

Improving learner outcomes in GCSE resits in English and maths: information for college staff

Why am I receiving this information sheet?

The [National Foundation for Educational Research](#) (NFER) and [ICF](#) are undertaking two separate, but closely related research projects, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). These projects aim to provide both exploratory and causal evidence to assess how the number of hours allocated to teaching GCSE resits may affect student outcomes, and to determine the optimal timing for students to resit their exams.

We are contacting you because we would like your college to take part in an online survey that will help us understand how the number, timing and nature of teaching hours may affect student outcomes. The survey should be completed by a senior leader with strategic responsibility for English and maths GCSE resits. Input from senior course leads for English and maths may also be needed.

What are the aims of the projects?

NFER's project aims to assess the impact of increased classroom teaching hours on the proportion of learners achieving a grade 4 or above in their maths and/or English resits. ICF's project will explore the impact of different enrolment choices for November resits.

The findings from both projects will be shared in accessible research reports, offering recommendations for policy and practice.

Who is conducting the research?

The research is being undertaken by NFER, which is the leading provider of independent educational evidence and assessments in the UK, and ICF, a leading global solutions and technology provider. Both projects are funded by the Education Endowment Foundation.

What will the project involve?

General FE Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges will be invited to complete an online survey. The survey will explore staff views on the impact of DfE targets and factors affecting resit outcomes (e.g. staffing, entry timing, class sizes, student engagement). It will also capture data on the teaching hours your college has offered to both English and maths GCSE resit students going back to at least 2021-22, and 2017-18 where possible. There are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions—we simply want to understand your perspectives. All responses will be confidential, and no colleges or individuals will be named in the research.

How will I benefit from taking part in the research?

By taking part, you will help us understand how colleges are responding to the new government guidelines on teaching hours. Your insights will help identify effective practices and challenges, supporting colleges and policymakers in improving outcomes for learners.

Ultimately, this research aims to ensure more students benefit from the most effective strategies and approaches to GCSE resits. In addition, as a thank you for completing the survey, one nominated staff member will receive a £50 Amazon voucher, with your college entered into a prize draw for one of ten £1,000 prizes.

How will NFER and ICF use and protect the data collected?

The results will be published in two separate reports, giving suggestions for how colleges and policy makers can improve the way they support students. The reports will be published on the EEF website in spring/summer 2026.

Participation in the survey is voluntary, and colleges can withdraw from one or both projects at any time. Full details of how your personal information will be collected, stored and used can be found in our [privacy notice](#).

Who to contact?

If you have any questions or would like further information about the research, please contact the NFER Project Leader, Matt Walker, at m.walker@nfer.ac.uk