

Grading gaps in summer 2020



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Students from poorer families were treated fairly when grades were awarded last year, a new Ofqual report has found.

“: who was affected by differences between Centre Assessment Grades and calculated grades?” looks at the way students received grades in 2020, when the government cancelled exams due to the pandemic. Initially, it was planned that students would receive GCSE and A level results on the basis of a calculated grade that aimed to standardise teacher assessments.

However, the public did not have confidence in this approach and, as a result, Ofqual told exam boards to issue grades again – this time based on centre assessment grades, awarded by schools and colleges, when they were higher than the initial calculated grades, which were statistically standardised.

This report finds that:

for A level entries, the calculated grade was the same as the centre assessment grade 59% of the time

more than two-thirds of candidates saw at least 1 of their A level subjects upgraded when they received their final grades

10 per cent of candidates received calculated grades that were 3 grades or lower than their final centre assessment grades

The report finds that students from poorer families, along with those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those students who speak a language other than English at home, were not disadvantaged.

A second report published today, “An evaluation of Centre Assessment Grades from summer 2020”, takes a look at the grades that were awarded by schools and colleges last year. It finds that teacher grades did not introduce any substantial bias or differences in patterns of grades. In fact, the strongest predictor by far of grade outcomes was a candidate’s prior attainment for both GCSE and A level.

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