



Awarding grades in the June 2020 series

A guide for universities

On 23 March 2020, we announced that we would not hold the June 2020 exam series anywhere in the world, to protect the safety of students and teachers. We said we would take steps to provide students with fair grades using alternative assessment methods, so students could get on with their educational journeys as soon as possible.

We set out these steps here. Our approach is to ask centres to collaborate with us as we make **evidence-based decisions** about grades for each candidate in each subject.

In developing a new process to assess students and provide grades, we have engaged with different entities worldwide, including other awarding bodies, governments and universities. We have also engaged with the UK government's Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), which has developed a similar process for the GCSEs and A Levels taken by schools in England.

The Cambridge International process has four steps:

STEP 1

Centre determines predicted grades for each candidate for each syllabus entered

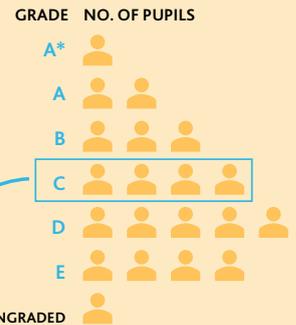
Subject teachers will determine a predicted grade for each candidate in each syllabus based on the evidence they have gathered on candidates' performance, weighing up what these different sources of evidence tell them about each candidate's performance.

The predicted grade should be the grade that, in the professional judgement of the teacher, the candidate would have been **most likely** to achieve if the June 2020 exam series had taken place.

STEP 1

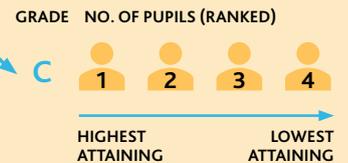
Teachers use evidence and judgement to grade every student entered in each syllabus in their centre, to produce **predicted grades**

Example A Level syllabus:



STEP 2

Teachers rank students based on expected attainment within each grade in each syllabus



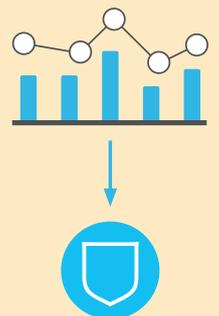
STEP 3

Head of centre confirms **predicted grades** and **rank orders** for each syllabus and sends to Cambridge International



STEP 4

Cambridge International carries out a standardisation process, combining data from the centre with other data, and awards final grades



STEP 2

Determining a rank order of candidates within each grade for each syllabus

Schools and centres are required to place these candidates in a rank order. A **rank order** is a list of candidates in order of their attainment, from the highest-attaining to the lowest-attaining.

Schools do this **separately for every grade** at which they have predicted candidates will achieve, and for each syllabus in which they have entered candidates.

Schools should produce **one** rank order for their centre **for each grade in each syllabus**.

STEP 3

Head of centre confirms the predicted grades and rank orders. Centre sends them to Cambridge International.

Once the subject teachers have agreed on a predicted grade for each candidate about whom they have evidence, and a rank order of the candidates for each predicted grade, the head of centre will need to **confirm that**:

- they are satisfied that the predicted grades and rank orders have been properly decided by the subject teachers based on the available evidence
- they reflect a fair professional judgement of the candidates concerned.

The centre will then need to send the grades to Cambridge International. When the predicted grades and rank orders are submitted to Cambridge International, the person submitting them will be required to indicate that they have the consent of the head of centre.

As with any exam series, Cambridge International will investigate any attempts to undermine this system that could be regarded as malpractice.

STEP 4

Cambridge International carries out a standardisation process, combining data from the centre with other data, and awards final grades

Cambridge International will take data submitted by centres and carry out a **statistical standardisation** exercise. This exercise will use statistical evidence from the historical performance of a centre in the syllabus as well as global performance statistics.

We will do this to align judgements across centres, so that, as far as possible, students are assessed on the same basis and not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in the next steps of their education journeys.

The standardisation exercise will enable us to see whether the distribution of the predicted grades for June 2020 is **what we would expect the candidates to achieve**. This statistical standardisation process will not change the rank order of students within a centre. However, if the distribution of the predicted grades is not what we expect to see, then **we will adjust candidates' grades** so that the distribution of grades that we award matches our expectations.

The statistical standardisation exercise will mean that **the grade we award to a candidate may or may not be the same as the predicted grade** that a centre provides.

The statistical standardisation exercise also means that there will be **no advantage gained by centres whose predicted grades are unrealistic**. If the statistics show that the predicted grades are more generous than our expectation, we will adjust the grades of some or all of the candidates downwards. If the statistics show that predicted grades are more severe than our expectation, then we will adjust the grades of some or all of the candidates upwards.

The greater the difference between the predicted grades and our expectations, the more candidates' grades will be adjusted and the bigger the adjustments.

The standardisation exercise will **not change the rank order** of candidates provided by the centre.

Schools are required to retain the evidence that they have gathered to inform their predicted grades and rank orders. In some cases, we may ask them to send us the evidence they have considered in making their professional judgements. If we ask for evidence, it is likely to be for a sample of the candidates, and we will identify the candidates whose evidence we would like to see.

Appeals

We will make sure every centre has the right to appeal the grades it has been awarded, as part of providing a fair and equitable system.

We are still working on an appeals process for the June 2020 series, and we will publish full details at a later date.

For now, we can say that there will be an appeals process, and it is likely to be confined to situations in which centres have reason to believe we have made an error in our standardisation process.

Cambridge International has drawn on its wealth of assessment expertise in developing this method of grading students and we believe it is the most valid, fair and effective method in these unique circumstances. At the same time, no statistical method is capable of matching the accuracy and



reliability of a full examination series. Some candidates will receive grades that they did not expect. The collaborative approach that we have designed will ensure that these unexpected situations are kept to a minimum.

The same standardisation method will be applied to all centres taking a syllabus, and we will not subsequently apply a different method for centres whose results disappoint them.

For those candidates who receive disappointing grades there will be an option to sit an exam in either the November 2020 or the June 2021 series.

Key questions

- **Are predicted grades the same as forecast grades?** No. A predicted grade is new information that we will ask schools to submit, together with rank orders, as part of this new process. Predicted grades should stem from a centre's judgement about each candidate, and combine all the evidence a centre wants to consider, including any forecast grades the centre has previously submitted to us.
- **Where can I find the full methodology?**
<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/579659-awarding-grades-factsheet.pdf>

Staying in touch

You can find our advice on our website at www.cambridgeinternational.org/covid

If you have any questions, please get in touch with us via: recognitions@cambridgeinternational.org

We will update our website regularly with the latest information. We thank universities and colleges for your support for the Cambridge International community at this difficult time.