

95% of students more likely to challenge exam results as faith in the system shaken

Exam boards are set to be overwhelmed next summer, as research by The Student Room shows 95% of students say they're more likely to challenge their exam results, following the discovery that up to 45% of exam papers in key A-level and GCSE subjects were marked incorrectly.

In a report published on November 14, exam regulator Ofqual revealed the result of an investigation into the marking of 12 GCSE and A-level subjects. Nine of these subjects were found to have, on average, less than 75% marking accuracy. English literature fared worst with around 45% of papers graded incorrectly, but subjects such as history also performed badly with only around 63% of grades being correct.

The Student Room (TSR), the world's largest online student community, asked 1,364 GCSE and A-level students about Ofqual's findings. The survey showed the research has damaged confidence in the exam system for 77% of students, with over a third (38%) saying their faith is "completely shaken".

95% of students have said they will now question future results, with 67% saying they are a lot more likely and 28% saying they are a little more likely.

To prevent the same problems next year, students in the survey called for more supervision for examiners (31%), better training for examiners (28%) and clearer mark schemes (24%).

Students flocked to the TSR website to vent their frustrations. One TSR user said: "This has the potential to ruin people's lives and is an extremely serious problem. It's completely ruined my confidence." TSR member Gomc said: "It makes me want to sob into my exam paper".

Pete Langley, ex-teacher and director of learning at The Student Room, says: "Minor errors in marking can make major differences to students' lives - a place at university missed, a job opportunity lost.

"Students need to feel confident when they walk into an exam hall that their work will be fairly rewarded. There's a danger that this confidence will evaporate if exam boards don't heed the lessons of this Ofqual research and act now to improve the reliability of marking."

**The Student Room polled 1364 students - 21/11/16*

ABOUT THE OFQUAL STUDY

Ofqual, the organisation that checks the work of exam boards, compared the marks of thousands of examiners with the marks given by senior examiners. The study found significant discrepancies across a range of subjects at GCSE and A-level. Ofqual's data is specific to individual exam papers. Full findings here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/568424/Marking_consistency_metrics_-_November_2016.pdf

ABOUT THE STUDENT ROOM

Founded in 2001, The Student Room is the world's largest online student community and the UK's no.1 education website according to ComScore data. The Student Room has over 3 million registered members, primarily aged between 14-24 and attracts over 8 million visitors a month. It provides student-to-student advice on studying, educational career choice and lifestyle issues. The Student

Room works directly with most UK universities as well as a wide range of leading brands and companies.