

Ofqual's 2020 A-Level Standardisation Algorithm — the Grading Model Withdrawn After 39% of Results Were Downgraded

AI in the Public Sector · Good practice · United Kingdom

Quality score: 47/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

In 2020 Ofqual's statistical model downgraded about 39% of A-level grades in England; disadvantaged students fared worst, and the approach was withdrawn within days in favour of teacher-assessed grades.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of impact / measured public value	3/3
Transparency, fairness & accountability	1/3
Transferability / demonstrated replication	2/3
Scalability beyond pilot	0/3
Governance, capability & sustainability	1/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-30

[Ofqual \(Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation\), England](#) — accessed 2026-09-30

[University of Bristol CMM — The 2020 exam grades fiasco](#) — accessed 2026-09-30

[BERA — The great algorithm fiasco](#) — accessed 2026-09-30

[CNBC — How a computer algorithm caused a grading crisis](#) — accessed 2026-09-30

[UK Parliament — Government and Ofqual respond to calculated grades report](#) — accessed 2026-09-30

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