

Lower predicted A-level grades given to poorer students

Lower predicted A-level grades given to poorer students : Recent data released by UCAS showed that, despite promises to reform university access, over half of university places awarded in 2017 were to students of the wealthiest backgrounds.

University College, Oxford

Now the [Sutton Trust](#) is calling for an overhaul of the university admissions system, after their report found that students' university acceptance rates are highly dependent on their predicted grades.

Under the current system, students choose their institutions based on A-level grades predicted by their teachers. If their predicted grades are low, they may be accepted onto a course with entry requirements far lower than those which they are capable of achieving. According to this new report, bright students from poorer backgrounds are more likely than their wealthier peers to be given lower predicted A-level grades than they actually achieve. The report says that teachers do tend to over-predict A-level grades, partly in response to mounting pressures from parents who push for grades at the top end of the spectrum. Disadvantaged students are also over-predicted, yet every year, there are as many as a thousand high-achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are under-predicted. Senior lecturer at the UCL Institute of Education Gill Wyness, who wrote the report, concludes there is a lack of transparency in the admission process. She says: "Greater openness and transparency is vital if disadvantaged students are to be able to play the admissions game on the same terms as their better-off peers. A more consistent approach to offer-making across universities would also benefit disadvantaged students." The University and College Union general secretary Sally Hunt echoed [Sutton Trust's](#) call to overhaul the admissions system, saying that "It is in everyone's interests to give all students the very best chance of fulfilling their potential and one huge step in the right direction would be to allow them to apply to university after they receive their results."

Unattributed

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