

## Written evidence submitted by Amanda Pike

### Algorithm transparency and teacher predictions

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- Make clear that the algorithm (simply a set of instructions) did not rely on CAGs or any student details, or postcode bias but merely tried to apply the same distribution of grades to students based on their school's prior performance. A student's ranking (not within a class but within a cohort (240 possible!)) was crucial. A model of this sort was the ONLY sensible thing you could do given the inflation of grades that many teachers had applied...40% we are to believe! It turns out that this would clearly be unfair on able students within a poorly performing school cohort and frankly the outcomes should have been predicted by schools themselves. It was not biased explicitly at all. (If there were on average 4 A\*s in recent years and you were ranked 5<sup>th</sup> you may have just missed it and could possibly prepare for that!) It would seem that the impact of downgrading was very harsh for some students and **this impact should have been calculated, reviewed and possibly refined to avoid so many shock Us. There was plenty of time to do this. And it seems other contributors to your written evidence have described their frustrations that Ofqual did not do this.**

### Transparency for students, parents and teachers

- **Make it a requirement by law that ALL schools/ colleges offering A levels, BTECS etc display a fixed format table for subject grade details for the past 3 years minimum on websites and prospectuses.**

### Improve teaching standards

We have learned and generally agree that mock exam results could not have been used as an alternative option for grading for many reasons, some of which I describe in detail in my prior correspondence. They are not standardised within or across schools. Instead of the Ofsted inspections focusing on intangibles such as subjective opinions on lesson observations etc demand that they focus on data. Inspect records of mock exams, content, planning, timing, quality, etc. I would certainly be able to grade a school on detailed evidence of mock exams. Frankly they must have been the main tool by which schools did any kind of ranking, especially with large numbers of students.

- **Assessments which are used for grade predictions need to be standardised in some manner and I am certain that parents and good schools would welcome this as a focus for Ofsted inspections.**

### Focus more on subject knowledge, assessment (and marking) quality.

The government is clearly under some attack given the way this situation was handled. I wrote to the DFE at the end of March suggesting the many issues that would be a consequence of the unreliability of teacher predictions and suggesting that robust evidence was needed. It turns out that I was correct and that some but not all teachers can be trusted. I have seen this first hand throughout my teaching career and first-hand now as a tutor. This has to be addressed.

### The inability to predict correctly is generally because you

'don't know where the student needs to be – in terms of content, challenge etc' or

because you don't know where they are (inadequate assessment against requirements of the course' eg marking )

**It really is that simple.**

School leadership needs to know and notice that some teachers have underperformed in the past, might never have taught anyone to get an A\* etc., may have frequently predicted very optimistically for students on a regular basis and they need to deal with that issue in a supportive but firm manner. Students deserve this. You wouldn't expect different standards in other professions.

**Ofqual,**

This organisation has clearly failed to produce a workable system, probably exacerbated by poor and frankly disinterested management by the DFE. You have an even bigger challenge next year as exam students will be unprepared through no fault of their own for next year's exams. The university cohort for 2021 entry is already being filled with deferrals and they will have even greater competition and stress.

**Missed teaching for 2021 and urgent reform of the syllabus**

Many students missed up to 4 months of valuable teaching time, especially for GCSE and year 12 for A level. With lockdowns continuing it is clearly going to be impossible to cover the entire syllabus for subjects completely and some have already been adjusted. Surely it is imperative that working parties decide topics that can be safely and sensibly omitted to reduce pressure on students and teachers. As we continue to experience local lockdowns and self-isolation requirements for schools and students and teachers it is clear that this situation is getting worse. Exams in 2021 are still at risk and we must certainly plan for the possibility of delayed or even missed exams. Clearly centre assessed grades must be avoided and evidence must be sought. Standards and expectations for this must be decided quickly. These decisions MUST happen before Christmas and a new mock exam season to avoid completely demoralising everyone causing even more mental health challenges.

**I strongly suggest that you ensure that there are working parties that support any education decisions that involve experienced educators, teachers, university staff and senior teachers. I also think we can see that the leadership involved at Ofqual were completely inexperienced and unsuited to the task they were given. It needs a radical rethink.**

**The decision to cancel summer exams was a grave error of judgement. Ofqual's lack of accountability and the DFE has contributed to the ongoing chaos. Our young people deserve to have the opportunity to show what they can achieve in a fair and evidence based education system.**

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