

The British Council works with UK awarding bodies (Cambridge Assessment International Education, Pearson Edexcel, and Oxford AQA) to offer school qualifications such as IGCSE, AS level and A level internationally. In Egypt we work with over one hundred and forty approved schools who prepare their students for these exams.

Normally, these assessments take the form of pen and paper exams. This year, however, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the UK government and Ofqual (the UK exams regulatory body) took the decision to cancel the May/June exams and switch to a system in which the subject teachers used a range of evidence to award predicted grades for their students, and those grades then underwent statistical standardization to ensure that they were consistent with historical records for subjects and schools. The purpose of the process was to ensure that the grades awarded this year would have the same value as grades awarded in any other series, and the awarding bodies have been working with universities to ensure they understand and accept the assessed grade method used in the June 2020 series.

With the pandemic affecting so many countries in which their exams were sat, the UK awarding bodies decided to apply the same policy to all their assessments globally.

When the results were released, it was found that up to forty per cent of grades predicted by teachers had been downgraded. This created such consternation among parents and school leaders that the decision was taken to reinstate the predicted grades awarded by teachers in cases where students had originally been downgraded by the standardization process.

The UK awarding bodies have announced that they intend to return to their usual exam procedure for the next test session in October and November 2020. The British Council is committed to delivering these exams in Egypt, applying rigorous measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all test takers and exams staff. Any students disappointed with the results they received in August will have the opportunity to take exams in this session.