

Exam results analysis checklist for subject leaders

A one-page sequence for reviewing your department's GCSE or A-Level results — from establishing the cohort to agreeing a small number of priorities. Work down it in order, and take it into your department or SLT meeting.

1. Cohort Establish the basic facts before any interpretation.

- ☐ Number of students entered recorded
- ☐ Exam board and specification noted
- ☐ Number achieving each grade (9-U or A*-U) recorded
- ☐ Cohort size flagged if small (one student = a large % swing)

2. Grade distribution Look at the whole shape, not one headline.

- ☐ Individual grades reviewed, not just one threshold
- ☐ Key cumulative measures noted (e.g. GCSE 7+, 5+, 4+; A-Level A*, A*-A, A*-B)
- ☐ Any unusual clustering or gap near a boundary identified

3. National benchmark Compare like with like.

- ☐ Same qualification, subject, board and year compared
- ☐ Differences expressed in percentage points, not %
- ☐ Population checked (all-age national data can include post-16 resits)

4. Previous years Put this year in context.

- ☐ Same measures compared across years
- ☐ Cohort size and prior-attainment changes noted
- ☐ National movement used as context for your own change
- ☐ Exceptional years (2020, 2021, transitional 2022) treated with care

5. Significant differences Separate signal from noise.

- ☐ Differences translated back into numbers of students
- ☐ Small-cohort volatility acknowledged
- ☐ Findings stated as evidence, not yet explanation

6. Further evidence Test the hypotheses.

- ☐ Scripts / question-level analysis reviewed where useful
- ☐ Mock and in-year assessment evidence considered
- ☐ Prior attainment and cohort circumstances checked

7. Strengths Protect what works.

- ☐ Areas of strong performance identified
- ☐ Practice worth maintaining or extending noted

8. Priorities Keep it proportionate.

- ☐ Two or three evidence-based priorities agreed
- ☐ Each action specific enough to implement and evaluate
- ☐ What to maintain / investigate / change made explicit

Before sharing your analysis, ask: what do the data definitely show? What are we inferring? What additional evidence would test that inference? What action is genuinely justified?

Free from tutor2u. Benchmark your class or department against national data with the interactive Exam Results Explorer — grade distributions, boundaries and the My results tool: **sims.tutor2u.net/examresults**. Ten teacher analysis guides: **sims.tutor2u.net/examresults/exam-results-explained/for-teachers**