

## Written evidence from graduated high school students

- 1) Request for re-evaluation of grades**
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### *Request for re-evaluation of grades:*

We are writing to request for a re-evaluation on the IB final grades as there are still a large number of students that have been negatively affected.

In light of the recent update from the IB, our IAs went from weighing 20% of the final grade to 100% of the final grade (this only applied if the predicted grade was one more point or one less point from the IA grade).

We fail to understand how an IA worth 20% of our final grade in any other year is an accurate representation of what we are capable of as students. For most subjects, an IA may only reflect knowledge of one topic (maybe even one subtopic) in the entire syllabus. It is very frustrating knowing that for other higher education boards, after an outcry from students and teachers (for only a few days after releasing results), every board did a U turn and candidates were awarded their teachers' predicted grades.

As students in the May 2020 session, we have watched some of our friends from other exam boards get their places in their first choice university while we are still struggling to find a place. We find it impossible to comprehend as to how a teacher's prediction is not an accurate representation of what a student is capable of as a whole. We note that, 'The IB noted a significant increase in the level of predicted grades awarded by teachers, including a 35.4% increase in the number of 7s predicted and a 17.5% in the number of 6s and 7s predicted.' However, we believe that this excuse is unjustifiable. If a similar statistic can be observed in other higher education boards, then IB should be no exception. While one can argue that some of the other higher education boards have no coursework in their programs, some of them like A levels have AS level as part of their program which they could have easily used as final grades. Furthermore, despite claiming to be 'super flexible and understanding with students this year' UK universities are not empathising with IB students and there have been a great deal of IB offer holders who have suffered and lost their respected places when they may have only missed their offer by one or two points. Some of these students could easily attain their offers if predicted grades were awarded instead.

In addition, we also feel that IAs hold a great level of subjectivity as the final outcome of the IAs is very dependent on the external moderator. A teacher's prediction on the other hand takes into consideration the individual student as a whole. This therefore means that the teacher's prediction is a more accurate representation of a candidate's capabilities. It also allows for all students to be on a level playing field as all boards have used teacher predictions as final grades. By not taking into consideration teacher predictions, the IB has neglected teachers' intellectual skills and has undermined their understanding of students' capabilities.

IB has always taught students to be fair and ethical in all matters, so why can't the IB practice what they teach. Several thousands of students are still unsatisfied with their final

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grades remaining unchanged and we all believe that a teacher's predicted grade is a more accurate representation of a candidate's capability and therefore, we are humbly requesting for teacher's predictions to be awarded as final grades (if the predicted grade was one point above or one point below from IA grades).

As students, there is only so much we can do. We therefore urge and encourage for teachers, schools and organisations to take legal action and help us fight against this injustice. So far we have seen that IBO only make changes when a lawsuit has been filed against them. We urge teachers, schools and organisations to boycott the IB and perhaps at the very extreme end resign from their jobs. There is no point working with an organisation that does not value or recognise the hard work and capabilities of teachers.

Approximately, 130,000 out of the 170,000 candidates are still unsatisfied with their final grades.

The following article <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-53735304> published by the BBC on August 19th 2020 is a Q and A that gives insight to the matter. It says: 'What about those students who took the International baccalaureate? These students also need fairness and equity. When will their plight be addressed? Sarah.

These are questions which should be raised directly with the IB Organisation. We know that Ofqual has asked it to scrutinise the grades awarded this summer to ensure they have been delivered in line with Ofqual's new process.

I'm sure that receiving universities will want to be as flexible and helpful in responding to candidates with IB Diplomas as they were with A-level candidates.'

Another article <https://thingstodoingeneva.ch/ib-results-scandal-2020/> by Chené Koscielny says:

'following a UK government decision to allow A-level students to use predicted grades for applications. The IBO has refused to allow the same, putting IB students at a significant disadvantage.'

There have been several articles written to highlight this matter. Please see below:

1. An article [`https://nrkbeta.no/2020/08/24/mener-nye-ib-karakterer-er- ulovlige/](https://nrkbeta.no/2020/08/24/mener-nye-ib-karakterer-er- ulovlige/)) written by Martin Gundersen on August 24th, 2020 who 'believes new IB grades are illegal.' A letter also part of the article highlights this matter as well.

### **Legal Letter sent to IBO by Norway Attorney:**

([http://nrkbeta.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/F%C3%B8yen-Torkildsen\\_kommentert\\_Response-to-the-NO-DPA-Advance-Notification.pdf](http://nrkbeta.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/F%C3%B8yen-Torkildsen_kommentert_Response-to-the-NO-DPA-Advance-Notification.pdf))

2. An article written by Trond Lossius on August 19th, 2020 which says that 'When IBO now chooses to place decisive emphasis on submitted assignments, it entails a skewed prioritization when determining grades between the various learning goals in the subject.'

<https://khrono.no/kritikk-av-ibs-nye-karaktermodell/508520?fbclid=IwAR05u5WaSvqCRBRRd5uKmExH2vFo55rvBLZ9RLuYWwPXufapsn ahBsryxJg>

3. The most recent article written by Claudia Civinini and Catherine Lough on Thursday 3rd September explains how there is a Parents' group investigating legal options to challenge the 2020 International Baccalaureate results. The group of parents have reached out to a

law firm known as Mishcon de Reya. The founder Chris Stutz is currently collecting data to present. Once a firm case can be built, him alongside other parents will take action against the IBO.

[https://tes.com/news/international-baccalaureate-legal-challenge-possible-over-ib-results-fiasco?fbclid=IwAR0QpPol87qBZd6baD5\\_CS-YDGk2IpDbMX3j6y6yG1EzokMaZa\\_zG\\_\\_azIA](https://tes.com/news/international-baccalaureate-legal-challenge-possible-over-ib-results-fiasco?fbclid=IwAR0QpPol87qBZd6baD5_CS-YDGk2IpDbMX3j6y6yG1EzokMaZa_zG__azIA)

4. The law firm also published an article stating that the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will investigate the International Baccalaureate algorithm used to determine the May 2020 results.

<https://mishcon.com/news/will-ico-have-to-investigate-the-international-baccalaureate-algorithm>

With university deadlines fast approaching, we would be truly grateful if an article could be written in order to apply pressure on the IBO

Please see the petition below:

<http://chng.it/Rw45w42Hv6>

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([http://nrkbeta.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/F%C3%B8yen-Torkildsen\\_kommentert\\_Response-to-the-NO-DPA-Advance-Notification.pdf](http://nrkbeta.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/F%C3%B8yen-Torkildsen_kommentert_Response-to-the-NO-DPA-Advance-Notification.pdf))

**Reasons why Internal Assessments cannot be given sole importance in arriving at final grades for IB May 2020 examination:**

1. By design IAs comprise not more than 20% of the paper which cannot be a proxy for the entire paper for marking results for IBDP May 2020 examination. This is the standard practice of the IB and they cannot unilaterally change this grading method post facto without prior intimation. This new method gives unfair advantage to students who have resorted to unfair practices for the Internal Assessments.
2. Students only choose a particular topic in IA which doesn't represent the subject syllabus. Sometimes, the topics chosen might not be in the syllabus itself
3. IAs are subjective in nature and hence difficult to score high marks. IAs cannot be used to mark the entire paper which comprises subjective, objective, multiple choice as well as numerical questions and the other questions are slightly easier to score high marks.
4. If IB does not trust the PGs of their own affiliated schools for IBDP May 2020 exam results, then they should take into consideration the student's actual results in his / her 2-year IBDP course.
5. Doesn't IB have the confidence in their own affiliated schools that they can evaluate the students efficiently and impartially?
6. IB should take into consideration the PGs provided by the schools for marking IBDP May 2020 exams but unfortunately they do not even trust their own affiliated schools!
7. IAs cannot be the basis for marking the entire paper for the May 2020 exam as IAs weightage is not more than 20% and it is by definition needs to be marked internally.
8. IB does not have the authority in marking IAs and using it for IBDP May 2020 results as their examiners are not even trained for it.
9. IB preaches about academic honesty. INTEGRITY and HONESTY are values which the IB propagates. However, many students use external professional help in preparing their IAs in many schools and hence those students who diligently and honestly prepared their IAs on their own have been left high and dry as IB has marked exams using IAs.
10. An internal examiner can find out which student has used external help for IA and who didn't since they are well aware of the writing styles of the students. An external examiner would never be able to ascertain as to who has used external help and who didn't.

11. IB should mark candidate's May 2020 IBDP results according to their Predicted Grades and not based on Internal Assessments. Cambridge also marked students IGCSE, AS & A Levels according to Predicted Grades ! Many IB students are at a disadvantage because of this.
  
12. IB has made a mockery of their evaluation methodology of IB May 2020 examination and the IB May 2020 examination results can only be referred to as a joke to above average students who have consistently scored high marks in their 2-year IBDP program

13. First IB uses some analytics for May 2020 results (which they don't understand) & changes it to a methodology which is overdependent on Internal Assessments. Thus, they admit that their initial methodology was flawed but their latest methodology is not flawless either.
14. Marking results using IAs breach the various data protection regulations globally as they are being used for different purposes than what they were originally meant to be.
15. Almost all schools are closed since March 2020 and hence students haven't been guided properly by their teachers for their Internal Assessments and hence it shouldn't be solely considered for the final grades. It is unfair to students who have put in sincere efforts in preparing the IAs and not bought from external professionals and agencies despite lot of hardships in these difficult pandemic times.
16. The students' performance in the 2 years of IB and the sincere efforts put in by the student in these 2 years is not given any consideration if the entire importance is given to Internal Assessments.
17. The universities worldwide rely on the predicted grades given by the schools and universities decide on the admissions based on these grades. If IB changes the methodology unilaterally and changes to give complete weightage to Internal Assessments the criteria for university selection goes haywire.
18. If the entire world is expected to use the predicted grades which is derived by the school teachers based on the students' performance in the 2 years of IB course and also considering the Internal Assessments, etc., then why does the IB discard these predicted grades given by their own schools and resort to a grading method which disregards the students aptitude, their efforts in the 2 years of IB and the teachers understanding of the students' performance due to close interaction with the students. Does this mean that the IB does not trust their own schools and the teachers ? If so, then how they expect the entire world to rely on the predicted grades ?
19. The external examiners appointed by IB to correct the Internal Assessments do not have the expertise to do so and have no idea of the students and their understanding of the subject, the effort put in by the student to produce the IA and whether the IA has been done by the student or procured externally. They are only trained to mark the final papers using mark schemes. Hence the IB external examiners are not competent in correcting the IAs and the grades given by them are not at all reliable.
20. Internal Assessments do not at all reflect or examine the students' complete understanding of the IB syllabus, their knowledge, intelligence and their competence. Hence, they cannot be given the sole importance in providing final grades to a student.

**Quotes taken from the IB website about the May 2020 session:**

**‘Our students, their well-being and their progression in future stages of life have been at the forefront of our thinking as we respond to this extraordinary pandemic.’**

- ☐ In the middle of a pandemic, we have not only lost our places at universities, we have questioned our academic abilities. We have watched our friends from other higher education boards attain their places in university after less than a week of protesting. If you truly cared about our well-being and mental health, you would not let us suffer. A good number of us are still suffering (approx 130,000 of the 170,000)

**‘As an organisation, it is critical for us to ensure that the options we provide for our IB community, students and teachers are fair and compassionate during these difficult circumstances.’**

- ☐ How has any compassion or fairness been shown if predicted grades have not been taken into consideration? How have you been compassionate when you have not heard our cries for over 2 months?

**‘Predicted grades are a key part to the calculation’**

- ☐ Yet they were completely neglected

**‘We are going to take into account the fact that students have had a harder time’**

- ☐ Your poor choices and lack of ethics which is ingrained into the program has given us an even harder time

**‘What it means for the student is that we have taken on board everything we know about them and how they would have learnt and been taught in their school so that we have taken into account all the factors which lead to that final mark and that final grade. So we have looked at as much information as we can about their circumstance in getting something fair and consistent out.’**

- ☐ All the factors which lead to that final mark does not and should never boil down to an IA. You have looked at one assignment only and deemed it appropriate to use this one assignment as the final grade. A 12 year old would have probably made a better decision knowing that in order to come to conclusion on the abilities of the student, a teacher’s prediction would play the biggest role.

**‘We will be here to support and offer those services to ensure that no student is disadvantaged.’**

- ☐ Then why are we being disadvantaged and uncompetitive against other higher education boards such as A levels

**‘We are able to deliver to the universities valid and reliable results that will allow students to get on to their next step.’**

- ☐ How can IAs be valid and reliable results when they only merely reflect the student’s knowledge? IA’s reflect knowledge of one topic (maybe even one subtopic of an entire syllabus) 20% should never equate to 100%

**'The certificate that we are actually awarding on the 5th of July is really the culmination of two years of learning. It's not just about the summative, it's the whole learning journey that that reflects. And I think this is where the value of coursework that we've been able to use the insights from the coursework and taught to demonstrate that in this unprecedented situation.'**

- The whole learning journey takes into consideration two years worth of hard work. You have clearly indicated that 'it's not just about the summative.' How does a culmination of two years of learning boil down to one IA? How does one piece of work reflect two years worth of learning?

**And our students have very much been at the heart of all of this work we've been doing. And we are here and will continue to support you.**

- Why are appeals coming back with no change? Where is your support when all you have been is unresponsive?

**Take into consideration the fact that some students perform better in exams You said you would take into consideration the idea that some students, if not most perform better in exams.**

- How is an IA reflective of that? Surely a teacher knows their students better

In any other exam session, had a student been in a position where they could not take their exams, under no circumstances would their IA grades be awarded as their final grades. Please explain why for our cohort, amid an entire pandemic, the IA grade should have a weighting of 100%. This is not a level playing field even amongst our cohort as various schools have various timings for when the IAs are completed. Given that for most universities, the deadline to submit final grades is Monday 21st September, we humbly request for you to give us our predicted grades as our final grades. They not only provide a more accurate representation of a student's capabilities, it also means that we are not disadvantaged against other higher education boards. For an organisation that returns appeals back in less than 24 hours, this should not be a heavy task for you. If you really stand for principle and ethics, you will give us our predicted grades by this date. Teachers are appalled and disgusted by the havoc you have created in students' lives and several schools no longer offer the IB program because of the way you have carried out this exam session. In fact, members of your own organisation are turning against you. Giving us our predicted grades will save you time and energy. Legal action is taking place and we assure you that we will not be silenced and this storm shall not just pass. Your silence is a sign of your arrogance and your wrongdoing. You have lost your credibility, respect and our trust! Practice what you have always preached to your students and do the right thing! It is better late than never! Give us our predicted grades!

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