

May 2020 Awarding – Further information*

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the IB decided not to hold exams, prioritizing student well-being over all else.

The IB, working with experts across the education sector and in dialogue with regulators, assessment bodies, examiners, universities and stakeholders, made every effort to ensure that the results, across the cohort of 174,355 students from 152 countries, this year are fair and meaningful. The IB also takes extraordinary care in ensuring that the marking of the individual student work is reliable and fair. Further, the IB's obligation to our students in this exceptional session is that their grades can be fairly considered alongside previous and future grades issued by the IB, so these students have a qualification which is equal to all other IB alumni, while mitigating as much as possible for the decision to cancel examinations.

The awarding model is not an alternative to the examination session, but our best estimation of how students would have performed had they taken the examination.

The awarding model

Each subject has its own design of coursework and final examinations, and we ensured that the model developed for each subject/option/level/time zone was the best possible model for the calculated mark for each student.

The awarding model has three components:

1. **Student Coursework** or Internal Assessments (IAs): Unlike other assessment bodies, the IB has student coursework as part of the normal awarding system. This is because we believe that some course learning objectives are best assessed through extended tasks undertaken at the students own pace, and ideally marked by the teacher who observes them during this time. Other course learning objectives are best assessed through an examination.

For this session, as an extra measure of reliability to assure universities and regulators that our awarding model is robust, the IB has carried out examiner marking of all of the coursework with teacher comments that schools uploaded, instead of taking samples of teacher-marked work and applying moderation factors, as is our usual model. It is important to note that moderation in normal sessions always involves examiners marking samples of teacher-marked coursework. We, therefore, used the same method that we used in past sessions.

Examining all student work rather than only moderate aims to maximise the confidence that every student will receive a fair mark overall, by the IB having seen at least one piece of work from every student.

2. **Predicted grade:** The model relied on the teacher-delivered predicted grade for each student in each subject and the weighting. All students received the same weighting for the predicted grade.
3. **School context** was an additional feature of the model; for each subject in each school, a unique factor was created based on historical prediction data, and the same school factor was applied to every student in that school for that subject/option/level. This factor used historical data to model the predicted grade accuracy as well as the record of the school to do better or worse on examinations compared with coursework. This ensured that the school's own record was built into the model to give the student an advantage and to ensure fairness across the cohort.

To arrive at this model, extensive testing and analysis was conducted on the data from previous sessions.

Grade Boundaries

In May 2020, we calculated *marks* for students and then carried out a grade award process, undertaken by senior examiners and assessment experts, as is our normal process.

The pandemic affected all our students, and we took great care in the setting of grade boundaries to make sure that COVID-19 did not result in a lower average grade. In every session, we look at outcomes and adjust the grade boundaries based on observations of the whole cohort. In this year's session, looking at the patterns in the calculated marks, IB examiners and assessment experts reviewed the evidence on whether across the world students were similar to last year. Where there was strong evidence of a higher performing cohort, this resulted in higher outcomes, just as in a usual session.

If you refer to the May 2020 statistical bulletin (<https://ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/statistical-bulletins/diploma-programme-statistical-bulletin/>) you will see that for most subjects, overall outcomes are very similar this year compared to last year.

Student outcomes

This session, the IB is calculating the grade the student would have received if the examinations were not cancelled, not simply awarding a grade for the coursework as the only assessment.

We often see that students can perform better in either their coursework or examinations and this has been taken into consideration.

For example, at the cohort level, we know that in a typical session a student who is predicted a grade 5 and who achieves a grade 5 on their coursework may receive a lower grade overall due to their performance on the examinations. This is reflected in the calculation we have used this session, which has been created by modelling previous session data.

Similarly, we know that school predicted grades are close to, but sometimes different from, the final grade. In a normal session, we know that in 55% of cases students achieved at least a grade different to what was predicted by their teacher. This variance was likely to increase due to the additional pressures faced this year. Our obligation to students in this exceptional session is that their grades can be fairly considered alongside previous and future grades issued by the IB, so these students have a qualification which is equal to all other IB alumni.

Results services: Post results release

We are continuing to develop support options for schools and students during this unprecedented time, and we care deeply about the outcomes for our students.

Our results services are available and will be addressed promptly by our dedicated teams. As a school, if you have concerns for your cohort that cannot be addressed by the processes below, please contact your IBWS manager, who will be able to provide you with the necessary guidance. Through a dialogue of individual school issues, we can achieve more together for our students.

Enquiry Upon Results (EUR)

Where a student has concerns in marking, schools can lodge an EUR on behalf of the student.

The purpose of an EUR is to identify where an error has occurred in the marking of a piece of work or proven error based on the predicted grade supplied by the school. This session, the IB has marked all of the coursework that the IB asked schools to upload, and so the EUR process will allow schools to highlight where they believe a mistake has been made in this marking. Any changes in the coursework mark will lead to recalculating the student's mark, so EURs can lead to grades changes.

The IB is removing the principle of a "tolerance" for small increases in the EUR marks. This means that if the EUR indicates a one or two marks increase in the coursework, we will recalculate an overall grade accordingly. We will continue to protect the student from small decreases in marks through the EUR process, in line with the previous policy. Therefore, if the EUR indicates a drop of one or two marks in the coursework, we will retain the original mark and overall grade.

We are committing to a rigorous review of these cases. We cannot guarantee higher grades as a result of the review. Where the marks are deemed reasonable grades will not go down as a result of this process.

We are going to review all EURs which have already been submitted and implement this change retrospectively and there is no need to resubmit an EUR which has already been completed.

Appeals

The IB has created an appeals policy for the May 2020 session to clarify what is covered by the appeals process in this exceptional session. You can find out more here: <https://resources.ibo.org/ib/resource/11162-413585/?lang=en>

Registering for retake in November

Candidates who would like to sit their examinations can register to do so in the November 2020 session. The registration deadline for this is 31 August 2020, up until which time **no late registration fee will be applied**. Registrations after 31 August 2020 will incur the late registration fee. For more information please see section B2.5 of [Assessment Procedures](#).

*Released in English on 13/7/20 with additional publishing in Spanish and French to follow on 14/7/20.