

# Summer 2020 alternative awarding arrangements – helping students progress this year



## Alternative Arrangements

On 19 March 2020, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, announced that the Summer 2020 GCSE, AS and A level examinations would be cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minister has continually emphasised the need to ensure ‘fairness’ in any alternative arrangements put in place to help award grades this summer. CCEA wants to assure you that students won’t be disadvantaged by these arrangements.

In subjects that students were entered for, we asked schools and colleges to provide:

- centre assessment grades for each student; and
- the rank order of students within each grade.

By using a combination of teacher judgement and standardisation, we’ll ensure that this summer’s grades will have equal value to those of previous and future years, helping to make the system fair for all students this year.



## Fairness

Our guiding principle this year has been to try to ensure fairness. Like other awarding organisations, we have adapted well to change over the years, for example with the introduction of new qualifications and last year’s new GCSE grading arrangements.

The tried and tested processes that we have in place, along with our expertise, help us to ensure that students are protected. While circumstances this year are exceptional, these processes have helped us when awarding grades this summer.



## Statistics

Statistics have played a role in our work. We often use statistics as part of our normal examinations process, as they help with decision-making. They’re also an important way for us to present evidence to our qualifications regulator, who have been overseeing our work this year, as they do every year.

Even without examination papers, we’ve been able to use a range of other statistical evidence to support this year’s process. In a normal year, before they take their examinations, we’d carry out a detailed statistical analysis of the students in each subject to see if they are stronger or weaker than previous years’ students, based on their past performance. We also carried out this process this year.



## Comparability

Comparability ensures that grade outcomes in GCSE and GCE qualifications across all awarding organisations are broadly similar each year, unless evidence suggests otherwise. If this is the case, then students can expect to see similar outcomes in the qualification.

Although we didn't have the assessment evidence we would normally have available to us to inform these decisions, we've applied similar principles when awarding grades in Summer 2020. This helps to ensure that this year's cohort are not advantaged or disadvantaged when compared to previous and future cohorts.



## Standardisation

When schools and colleges submitted their centre assessment grades and rank orders to us, we started to standardise the data. This is a very important part of the process this year because, without examinations, it helps to ensure that each student, both within and across centres, is treated fairly.

To standardise, we drew on the data that schools and colleges submitted and used a range of additional evidence, such as historical outcomes from each school or college.



## Quality Assurance

To make sure that we've taken the most appropriate approach, we've been working with data science specialists and academics. We've also taken advice from other assessment specialists. Following this, our team of education professionals reviewed the grade outcomes before signing off the awards in each subject.

If the qualifications regulator believed that the grades issued this summer were not a fair representation of the cohort in each subject, they would not approve them and would ask us to revisit the work we've done.

All of us at CCEA have been doing everything we can to provide students with a fair outcome this year and ensure that they can have confidence to progress on to the next stage of their journey.

For more information on the alternative arrangements for Summer 2020, visit [www.ccea.org.uk/summer-awarding](http://www.ccea.org.uk/summer-awarding)