

Special consideration for GCSE, AS and A level in Wales: Summer 2023 exam series



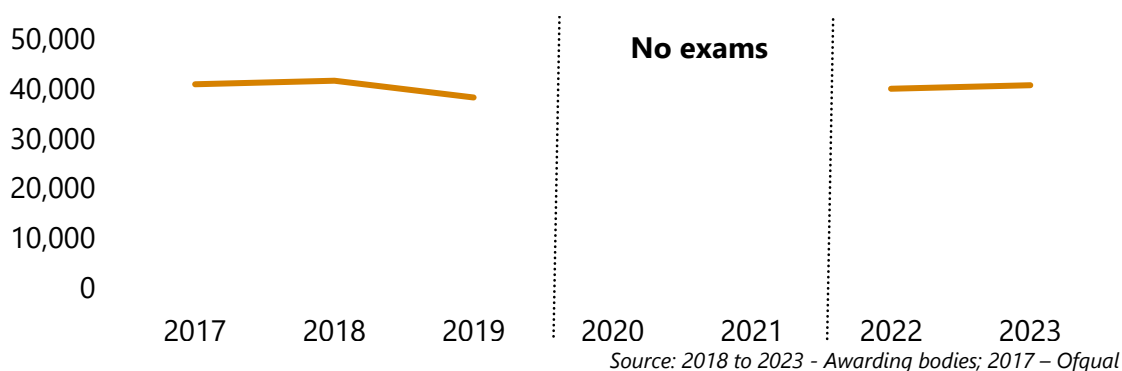
16 November 2023

About this release

This statistical release provides information on the number of special consideration requests and approvals for individual units/components within GCSEs, AS and A levels in summer 2023. These requests were submitted by centres in Wales to exam boards. Due to the cancellation of summer exams in 2020 and 2021, this release does not contain data for 2020 or 2021.

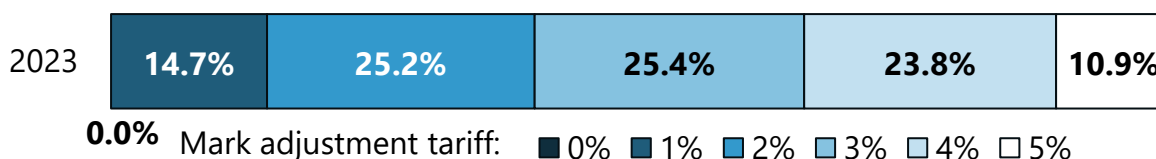
Highlights

Figure 1: Number of special consideration requests



There were 40,900 special consideration requests in 2023, up 2.2% compared to 2022. 90.7% of requests were approved in 2023, compared to 92.1% in 2022. The approved requests represent 3.5% of all assessments sat in summer 2023, a small proportional decrease compared to 3.8% in 2022.

Figure 2: Distribution of mark adjustments



Source: Awarding bodies

The most frequent tariffs in 2023 were 2% and 3% with a quarter of approved mark adjustments receiving an additional 2% of the maximum marks, and a quarter receiving an additional 3%.

Quick links: [What is special consideration?](#) [Total requests](#) [Mark adjustments](#) [Approved requests](#) [Requests by subject](#) [Requests by type](#)

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Next update November 2024 (provisional)

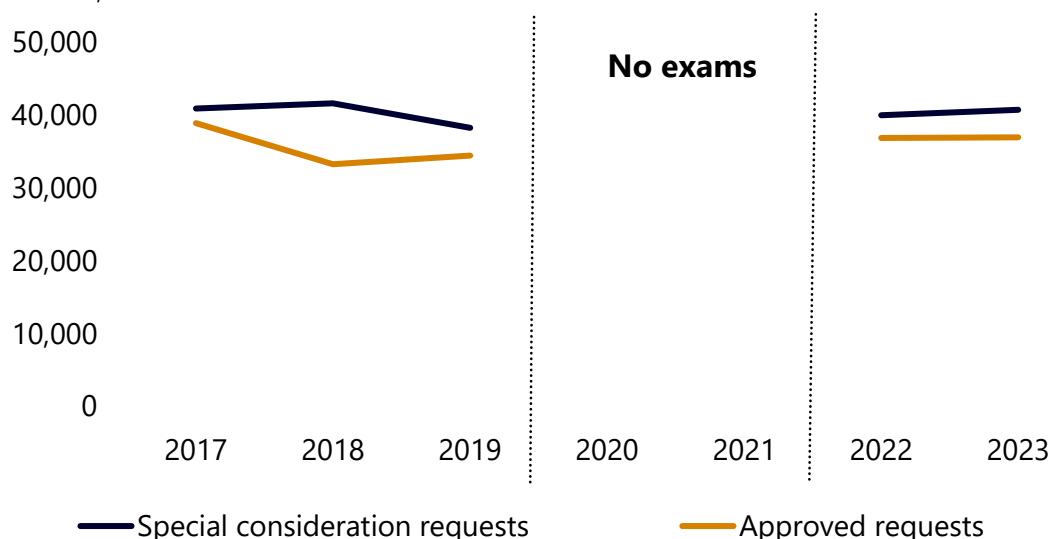
What is special consideration?

[Guidance published by JCO](#) 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 true level of attainment. This release only includes data for special consideration requests submitted by schools and colleges. Mark adjustments that were not the result of a request from the school or college are not included. More information about special consideration can be found in the background notes published alongside this release.

Have special consideration requests increased this summer?

Figure 3: Number of special consideration requests

Summer series, 2016 to 2023



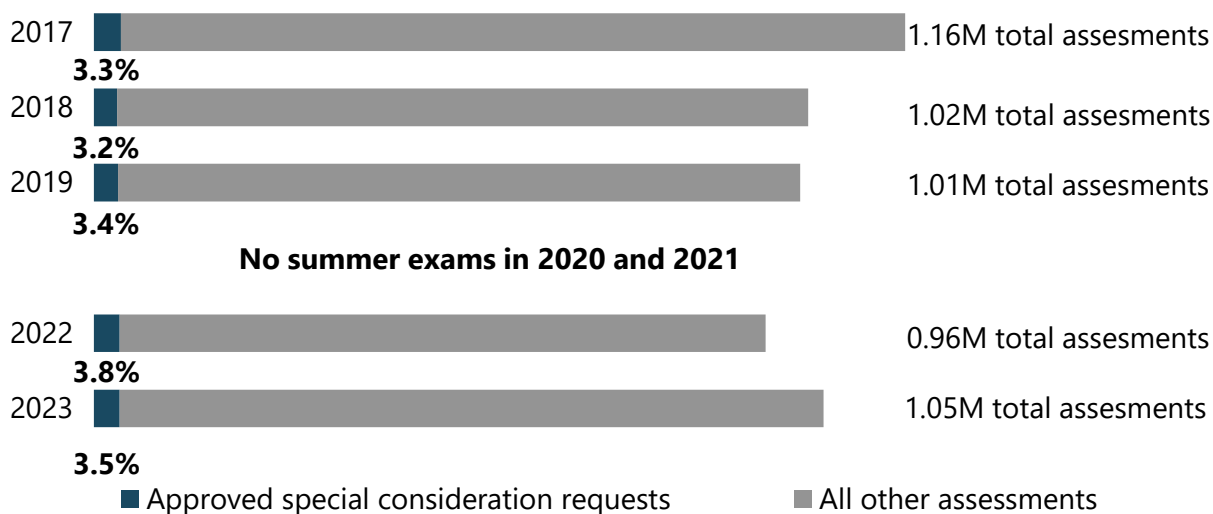
Source: 2018 to 2023 - Awarding bodies; 2017 - Ofqual

The number of special consideration requests increased by 2.2% in 2023 compared to 2022. 40,900 requests were made in 2023, compared to 40,030 in 2022 and 38,280 in 2019.

Approved requests increased by 0.6% from 36,885 in 2022 to 37,110 in 2023. In 2023, 90.7% of all requests were approved, compared to 92.1% in 2022

What proportion of all assessments had an approved special consideration request?

Figure 4: Approved requests as a proportion of all assessments



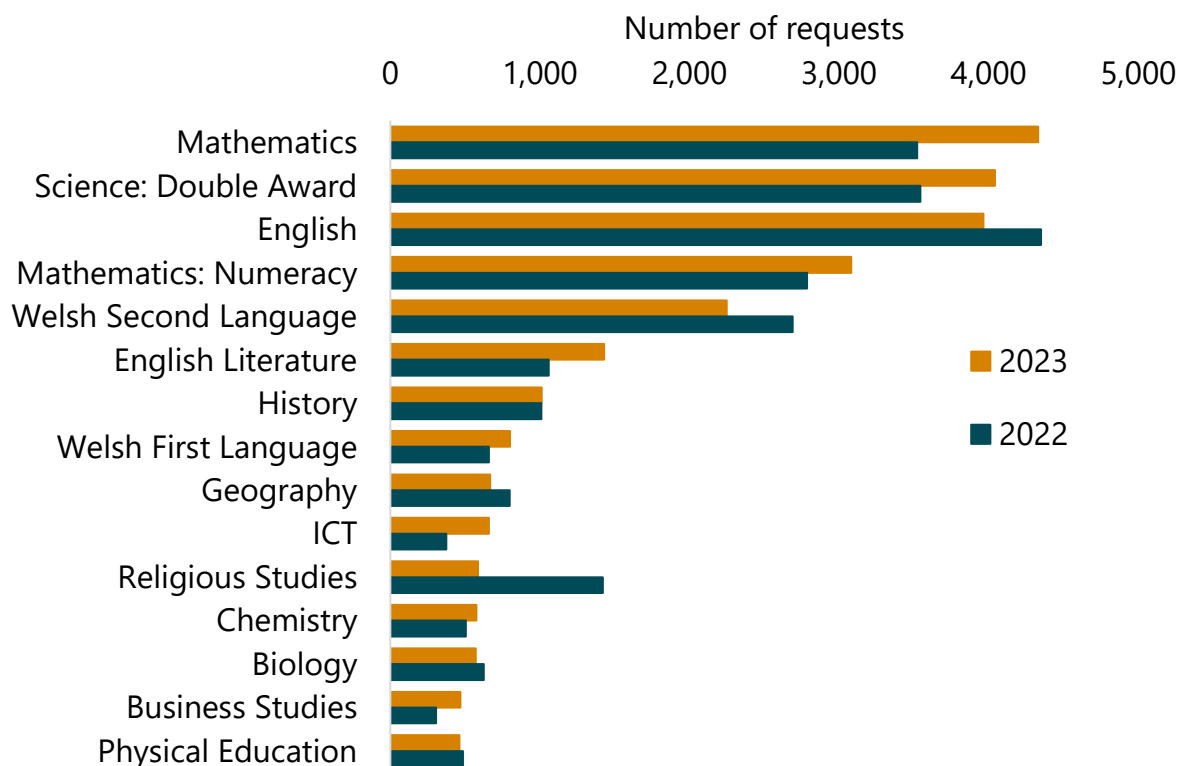
Source: 2018 to 2023 - Awarding bodies; 2017 - Ofqual

Out of a total 1,047,120 assessments sat in summer 2023, 3.5% had an approved special consideration request. This is a small decrease of 0.3 percentage points compared to 2022, when 3.8% of assessments had an approved special consideration request.

How do special consideration requests vary by subject?

Figure 5: GCSE special consideration requests by subject

Top 15, summer series, 2022 and 2023

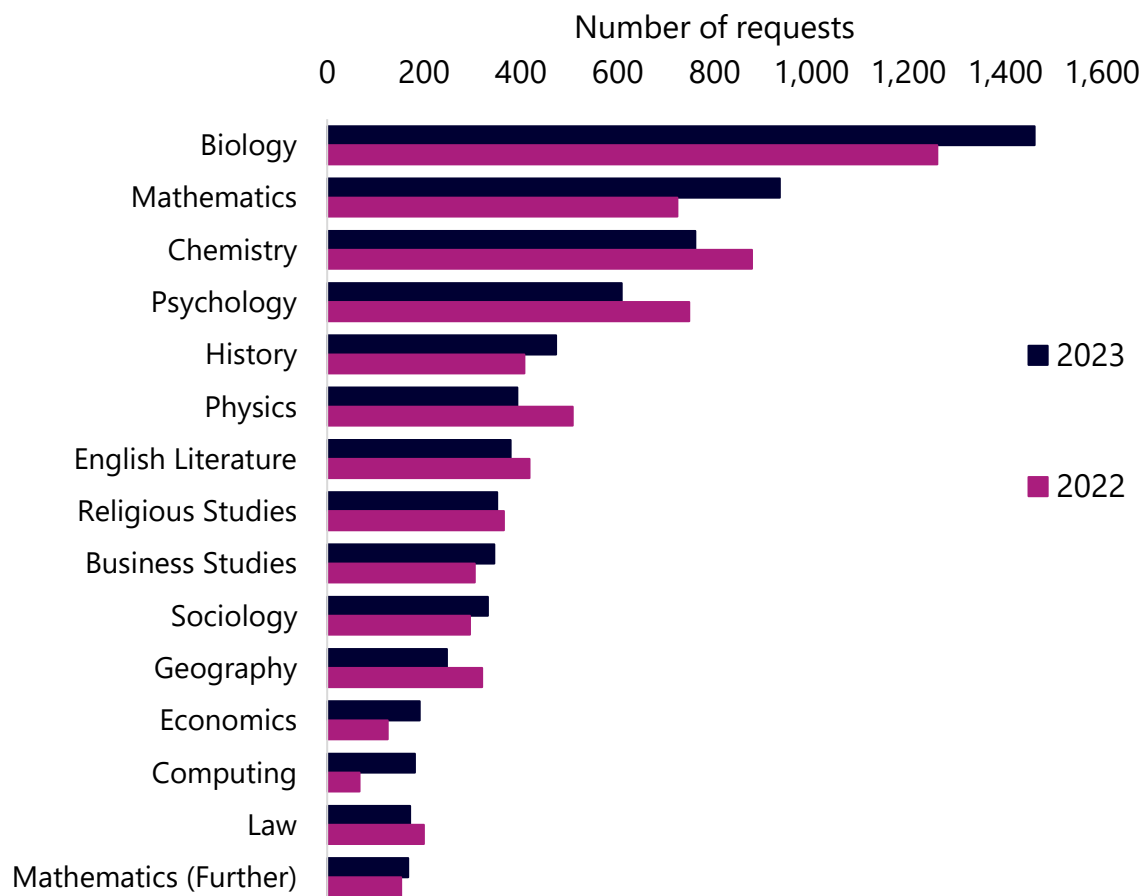


Source: Awarding bodies

GCSE Mathematics had the most special consideration requests in summer 2023, increasing by 23.2% compared to 2022. Science: Double Award, which had the most requests in 2018 and 2019, had the second highest number of requests and saw an increase of 14.1% in 2023 compared to 2022.

Figure 6: AS & A level special consideration requests by subject

Top 15, summer series, 2022 and 2023



Source: Awarding bodies

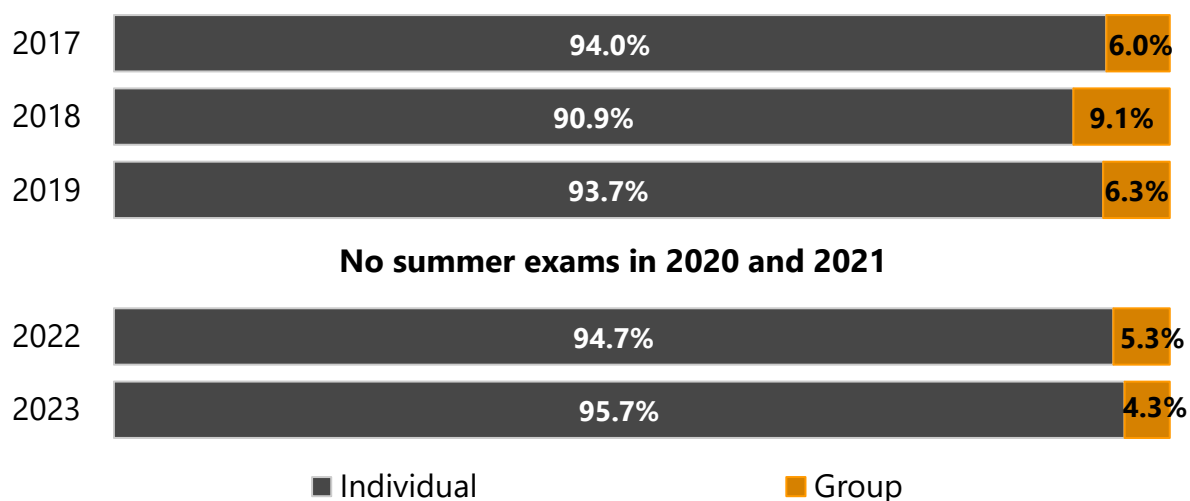
For AS and A level, Biology, Mathematics and Chemistry had the highest number of special consideration requests. Compared to 2022, requests in 2023 related to Biology, and Mathematics assessments increased by 16.5%, 30.6% respectively and decreased by 13.1% in Chemistry.

There are many reasons why the number of special consideration requests varies by subject, and it's important to consider the following when interpreting the data:

- requests are made for individual assessments;
- multiple requests can be made for the same qualification;
- different qualifications are made up of different numbers of assessments;
- adaptations to assessments in summer 2022 reduced the total number of assessments that learners needed to take in some subjects, but not others;
- the volume of requests for a given subject is related to the number of entries, which will vary from subject to subject.

How is special consideration split between different types of request?

Figure 7: Proportion of individual and group applications submitted



Source: 2018 to 2023 - Awarding bodies; 2017 - Ofqual

Applications can be made for an individual candidate, or for a group of candidates if they are linked by a common disadvantage. Individual special consideration applications continued to make up the majority (95.7%) of all applications in summer 2023, up from 94.7% in summer 2022.

Smaller group sizes were most common, with groups of 2 to 5 candidates accounting for 26.7% of all group applications in summer 2023.

Table 1: Number of group applications by group size

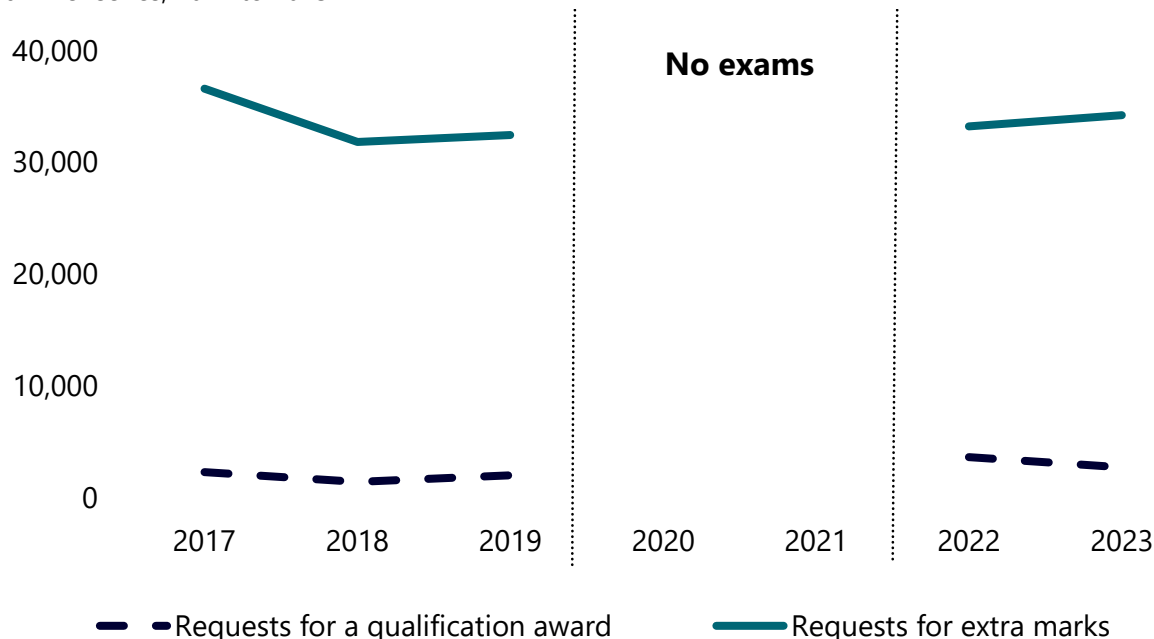
Summer 2023

Group size	Number of applications	Percentage of total applications
2-5	115	26.7%
6-10	85	20.4%
11-20	85	20.4%
21-50	80	19.2%
51-100	45	10.1%
101-200	15	3.3%
201+	0	0.0%
Total	425	100.0%

Source: Awarding bodies

Figure 8: Approved special consideration requests by type of request

Summer series, 2017 to 2023



Source: 2018 to 2023 - Awarding bodies; 2017 - Ofqual

There are two distinct categories of special consideration: mark adjustments and qualification awards. Requests for a mark adjustment are made in cases where a learner is present for the assessment but disadvantaged. Requests for a qualification award are made in cases where a learner is absent from a timetabled assessment.

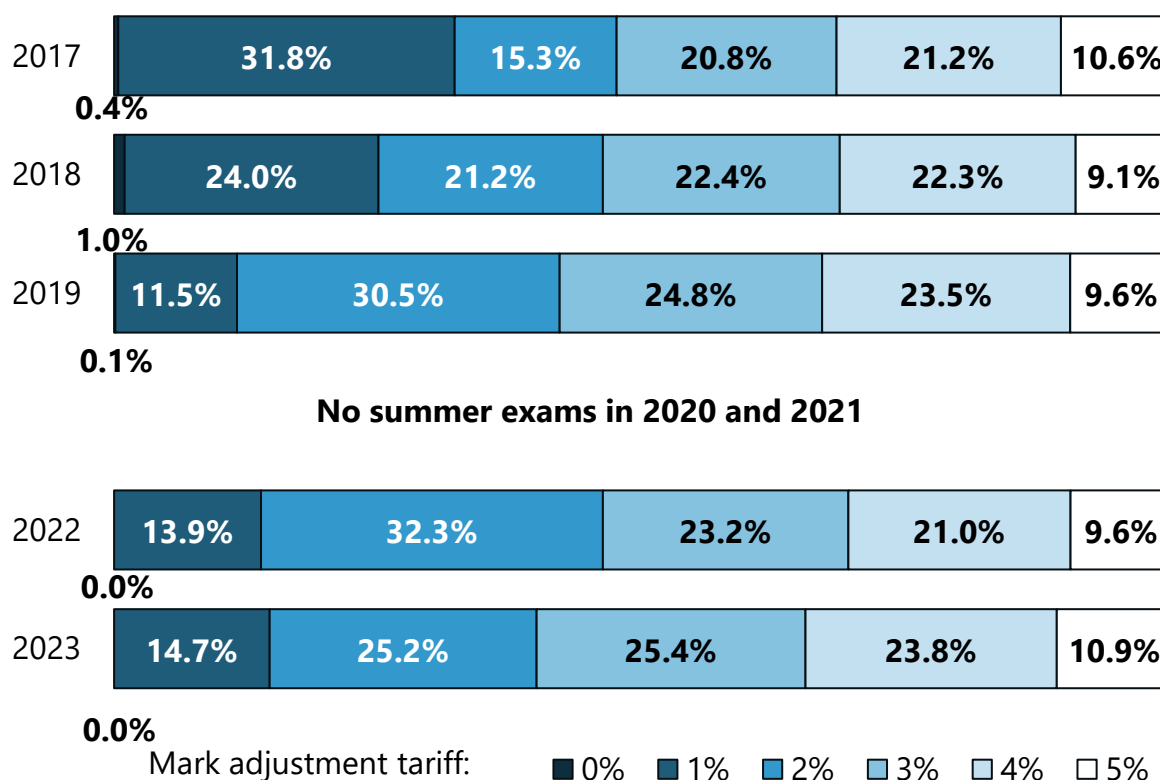
Mark adjustments continue to make up the majority of approved special consideration requests, and made up a higher proportion of approved requests in summer 2023 compared to 2022 but lower than in previous years. In 2023, 92.5% of approved requests were requests for extra marks, compared to 90.1% in 2022 and 94.2% in 2019.

The number of approved requests for a qualification award decreased by 24.2% from 3,650 in 2022 to 2,765 in 2023.

What adjustments are made as a result of special consideration requests?

Figure 7: Approved mark adjustments by mark adjustment tariff

Summer series, 2017 to 2023



Source: 2018 to 2023 - Awarding bodies; 2017 - Ofqual

When a request is approved for a learner who was present for the assessment but disadvantaged, the learner's mark can be adjusted. For each adjustment, a percentage of the maximum available marks is added to the mark given by the marker. The largest available adjustment tariff is 5% of the maximum available marks. For each request, the exam board decides which tariff to apply. If the application is reviewed but the addition of marks is considered inappropriate, exam boards may choose not to make any change to the candidate's mark (i.e. 0% adjustment).

The distributions of mark adjustments across each tariff in 2023 is broadly similar to 2022 and 2019. The addition of 2% and 3% of the maximum mark were the most common mark adjustments made in summer 2023. A quarter of approved mark adjustments received these tariffs. For the 2% mark adjustment this was a decrease of 7.1 percentage points compared to 2022 and for the 3% mark adjustment tariff an increase of 2.2 percentage points. There were no 0% adjustments in 2023.

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