

Ofqual
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Statistical bulletin

**Access arrangements for GCSE and GCE: June 2009
examination series**

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Introduction

This Statistical Bulletin published on behalf of the regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland presents data on the access arrangements approved for GCSE and GCE examinations during the June 2009 examinations series. These qualifications are offered by five awarding organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (Northern Ireland) (CCEA)
- Edexcel
- Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR), and
- WJEC.

In the June 2009 examination series over 1 million GCE AS qualification awards and over 840,000 GCE A level qualification awards were made. Nearly 5.5 million GCSE qualification awards were made during the June 2009 series. Over 16 million GCSE and GCE scripts were marked by the awarding organisations.

Access arrangements

The regulators in England (Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator; Ofqual), Wales (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills; DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment; CCEA) produce the *GCSE, GCE and AEA code of practice* to promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding. It helps maintain standards, both within and between awarding organisations and from year to year. The code lays down agreed principles, processes and practices for the awarding organisations that develop and deliver these qualifications.

Section 7 of the code of practice requires awarding organisations to make sure that candidates with particular requirements can demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding, for example by providing modified question papers for candidates with visual impairments. The code makes clear that arrangements must be based on the needs of individual candidates and must not give them an unfair advantage or undermine the integrity of the qualifications in any way.

Candidates may have particular requirements for a number of reasons including

- a permanent (long term) disability or medical condition
- a temporary (short term) disability or medical condition
- an illness, other indisposition, or unforeseen incident at time of the assessment, and
- where their first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.

Centres should consider the particular requirements of individual candidates and then follow the regulations and guidelines of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The evidence required to support an application will vary depending on the reasons for the particular requirement and the type(s) of arrangement being requested. The JCQ's regulations on access arrangements detail the evidence required in support of an application.

Access Arrangements Online

Access arrangements online was launched in September 2008 and allows centres to apply for all GCSE and GCE access arrangements via a single portal. *Access arrangements online* replaced the previous paper-based system for awarding organisation approved access arrangements and the online Centre Delegated Access Arrangements (CDAA) tool.

Previously, for each individual candidate, centres were required to apply to each of the awarding organisations separately for those access arrangements which required awarding organisation approval. As a result, data was collected and reported for each awarding organisation separately. *Access arrangements online* is a centralised system through which centres can make a single application in relation to all the examinations a candidate intends to take. If approved, access arrangements will apply to all GCSE/GCE examinations taken with any of the five awarding organisations offering these qualifications. Therefore, the 2008–9 access arrangements data contained in this report is not awarding organisation specific as in previous years. Applications will apply for a period of 26 months although applications based on temporary conditions will last for one exam series only.

Table 1: Access arrangements for GCSE and GCE examinations received and approved via access arrangements online up to September 2009

Access Arrangement	Number of Requests	Number Approved	Approved Rate
Alternative accommodation	2,438	1,981	81.3%
Amplification equipment	128	108	84.4%
Bilingual dictionary	8,598	8,323	96.8%
Bilingual dictionary with extra time of up to 25%	14,856	14,255	96.0%
Braille machines	131	72	55.0%
CCTV	107	81	75.7%
Colour naming	505	487	96.4%
Coloured overlays	2,410	2,272	94.3%
Computer reader	94	70	74.5%
Early opening of question papers	4,519	3,724	82.4%
Exam on coloured paper	1,814	1,585	87.4%
Live speaker	638	535	83.9%
Low vision aid	410	312	76.1%
Oral language modifier	1,217	1,030	84.6%
Practical assistant for practical paper	742	389	52.4%
Practical assistant for written paper	837	518	61.9%
Prompter	5,853	5,485	93.7%
Read aloud	1,398	1,323	94.6%
Reader	72,302	67,466	93.3%

Access arrangements for GCSE and GCE

Scanners	27	25	92.6%
Scribe	36,619	32,735	89.4%
Separate invigilation	16,787	15,671	93.4%
Sign language interpreter	524	481	91.8%
Supervised rest breaks	8,202	7,028	85.7%
Transcript	5,026	4,613	91.8%
Up to 25% extra time	152,109	144,721	95.1%
Up to 25% extra time with supervised rest breaks	7,219	6,529	90.4%
Extra Time greater than 25%	3,784	2,535	67.0%
Word Processors	20,570	18,194	88.4%
Other	1,276	469	36.8%
TOTALS	371,140	343,017	92.4%

The most frequent arrangement during this period was to allow up to 25 per cent extra time for candidates taking an examination. Up to 25 per cent extra time can be given to candidates with a learning difficulty or other applicable medical, physical or other psychological requirement. For many candidates a smaller allowance, such as 10 per cent extra time, is appropriate. The second most frequent arrangement was the use of readers for candidates with particular visual impairments or a learning difficulty which affects their reading. A reader is either a person who reads the questions to the candidate or computer software that reads out a scanned paper.

The other most frequent arrangements were the use of a scribe or word processor for a candidate with learning difficulties, a medical condition, a physical disability, a severe visual impairment or a temporary injury which affects the candidate's ability to write independently.

The evidence required to support an application varies according to the arrangement being requested and the particular requirements of the candidate. Applications for particular categories of arrangement, such as practical assistants, are likely to be referred to the relevant awarding organisations as the centre would need to supply detailed information as to the precise role of the practical assistant during the assessment. *Access arrangements online* will reject applications if the information

submitted does not meet the relevant criteria for that arrangement. This may lead to subsequent applications with new or revised information/evidence for the same candidate. Both rejected applications and any subsequent approved applications will be captured within the data in the table above. Overall, 92 per cent of applications for access arrangements were approved with a variation of approval rate across the different types of access arrangement.

Modified question papers

Modified question papers are applied for in advance of a specific examination series and are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. Modified question papers allow those candidates who have a range of visual impairments and/or significant language comprehension disorders to demonstrate their attainment.

The types of modified papers that can be requested include:

- A3 enlarged unmodified
- A4 modified 18 point bold
- A3 enlargement of A4 modified paper (approximately 24 point)
- braille papers
- modified language, and
- tactile diagrams.

Centres apply for modified papers via a single portal with requests processed and papers produced by the individual awarding organisations.

Table 2: Modified question papers produced for the June 2009 examinations series

	Total	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA
Number of modified question papers requested	22,758	9,924	4,447	7,126	642	619
Number of requests approved	22,758	9,924	4,447	7,126	642	619
% of total question papers that were modified	0.14%	0.15%	0.12%	0.19%	0.05%	0.13%
Braille question paper	1,130	636	174	289	31	0
Enlarged paper (18 and 24 point bold)	14,542	7,072	2,942	3,747	411	370
Modified language	2,892	301	236	2,119	84	152
Tactile diagrams	173	43	51	79	0	0
Unmodified A3 question paper	4,021	1,872	1,044	892	116	97

Awarding organisations approved all 22,758 requests for modified question papers for the June 2009 exam series. This was consistent with the previous June 2008 examination series where 22,457 modified question papers were produced. The number of modified papers issued accounted for less than 0.14 per cent of the 16 million papers issued for GCE and GCSE examinations in June 2009.

The qualifications regulators wish to make their publications widely accessible. Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

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Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Spring Place

Coventry Business Park

Herald Avenue

Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346

www.ofqual.gov.uk

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Alison Fisher – Head of Profession for Statistics

Chris Harvey – Policy Lead