
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Professor Deborah Ashby and Sharon Witherspoon
President and Vice-President for Education and Statistics Literacy
The Royal Statistical Society
(by email)

18 August 2020

Dear Professor Ashby and Ms Witherspoon

Review of statistical models used for grading 2020 exam results

Thank you both for your letter of 14 August highlighting concerns about the statistical models used to determine exam grades across the UK this year. You have requested the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) conducts a review of the statistical models put in place by the qualifications' regulators in the UK and the processes by which they were put in place.

Despite the changes in approach to awarding exam grades announced since your letter, we consider there is still value in a review. OSR therefore plans to undertake a review focused on the process of developing the statistical models. Our review will consider the extent to which the organisations developing the models complied with the principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

There are many areas of the approach to awarding exam grades this year that may warrant review and it is likely that other organisations will commission or carry out reviews. We are conscious that too many reviews could be unhelpful and will seek to minimise overlap between our review and others. We will try to minimise the burden of our review on organisations involved in awarding exam grades and will contribute our findings to other relevant reviews where appropriate.

Our review will seek to highlight learning from the challenges faced through these unprecedented circumstances. We will not review the implications of the model on individual results or take any view on the most appropriate way to award exam grades in the absence of exams.

We plan to publish the findings from our review in September.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation