

# Background Notes – Special Consideration

## **Purpose and coverage of this release**

This release presents data for GCSEs, AS and A levels sat during the summer exam series at centres located in Wales. This release does not include GCSEs, AS and A levels taken outside of Wales.

This release covers breakdowns of special consideration requests and approvals and looks at outcomes associated with the special consideration process. The figures represent the number of requests and approvals, rounded to the nearest 5, submitted by awarding bodies on the reporting date detailed in our [reporting schedule](#), reflecting the position up to and including the data cut-off date.

## **Special Consideration**

[JCQ guidance](#) sets out that special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness/injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of assessment, which is reasonably likely to have had a material effect on their ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their normal level of attainment. These should not be confused with pre-agreed examination provisions made to ensure that students can be validly assessed and are not unfairly disadvantaged due to a disability, temporary illness/injury or if their first language is not English or Welsh. We report on that form of adjustment in our statistics on access arrangements.

A special consideration request relates to a single request for a candidate sitting a specific unit or component in an exam series. Requests are made by centres usually after an assessment has taken place. An application can be made for an individual candidate, or for a group of candidates if a reason for special consideration covers multiple candidates. An application can also be made for an individual candidate across multiple assessments.

Special consideration can be in the form of a mark adjustment if the candidate was present for the assessment, or a qualification award if the candidate could not be present to complete all the required assessments. The latter involves calculating a missing mark using the candidates' performance in similar units and the mark distribution of the overall cohort. Awarding bodies will not approve a request if they believe that the reasons given did not significantly affect the performance of the candidate.

This release only includes special consideration requests made by centres. In some cases, special consideration mark adjustments may be given when a request was not made by the centre. For example, if there is an error in a question paper which disadvantaged a large number of candidates, an awarding body may decide to award a mark adjustment to all candidates who were disadvantaged by the error, regardless of whether or not a request has been made. Any mark adjustments not related to a request are not included in the data in this release.

## **Data Source**

The awarding bodies that provide GCSEs, AS and A level have submitted information to Qualifications Wales about the number of special consideration requests for each qualification available in the summer series. The special consideration data that was submitted is only for centres located in Wales, regardless of the type of centre.

Due to the cancellation of summer exams in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no special consideration data for the summer 2020 or summer 2021 exam series and these years are excluded from the release.

## **Limitations of data**

Data has been collected at an appropriate point when it is reasonably complete, in accordance with our reporting schedule. While Qualifications Wales expects awarding bodies to provide us with accurate data, we cannot guarantee that the information given is correct. We compare the data over time to check for any systemic issues or anomalies and engage with awarding bodies to validate the data. From 2017/18, awarding bodies submitted qualifications data to Qualifications Wales rather than Ofqual. Comparisons to historical Ofqual data should be interpreted with caution.

## **About us and our statistics**

[Qualifications Wales](#) is the independent organisation responsible for regulating general and vocational qualifications in Wales

The [Official Statistics \(Wales\) Order 2017](#) names us as one of the bodies in scope of the [Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007](#). This release is published as official statistics, in compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

## **Quality assurance**

Details of how we quality assure this data are covered in our [Interim Statement on Statistical Quality and Quality Assurance of Administrative Data Sources](#). Historical data has been subject to Ofqual's quality assurance procedures.

## Revisions

Once published, this data is not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or correct an error. More information can be found in our [Statistical Outputs Policy](#).

## Rounding and Confidentiality

In accordance with [Qualifications Wales's Statistical Outputs Policy](#), figures fewer than 5 but greater than 0 are replaced with a [s]. This is to ensure that data does not reveal an individual candidate. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5. All percentages are based on unrounded figures. Figures have been rounded independently and therefore may not sum to the total.

## Useful information

A [glossary of terms](#) is available on our website to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the [Welsh Government website](#).

The [QiW database](#) gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

## Related statistics and publications

A number of statistical releases relate to this one, including:

- The '[Examination results](#)' release, published by Welsh Government.
- [Statistics published by us](#) relating to other aspects of the qualifications system.
- [Statistics published by Ofqual](#).

## Users of these statistics and feedback

Qualifications Wales uses these statistics to monitor the qualification system. These statistics are also likely to be of interest to Ofqual and other qualifications regulators awarding bodies, centres (schools and colleges) and the Welsh Government. We welcome any feedback on these statistics which can be provided by email to [statistics@qualifications.wales](mailto:statistics@qualifications.wales)

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