



# Scottish Qualifications Authority Certification 2020

National 2 to National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher, National Certificates, National Progression Awards, Skills for Work courses and Awards

Guidance for learners, parents, and carers

2 April 2020

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.a. Background**

Due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak, the 2020 national examination diet cannot go ahead.

[In a statement to the Scottish Parliament](#), John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister, and Cabinet Secretary for Education asked Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to develop an alternative certification model.

Staff at SQA are working hard to ensure learners will receive their results no later than Tuesday 4 August. A free appeals service will be available this year, to allow schools and colleges to have a route to question any result.

We also recommend that learners [sign-up to MySQA](#) to receive their results by text and/or email. Any learner who has previously signed up to receive their results through MySQA will continue to do so, and we recommend that those learners review their profile to make sure their contact details are up to date.

The guidance in this document aims to provide learners, parents, carers with answers to some common questions about how we will deliver a fair, safe and secure set of results over the coming months. It will be regularly updated.

### **1.b. Which qualifications are covered by this guidance?**

This guidance is currently relevant to the following SQA qualifications:

- National 2 to National 5 courses
- Highers
- Advanced Highers
- National Certificates (NC)
- National Progression Awards (NPA)
- Skills for Work courses
- Awards

### **1.c. Why did SQA take the decision to cancel the exams, and not delay them to later in the summer or open the schools up just for the exams?**

This is an unprecedented situation and as the Deputy First Minister outlined in Parliament on 19 March, the exam diet in 2020 cannot go ahead.

The decision was made by The Scottish Government, using the latest medical and scientific advice.

## **2. Estimates Grades**

### **2.a. How will exams be certificated this year?**

We are asking teachers and lecturers at schools and colleges across the country to use their professional judgement, and knowledge of your work, to make an estimate of the grade and band. This will be based on learners' demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

This will provide SQA with the information needed to allow us to adjust estimates where necessary, to ensure consistency both across the country, and in comparison with previous years.

We will provide detailed guidance to schools and colleges on how to determine and submit this estimate information after Easter, and by 20 April 2020.

### **2.b. When and how should schools and colleges supply estimate grades to SQA?**

We will provide detailed guidance to schools and colleges on how to determine and submit the required estimate information after Easter, and by 20 April 2020.

We understand that teachers and lecturers will need time to access evidence and have departmental and faculty discussions, in order to provide this information. We are also conscious that this will be more challenging with school and college closures. **We are therefore extending the existing deadline for receiving these estimates to 29 May, from the original date of 24 April.**

### **2.c. Do students need to do further work?**

There is no requirement for schools and colleges to set additional mock or prelim exams or homework tasks for the purpose of determining a learner estimate. Teachers and lecturers are also not required to mark other work that would have been externally marked by SQA.

### **2.d. What does this mean for subjects with internally assessed coursework?**

National 2, National 3 and National 4 qualifications are made up of units, and an added value unit at National 4, which are internally assessed as pass or fail by the school or college, and externally quality assured by SQA.

Schools and colleges will provide us with your unit results based on either existing evidence from assessments that have already been completed, and/or by using their professional judgement of your work through the year.

For National Certificates, National Progression Awards, Skills for Work courses, and Awards, we are asking schools, colleges, employers and training providers to provide us with the results of their internal assessment decisions, where some evidence from the course already

exists but further progress is not possible, and/or using their professional judgement of your work through the year.

### **3. Coursework**

#### **3.a Why aren't you marking my coursework?**

Coursework for Higher and Advanced Higher courses are submitted later in the year, so as a result of the current public health advice on social distancing, you may not be able to complete it and we would not be able to receive it and mark it.

While considering the required arrangements to mark National 5 coursework, that we had already received, it has become clear that we can no longer proceed with the marking of it, in a safe and secure manner, that maintains the integrity of national standards.

We know this will be disappointing news to many of you. We have taken this difficult decision to be as fair as possible to all National 5 learners, whilst responding to the latest public health guidance.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.a. When will we receive our results?**

Everyone at SQA is working to ensure that learners expecting their results for National Certificates, National Progression Awards, Skills for Work courses, Awards, National 2 to National 5, Highers, and Advanced Highers, will receive their results no later than Tuesday 04 August, as originally planned.

We strongly recommend that learners [sign-up to MySQA](#) in order to receive their results by text and/or email. Any learner who has already received their results through MySQA will continue to do so, and we recommend that learners review their profile to make sure their contact details are up to date.

A free appeals service will be available, to ensure that schools and colleges continue to have a mechanism to question any result.

#### **4.b. Will young people be able to progress to the next stage of their education or employment with the grades they receive this year?**

SQA is in regular discussion with UCAS (the University and College Admission Service), Colleges Scotland, and Universities Scotland, who are fully aware of the situation and will help learners to progress on to the next stage of their education or employment.

We are also in close discussion with Skills Development Scotland, to ensure employers and their representatives are kept aware of the decisions being made.

**4.c. Will schools and colleges still be able to question results, and use SQA's Post-results Services?**

Everyone at SQA is doing everything possible to ensure learners' hard work is rightly and fairly recognised.

A free appeals service will be available, to ensure that schools and colleges continue to have a mechanism to question any result.

**ENDS**