

# News story: National Reference Test 2018

Today, 18 September 2017, Ofqual has announced that the next, annual National Reference Test will be held between 19 February and 2 March 2018. Our test supplier, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), is contacting about 350 schools that have been selected to take part in this year's test to make arrangements.

Commenting on the first annual test held in February and March 2017, Sally Collier, Ofqual's Chief Regulator said:

Thank you again to all the 341 schools and nearly 18,000 GCSE students who took part in the first test, earlier this year. We have completed the analysis of this year's test and we are very satisfied with the quality of the information that it has provided. Nearly all schools that had been asked to take part did so and this was a major contributor to the quality of the information we obtained. I would ask all schools that are contacted for the test in 2018 to take part. Thank you in advance for your support.

Each year a sample of GCSE students will take the same test so it will show, over time, if there is any change in how students perform at a national level. Results from the test will only be used to measure changes in performance nationally. There will be no results for individual students or schools.

We would expect to see an improvement in early National Reference Test results as student and teacher familiarity with the new English language and maths GCSEs increases. This, alongside the need to compare the performance of student cohorts over several years, means that we expect it will be 2019 at the earliest before exam boards will start to use the information from the National Reference Test when they award GCSEs.

For more information about the test, please visit the [National Reference Test document collection](#).

For more information about the National Foundation for Educational Research please visit [the NFER website](#).