

Ofqual update 2026

Supporting the successful delivery of exams and assessments

The Exams Office
Winter Conferences 2026



What is Ofqual's role?

To ensure that:

regulated qualifications reliably indicate the knowledge, skills and understanding students have demonstrated

people have confidence in the qualifications we regulate

schools and colleges have information on the full range of qualifications we regulate

Summer 2025 exams and assessments

More than **1.3 million** students received GCSE, AS and A Level results at 6,011 centres

More than **6.5 million** results issued – GCSE, AS and A Level

522,000 certificates for VTQ performance table qualifications

Thank you !

For further details see Ofqual's 2025 [Delivery report](#)

Summer 2026

Looking ahead to this year

Formulae and equation sheets

- Students will continue to be provided with formulae and equation sheets in GCSE maths, physics and combined science
- An extra formulae sheet will be provided for the Level 3 Free-Standing Mathematics Qualification

Ofqual Guides for 2026

- [Ofqual guide for schools and colleges 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Ofqual student guide to exams and assessments in 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Info Hub

- [Info Hub](#) published in November

Contingency sessions

- The morning and afternoon of **24 June 2026**

Grading

Standards in qualifications are maintained year-on-year

Grade boundaries change between years and between exam boards

No pre-determined quota of grades

Outcomes may vary a little

[Understanding grading: toolkit for schools and colleges](#)

Special consideration

For illness, injury or event outside of control which affects ability to take assessment or affects performance

Student must have fully prepared for assessment and covered whole course

Broader issues impacting teaching and learning are not eligible

Access to scripts

Reviews of marking of exam / moderation of non-exam assessment

Marked scripts can be requested from awarding organisations

Can also be requested to support teaching and learning

System resilience



Resilience arrangements

- **Purpose** – to be able to provide evidence of student performance should exams and assessments not go ahead
- Gather evidence in line with Ofqual's guidance
- Avoid over-assessment
- Vocational and technical qualifications may differ
- Internal contingency processes



Access arrangements

Rise in approvals for arrangements, particularly 25% extra time

Ofqual considers an **effective system** one that supports students to get **appropriate arrangements** for their needs and is **manageable** for schools and colleges, and commands **public confidence**

Modified papers

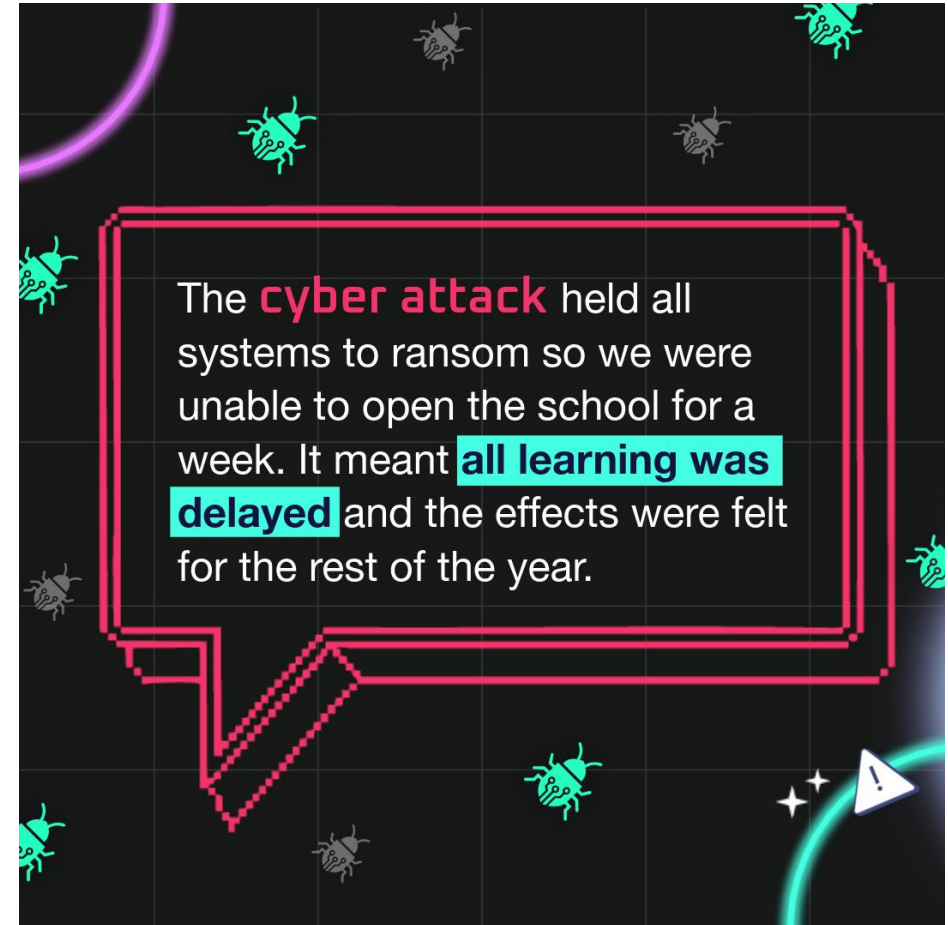
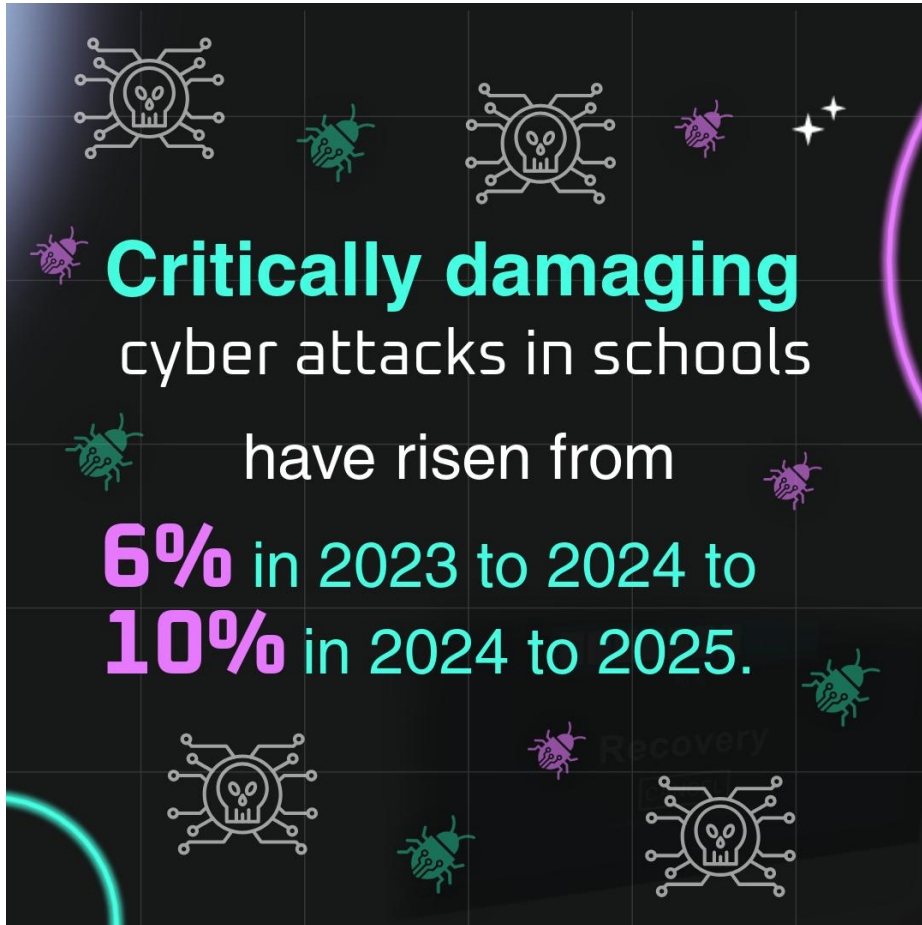
- Timely requests
- 31 January deadline



Malpractice

- **5,025** penalties issued to students in 2025
- **44.3%** of these involved mobile phones or other communications device
- Penalties range from a **warning** to a **loss of marks** or **disqualification**

Cyber security



Developments to exams and assessments

On-screen assessment



Ofqual is consulting **until 5 March** on a proposed approach to regulating OSA in GCSEs, AS and A levels in England [On-screen assessment](#)



OSA could benefit some students, but fairness a priority



Aims to support responsible innovation



Paper-based exams will remain central

Artificial intelligence

Students must not use AI to produce work they claim as their own

Be aware of risks for exam and non-exam assessments

JCQ guidance: centres must ensure authenticity, prevent misuse, and require acknowledgement of any AI use

AI must not be the sole marker of any component, including non-exam assessment

Reform

Vocational & Technical Qualifications: New qualifications **V Levels** (L3), **Foundation Certificates** (L2), **Occupational Certificates** (L2)

Nationally-set content, consistent grading, phased roll-out from **2027**

GCSEs/A Levels: proposals such as update subject content, explore on-screen assessment, strengthen resilience

Maintain progression routes and standards

When Ofqual can help you

Enquiries

EPRS

Complaints

Malpractice
allegations

Whistleblowing

Freedom of
Information

[Contact Ofqual - GOV.UK](#)

Additional resources

- [Exams and assessment checklist for exam officers - GOV.UK](#)
- [Ofqual guide for schools and colleges 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Ofqual student guide to exams and assessments in 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system - GOV.UK](#)
- ['ICE' – Instructions for conducting examinations - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)
- [AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

