

Data sharing framework for the GRADE project published

[Guidance for researchers wishing to access the GRADE \(Grading and Admissions Data for England\) data set](#), which covers the years 2017 to 2020, is now available.

The data sharing framework sets out the application and review process to access the data. It clarifies the requirements that accredited external researchers must meet before gaining access to the data set to conduct research on the educational, assessment and admissions systems in England.

The GRADE project is a [joint open data initiative by Ofqual, Ofsted, the Department for Education \(DfE\) and UCAS](#), launched in 2021. It is designed to encourage independent research that will enhance the quality of the qualification system. The linked data from Ofqual, the DfE and UCAS is a rich resource that will enable external researchers to make independent, high-quality evaluations of the judgements reached in awarding grades. It includes detailed information on the qualifications taken, such as subject, awarding organisation and tier of entry, for GCSEs and A levels. It also has information about pupils, such as age, gender, socio-economic background and prior levels of attainment, including teacher assessments and test results for Key Stages 1 and 2, and information about university applications, offers and acceptances.

Between 2017 to 2019, grades and marks achieved by students are made available. For 2020, when exams were cancelled, it includes details of the centre assessment grades and calculated grades for each student.

Ofqual Executive Director for Standards, Research and Analysis, Cath Jadhav, said:

The GRADE project is a ground-breaking initiative that demonstrates Ofqual's commitment to openness and transparency by allowing independent researchers access to a wealth of information to gain valuable insights about the assessment process.

For the first time accredited researchers will have access to cross-referenced data shared by Ofqual, the Department for Education and UCAS. Their research will inform future policy about education, assessment and university applications.

Ofqual is committed to putting the interests of students first and I am pleased that the Office for Statistics Regulation has commended the GRADE project.

There are 2 top requirements researchers must meet:

1. Become an accredited researcher with the Office for National Statistics. [Full guidance on how to apply](#) is available on the UK Statistics Authority website.
2. Gain approval for their specific research project from the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service and from data owners by submitting details of their research project and how it will benefit the public good, via an application for project accreditation in the [Research Accreditation Service](#).

Data can only be accessed for valuable and ethical research that delivers clear public benefits. Commercial and operational uses of the data will not be allowed.

Strict security controls are in place to ensure the privacy and security of the data, given the wealth of information contained in the dataset about students. Data is de-identified and pseudo-anonymised and access to it will only be provided in safe settings.

In name only

Press release

In a recent case in the West Midlands, Terry Northwood had his Standard national licence revoked for effectively not having a transport manager for 15 years.



The commissioner heard that the nominal transport manager, Alan Austin, never had a contract with the operator, and had not received any payment for his services. Nor had he performed any of the duties and responsibilities of a transport manager, continually failing to download tachograph data, failing to ensure that vehicles were given safety inspections at the stated six-week intervals, failing to ensure that brake tests were carried out and failing to ensure that the safety inspection records were completed correctly. By remaining on the licence as a transport manager he had enabled the operator to display the outward sign of professional competence when in reality no

such professional competence existed.

The operator was found to lack professional competence since 2007, as ever since then it has not had a contract with its supposed transport manager, had not paid that transport manager and that transport manager has failed to carry out any transport manager functions. Maintenance practices appeared stuck in the 1970s and do not reflect modern day requirements. There was a complete lack of drivers' hours supervision, and the transport manager did not understand the need to check driver entitlement, as Mr Northwood was "a friend".

The commissioner said "In the end I cannot ignore the fact that he [Mr Northwood] has in essence operated without a functioning transport manager for many years, thereby gaining an unfair competitive advantage over those operators who bear the cost of professional competence.

"Mr Austin's good repute cannot possibly survive such negligence and deception. I find that his good repute is lost and I am thus obliged to disqualify him from acting as a transport manager under any operator's licence. Mr Austin's ignorance of the role of a modern-day transport manager is such that the mere passage of time will not suffice for him to re-establish his repute."

Further details can be found [here](#).

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[Piper PA-46-350P \(MODIFIED\), G-HYZA, Anniversary Statement](#)

News story

Piper PA-46-350P (MODIFIED), G-HYZA, near Cranfield Airport on 29 April 2021.



This statement provides an update on the AAIB investigation into an accident involving a Piper PA-46-350P (MODIFIED), registration G-HYZA, near Cranfield Airport on 29 April 2021.

G-HYZA was an electrically powered aircraft which was undertaking experimental flight tests, under E Conditions, Civil Aviation Publication 1220, when power to the electrical motors was lost. The loss of power occurred when, as part of the test procedure, the battery was selected OFF leaving the electrical motors powered by the hydrogen fuel cell.

A forced landing was carried out close to Cranfield Airport during which the aircraft was severely damaged. The draft report has been disseminated for consultation. Publication of the report is expected mid 2022.

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[CMA publishes second state of competition report](#)

Effective competition helps make sure shoppers and households get a fair deal when buying goods and services. This is especially important at a time when the UK is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and facing a rising cost of living.

Recognising the importance of competition, the [Chancellor and the Business Secretary asked](#) the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to assess the state of competition in the UK economy.

This is the second report of its kind that the CMA has produced.

Building on its [first report](#), the CMA has improved the techniques it uses to measure indicators of competition like market concentration, firms' profitability and markups, and market entry and exit levels.

Key findings include:

- The level to which markets are dominated by a limited number of companies – their concentration – remains higher than it was before the financial crisis of 2008.
- Concentration is higher when 'common ownership', where competing firms are owned by the same companies, is factored in but lower when accounting for international trade.
- Lower income households are more likely to consume goods and services produced in more concentrated markets. This is because a higher proportion of their income is spent on essential services, like gas and

water, which tend to be produced by a limited number of companies.

- Average markups – the amount added to the cost price of goods to cover overheads and profit – have increased since 2008, from just over 20% to about 35%, with the increase in markup being higher for the 10% most profitable firms.
- Evidence suggests that the largest and most profitable firms are able to sustain their strong position for longer than they used to, with the likelihood of the largest firms in an industry remaining the largest firms increasing over the last 20 years.
- Digital markets have huge potential to improve our lives and living standards and to play an important role in the post-pandemic recovery. But to deliver those benefits, they need to stay competitive. Weak competition in digital markets, like search engines, mobile ecosystems and social media, risks reducing innovation and choice, and leading to people giving up more personal data than they would like.

In its report, the CMA also analyses surveys which asked people about their direct experience of problems with goods and services they purchased. The [BEIS Consumer Protection Study 2022](#) estimates that issues with purchased goods and services cost UK consumers £54.2 billion in the year to April 2021, with two-fifths of issues arising from just four sectors: renting services, vehicle maintenance and repair, second-hand vehicles, and internet provision. Consumers reported that around £7.7 billion of this cost (14% of the total) was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic was also felt to have played a large part in the majority of issues people experienced with services provided by airlines and package holidays and tours sectors.

Mike Walker, Chief Economic Adviser at the CMA, said:

Our State of Competition report shows a worrying combination of trends. We are seeing markets getting more concentrated, companies enjoying higher mark-ups and the biggest firms maintaining their leading positions for longer. The fact that all these indicators are pointing in the same direction provides a warning sign about the state of competition in the UK.

What's more, we've found that the poorest households are likely to suffer the effects of these changes the most – at the very time when they are already being hit by sharp rises in the cost of essential items.

We will use our findings to direct our work to keep markets competitive and protect consumers at this crucial time.

The CMA's report is informed by its knowledge of markets and work enforcing consumer and competition law. It has also included insights of outside experts, academic advisors and other parts of government.

For more information, and to read the report, visit the [State of UK](#)

[Competition report page.](#)

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

1. The CMA is extremely grateful for the assistance of Steve Davies, professor of economics at the University of East Anglia and Dr Anthony Savagar, associate professor in economics at the University of Kent in advising on the report structure, reviewing the methodology used and providing critical review of the final report.

[Lieutenant General Sir James Hockenhull appointed new Commander United Kingdom Strategic Command](#)

News story

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has confirmed that Her Majesty The Queen has approved the new appointment of Commander United Kingdom Strategic Command.



Lieutenant General Sir James Hockenhull KBE is to be appointed Commander United Kingdom Strategic Command and Aide-de-Camp General to Her Majesty, in the rank of General, in succession to General Sir Patrick Sanders KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, in May 2022.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

I am delighted to congratulate General Sir James Hockenhull on his well-deserved promotion and appointment as Commander United Kingdom Strategic Command.

As the current Chief of Defence Intelligence, General Jim has had an extraordinary impact on Defence, including vital work most

recently in supporting the crisis in Ukraine, declassifying Defence Intelligence products to help inform the public in a way that we have not seen before. I know he will bring his significant skills and experience to bear in his new role.

Defence's joint capability will be in excellent hands under General Jim's leadership. He takes up his appointment at a crucial moment in the UK Strategic Command transition to becoming the Defence capability integrator as laid out in the Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper. I wish him well in this endeavour.

General Sir Patrick Sanders, said:

I am very pleased to welcome Lieutenant General Sir James Hockenhull as the next Commander UK Strategic Command. As Chief of Defence Intelligence, he brings a wealth of operational experience and joint capability to the role. He will continue the development of UK Strategic Command to ensure that Defence can meet future threats and deliver for the Nation.

We live in uncertain times, and I am delighted to be working with Sir James in my new role as Chief of the General Staff to ensure that Defence is a global force delivering for Global Britain.

Lieutenant General Sir James Hockenhull KBE, said:

I am deeply honoured to be appointed Commander of UK Strategic Command. We must be prepared to think differently and deliver real change at pace to address the fast changing global security environment.

It has been a privilege to lead Defence Intelligence, working with some of the most capable people in Defence together with our cross government partners and allies. I am extremely proud to take up the challenge of leading Strategic Command on its journey to becoming Defence's Integrator.

[A biography of Lieutenant General Sir James Hockenhull.](#)

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