



I have a voice's response to Ofqual's consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021

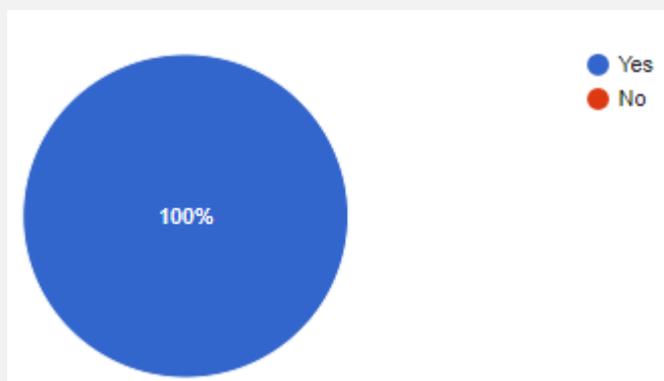
We asked our Ambassadors their views on what should happen regarding exams in 2021.

Twelve of you took part in our survey. Here is a snapshot of what you told us, keep scrolling to see the results in full.

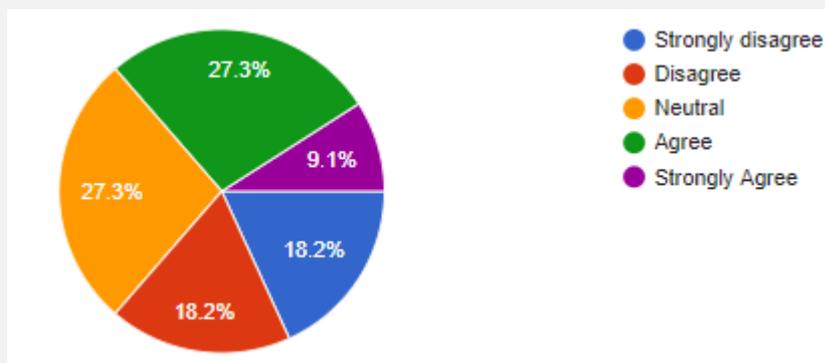
- You're divided on whether the exam board should be banned from offering exams.
- If they do go ahead:
 - you're concerned about an assessment being made before you get back to school;
 - you raised concerns about exams taking place at home as not everyone has a quiet place to work with good tech and connectivity, and that exam access arrangements for disabled students should apply as usual;
 - if any form of exam is included you think teachers should have a choice about the topics covered in the questions you'll have to answer and that the type of questions should be familiar to you. In a nutshell, that you should be assessed on what you've retained and understood from what you've been taught, rather than being penalised if your class has not been able to cover the full curriculum this year.
 - That being said you think there should be a need for teachers to assess a certain minimum proportion of the curriculum. It would be interesting to know how many teachers and students are concerned about not being able to teach the full curriculum this year...
- In terms of teacher assessed grades:
 - you think a range of your work should be considered by your teachers;
 - you're divided on whether more recent work should be weighted more heavily or not;
 - you strongly agree that IT SHOULD BE YOUR TEACHER who determines your grade;
 - but exam boards should moderate the results and be responsible for quality assurance; and
 - you should be able to appeal.
- You're divided about whether you should be told the grades your teacher submitted before results day.
- No matter what you want to be encouraged to keep learning until the end of the academic year.

We also asked you a few fun questions...

Has the Government missed an opportunity to make more fundamental changes to the way students are assessed?



One idea being discussed is having four broad bands, as the consistency of grading for middle grades has been put into question. To what extent would you favour this approach? If you want to know more here is an interesting paper <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/01/16/how-to-be-innovative-in-school-exam-assessment-fewer-grades/>



If you were Education Secretary what would you do?

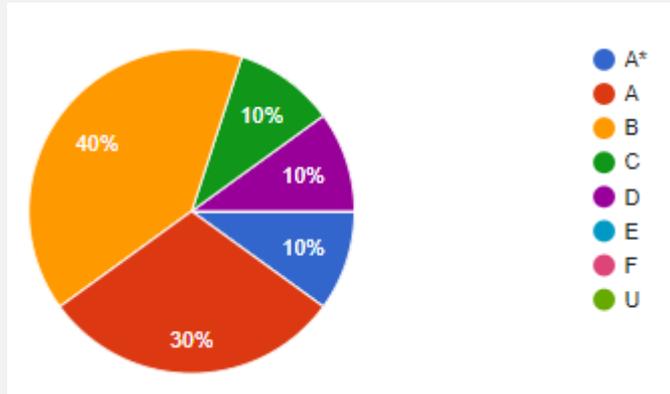
- If I were him resign 😊. Seriously though, I would just accept that exams and stuff can't go ahead and allow teachers to make the grades like last summer.
- Allow teacher assessed grades to be the final grade.
- Create a system where all work in the school year is accounted for in the final grade of that year.
- Teachers would submit evidence for the students, but consideration needs to be made about how many months students were out of face to face education.
- Predicted grades should also be taken into account.
- Give every student a grade that takes account of their work from year 9 onwards to help with predicted grades and school work.
- Cancel all forms of external assessment and trust teachers to give appropriate grades to students through considering all the work students have produced over



their exam years, in class assessments on topics, homework and class effort (i.e. attendance).

- Use evidence from the entire two years of the course and then take this as an opportunity to reform education away from terminal exams.

What grade would you give this consultation?



We submitted this response to Ofqual via their response form. You can read the full consultation document here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953000/6743-

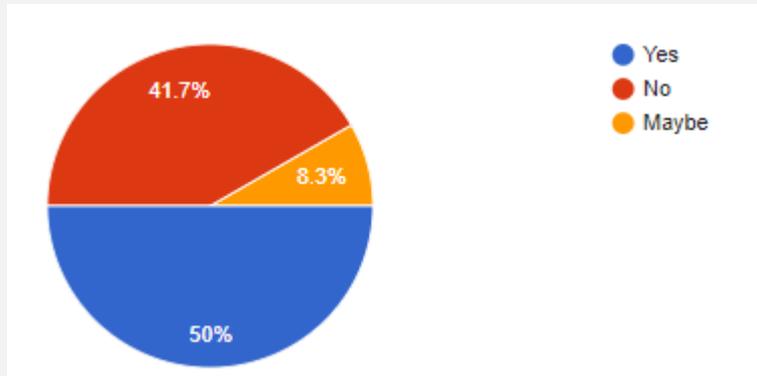
[1_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf](#)



Appendix: The results in full

1. Should they even go ahead?

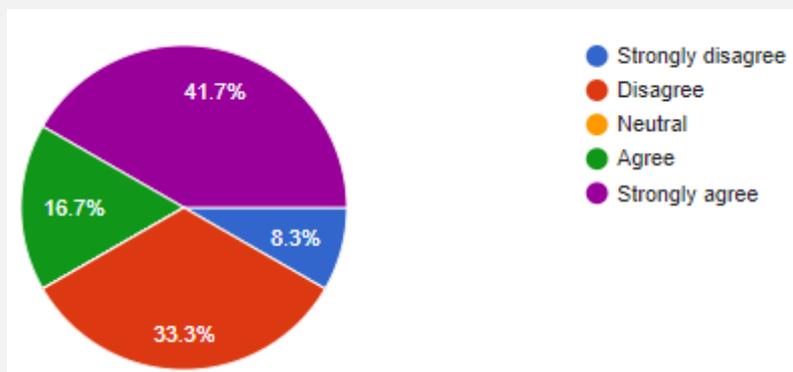
Should the exam board be prohibited from offering GCSE, AS and A level exams in 2021?



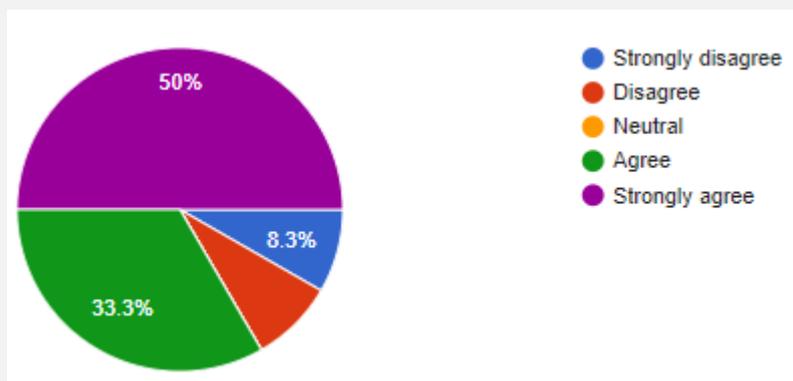
You were split on whether exam boards should be prohibited from offering exams. Those who answered no said that students who want to sit exams should be able to.

2. How should they be assessed?

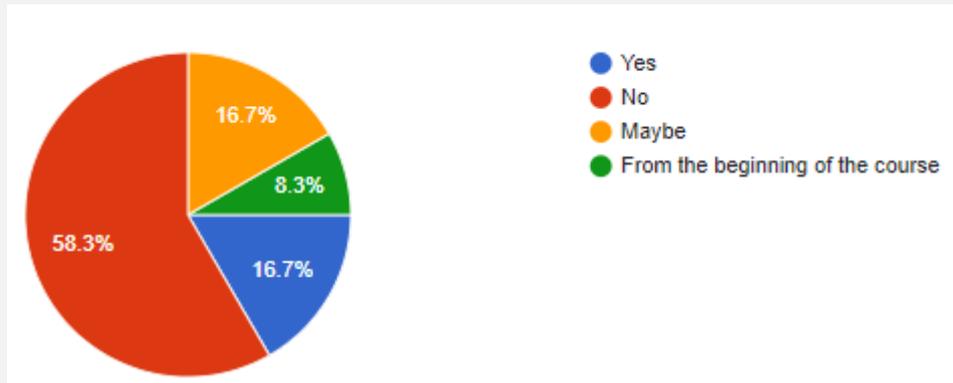
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the grades awarded to students in 2021 should reflect the standard at which they are performing?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that the alternative approach to awarding grades in summer 2021 should seek to encourage students to continue to engage with their education for the remainder of the academic year?



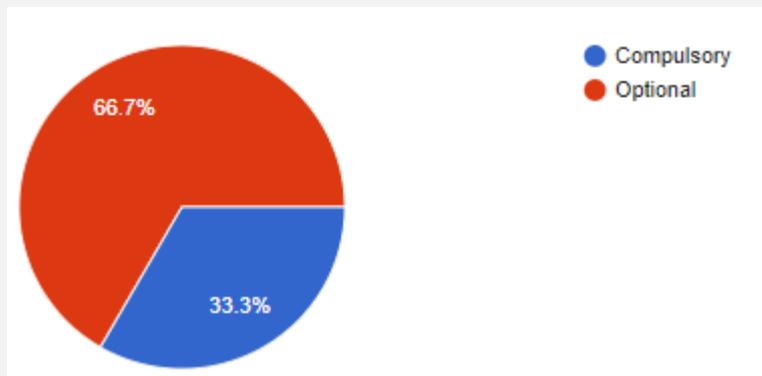
Should there be any limit on the period from which previous work could be drawn?



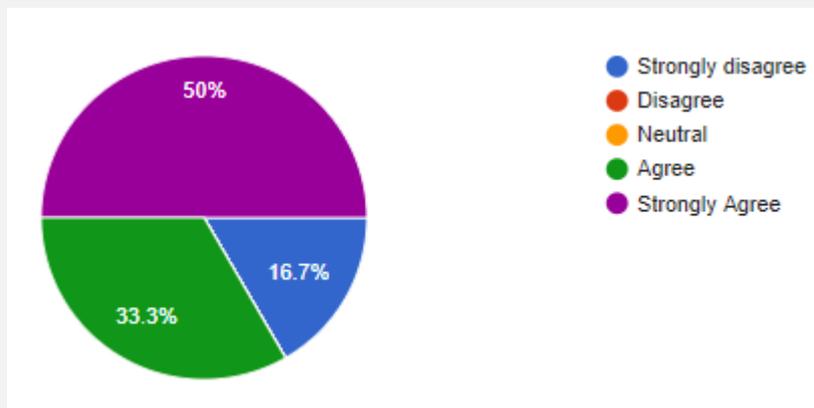
Do you have any comments on when students should be assessed?

You are concerned about your grades being assessed before they are back in school, they were also concerned about any 'exam-style' assessments taking place before May. Those who disagreed with the questions asked, such as whether assessments should reflect their current performance or that teachers should use evidence from throughout their course were in disagreement with the fundamental premise that they should be assessed this year.

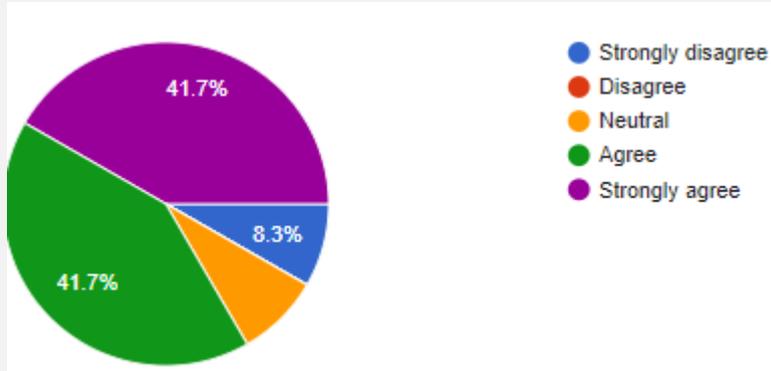
Do you think the use of the papers provided by the exam boards should be compulsory or optional, for GCSEs, AS and A levels?



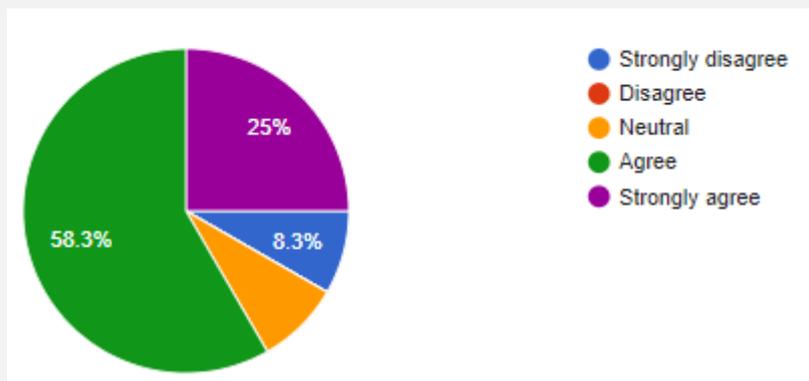
To what extent do you agree or disagree that any papers provided by the exam boards should include questions that are of a type that is familiar to students?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that if teachers use exam board papers they should have choice about the topics covered in the questions their students answer, for example through choice of which papers they use with their students from the set of papers provided?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should be required to assess (either by use of the exam board papers or via other evidence) a certain minimum proportion of the overall subject content, for each subject?



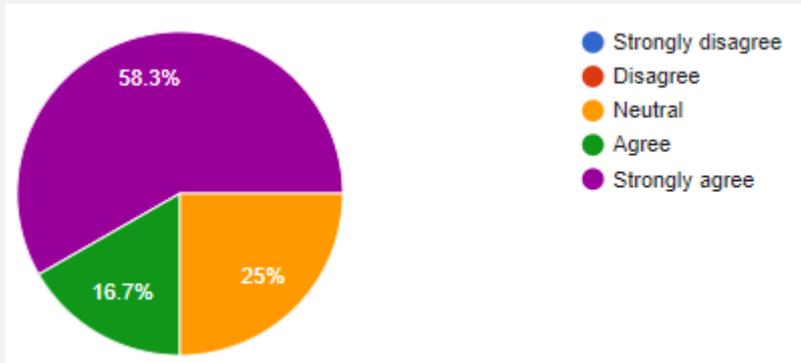
Do you have any comments on the use of exam board papers?

Again, a number of our respondents felt that exam papers should not be used to disagreed with the premise of the question. Their view is that the Government announced that external examinations were cancelled and replaced with teacher assessments, therefore no form of external examination should take place.

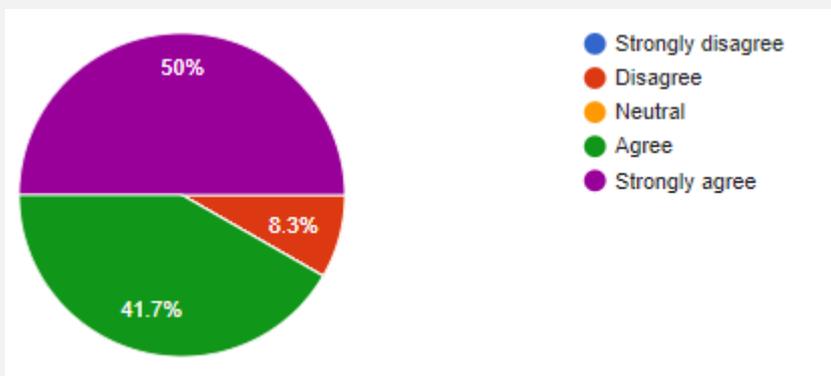
Those who answered the questions as posed also expressed concerns and felt strongly that teachers should be able to customise the papers to reflect the content covered by the school and that they should be able to reduce the burden on students.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should take account of a student's performance in any non-exam assessment where that has been completed in full for a subject?

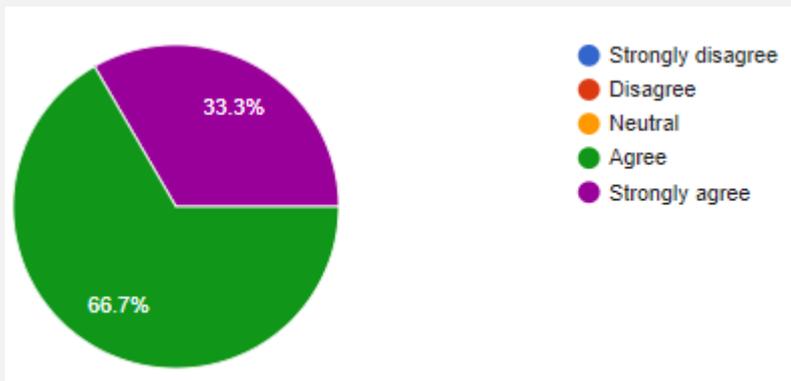




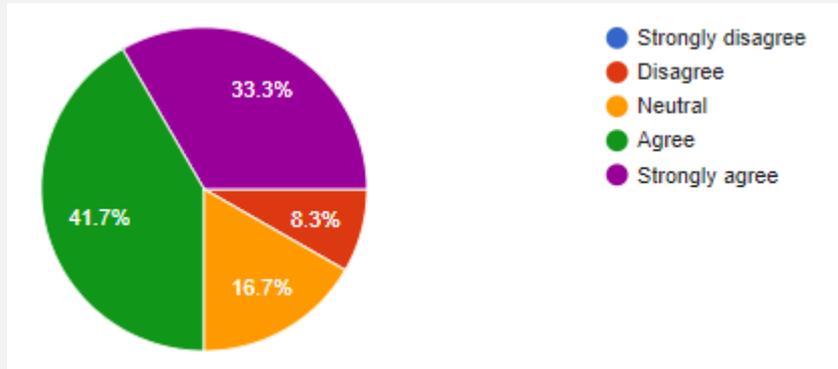
To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should take account of a student's performance in any non-exam assessment where that has been completed in part for a subject?



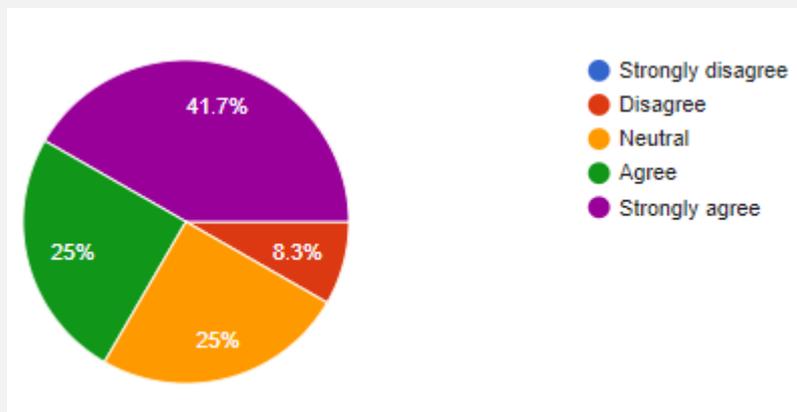
To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should mark their students' non-exam assessments?



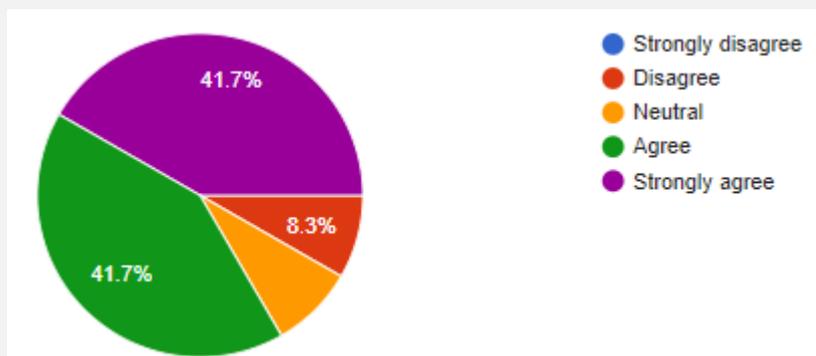
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the marking of non-exam assessments should not be moderated by the exam boards this year?



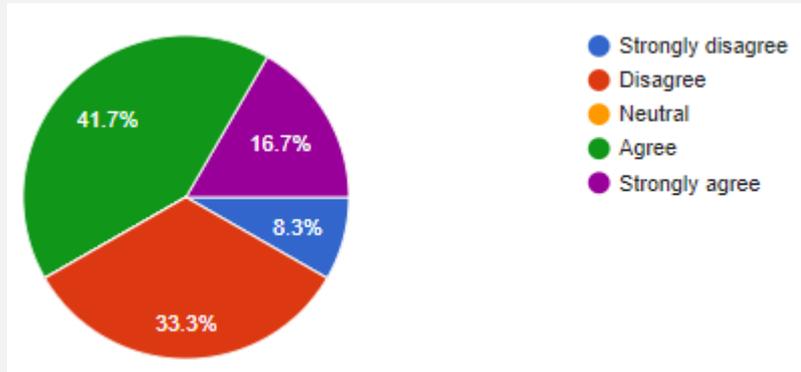
To what extent do you agree or disagree that a breadth of evidence should inform teachers' judgements?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should be able to take into account other performance evidence for a student before submitting a grade?

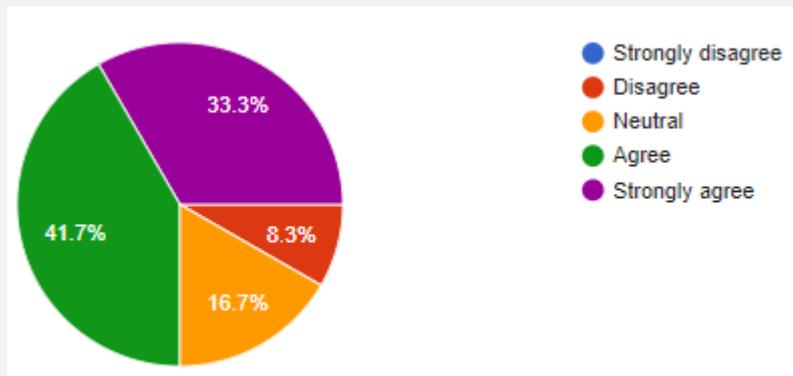


To what extent do you agree or disagree that performance evidence from closer to the time of the final assessment, should carry more weight in determining a student's final grade?

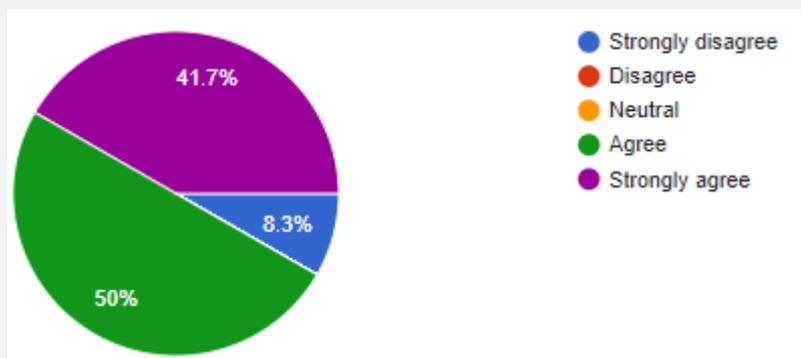


3. Conditions of Assessment

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the assessments should, if possible, be taken within the student's school or college?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that if the pandemic makes it necessary a student should be able to take their assessments at an alternative venue, including at home?



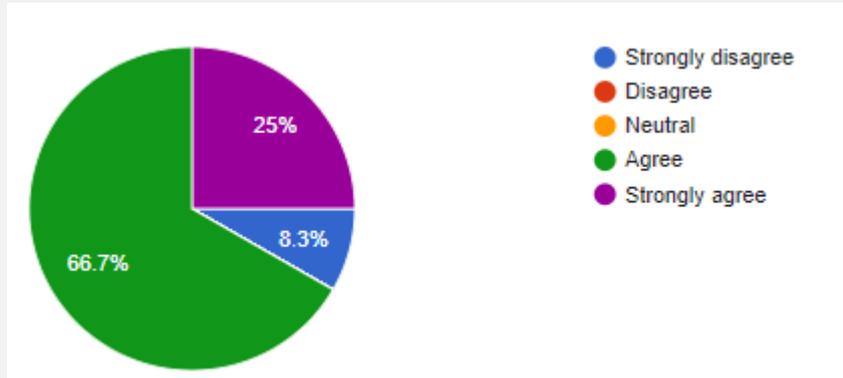
One student raised that if the rest of their family was at home it would be too noisy and disruptive for them to take an exam. They stressed that not everyone has the same home situation, and this would create a further negative impact on some students' performances.



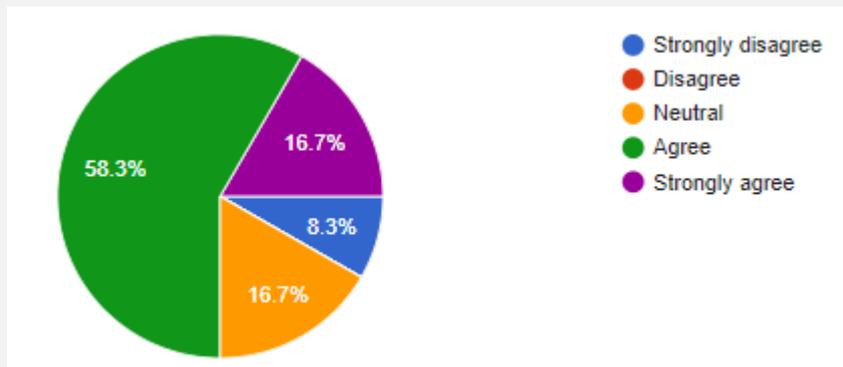
Another student with a disability responded that exam access arrangements for disabled students should apply as usual.

4. Quality Assurance

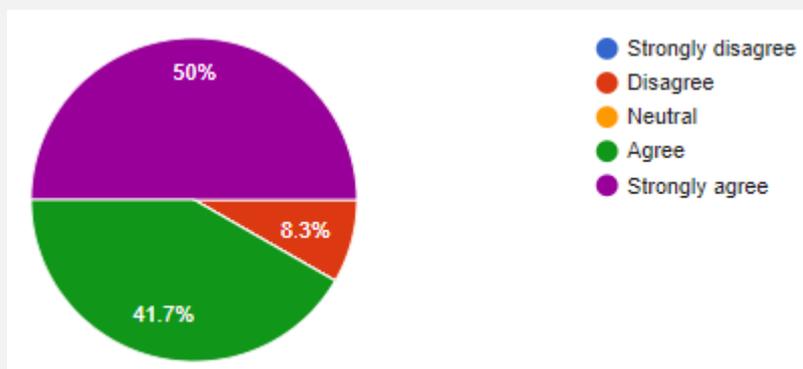
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should quality assure how schools and colleges are determining grades?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should sample, at subject level, the evidence on which the submitted grades were based?

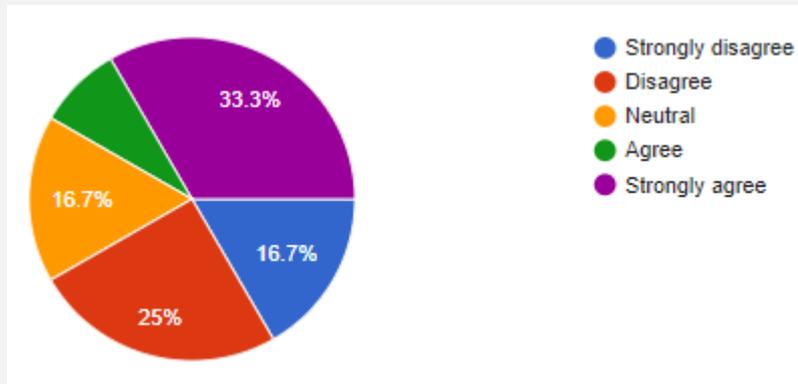


To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards could only change a student's grade after a review of the evidence and discussion with the school or college?

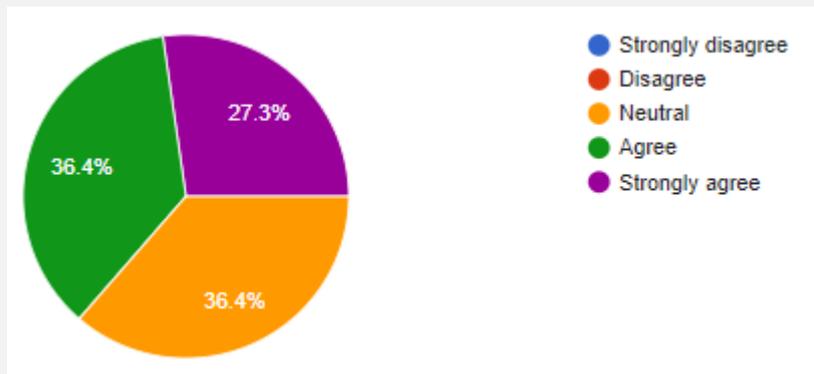


5. Appeal

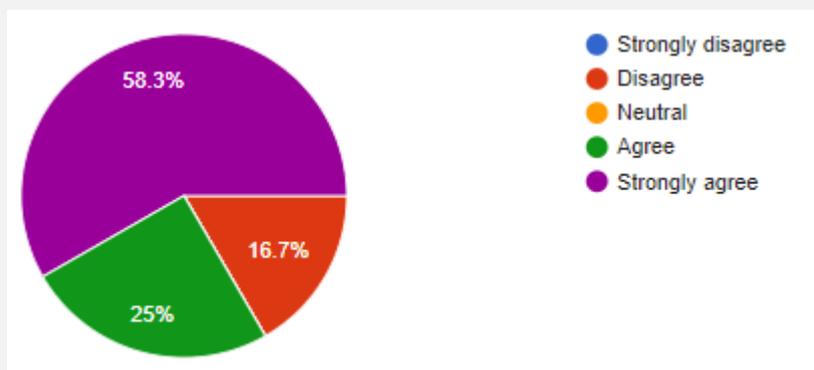
To what extent do you agree or disagree that students should not be told the grade their teacher has submitted before results day?



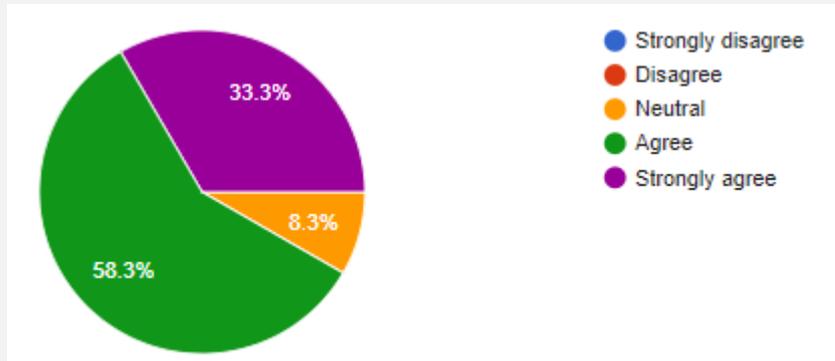
To what extent do you agree or disagree that if results day(s) are brought forward, we should seek to decouple when a student is informed of their results, and universities are informed of their formal result for the purpose of admissions decisions?



To what extent do you agree or disagree that students should be able to appeal their grade on the grounds that their teacher made an error when assessing the student's performance?

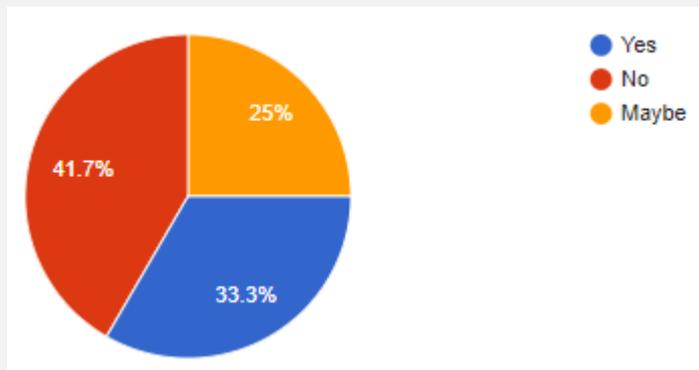


To what extent do you agree or disagree that a student should be able to appeal to the exam board on the grounds that the school or college did not properly consider the student's appeal?

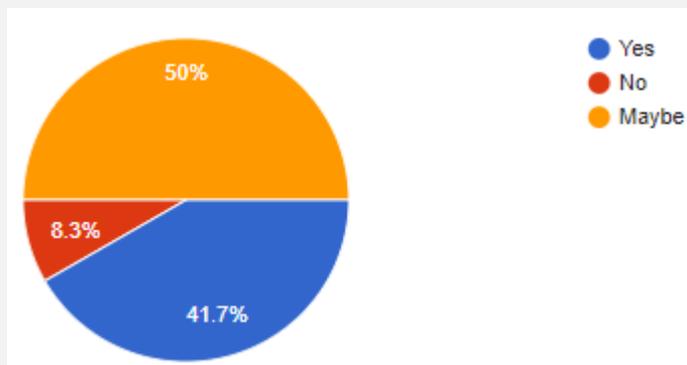


6. Equality Impact Assessment

Do you believe the proposed arrangements (any or all) would have a positive impact on particular groups of students because of their protected characteristics?



Do you believe the proposed arrangements (any or all) would have a negative impact on particular students because of protected characteristics?



One very direct response was that "There is no logic to allowing IGCSE exams to continue but not standard GCSE. It puts pupils' health at risk, it puts other students not studying IGCSE exams at disadvantage."



Another respondent raised concerns about teachers being unconsciously bias and asked whether the training could involve a section on unconscious bias, how to identify and how to deal with it.

Two main points raised by respondents were:

7. If teachers have greater control over what is assessed they can ensure it is aligned with the content that the students had been taught, so that the exams are based on their ability to learn that content and to reduce the risk of them being examined on topics that had not been covered.
8. We must prevent the issues we saw with the results in 2020 where students in generally lower performing schools were more likely to have their grades lowered. This algorithm was already inherent in the system and therefore this is an existing issue that was prevalent before last year's results put it in the spotlight.

