

Ofqual's 2020 Exam-Grading Algorithm — A National Cautionary Case in Automated Assessment

AI in Education · Good practice · United Kingdom

Pending C-NAPSE evaluation

Evidence strength: Pending evaluation

Summary

When COVID-19 cancelled exams, England's regulator Ofqual used a statistical model to standardise A-level and GCSE grades; it downgraded 39% of teacher-predicted grades, hit disadvantaged pupils hardest, and was scrapped within four days.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of learning impact	0/3
Equity & inclusion	0/3
Transparency, ethics & data protection	0/3
Teacher capability & pedagogy	0/3
Scalability & sustainability	0/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-07-30

[Ofqual \(Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation\)](#) — accessed 2026-07-30

[CNBC: How a computer algorithm caused a grading crisis in British schools](#) — accessed 2026-07-30

[University of Bristol: The 2020 GCSE and A-level 'exam grades fiasco'](#) — accessed 2026-07-30

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