ofqual

Annex Q: Differences between CAGs and final grades by socio-economic group

Annex to 'Awarding GCSE, AS, A level, advanced extension awards and extended project qualifications in summer 2020: interim report'

We have been asked about the differences between centre assessment grades (CAGs) and calculated grades for different socio-economic groups. The levels of adjustment are similar across groups and vary across the grade range. At A and A* the differences between the final grades and CAGs for students with higher socioeconomic status are larger than for students with lower socioeconomic status. At lower grades, the trend is reversed.

The socio-economic status (SES) grouping used in all our analyses was based on the IDACIScore variable in the NPD. To classify students into SES groups, we identified in our dataset all unique students in 2020 with a non-missing IDACI score, and then set the two boundary scores on the IDACI score scale that would divide the 2020 students into three groups of roughly equal size of low, mid and high SES. The same 2 boundary scores were used to classify students in 2018 and 2019 as well as those in the 2020 entry.

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the basis of this analysis, for several reasons:

- we know that different centres have varied in the extent of the generosity of the CAGs submitted and the analysis takes no account of that
- research shows that teachers have a tendency to over-estimate to a greater extent the grades of socio-economically disadvantaged students[1]
- the outcomes in all three years are higher for students with high socioeconomic status (SES) and therefore there is less scope for over-generous CAGs than for students with lower SES who, in general, tend to have lower outcomes overall

Nevertheless, the differences between the three groups are relatively similar.

[1] Equality impact assessment: literature review

Table Q.1 Percentage of overall entries awarded grade A* based on CAGs and calculated grades

	2018	2019	2020		
			CAG	Final grade	Difference (CAG-final)
Low SES	5.65	5.07	9.90	5.70	-4.20
Medium SES	7.13	6.67	12.31	7.24	-5.07
High SES	8.46	8.10	14.31	8.45	-5.86

Table Q.2 Percentage of overall entries awarded grade A and above based on CAGs and calculated grades

	2018	2019	2020		
			CAG	Final grade	Difference (CAG-final)
Low SES	20.97	19.97	31.35	20.96	-10.39
Medium SES	25.06	24.01	35.78	24.63	-11.15
High SES	28.75	27.55	39.72	28.28	-11.44

Table Q.3 Percentage of overall entries awarded grade B and above based on CAGs and calculated grades

	2018	2019	2020		
			CAG	Final grade	Difference (CAG-final)
Low SES	47.44	46.06	59.89	47.61	-12.28
Medium SES	52.83	51.90	64.42	52.23	-12.19
High SES	57.21	56.28	67.99	56.45	-11.54

Table Q.4 Percentage of overall entries awarded grade C and above based on CAGs and calculated grades

	2018	2019	2020		
			CAG	Final grade	Difference (CAG-final)
Low SES	74.03	72.64	85.02	74.60	-10.42
Medium SES	77.96	77.21	87.69	78.20	-9.49
High SES	81.12	80.29	89.30	80.96	-8.34

Table Q.5 Percentage of overall entries awarded grade D and above based on CAGs and calculated grades

	2018	2019	2020		
			CAG	Final grade	Difference (CAG-final)
Low SES	90.82	90.00	96.09	91.32	-4.77
Medium SES	92.64	92.16	96.96	92.89	-4.08
High SES	94.06	93.54	97.46	94.08	-3.38

Table Q.6 Percentage of overall entries awarded grade E and above based on CAGs and calculated grades

	2018	2019	2020		
			CAG	Final grade	Difference (CAG-final)
Low SES	97.69	97.50	99.69	98.01	-1.69
Medium SES	98.41	98.16	99.80	98.47	-1.33
High SES	98.81	98.56	99.81	98.82	-1.00

Note that the Difference (CAG-final) figures have been rounded to two decimal places after subtraction perform