

May 2020 Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme Results Adjustment FAQ

Why have some results been adjusted?

Following the release of results, we listened carefully to the concerns raised by some schools, students and their families. We designed a free “additional review service” where schools could provide additional evidence that either student, subject or cohort results were not in line with student performance.

The detailed information provided by the schools in the review process was truly invaluable in supporting the analysis work undertaken by the multidiscipline IB review team. The data and analysis guided the review team to evaluate and recommend moderate adjustments that we believe are fair and necessary to be applied May 2020 cohort results.

What was the adjustment made to the model?

With the IA as evidence of actual student work marked consistently to the global standard by IB examiners and the predicted grades provided by the schools as guidance, we are making the following adjustment:

For eligible students’ subject final grade results will be adjusted to be equal to the internal assessment (IA) result when the predicted grade was only one grade less, equal to or greater than the IA grade. The student will be awarded their IA grade as their final grade for that subject in these cases. No student will receive a lower grade than what was received previously.

Why is the IB making this decision now to adjust grades?

Ensuring fair and valid results in such an unprecedented situation is a complex process. We first needed to review the issues, and then think through what would be fairest for most students. We had to ensure we had appropriate data, had the opportunity to have discussions with regulators and school representatives before making decisions.

We released results on 5 July, on 14 July we released a newly created review service to ensure schools had an opportunity to provide data, and made a decision based on the early trends we saw while waiting for the review service deadline of 14 August. We released this new announcement on Monday, 17 August, after conducting a lot of back-end due diligence over many days and changing all the systems needed including due diligence with regulators. We worked in the best interest of students in this turbulent year and we know that this change will have material impact for many students.

What if the school or student believes the internal assessment (IA) grade is wrong?

The IA grade is awarded based on the coursework submitted by the school to the IB to be graded. The coursework was marked by trained examiners. Schools can submit an Enquiry Upon Results (EUR) on behalf of a student, if they would like to have the coursework remarked by examiners once you have reviewed the adjusted results.

Why can't the IB just award the predicted grade?

Unlike some other awarding bodies, the IB has coursework as a substantial part of its assessment model. This means that we have student work that can be assessed and can reflect a student’s standard of work.

Our historical data shows that school predicted grades are close to, but sometimes different from, the final grade. In previous sessions, 55% of students achieve at least a grade different to what was predicted by their teacher. In 2020 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.

In addition to ensuring grades awarded are reflective of the students' standard of work the IB must also ensure that in these exceptional circumstances the grades can be fairly considered alongside previous and future grades issued by the IB, so these students have a qualification that is equal to past and future years and are recognised for admission into University or other higher education institutions.

Which subjects are impacted?

All the subjects where examinations were cancelled. This was all subjects, except Theory of Knowledge (ToK), Extended Essay (EE) and subjects in group 6 (the arts) with the exception of Music where an examination was cancelled.

How does it work in subjects with more than one piece of coursework?

In group 1 (Language and Literature) and other subjects where there are more than one piece of coursework to consider then we will use the mean average of the coursework grades, rounding 0.5 upwards.

How are EURs in process being affected?

All EUR will pause until the new results are awarded. Then we will continue any EUR for students whose grade has not been changed, but if the grade has increased we will wait for you to let us know that you would still like to pursue an EUR after reviewing the new result with your student(s) by contacting us at support@ibo.org.

Will transcripts and IB certificates reflect this change?

Yes. The IB is ensuring the adjusted grades are reflected on transcripts and certificates. Certificates will be dispatched up until 25 September.

How will the adjusted results be communicated to universities?

The IB will follow the usual procedure for changes to grades as a result of EUR changes. Universities will be informed automatically of the new grade. The vast majority of universities opt to have an electronic notification, and this will take place immediately. If the institute requires paper transcripts, then the updated transcripts will be posted out within the next two weeks.

How will universities and ministries consider these new grades?

Our research has shown that universities around the world recognize the rigour of an IB education and the preparedness of IB students for higher education. It is for this reason that we made this critical adjustment to ensure fairness to this year's graduating students, whilst maintaining the validity and recognition of IB Assessments for the benefit of all students including both past and future cohorts.

We are communicating this change to universities and colleges so that they are aware of the steps we have taken and the rationale for the changes.

Has the regulator and other ministries been informed of this change?

Yes, we are in active dialogue with the regulator, ministries and governments globally.

Does this change apply to November 2020?

We are taking a period of reflection on the best way forward for the November 2020 session. We are committed to our schools and will continue to communicate decisions as soon as possible.