



Helen Hayes MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20 April 2020

Dear Ms Hayes

PQ 34386: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) accuracy of predicted grades for (i) GCSEs and (ii) A-Levels and (b) potential effect of unconscious bias on those predicted grades in terms of (A) gender and (B) race.

The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP has asked Ofqual to respond to you directly regarding your recent parliamentary question. A copy of this response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Ofqual is the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. We have a statutory objective to secure qualification standards as part of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

In these exceptional circumstances, grades will be awarded this summer based on the best available evidence. Centres know their students well, and they will submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead. Centres will take into account a range of evidence and data to provide calculated grades. Our overriding priority is to ensure that all students are fairly rewarded for their hard work. We have developed [clear guidance for schools and colleges](#) which sets out how teachers can make objective, evidence-based judgements of student performance. Students who do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance will also have the opportunity to sit an exam in the autumn. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.

Centre predictions will not be used in isolation to produce the calculated grades for students. Ofqual is working closely with exam boards to produce a statistical model that will be applied to predictions submitted in order to adjust for different standards being applied by schools and colleges.

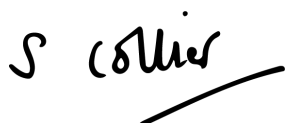
We are alert to concerns that unconscious bias could influence the grades schools and colleges might have expected their students to have achieved in the exams and assessments, and we have published a [review of the recent research literature on bias in teacher assessments](#). The evidence from this research is mixed and suggests that the effects of bias vary depending on the context in which judgements are made. We are sensitive to this research and are working hard to make this summer's assessment process as fair as possible.

We have also published an [equalities impact assessment](#) of the approach we propose to take this summer as it is crucial that we consider the impact on protected groups in the current circumstances. We will take this into account when finalising the assessment arrangements for these qualifications this summer.

We have now launched a [consultation](#) seeking views on this and other aspects of our proposed assessment arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels.

I do hope this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Collier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sally Collier
Chief Regulator