

# Ensuring fairness in the exam route

## November 2021 examination session



Our goal this year is to give students on the two different routes equal opportunity to progress after the global disruption due to COVID-19. While we acknowledge that students on the exam route will have more opportunities to show what they can achieve, and so will have a better chance to distinguish themselves, those who were not able to complete the examinations will still receive a fair indication of their performance after two years of DP to support them moving on to the next step of their education.

To ensure our dual-route system is fair, we will:

- Consider the impact of the pandemic.
- Make the outcomes of the exam route and the non-exam route comparable so that we do not advantage students in one route over the other.
- Check for unfairness across specific situations.

### Considering the impact of the pandemic

The IB will deeply consider the impact of the global pandemic throughout grade awarding. We will compare the distribution of results of all students in November 2021 with the results in previous years including 2020 and in setting the final grade-boundaries we will use the same level of generosity in awarding to ensure that

overall results are in line with those results from 2020. The May and November 2020 results were somewhat higher than those of 2019, because we took into account the adverse effect of the pandemic on student performance across the whole cohort. By comparing results to 2020 we will ensure that the impact of the pandemic is accounted for in a similar way.

### Outcomes of the exam route and the non-exam route will be comparable so that we do not advantage students in one route over the other

Setting the grade boundaries for both routes is a 3-step process.

**Step 1:** First we will compare the overall results of the schools in the non-exam route to the results of those same schools in 2019. Given the process we use to determine the final grade in the non-exam route we expect that results will be somewhat higher than in 2019.

**Step 2:** We will make sure that overall results for schools in the exam-route are overall comparable to the results of those same schools in 2019, but we will also take into account any relative increase in results we may see in

the non-exam route (step 1). This makes sure that exam route and non-exam route are comparable in grading standards.

**Step 3:** We will compare the results of both groups together and compare the results with 2020 (as described above).

### Checking to see if unfairness occurs in specific situations

We know that some regions or groups of schools may have experienced greater disruption due to the impact of the pandemic in their locality. We have been working closely with schools globally to understand the varying situations faced. Where we believe there may have been a greater disruption due to the pandemic, we will check results in groups of schools in specific regions or situations to see if results are impacted more by the pandemic than accounted for using the above process. If this is the case, we will consider and apply appropriate measures to correct for this.