

Ten things you didn't know about OCR examining

1. Size

Exam marking is a large, complex operation. We send out a total of 4 million items in preparation for summer exams including teachers' instructions, resource materials, CDs and exam papers. OCR's examiners mark over 3 million GCSE and A Level exam papers for nearly 1 million students. This involves over 14,500 examiners and nearly 1000 marking meetings so OCR can deliver results on time.

2. Every result matters

Despite the large numbers involved, every result represents the work of an individual student and can affect their life chances.

3. Knowledge and experience

Over 90% of OCR examiners are teachers, or ex teachers; their knowledge is vital. The majority have examined for OCR for at least 6 years.

4. Training

OCR examiners are trained and tested every year to ensure they mark exam papers accurately and consistently. Before they mark any 'live' papers, examiners must pass 'standardisation' tests to ensure they can apply the mark scheme accurately, time after time. Every year, OCR rejects examiners who do not pass these tests.

5. Online marking

99% of exam papers taken in summer exams are now 'marked online'. This means that after a student takes an exam, the paper is scanned and then downloaded onto the computer of an examiner who marks it on screen.

6. Quality of marking

With the introduction of online marking, OCR has developed 6 different data checks to continuously monitor examiner marking. The checks ensure that the mark scheme is being applied as accurately on day 30 as on day 1. And our checks analyse everyone in the examining chain, from the individual examiner up to the most senior examiner.

7. Other ways of calculating performance

To protect students' interests, OCR mathematically calculates a mark for a student who was not able to sit an exam due to illness or other personal circumstances. The mark is based on their performance in other exam papers. This is an agreed policy followed by all exam boards. Around 3500 marks were calculated by OCR in this way in 2015.

8. Child protection

OCR has child protection officers. Examiners refer more than 100 cases to our child protection officers for further investigation each summer.

9. Meeting individual needs

We create specially modified papers in braille or enlarged print – nearly 4000 in exams in summer 2015 – to meet individual student needs. We process thousands of applications for special consideration when a student's performance in an exam was likely to have been affected by illness or an injury.

10. The right to review marking

If a student or teacher is unhappy with an exam result, OCR provides a range of options to ensure every result enquiry is dealt with efficiently and appropriately. OCR's priority service reviewed A Level papers for students applying to university in 3 days in 2015. Big changes in final grades are unacceptable and they are rare. And despite the upward trend in result enquiries in recent years, the percentage of final OCR grades changed was only just over 1%.