

Teacher assessed grades in 2021 – student and teacher experiences

Two Ofqual reports published today outline student and teacher experiences of teacher assessed grades (TAGs) in summer 2021.

Summer 2021 exams were cancelled. Students' grades for GCSEs, AS and A levels and many vocational qualifications were based on teacher judgments.

TAGs were based on a range of evidence produced by the students, and only on content they had been taught.

Ofqual conducted [a survey in 2021](#) after TAGs were submitted and before students got their results in August.

A total of 1,785 teaching staff and 550 students completed the survey. [Researchers also interviewed](#) 39 teachers and 14 students to find out more about their experiences and opinions.

Among other findings, the survey showed:

- 57% of students said too much time was spent on assessments
- 4 to 6 pieces of evidence were used
- most assessments were taken under exam-like conditions

Different schools and colleges took different approaches to setting and marking assessments, and deciding on grades. Almost all teachers thought the grades they determined were accurate.

Students who responded expressed concerns about the pressure they felt from the assessment process, and the potential for different schools and colleges to take different approaches.

The majority of teachers who responded told us that the process was often stressful and time-consuming. They had no desire to undertake TAGs in this form again.

Ofqual Chief Regulator Dr Jo Saxton said:

We know from our research that teachers worked incredibly hard to award grades in the exceptional circumstances of summer 2021 and we are grateful to them. TAGs were necessary to allow more than a million students to move on with their lives, but our research highlights the additional burden on teachers and students.

It's great that exams and formal assessments have taken place this year, and again, I would like to thank teachers and pay tribute to the resilience of students.

[Another Ofqual report](#) published today considers statistical alignment between subjects in GCSEs and A levels in 2021 compared with previous years. This work is a follow-up to analysis published in summer 2020.

Last year's TAGs and centre assessment grades (CAGs) in 2020 resulted in higher grades generally. The findings suggest the relative difficulty of subjects varied a little more between 2021 and 2020 than is typical between normal consecutive years of exams.