



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

Normally, this is the week in which GCSEs take centre stage. However, these are not normal times and circumstances are such that GCSEs have had to share top billing with A levels, vocational & technical qualifications, regulators and politicians. Ever since the publication of A level results pressure had been mounting on Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson to follow Scotland in accepting Centre Assessed Grades. Northern Ireland and Wales made similar decisions and so it was no surprise when, on Monday, Ofqual announced the replacement of its algorithm for general qualifications with teacher assessment. The decision, welcomed on all sides, will have immediate and longer lasting consequences.

Top stories

Ofqual announce a major change in the awarding of A level & GCSE results this year in England.

- [Teacher-assessed grades now awarded to A level and GCSE students](#), replacing the algorithm established by Ofqual to standardise exam results this year. [Roger Taylor, Chair, Ofqual – statement](#)
- The decision also led to awarding organisations, including Pearson, using similar approaches vocational qualifications to review awarding decisions. [Ofqual statement](#) on vocational qualifications.
- [Kate Green letter to Gavin Williamson on consequences of exam decision](#)
- *Stakeholder responses:* [NASUWT](#); [AoC](#); [Independent Schools Council](#); [Universities Alliance](#); [Russell Group](#); [Disability Rights UK](#); [NEU on changes required for 2021](#); [UCU & NUS concerns](#)

Over 600,000 students [received their GCSE results on Thursday](#) with 76% of entries getting grades 9-4.

- All **GCSE students** have been [awarded](#) the centre assessment grade submitted by their school, unless their calculated grade was higher.
- 76% of entries received a grade 9-4, compared to 67.1% in 2019.
- [Ofqual guide to GCSE results \(England\) 2020](#)
- *Stakeholder responses:* [Labour](#); [AoC](#)

Action agreed to [support students](#) into preferred universities

- The Government and higher education sector have [agreed](#) that all students who achieved the required grades will be offered a place at their first-choice university.
- If maximum capacity is reached, students will be offered an alternative course or a deferred place.
- To support this commitment, the Government has lifted the cap on admissions for domestic medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and undergraduate teacher training.

Pearson news

BTEC results 2020 Following Ofqual's announcement that A level and GCSE students are to receive centre assessed grades, Pearson took the decision to apply the same principles for students receiving BTEC results this summer. We will be regrading BTECs to address concerns about unfairness in relation to A levels and GCSEs and ensure no BTEC student is disadvantaged. We know this could cause additional uncertainty for students and we are sorry about this. Our priority is to ensure fair outcomes for BTEC students and we are working around the clock to provide revised grades as soon as we can.

To read a statement from [Cindy Rampersaud, Senior Vice-President, BTEC & Apprenticeships - click here](#)

Other news

Regulators

- [Ofqual – updated extraordinary regulatory framework for awarding general qualifications](#)
- [Ofqual – The National Reference Test in 2020](#)
- [Vocational qualification appeals update \(20 Aug\)](#)
- [Parent & students guide to summer 2020 GCSE & A level awards](#)

Schools

- [Government launches 'back to school safely' campaign](#)

Further Education

- [Colleges receiving share of £200 million for buildings & estates named](#)

Higher Education

- [The Institute for Fiscal Studies on the impact on HE of the awarding of Centre Assessed Grades](#)
- [UCAS: initial analysis on number of upgraded students able to meet conditions of original first choice](#)

Wales

- [Kirsty Williams statement on decision to use Centre Assessed Grades for GCSEs & A Levels](#)
- [Qualification Wales – results overview 2020](#)

Northern Ireland

- [CCEA releases GCSE results](#)

Blogs and analysis

- [HEPI blog: Ofqual's grading by Huy Duong](#)
- [RSA: More A level results style disasters await until we tame the algorithm](#)

- Children's Commissioner – Children without internet access during lockdown
- Disability Rights UK: Analysis suggests deaf pupils being failed by education system

Consultation watch

New consultations

- Welsh Government: Amendments to school governance procedures. Closes 23 September

What's happening in Parliament next week

- *House of Commons in recess until 1 September*
- *House of Lords in recess until 2 September*

Policy Watch will return on September 4th