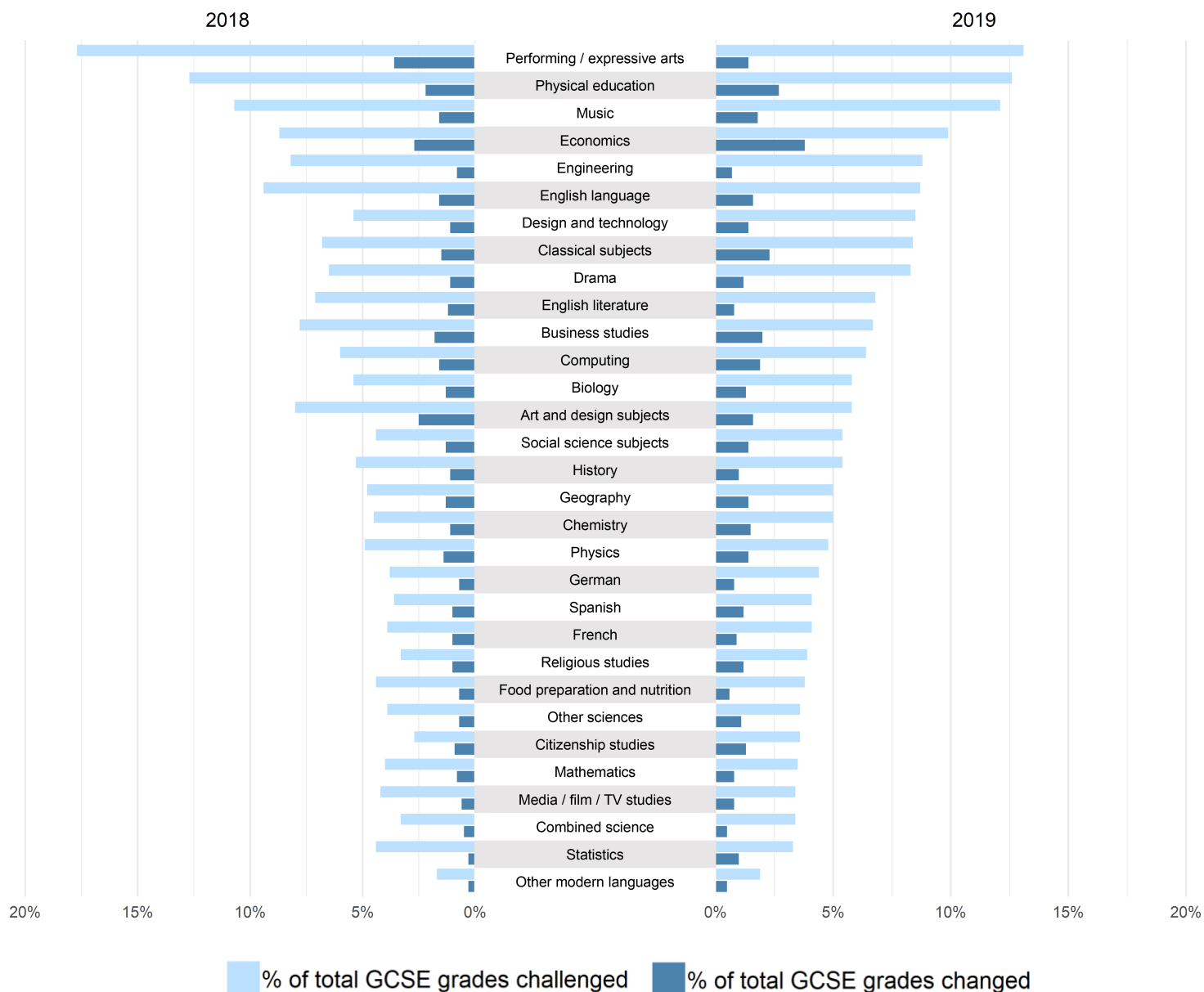
	GCSE		
	2018	2019	Change
Reviews	1,965	1,930	-1.8% ↓
Grades Challenged	800	735	-7.7% ↓
Grades Changed	40	30	-18.4% ↓
	GCE		
	2018	2019	Change
Reviews	370	420	13.5% ↑
Grades Challenged	180	180	1.1% ↑
Grades Changed	15	5	-64.3% ↓

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 fewer non-exam assessments and therefore fewer moderated components.

Underlying figures are reported in Tables 2 to 6 in the accompanying [data](#).

Grades challenged and changed by subject

GCSE grades challenged and changed by subject, 2018 and 2019



The percentages of grades challenged per subject are shown here as light blue bars. The percentage of GCSE qualification grades that were changed following reviews (shown here as dark blue bars) varies between 0.5% and 3.8%.

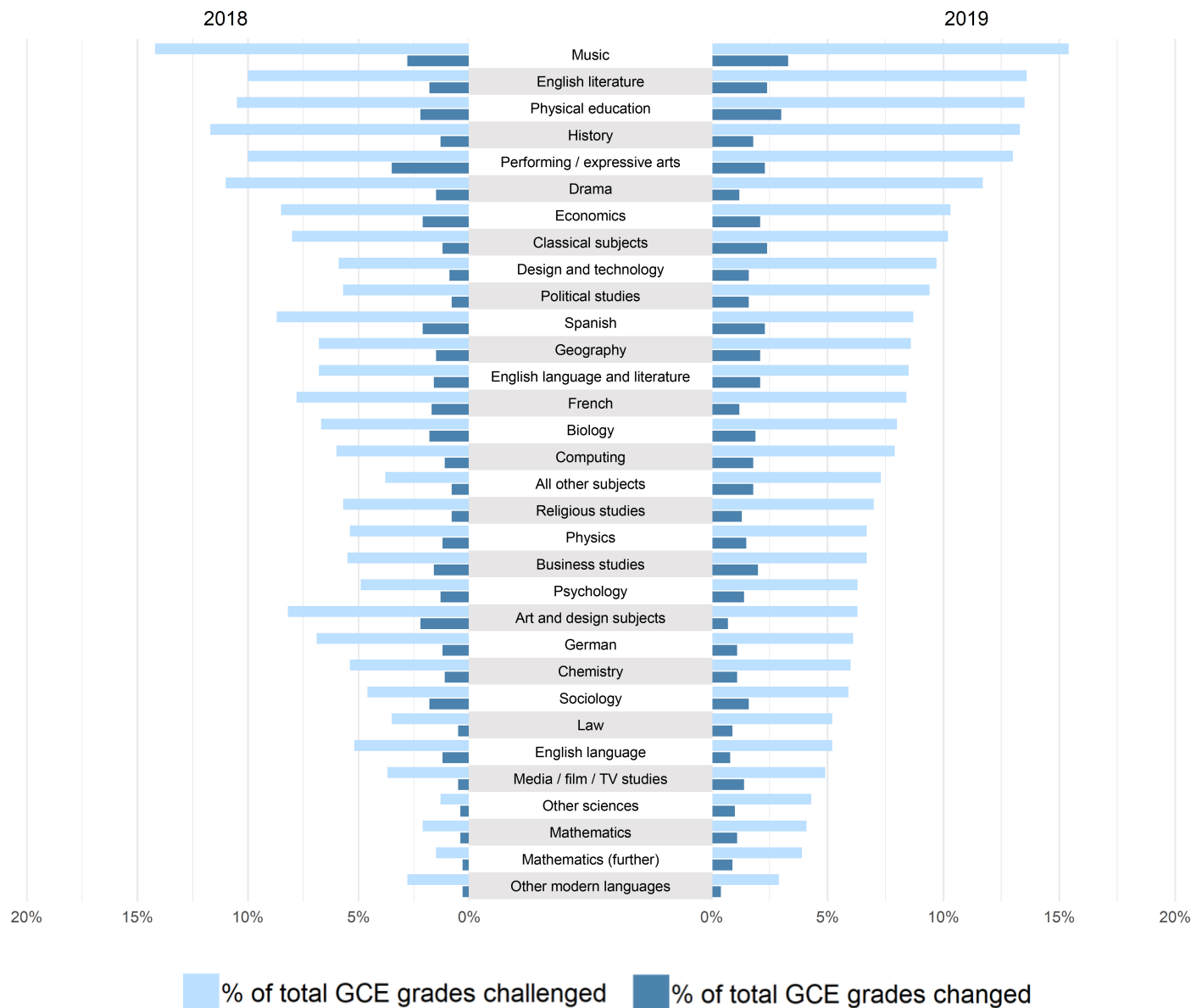
Of the 33 subjects offered at GCSE level in England this year, 19 saw an increase in the proportion of grades challenged and 13 saw a decrease in comparison to 2018, while one subject (Welsh as a second language) saw no grades challenged in either year.

The proportion of grades changed (from all grades awarded) increased in 19 subject areas, decreased in 8, while 6 had the same proportion of grade changes as in 2018.

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

Grades challenged and grades changed by subject

GCE grades challenged and changed by subject, 2018 and 2019



This year saw a rise in the proportion of GCE grades challenged in 28 of the 32 subject areas in England. The proportion of grades challenged was found to have decreased in only two subject areas (Art and Design subjects and German), while two subject areas showed the same proportion of grades challenged as in 2018 (English language and Spanish).

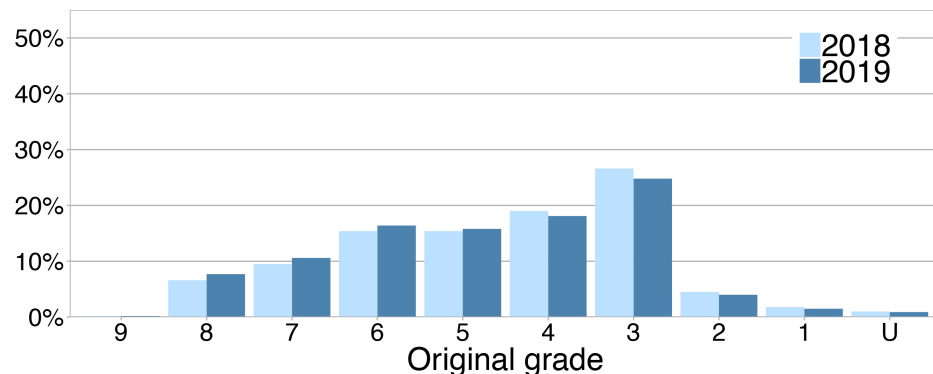
The proportion of GCE grades changed increased in 23 of the 32 subject areas, decreased in 7 subjects, and remained stable for 2 subjects. The largest proportional increase was seen in Classical studies (1.2% from 2018) while the largest proportional decrease in grades changed was for Art and Design subjects (-1.5% from 2018).

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

Original qualification grades subject to review

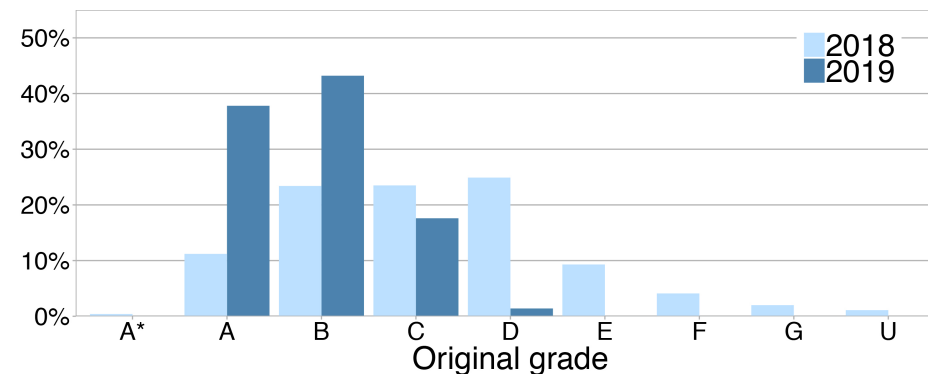
The charts below show the original qualification grades of students whose grades were subject to review.

GCSE 9 to 1



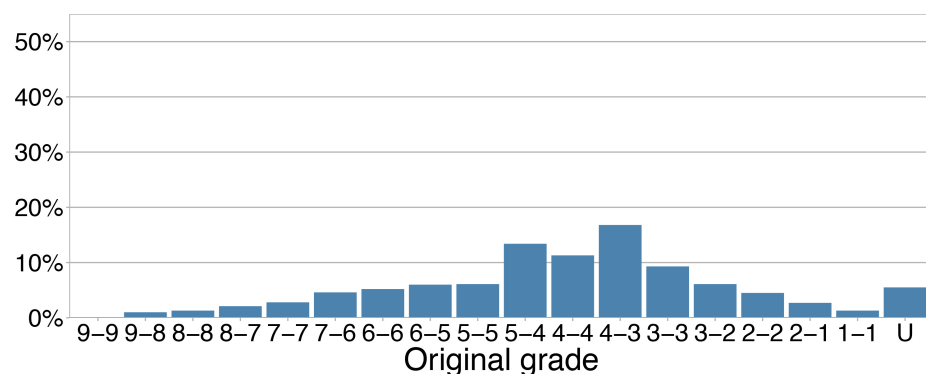
For GCSE 9 to 1, the most commonly challenged grade was 3 (62,745 or 24.8% of all grades challenged). This is likely a reflection of the importance of attaining a grade 4 or above.

GCSE A* to G



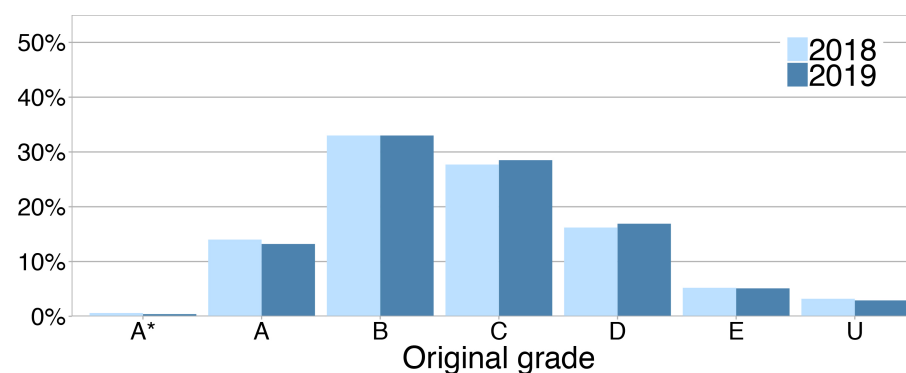
For GCSE A* to G, the most commonly challenged grade was B (30 or 43.2% of all grades challenged). It is worth noting, however, that there were fewer than 80 grades challenged for these legacy qualifications in 2019.

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 (2,230 or 16.8% of all grades challenged), reflecting the importance of grade 4-4.

GCE



For GCE, the most commonly challenged grade was B (21,115 or 33% of all grades challenged), closely followed by C (18,240 or 28.5% of all grades challenged).

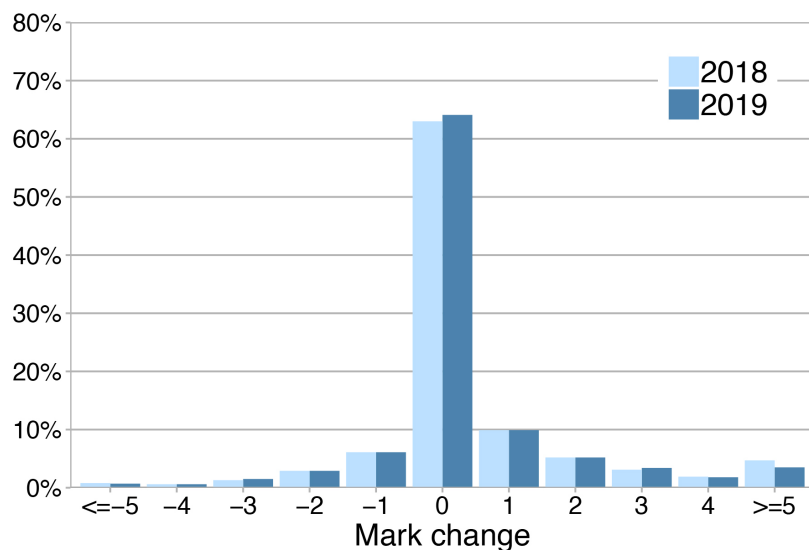
Note: Underlying figures are reported in Table 9 in the accompanying [data](#).

Raw mark changes following reviews

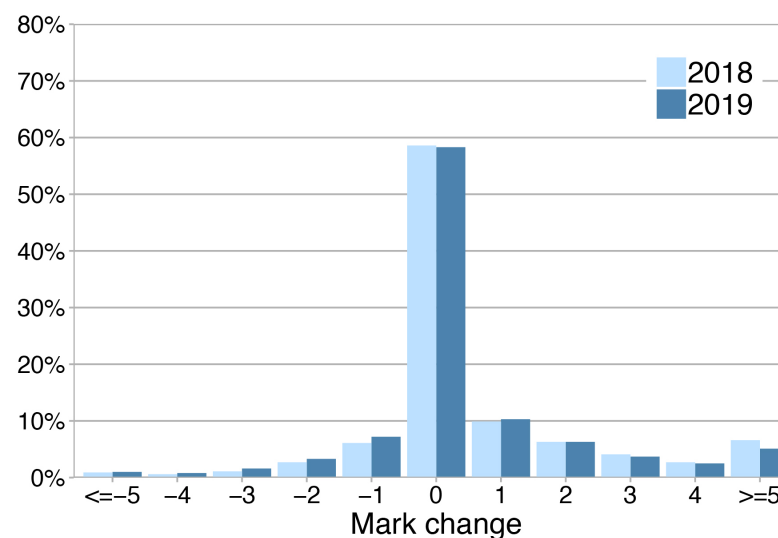
The charts below show the distribution of all raw mark changes following review. Raw mark changes described in this section relate to the difference in the mark given to a single unit, component or subcomponent before and after review.

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. Less than 5% 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 70% of reviews that resulted in a mark change receiving an increase in marks, as opposed to a decrease.

Distribution of GCSE raw mark changes



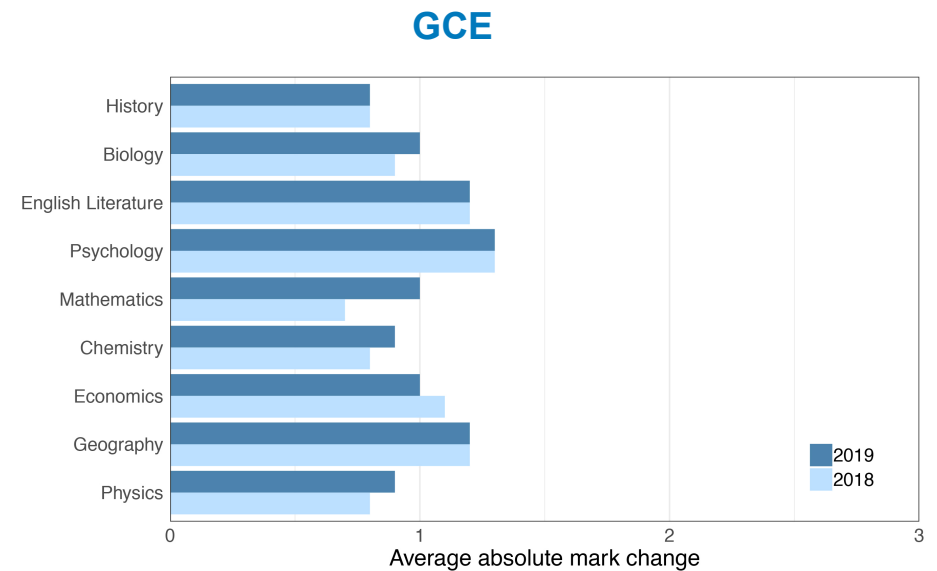
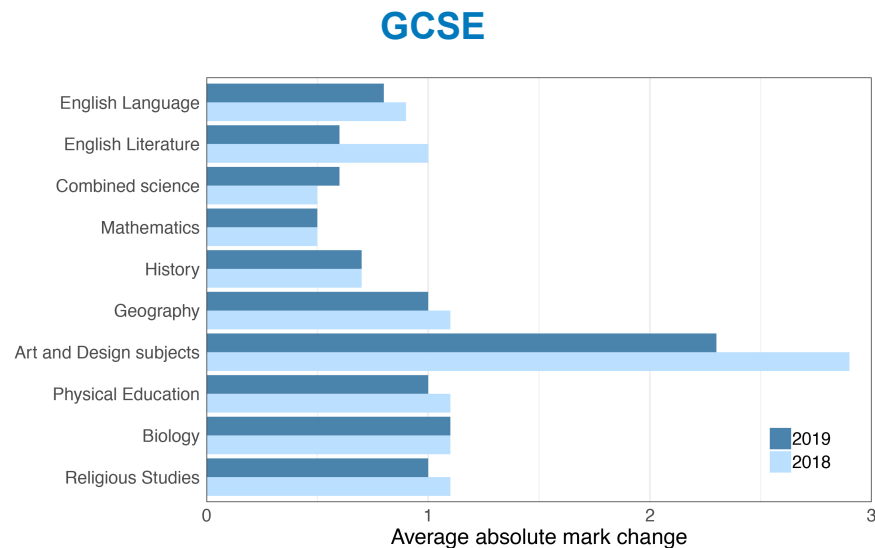
Distribution of GCE raw mark changes



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 10 GCE subjects with the highest number of grades challenged. The subjects are ordered by number of grades challenged in 2019, with the highest such subject appearing at the top of each chart. As described in the previous section, 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 for any subject in 2019 did not exceed 2.3 marks at GCSE and 1.8 marks at GCE.

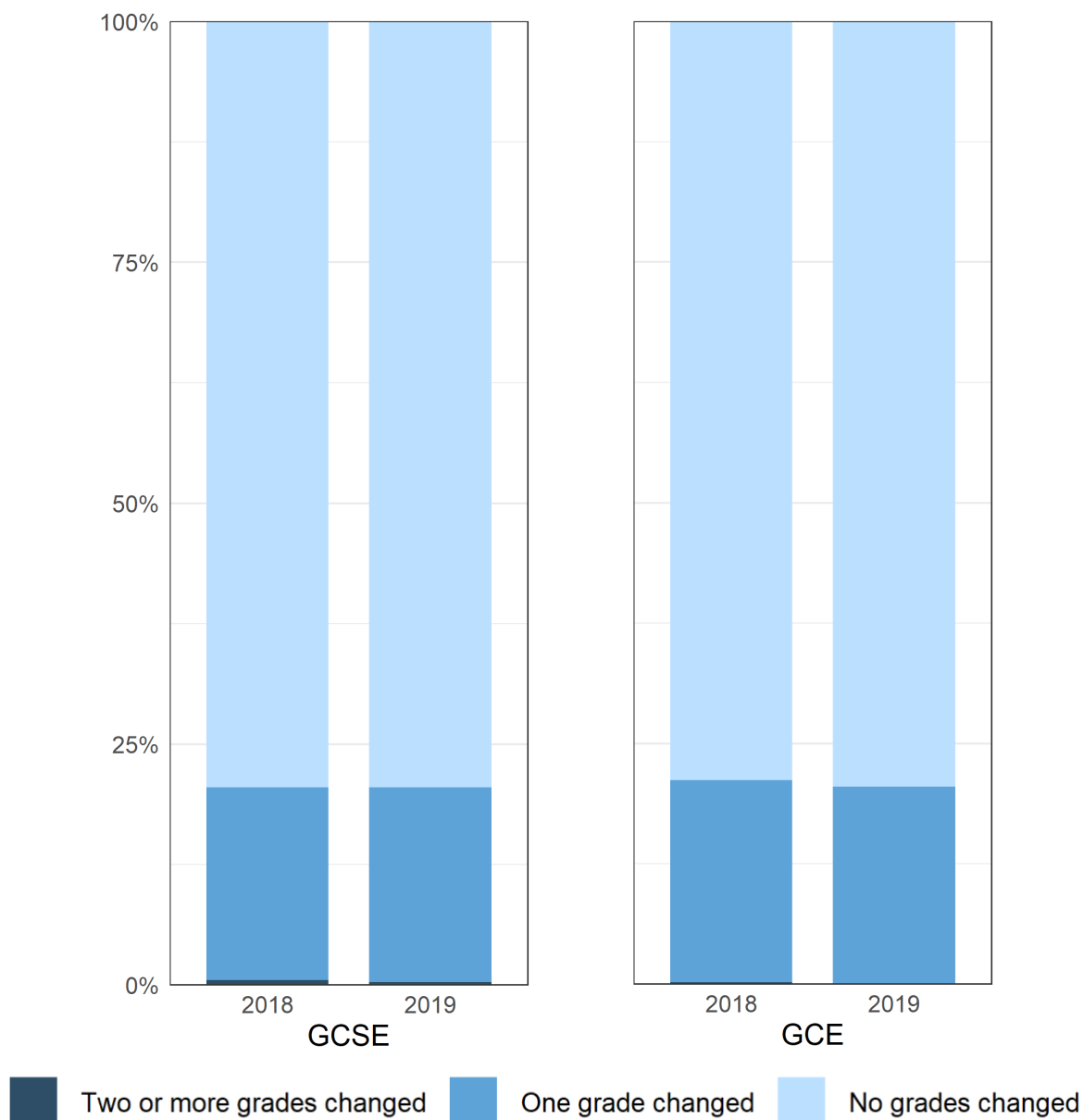


Note: Underlying figures and all other subjects are reported in Table 11 in the accompanying [data](#).

Grades changed following reviews

These charts show the magnitude of grade changes made following review. In the majority of cases (79.5% of all GCSE and GCE grades challenged), there were no grade changes made following review. When grades were changed, they were most commonly changed by one grade – 98.6% of all grade changes made were changes of a single grade.

Very few students had their grades changed by two grades or more – in 2019, just over 0.3% of all grades challenged resulted in a grade change of two grades or more (0.5% in 2018). These charts show a breakdown of grade changes by GCSE and GCE.



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

Number of changes of two or more grades by subject (2019)

This table shows the number of changes of two or more grades following reviews of marking and moderation by subject in 2019.

Overall, Art and design and English subjects had the highest number of changes of two or more grades.

In GCSE specifications, changes of two or more grades accounted for 1.7% of all GCSE grades changed in 2019.

In GCE specifications, changes of two or more grades accounted for 0.5% of all GCE grades changed in 2019.

Subject	GCE	GCSE	Total
Art and Design subjects	15	285	305
English Language	0	240	240
English Literature	25	215	240
Combined science	0	85	85
Religious Studies	0~	25	25
History	0~	15	20
Business Studies	0	15	15
Drama	0	15	15
Design & Technology	0	10	10
English Language & Literature	10	0	10
All other subjects	5	35	40
Total	60	945	1,010

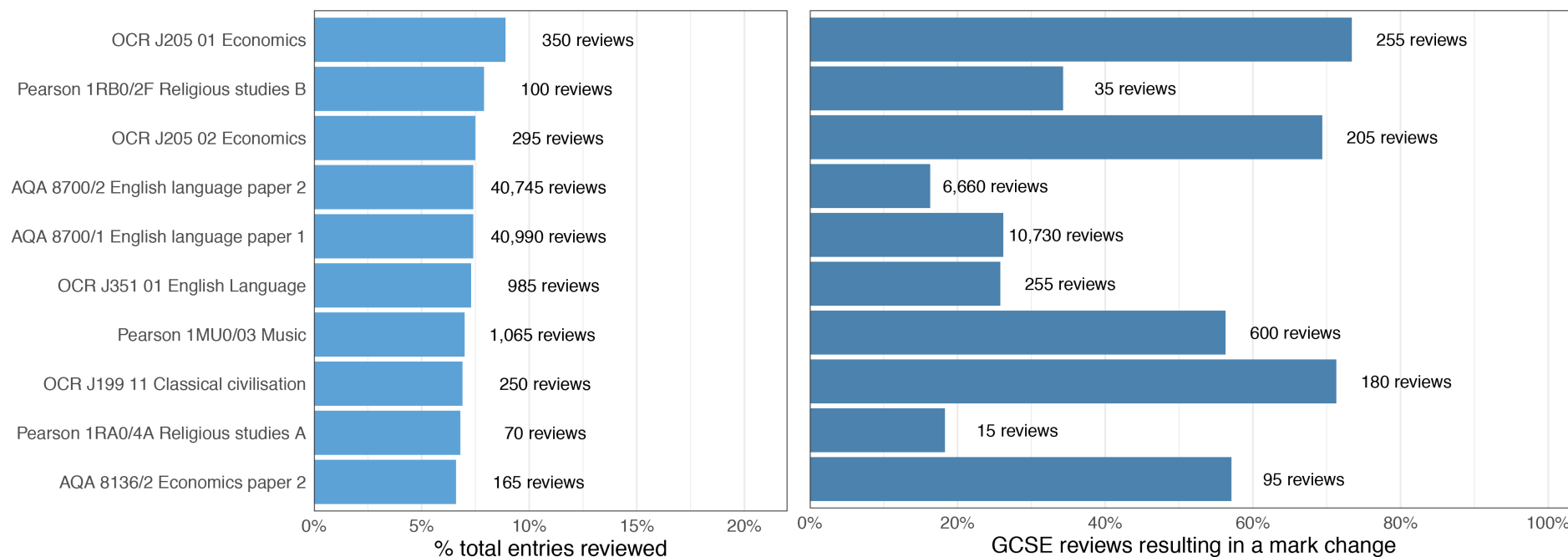
For breakdown by specification please see Tables 13b and 14b in the accompanying [data](#).

Units/components with the highest percentage of reviews

The charts below show the percentage and number of entries reviewed for the 10 GCSE units with the highest proportion of entries reviewed (left chart) and the proportion and number of those reviews which resulted in a mark change (right chart). The raw number for each unit's reviews and instances of mark changes are displayed on each chart. Only units with over 1,000 entries were included for analysis.

At GCSE level, the greatest overall proportion of mark adjustments was seen in economics components.

The 10 GCSE units/components with the highest percentage of entries with reviews of marking requested

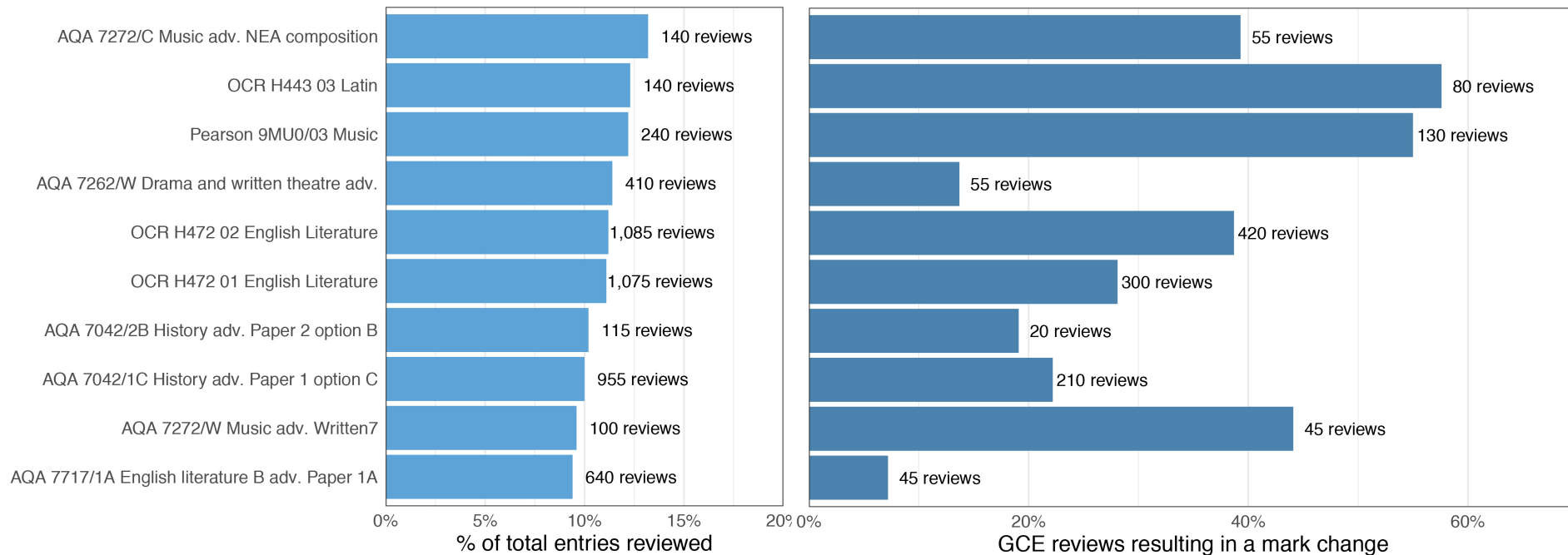


Note: Underlying figures are reported in table 13 in the accompanying [data](#).

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

The charts below show the percentage and number of entries reviewed for the 10 GCE units with the highest proportion of entries reviewed (left chart) and the proportion and number of those reviews which resulted in a mark change (right chart). The raw number for each unit's reviews and instances of mark changes are displayed on each chart. Only units with over 1,000 entries were included in this analysis.

For GCE (AS and A level) components, reviews of marking were requested in the highest proportions for arts and language-related subjects. This may reflect the greater need for examiners to apply their academic judgment in marking schemes for these subjects than is generally the case in science, technology, engineering or mathematics subjects. Mark adjustments were most common in music-based units or components, overall.

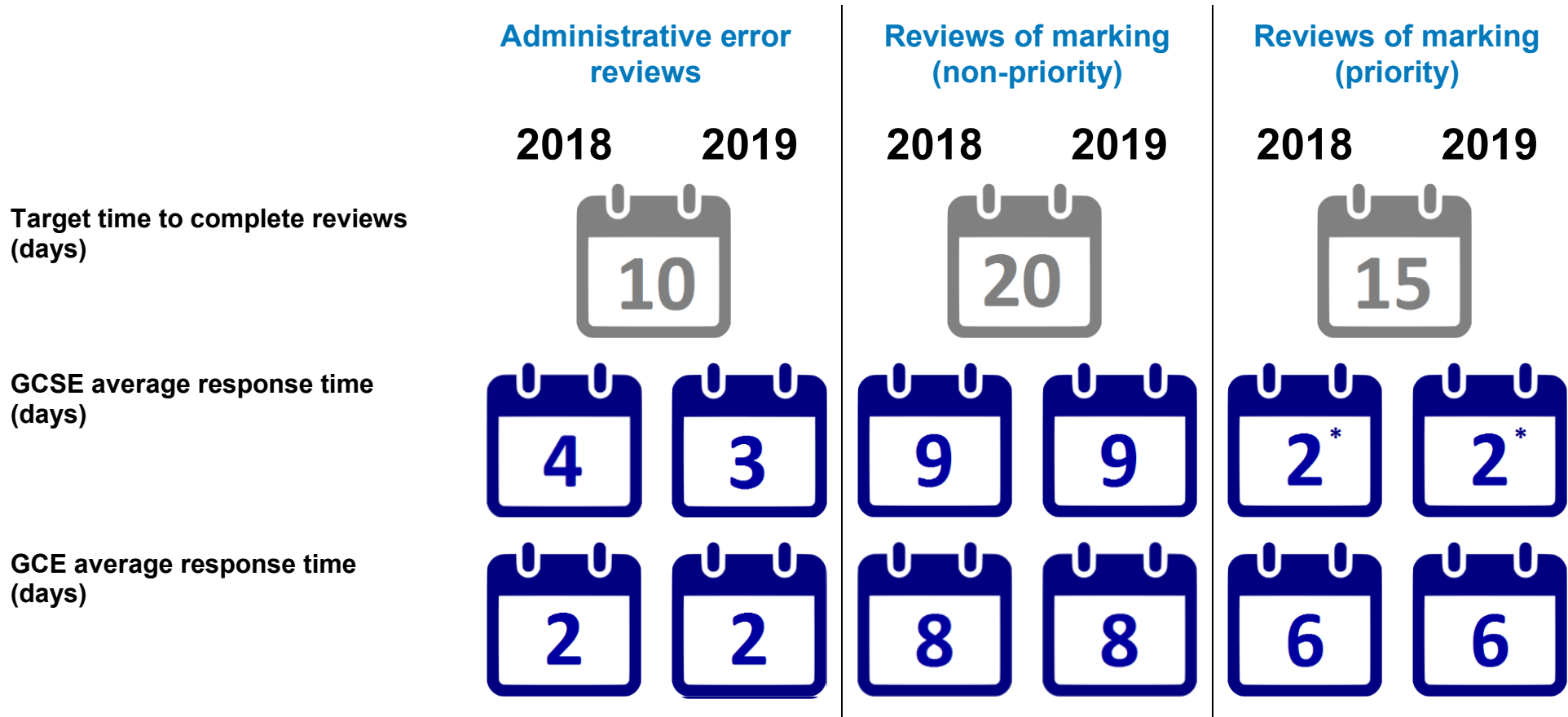


Underlying figures are reported in tables 14 in the accompanying [data](#).

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 (99.4%), reviews were completed well within the maximum times outlined in the Joint Council for Qualifications guidelines.



*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](#).



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