

Considerations for Ranking Students in Tiered Subjects

As you are aware, public examinations will not take place this summer.

Schools have been asked to assign grades to students, and within those grades to rank order students. (See guidance from [Ofqual](#))

The only advice the documentation offers regarding tiered examinations in

"In the case of tiered GCSE subjects, schools and colleges should only provide centre assessment grades which reflect the tier of entry of the individual student (9 to 3 for higher tier; 5 to 1 for foundation tier)."

Several subject leaders have raised concerns regarding ranking students who they expect would have achieved the same overall grade, but who have been following different pathways due to the tier of entry. In these cases the students will usually have been taught by different teachers, resulting in no one teacher having a solid working knowledge of the skills and accomplishments of all the students at that grade.

Because students would achieve the same grade on different papers a direct 'score' comparison is not possible.

In addition to this many schools have sent home much of their evidence base (exercise books, mock examinations etc.) with students when schools closed.

The grades likely to cause most concern in this case are those resulting in an overall grade 4 or grade 5 for mathematics or a 4-4, 5-4 or 5-5 in dual science.

The following advice is merely a suggestion to help teachers in final decision making regarding the ranking of students. Your professional knowledge of your students and the evidence you have available to you must be given due diligence.

Alongside evidence to assign a grade to a student consider the following:-

- Use of FFT data. FFT predictions data provides probabilities/ likelihood of students achieving each grade. A student with a higher likelihood of a grade 5, could be ranked higher than a student with a lower likelihood.
- QLA of mock examinations. If you have carried out a question level analysis of mock examinations you could compare performance of individual students on the 'cross over' questions which are common to both higher and foundation tier papers. A student performing more strongly on these question could be ranked more highly than a student whose performance was weaker on these questions.

- Caution: If a student has scored the majority of their marks on higher content questions but has 'dropped' marks on the 'crossover' questions through careless mistakes, it may be considered reasonable that they could rank more highly than a student scoring better on crossover but with no experience of higher tier topics.
- Your grade profile in recent years (particularly under the new GCSE assessment arrangements). Your numbers of students attaining each grade can vary year to year, particularly in relation to prior attainment at KS2. Be aware of any sudden increases or decreases in particular grade attainment and check against prior attainment from KS2 assuming you have that data at hand.
- In Options subjects many schools run parallel mixed ability groups in different options blocks. The same principles apply here, checking types of assessment data that you have for all students and moderating arrangements that are in place.

For further advice please contact:

Mathematics: helen.monaghan@lancashire.gov.uk

Science: Andrew.pearson@lancashire.gov.uk