

Access Arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level 2017 to 2018 academic years

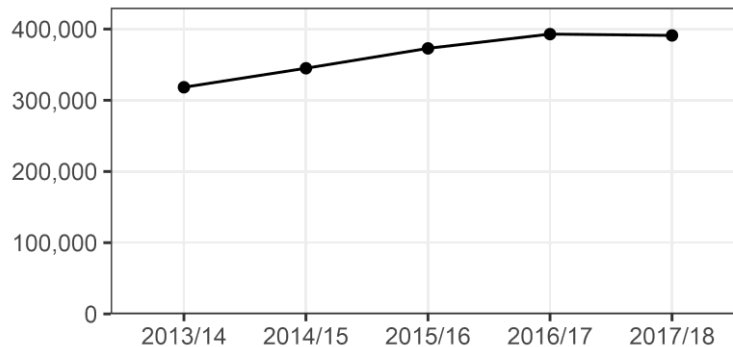
WITHDRAWN

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This report provides information on the number of access arrangements approved for GCSE, AS and A level, in England during the 2017/18 academic year, and the number of modified papers for the 2018 summer series.

Number of approved arrangements

There were 391,130 approved access arrangements, down 0.5% on 2016/17.



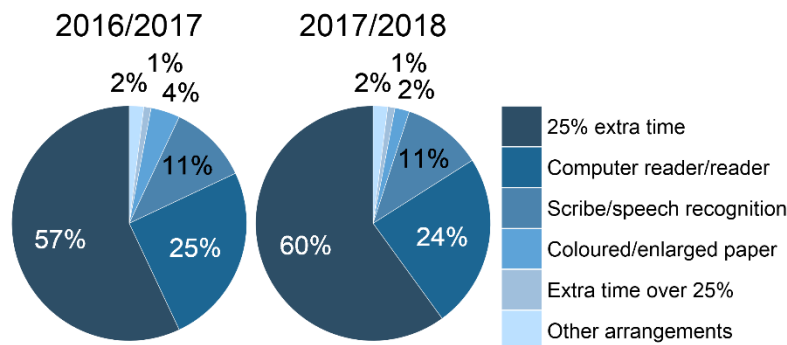
Percentage of centres with approved arrangements

91%

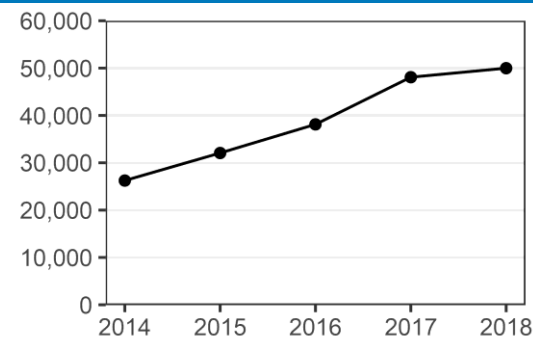
5,425 centres (91% of all centres) had approved access arrangements for one or more of their students this year, a similar percentage to last year.

Proportion of each type of approved arrangement

25% extra time arrangements made up 60% of all approved arrangements in 2017/18, compared to 57% in 2016/17.



Number of modified papers



There were 49,985 modified papers this year, up 4% on 2017.

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Comments and feedback are welcome.

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Access arrangements

In this report, Ofqual presents data on access arrangements approved for GCSE, AS and A level exams during the 2017/18 academic year in England.

Access arrangements are the provisions made for students, agreed before they take an assessment, to ensure that they can be validly assessed and are not unfairly disadvantaged due to a disability, temporary illness or injury or if their first language is not English. Any student with a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010 – ie has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities) is legally entitled to reasonable adjustments, which are a form of access arrangement. Access arrangements should not be confused with post-examination adjustments to the marks of students who have not been able to demonstrate their ability in an assessment due to exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement at the time of the assessment. These post-examination adjustments are covered in a separate report on [special consideration](#).

Any students taking GCSE, AS or A level exams or non-exam assessments who meet the exam boards' eligibility criteria can have an access arrangement. Individual students may require more than one form of access arrangement. According to [JCQ guidelines](#), once granted, an arrangement will apply for up to 26 months, although applications based on temporary conditions will last for one exam series only.

While other types of arrangements can be requested without needing the approval of exam boards, the data in this release only cover those arrangements which are granted through JCQ's Access Arrangements Online system (detailed in [JCQ guidelines](#)).

Due to differences in data collection, figures for modified papers are presented separately from other types of access arrangement towards the end of this report.

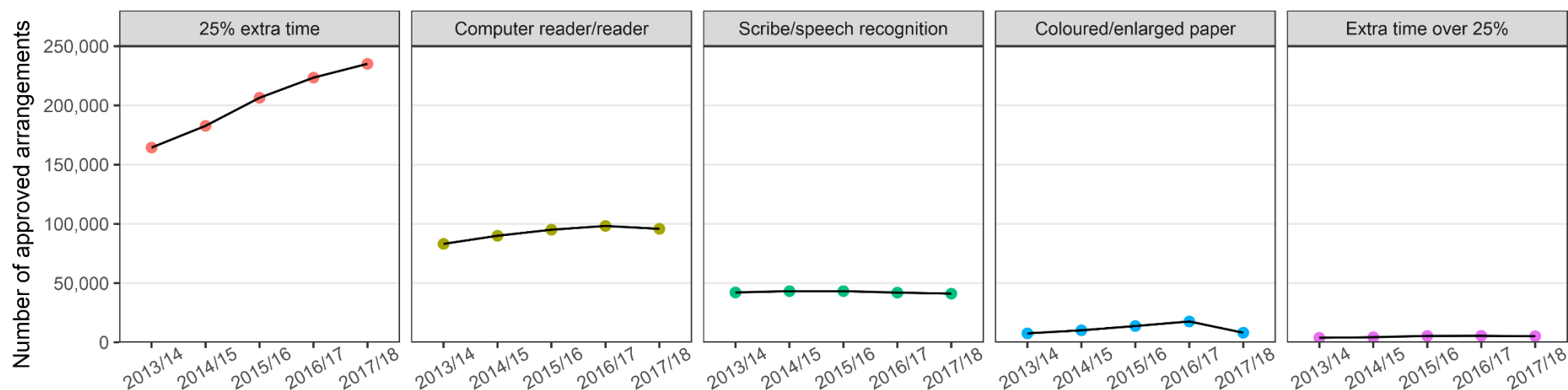
In this release, all figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure confidentiality of data.

Further information on this release is available in the [background information](#) as well as [data tables](#) accompanying this report.

Most common types of access arrangements

25% extra time remains the most common type of arrangement

The top five most common types of arrangement – 2013/14 to 2017/18



Number and proportion of each type of access arrangement for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years

Type of arrangement	Number		% change	% of students taking exams	
	2016/17	2017/18		2016/17 cohort	2017/18 cohort
25% extra time	223,405	235,060	▲ 5.2%	15.4	17.8
Computer reader/reader	98,225	95,785	▼ 2.5%	6.8	7.3
Scribe/speech recognition technology	41,960	41,070	▼ 2.1%	2.9	3.1
Coloured/enlarged exam paper	17,605	8,095	▼ 54.0%	1.2	0.6
Extra time over 25%	5,525	5,190	▼ 6.1%	0.4	0.4
Other arrangements	6,235	5,925	▼ 4.9%	-	-
Total	392,955	391,130	▼ 0.5%	-	-

‘Other arrangements’ and ‘Total’ contain multiple types of arrangements whereby individual students can be in receipt of multiple arrangements.

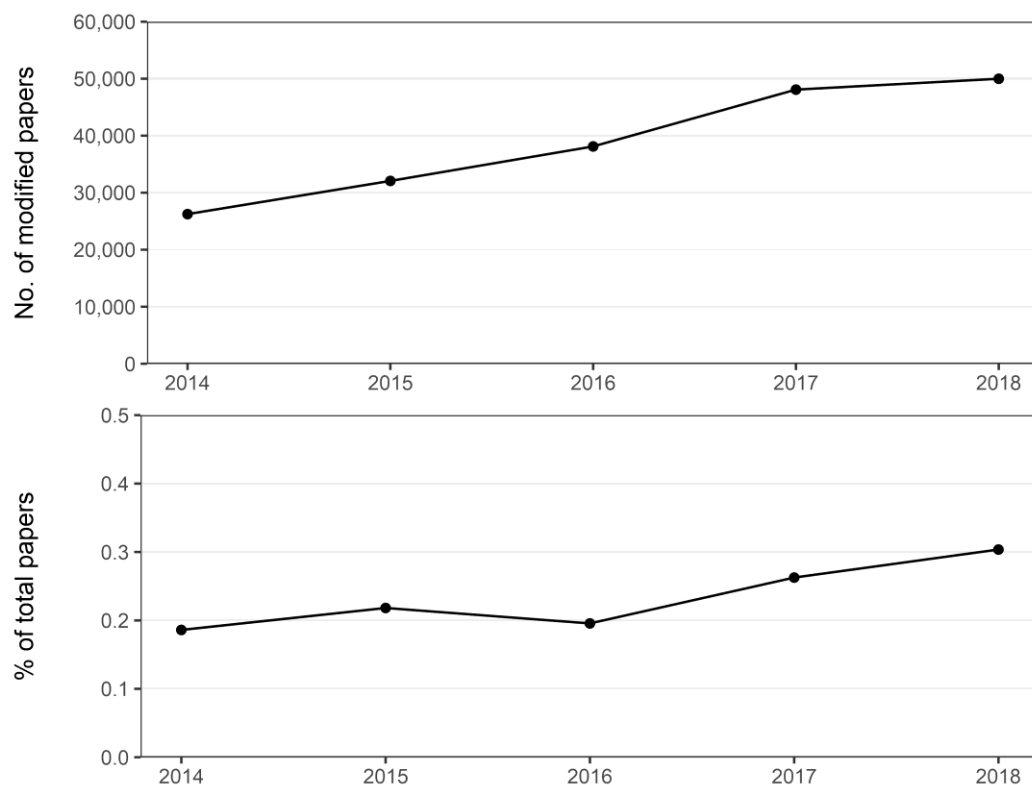
We are not able to calculate the % of students taking exams for the last two rows because more than one type of access arrangement can be granted per candidate, and we do not collect access arrangements data at candidate level to calculate these percentages.

Modified question papers for the summer series

Requests for modified question papers are made by schools and colleges in advance of a specific exam series. Modified papers are prepared for students with, for example, a range of visual impairments and significant language comprehension disorders in order to allow them to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding.

A request for a modified paper is made for each individual exam paper (whereas for the other types of access arrangements given in this release one request is made for each candidate across all exams). Therefore, an individual candidate may request multiple modified papers in a single exam series. The figures reported in this section are also for the summer exam series only (whereas the rest of the data reported in this release covers the whole academic year). For these reasons, data for modified papers is presented separately from the other access arrangements in this report.

The number and proportion of modified papers in the summer exam series has increased over time



There were 49,985 modified question papers produced in the summer 2018 exam series, an increase of 4.0% compared with 2017 (from 48,080) (the top graph).

The increases since 2014 may be because of the introduction of new types of modified papers in recent years (for example, the introduction of non-interactive electronic question papers in 2014), and better information being available to centres, parents, and students.

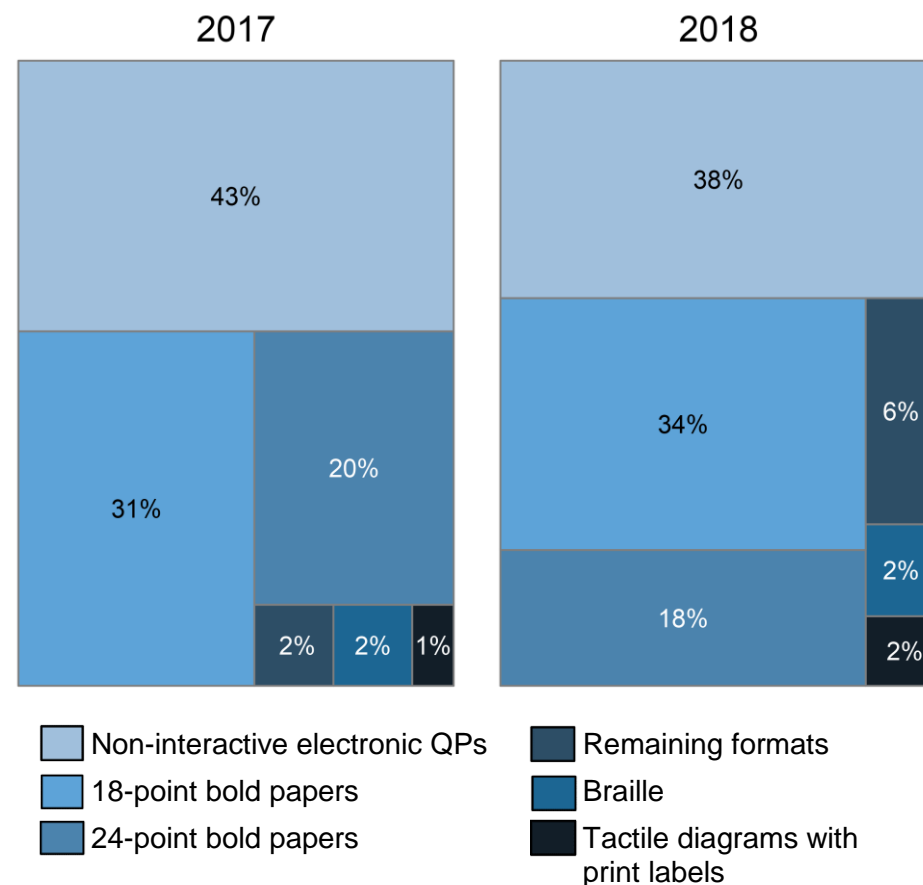
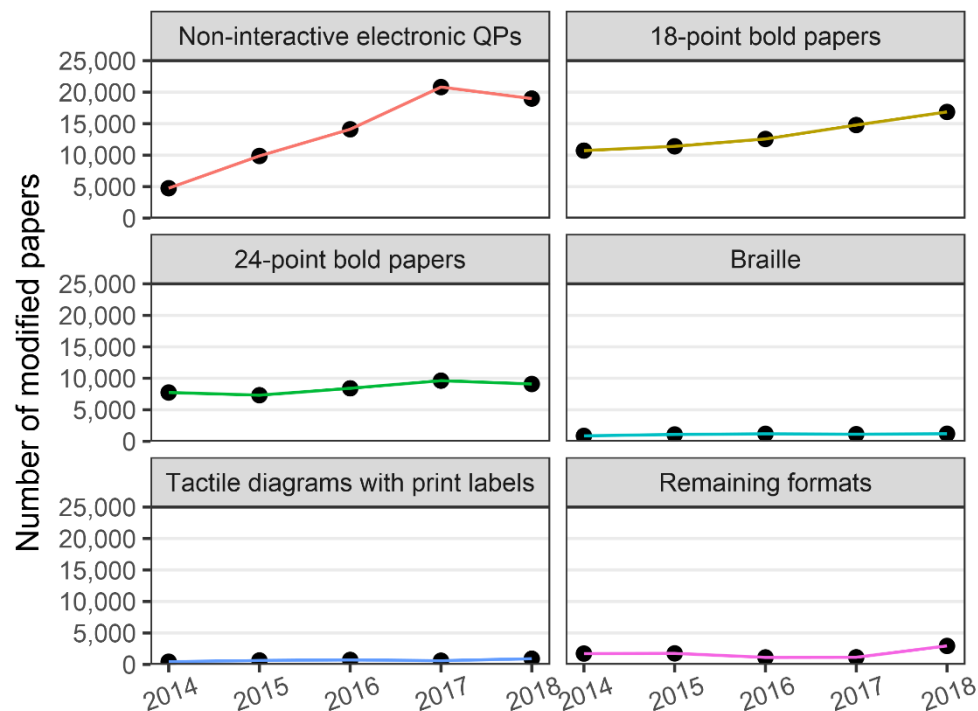
The number of modified question papers issued for the summer 2018 exam series (49,985) accounted for a small proportion (0.3%) of the 16.5 million papers marked for GCSE, AS and A level exams. The rounded proportion last year was also 0.3% (48,080 of 18.3 million papers).

Most common types of modified papers

Non-interactive electronic question papers are the most common type of modified paper

Number and proportion of each type of modified paper in 2017 and 2018

Type of modified paper	2017	2018	% change
Non-interactive electronic QPs	20,815	18,985	▼ 8.8%
18-point bold papers	14,785	16,865	▲ 14.1%
24-point bold papers	9,625	9,095	▼ 5.5%
Braille	1,130	1,195	▲ 5.9%
Tactile diagrams with print labels	595	905	▲ 52.1%
Remaining formats	1,135	2,940	▲ 159.4%
Total	48,080	49,985	▲ 4.0%



'Remaining formats' includes less frequently used modified papers such as modified language, transcripts of listening test/video, and other formats (detailed breakdown given in [data tables](#)).

These official statistics were withdrawn on 17 July 2025



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In 2025, Ofqual analysed a more detailed access arrangements dataset that we had requested from exam boards. Our analysis highlighted that our previously published official statistics on access arrangements overstated the number of approved access arrangements in place for the exam cohort in each year. For more details, see <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/shedding-new-light-on-access-arrangements-data>

Using this new more detailed dataset, we are strengthening our methodologies for analysis and quality assurance and plan to publish revised figures in our 2025 release. We intend for this release to include the academic years between 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025, for which we have the new data.

While we complete that work, we are withdrawing the previously published statistics because of the limitations we have identified through our analysis.

This issue does not affect the figures relating to modified papers, which are based on a different data source and which are now available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modified-papers-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-2014-to-2024>

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