

Moray Council

COVID-19 Head Teacher Meetings

Advice for SQA Processes 1 – week beginning 13 April 2020



SQA announced on 19 March that this year's diet of exams would not go ahead. Further updates for schools followed on 24 March (on coursework) and 2 April (on estimates and certification). Further advice on estimates will be issued by 20 April 2020.

Following the announcement from SQA on 2 April 2020 as to their plans for certification for 2019/20, a synopsis of the content is as follows:

Estimating Grades

- Use of teacher professional judgement and estimate the learner grade and band based on their demonstrated and inferred attainment of required skills, knowledge and understanding for each National Course
- There is no requirement for additional prelims or homework task to determine the estimate
- Estimate is a judgement of a grade and band based on a holistic review
- The integrity of the estimates will provide the core element of the certification process
- Existing bands will be subdivided and teachers will be asked to place learners within the band categories
- Teachers will also be asked to rank order their learners within each estimated grade
- Guidance will be issued after Easter and before **20 April 2020**
- The deadline for estimates is now **29 May 2020**
- There will be a free post results service – details to follow

National 5 Coursework

- Marking of N5 coursework will no longer proceed
- N5 course work will likely not be returned to centres but may be used as part of an appeals process
- Centres should not submit marks for internally assessed coursework

N 2, 3, 4 and Free Standing Units at SCQF 5, 6, 7

- Centres should provide unit results
- This should be based on existing evidence and teacher professional judgement
- The date for this is **22 May 2020**
- Evidence should be retained till **December 2020**

NCs, NPAs, SFW Courses

- Centres should provide results of internal assessment decisions from evidence which exists and professional judgement
- There will be reasonable level of quality assurance done remotely
- Evidence should be retained till **December 2020**

There will be no late fees for entry levels or withdrawals of entries for N5, H or AH after 3 April 2020.

What should schools be doing?

For session 2019/20, the certification to our young people will be the result of collaboration between SQA and schools; estimates for graded courses (National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) take on a new importance this session as they will be central to decisions made by SQA about grades awarded.

Further guidance is due from SQA on 20 April, which will support an element of integrity and equity across Moray. Use of teacher professional judgement will be paramount and will comprise of the use of bands and ranking to support teacher estimates.

In the meantime we should consider:

Graded Courses

- The update from SQA states that estimates should be based on “demonstrated and inferred attainment”
- This means that teachers can use any assessed coursework that has been accumulated during the course, and can also take into account their knowledge of the progress young people have made with knowledge, skills and understanding, **even when this has not been explicitly assessed**
- For example, teachers will know from learning conversations that candidates have deeper knowledge and greater understanding, even if that has never been formally acknowledged in a written or practical assessment
- It is of vital importance that the improvements young people have been making in the latter parts of the course are taken into account, even though teachers may not have paper evidence of that improvement. SQA is well aware that such written evidence may not exist and therefore cannot form part of any future validation or post results processes
- With reference to the above, some pupils may not have performed well in their prelims and it is very important the progress they have made since is recognised and the acknowledgement that the prelim is only one part of the range of evidence
- SQA is clear that **no new assessment activity** is required to support teachers’ decisions about estimates and rankings. This is in the interest of equity within the ability of young people to access assessment approaches
- Teachers should not be attempting to gather any additional evidence – there should be a “line in the sand” for additional evidence after 20 March when schools closed due to integrity and equity
- As indicated on 24 March, coursework submitted or about to be submitted to the SQA will not be marked and therefore will not contribute to overall exam grades - it is very important that teachers’ knowledge of completed and partially completed coursework, including coursework already sent to SQA, is taken into account when determining estimates. This should also include the practical and assignment element of the mark
- Rank ordering pupils within bands is a new procedure for many staff, although some will be familiar with this in previous SQA processes – there is likely to be a subdivision of bands and more information will come on this on 20 April
- Band 9 Estimates – there should be clear consideration of a band 9 for an estimate grade – this demonstrates a complete fail with no second change which exam diet would have offered; if there are no band 9 entries then results are skewed
- At present the focus should be on considering evidence for estimates

Ungraded Courses

- Unit results for National 2, 3 and 4 and for free standing units at SCQF 5, 6 and 7, should be submitted based on existing demonstrated attainment and professional judgement for units which are not quite completed
- Teachers should take the same positive approach to this as they do to the decisions about estimates for graded courses
- There will be no further SQA verification activity for schools until further notice but SQA have requested that all physical evidence of attainment, where it exists, should be retained until the end of December 2020 to allow for future verification of the processes that led to the August 2020 awards

Quality Assurance Processes

To ensure validity and reliability of estimates and to build confidence there should be quality assurance processes built in at school and authority level

- **Within** departments there should be discussion about estimates, with this discussion led by Principal Teachers. The purpose of these discussions is to ensure that there is consistency in the way that decisions are made about estimates taking into attainment which is completed and that which relies upon teacher professional judgement
- **Between** departments the Principal Teachers should be liaising with each other within a school to ensure that there is consistency of approach, and also use subject group networks to support consistency and reliability across the authority – this should be promoted with subject PTs
- Many **new PTs** will require additional support and practical solutions in the collation of evidence and the estimates for young people; SLT link and subject groups could be used here as well as PT mentors across this school as for some of them this will be the first time they have led this element within their role
- Consider the role of PTGs to provide information and support subject based decisions
- **SLT** in schools should oversee and support these processes by liaising with link departments to monitor the process and should quality assure the decisions being made – there is also an opportunity for an element of challenge, this should include looking at prior attainment, considering improvement actions which have taken place and the use of tracking, monitoring and target setting
- Datasets – there is a clear rationale for using datasets for the previous 3 years where estimates and actual marks can be used to support the agreement of this year's estimates in line with a concordant approach and for ranking – to this end 2019 actual marks and rankings for each graded subject and level will be provided for schools to use with their 2019 estimates to support this process as well as ranking of S4, S5 and S6 breadth and depth – should this be useful, then it can be replicated for 2017 and 2018 – this will be issued to schools this week
- Further to this, we would hope to include some SLT in Moray wide quality assurance processes after additional advice becomes available on 20 April

Further advice will be forthcoming from SQA and Moray to support these processes in due course. The DFM was very clear that no young people would be disadvantaged by the inevitable decision to cancel the examination diet, although this will not preclude young people from being awarded a D or indeed a fail as this is required as part of the statistical spread and reliability of the exam process.

SQA has also been very clear about the importance of having a certification system this year that does not lead to any disadvantage. In deciding estimates and rankings, please do all you can to help to ensure that there is no disadvantage by taking into account as much evidence as possible as well as your knowledge about the young people in your school and classes.

Young people and parents/carers will also be very anxious about this new set of procedures. Results will be released in August in the normal way and after that there will be a Post-Results Service appeals process that will address concerns about grades awarded.

Schools should not share estimates or rankings with parents/carers as a matter of course. The legal position is that parents/carers can request such information held by schools. Should such a request be received we suggest that you explain the process being undertaken and ask that parent/carers wait until August to find out the final grades, **since estimates are only one part of the process.**

What are SQA considering?

- Potential return of N5 coursework to support candidate estimate gradings and appeal evidence bank
- Estimate entry onto SEEMiS; groupings of 10 candidates; early new timetable start; electronic data entry from SEEMiS from home or use of SQA Connect for this year as web based
- Considering a fix for band 9 National 5 pupils to allow for some accreditation
- Evidence for Post Results - PRS is a remark or clerical check so may consider move back to appeal process

Moray Next Steps

- Issue of 2019 datasets as detailed previously – by 17 April 2020
- Issue of SQA information on estimates and banding/ranking – by 20 April 2020
- Virtual meeting with SQA coordinators and secondary HTs – on 22 April 2020
- Create opportunities for subject PTs to quality assure estimates and ranking
- Agreement of deadlines for subject PTs to complete estimate process – to be agreed on 22 April 2020 at virtual meeting
- Agreement of SEEMiS estimate input processes (eg who, where, when) - to be agreed on 22 April 2020 at virtual meeting
- Quality assurance processes at authority level, including identification of anomalies – agree a small group to undertake this - to be agreed on 22 April 2020 at virtual meeting

Moray Council

COVID-19 SQA Coordinator/HT Meetings

Advice for SQA Processes 2 – week beginning 20 April 2020



SQA announced on 19 March that this year's diet of exams would not go ahead. Further updates for schools followed on 24 March (on coursework) and 2 April (on estimates and certification). Further advice on estimates was issued on 20 April 2020 and formed the basis of the meeting on 22 April 2020.

Recap

- Estimates are to be entered by 29 May 2020 for N5, H and AH
- N2,3,4 and FSU for SCQF 5,6,7 deadline is 22 May 2020
- NCs, NPAs and SfW should be resulted as normal
- There will be no late fees
- Coursework already submitted will not be marked and discussion is taking place as to whether this will be returned as could potentially be used for PRS evidence

Producing Estimates (2019/20)

- Submission of estimate grades
- Balance of demonstrated and inferred attainment
- Bands subdivided; rank order within new bands

What should we be doing?

- Consider holistic professional judgement to show demonstrated and inferred attainment
- Consider the SQA suite of subject documents for each course and level, covering:
 - Range of skills and knowledge and understanding
 - Assessment structure
 - Course component and weightings
 - Grade descriptors
- There will be incomplete evidence but in reality there were 3 school weeks missed prior to study leave
- There should be no disadvantage to learners
- For integrity and equity, we should consider the school closure date of 20 March as "a line in the sand" for evidence generation
- Take account of reasonable adjustments

Band 9

- Over the last 3 years band 9 for N5, H and AH have been – 2017 – 14%; 2018 – 10% and 2019 – 10%
- If band 9 not estimated then there is not an even distribution, then distribution of estimates across bands will be skewed
- Advice to come out on the possibility of a N5 band 9 compensatory awards

What should schools be doing?

For session 2019/20, the certification to our young people will be the result of collaboration between SQA and schools; estimates for graded courses (National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) take on a new importance this session as they will be central to decisions made by SQA about grades awarded.

We should consider:

Graded Courses – N5, H and AH

- The update from SQA states that estimates should be based on “demonstrated and inferred attainment”
- This means that teachers can use any assessed coursework that has been accumulated during the course, and can also take into account their knowledge of the progress young people have made with knowledge, skills and understanding, **even when this has not been explicitly assessed**
- For example, teachers will know from learning conversations that candidates have deeper knowledge and greater understanding, even if that has never been formally acknowledged in a written or practical assessment
- It is of vital importance that the improvements young people have been making in the latter parts of the course are taken into account, even though teachers may not have paper evidence of that improvement. SQA is well aware that such written evidence may not exist and therefore cannot form part of any future validation or post results processes
- With reference to the above, some pupils may not have performed well in their prelims and it is very important the progress they have made since is recognised and the acknowledgement that the prelim is only one part of the range of evidence
- SQA is clear that **no new assessment activity** is required to support teachers’ decisions about estimates and rankings. This is in the interest of equity within the ability of young people to access assessment approaches
- Teachers should not be attempting to gather any additional evidence – there should be a “line in the sand” for additional evidence after 20 March when schools closed due to integrity and equity
- As indicated on 24 March, coursework submitted or about to be submitted to the SQA will not be marked and therefore will not contribute to overall exam grades - it is very important that teachers’ knowledge of completed and partially completed coursework, including coursework already sent to SQA, is taken into account when determining estimates. This should also include the practical and assignment element of the mark

At present the focus should be on considering evidence for estimates, this should be through:

- PT and department familiarisation with SQA suite of documents for the course and level
- Gathering a range of evidence which has been demonstrated
- Consider the gaps and the use of inferred attainment
- Ensure departments are confident with assessment judgements

Role of Link SLT:

- DMs with staff to discuss expectations and support evidence collation
- Consider the departments who will need more support
- Quality assurance of evidence

Role of Subject Groups

- Some subject groups are already meeting and this will be advice to others as how to support the gathering of evidence as well as sharing good practice
- Quality assurance of evidence

Quality Assurance Processes

To ensure validity and reliability of estimates and to build confidence there should be quality assurance processes built in at school and authority level

- **Within** departments there should be discussion about estimates, with this discussion led by Principal Teachers. The purpose of these discussions is to ensure that there is consistency in the way that decisions are made about estimates taking into attainment which is completed and that which relies upon teacher professional judgement
- **Between** departments the Principal Teachers should be liaising with each other within a school to ensure that there is consistency of approach, and also use **subject group** networks to support consistency and reliability across the authority – this should be promoted with subject PTs with prompt email from KL
- Many **new PTs** will require additional support and practical solutions in the collation of evidence and the estimates for young people; **SLT link** and **subject groups** could be used here as well as PT mentors across this school as for some of them this will be the first time they have led this element within their role
- Consider the role of **PTGs** to provide information and support subject based decisions as well as overview of conditional offers for some young people
- **SLT** in schools should oversee and support these processes by liaising with link departments to monitor the process and should quality assure the decisions being made – there is also an opportunity for an element of challenge, this should include looking at prior attainment, considering improvement actions which have taken place and the use of tracking, monitoring and target setting
- **Local authority** quality assurance processes built in at this stage as appropriate

Deadline for gathering evidence and determining overall mark/percentage – 4 May 2020

Next Steps

- PTs to work with SLT to determine banding and ranking
- Use centre data tables to support this for consistency and also previous concordancy
- Sampling across school and subject groups at this stage

Deadline for determining banking and ranking for subject and levels – 11 May 2020

Next Steps (cont)

- Training for SQA Connect available on SQA Academy
- Consideration of entry to a spreadsheet then SQA Connect
- LA sampling to take place with some SQA coordinators and HTs taking part
- Potential for inter authority sampling – to be arranged as part of local authority quality assurance processes

Deadline for QA processes for subject and levels – 18 May 2020

Centre Tables – Datasets

- Data sets are in from SQA, last 5 years but should use last 3 years – to be sent out when modified for each school
- For SLT to support discussions through support and challenge and SQA Coordinator for informed view of what estimates have looked at in the past
- **Need to be careful sharing with PTs**, would need to be further work to be done on tables and also as not to detract to importance of gathering and considering evidence prior to discussion re banding and ranking, a caution where there are new PTs and considerable change in departments
- Consider:
 - Caution around changes in staffing/department and quality of estimates submitted
 - Issues around concordancy – estimates versus actual over previous year datasets
 - SQA aware of turnover in staff and looking at statistical analysis
 - Should these tables/data be shared? They should have these each year and own departmental records should indicate this
 - Department tables usually have this – from department attainment reviews
 - Tables shouldn't be shared until first piece of work undertaken
 - Need to be careful not to influence gradings at this stage – needs to be based on individual pupil performance and evidence available in hard and soft forms
 - SLT to Quality Assure against – will help inform discussions at next stage with PTs/Departments

Ungraded Courses

- Unit results for National 2, 3 and 4 and for free standing units at SCQF 5, 6 and 7, should be submitted based on existing demonstrated attainment and professional judgement for units which are not quite completed, inferred attainment
- Teachers should take the same positive approach to this as they do to the decisions about estimates for graded courses
- There will be no further SQA verification activity for schools until further notice but SQA have requested that all physical evidence of attainment, where it exists, should be retained until the end of December 2020 to allow for future verification of the processes that led to the August 2020 awards

Estimates to Parents

This is currently been reviews by our Moray legal team and will be issued as soon as possible.

Other Information

SQA has also been very clear about the importance of having a certification system this year that does not lead to any disadvantage. In deciding estimates and rankings, please do all you can to help to ensure that there is no disadvantage by taking into account as much evidence as possible as well as your knowledge about the young people in your school and classes.

Young people and parents/carers will also be very anxious about this new set of procedures. Results will be released in August in the normal way and after that there will be a Post-Results Service appeals process that will address concerns about grades awarded.

What will we seek clarification on?

- SQA Marking Schemes – is there possibility of getting access to these for coursework etc as still in schools/copies in school?
- Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAA) – should these still be entered/uploaded
- Return of bulky coursework (can schools give back woodwork etc due to storage issues)
- Variability in completion of e.g. speaking tests etc and equity

Moray Next Steps

- Issue of centre table datasets as detailed previously –27 April 2020
- Advise subject groups of their role in quality assurance processes
- Virtual meeting with SQA coordinators and secondary HTs – on 4 May 2020 at 10 am
- Create opportunities for subject PTs to quality assure estimates and ranking
- Agreement of SQA estimate input processes (eg who, where, when) - to be agreed
- Quality assurance processes at authority level, including identification of anomalies – to be agreed

Moray Council

COVID-19 SQA Coordinator/HT Meetings

Advice for SQA Processes 3 – week beginning 4 May 2020



SQA announced on 19 March that this year's diet of exams would not go ahead. Further updates for schools followed on 24 March (on coursework) and 2 April (on estimates and certification). Further advice on estimates was issued on 20 April 2020 and formed the basis of the meeting on 22 April 2020. We continue to work towards completion of estimates to SQA on **29 May 2020**.

The cancellation of exams has made it necessary to provide estimates that are fulfilling a different purpose to the normal use of estimates. SQA has produced quite detailed instructions about the process and we are working towards the process of completion in schools as we attempt to ensure consistency of approach within and between schools. This new approach to estimates is based on the fundamental principle of professional integrity.

SQA have informed us that any estimates entered into SEEMiS prior to 30 April, will be pre-loaded into the SQAConnect/2020 Refined Estimate Service which will be available from the 11 May till 29 May 2020.

SQA will not accept any further estimate files generated from SEEMiS.

The deadline date for submitting entries and entry level changes has now passed, although some centres may need to action incorrect entry data identified when gathering enhanced estimates and rankings, which are due by 29 May. SQA systems will remain open to allow you to process these, to ensure alignment with your MIS system.

Please ensure that your entry information is fully up to date before week commencing 11 May.

Unit Completion

There has been no new advice from SQA about resulting unit for National 2, 3 and 4 and for free standing units at SCQF 5, 6 & 7. The position remains the same as stated in the previous SQA update, that teachers should exercise their professional judgement about resulting these units, including considering inferred attainment.

Using their knowledge of how candidates have progressed with work over the course of the year, it may be possible to infer that a candidate would have passed a unit, even where work on that unit has not yet begun since such work was planned for Term 4 (because, for example, that candidate has been successful in other units which have been completed earlier in the session).

All unit results (as well as changes of level or other such changes) should be made in SEEMiS as usual. It is only the estimates and rankings which will be entered in SQA Connect. The

SQA systems remain open for the processing of late entries/changes and unit results via SEEMiS.

SQA will provide your National 1 – National 4 Entries Eligibility Reports on 13 May. These can be accessed through Exchange within SQA Connect. If you have any queries about these reports, please contact our Data Services team by emailing national.qualifications@sqa.org.uk or calling 0345 213 6960.

The deadline for this is **22 May 2020**.

N5, H AND AH ESTIMATE PROCESS TIMELINE

Deadline for gathering evidence and determining overall mark/percentage – 4 May 2020

- PT and department familiarisation with SQA suite of documents for the course and level covering:
 - Range of skills and knowledge and understanding
 - Assessment structure
 - Course component and weightings
 - Grade descriptors
- Consider holistic professional judgement to show demonstrated and inferred attainment
- Take account of reasonable adjustments
- In the interests of equity and to maintain the integrity of the whole process, any work submitted by candidates after the school closure should be treated with caution, and no new work should be set for candidates.
- Balance of demonstrated and inferred attainment
- Gathering a range of evidence which has been demonstrated
- Consider the gaps and the use of inferred attainment
- Ensure departments are confident with assessment judgements

PTs, as appropriate class teachers, should undertake SQA Academy training – 11 May 2020

- Principal Teachers/Faculty Heads should arrange for staff decisions about estimates to be informed by the online training which is being made available by SQA from Monday 27 April by accessing [SQA Academy](#) (full joining details to be announced by SQA soon).

Centre Datasets to support estimates – 18 May 2020

- Data sets are in from **Seemis** for the last 5 years but should use last 3 years
- Similar tables will be issued from **SQA** on 4 May direct to schools for the last 3 years
 - SQA will upload one file for each centre, containing this information, to Exchange [SQA Connect](#) and you will only have access to your own file. You can

find a User Guide for Exchange on SQA Connect. SQA will contact you next week to confirm that your centre's file is available on SQA Connect.

- Caution around changes in staffing/department and quality of estimates submitted
- Issues around concordancy – estimates versus actual over previous year datasets
- SQA aware of turnover in staff and looking at statistical analysis
- SLT to Quality Assure against – will help inform discussions at next stage with PTs/Departments

The query has arisen as to how these datasets would be useful and should they be shared and with whom, as there has been inconsistency for estimates previously.

With reference to sharing, I would say yes but when the full evidence gathering and initial banding has taken place and only with PTs; this may support the revised banding as well as ranking but bearing in mind the generation of estimates this year is much more rigorous and extensive than previous years and therefore this should be considered along with the usual caveat of different young people and different staffing in some schools.

We appreciate you supporting a consistent approach in sharing the centre datasets to PTS should take place once initial banding has taken place and will support quality assurance processes.

SQA Coordinators should check entries on SQA Navigator – 11 May 2020

- SQA Coordinators should check on SQA Navigator that all candidates are entered for the correct course, level and units.

Deadline for determining banding and ranking for subject and levels – 11 May 2020

- The update from SQA states that estimates should be based on “demonstrated and inferred attainment”
- PTs to work with SLT to determine banding and ranking
- Use centre data tables to support this for consistency and also previous concordancy
- Sampling across school and subject groups at this stage

Deadline for QA processes for subject and levels – 18 May 2020

- DMs with staff to discuss expectations and support evidence collation
- Consider the departments who will need more support
- Quality assurance of evidence
- Some subject groups are already meeting and this will be advice to others as how to support the gathering of evidence as well as sharing good practice

College Liaison re estimates for courses – 22 May 2020

- Moray College are undertaking similar approaches in line with SQA expectations and requirements
- Lecturers may be in touch with schools to gather evidence and additional information in place of gaps which may exist in the generation of estimates
- The college will submit their estimates to us prior to final submission on 29 May

Quality Assurance Processes – 22 May 2020

Teachers – as described throughout the SQA update the process of arriving at final results depends entirely on classroom teachers using their professional knowledge and experience to create reliable estimates and rankings. The entire system this year is based on the principle of individual classroom teachers quality assuring their own judgements.

Principal Teachers – the role of the Principal Teacher or Faculty Head is responsible (as is the case every year) for supporting departmental/faculty members as they make decisions about estimates and, this year, rankings and for checking the accuracy of data being passed on to the SQA Coordinator. Principal Teachers/Faculty Heads should be liaising with each other within a school to ensure that there is consistency of approach, and we also suggest that PTs/FHs liaise with others in similar roles elsewhere in Highland to help to build consistency across the authority.

Senior Leadership Team – The HT and SQA Coordinator will sign off the estimates and rankings, confirming “that the centre assessment grades, bands and the rank order of candidates are a true representation of candidate performance.” The SQA document states:

“In reviewing centre estimates, the head of centre could consider how the distribution of centre estimates compares with the performance of the previous three years’ cohorts within the centre, especially for subjects with larger cohorts.”

Local Authority will undertake authority wide quality assurance within a small group prior to submission to verify the estimates and support further discussion.

We will also collect the estimate data *after* submission to SQA. This will support the collation of projected attainment data across Moray.

Deadline for Data Entry SQA Connect – 29 May 2020

SQA Connect, will be available week beginning 11 May. This will provide a list of all learners for whom SQA have an accepted entry and this is where you will input the required estimate information.

A user guide will also be provided in advance of the service opening. Users are encouraged to do as much preparation work as possible, including ensuring that the entry information is fully up to date, before this service becomes available.

The headings which will be used in SQA Connect are as follows and a spreadsheet has been attached to gather initial estimate data from departments prior to entry in SQA Connect:

SCN	Candidate	DOB	Band	Refined Band	Rank
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Estimates should not be submitted through MIS. The service on SQA Connect will open on 11 May.

Certification and start of PRS – 4 August 2020

SQA has also been very clear about the importance of having a certification system this year that does not lead to any disadvantage. In deciding estimates and rankings, please do all you can to help to ensure that there is no disadvantage by taking into account as much evidence as possible as well as your knowledge about the young people in your school and classes.

Young people and parents/carers will also be very anxious about this new set of procedures. Results will be released in August in the normal way and after that there will be a Post-Results Service appeals process that will address concerns about grades awarded.

Other Information

National 4

SQA in conjunction with Scottish Government have decided that there is not a fall-back position from band 8 at National 5 to a National 4 award.

Estimates to Parents

Until now, the description of the estimated grade was: “An estimate should be based on the candidate’s demonstrated attainment in all aspects of the course (ie all course components) and should reflect the candidate’s demonstration of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for the band estimated.”

This year, estimates cannot be entered on demonstrated attainment and instead have to be entered on demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for each National Course. This should be based on evidence and how the pupil is likely to have progressed by the time they sat the exam.

The Data Protection Act states that where personal data is processed by a Controller (in this case the council), for the purposes of determining the results of an exam, the duty to provide information within one calendar month is modified. Instead of being obliged to provide the information within one month of the receipt of the request, the period is extended to the earlier of 5 months from that date or within 40 calendar days of the date of announcement of the result. This means that even if requests for estimated grades are received now, this information need not be provided before the results are confirmed in August.

Schools should not routinely share estimates or rankings with parents/carers as a matter of course. The legal position is that parents/carers can request such information held by schools. Should such a request be received, we suggest that you explain the process being undertaken and ask that parents/carers wait until August to find out the final grades, **since estimates are only one part of the process**. The estimate is still subject to rigorous analysis and statistical processes by SQA prior to a final award being decided. Hence, the school estimate may not reflect the grade awarded.

Possible communication for parents:

“Thank you for your letter/email dated (insert date) requesting details of your son/daughter’s estimated grades. I would advise that, under the Data Protection Act 2018, Schedule 2, Part 4, paragraph 25(2)(a), this information is exempt from disclosure before SQA awards are communicated to candidates. You will, however, receive the information you are entitled to within (40 days of (insert date pupils receive award) or 5 months from (insert date of receipt of the request)).*

* insert whichever date is earlier

Exam Diet 2021

The exam diet next year is to go ahead as planned with existing dates remaining in place. More details will follow as they become available.

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting is on Monday 4 May at 10 am, link below

<https://meet.google.com/tbs-jvzz-fxz>

Moray Council

COVID-19 SQA Coordinator/HT Meetings

Advice for SQA Processes 3 – week beginning 4 May 2020



Update

The consensus across the country regarding following legal advice that schools will not release estimate data to pupils or parents.

The proposal put forward by ADES on recognising positive achievement in the National 5 course by awarding National 4 to some candidates was not accepted by Scottish Government.

National Qualifications 2020: Estimates and Appeals

There have been mixed messages about SQA Connect so far with very positive feedback on ease of data entry but also concerns around inability to bulk import data from MS Excel. SQA are looking at the issue of bulk entry.

The use of ranking this year, essentially schools will not be compared against each other and ranking will only be used to support overall grades in that particular establishment. ***We will discuss this further at our meeting on Thursday 21 May.***

There are a range of different moderation procedures being employed in schools and local authorities. However, this also brought a number of questions and in particular around schools with a 'story' to tell about a particular cohort or subject in a school this year. The proposal around SQA having conversations with authorities where anomalies have been highlighted was met with universal approval. Further, it was highlighted that this agreement by SQA and then made public would support schools to have these conversations with authorities just now to ensure this 'evidence' was available if required. ***To support this, we would ask that you have any narrative prepared at this stage.***

It is hoped that the agreed appeals process should be published as soon as possible and before the 29 May. However, there was also caution around the importance of not rushing this and getting it right. There is concern around conversations with parents when the appeals process starts and the guidance that will be given around this.

There is also concern around staffing levels for the appeals process; it is fully accepted that teachers will be required to support a successful appeals process, careful consideration will need to be given to when appeals work takes place, eg weekends as there will already be a shortage of teachers in the classroom.

National Qualifications 2021 and 2022

There are a number of challenges and questions being put forward around this and a answers and direction is required very quickly from SQA and Scottish Government. Courses have already started remotely for many young people across Scotland, as we have in Moray.

Starter questions nationally are:

- What does assessment look like? Acceptance that if young people not in front of teacher all of the time, then it must look different
- Focus required to ensure the assessment methods employed do not disadvantage some learners and therefore widen the gap further
- Suggestions around a mix of continuous assessment and changes to final exams; continuous assessment in National 5 and changes to exams in Higher was a suggestion as well as a choice when answering questions
- Exams pushed back until June, but understanding to do so has a knock on effect into the following year
- Concerns raised about entry requirements to colleges and universities the following year
- Conversations required around school/college partnerships and delivery models including FAs

These questions and others will be used to feed into the curriculum and assessment workstream of the CERG.

Next Steps

The next steps which will be addressed nationally:

- Further representation is to be made to SQA highlighting the importance of the need for conversations with authorities, if required, before final grades decided.
- SG Curriculum and Assessment workstream to add an additional focus on school and college partnership.
- Express the urgency around direction required about assessment and course content for national qualifications in 2021