

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY UPDATE

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF EDUCATION SECONDARY (CURRICULUM, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite the Education Executive to note the changes to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) arrangements for Session 2020-21, and subsequent arrangements for West Lothian Secondary Schools.

B. RECOMMENDATION

- 1) To note the implications for schools following the Scottish Qualifications Authority update
- 2) To note the arrangements across West Lothian Schools to address the changes

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Raising Attainment is a key strategic objective of West Lothian Council.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The approach to SQA arrangements will have a positive impact on performance indicators including those relating to attainment and positive destinations.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The approach to SQA arrangements will have a positive impact on performance indicators within the Single Outcome Agreement including those

relating to attainment and positive destinations.

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

Changes to SQA arrangements will be delivered within agreed central education and devolved school budgets.

VII Consideration at PDSP

VIII Other consultations

D TERMS OF REPORT

Based on consultation with from pupils, parents, carers, teachers, lecturers, and stakeholders, the SQA has decided the following.

There will be no external assessment of National 5 courses this year – either by an exam or by coursework.

National 5 courses will now be assessed using an alternative certification approach. This will be based on teacher and lecturer judgement supported by assessment resources and quality assurance

Higher and Advanced Higher externally assessed exams, including the completion of coursework where appropriate, will remain as planned.

These exams will start on Thursday 13 May 2021 and finish on Friday 4 June 2021, with Results Day on Tuesday 10 August 2021. A timetable is due to be published week beginning Monday 2nd November 2020.

A clear contingency plan will continue to be developed by SQA, including key checkpoints up to the February break to assess public health advice and its impact on the plans for these exams.

D1 WEST LOTHIAN SQA ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL 5 AWARDS SESSION 2020-21

Following consultation with Headteachers, there will be an authority agreed approach to the gathering and moderation of evidence for these, building on what was learned from last session. This will include:

- Authority-wide agreement on broad “assessment windows” during the session when pupils will sit formal assessments contributing to their teacher estimate grade. These will replace traditional prelim dates in schools.
- Authority wide agreement on the range of evidence that each N5 pupil’s estimate grade will be based on, for every subject. This will be developed by Principal Teacher authority networks based on SQA advice. As far as possible, schools will use consistent assessment materials to ensure these are robust and support moderation across the authority. SQA-developed secure question papers will be released shortly, which could be used by schools.
- An authority approach to moderation of pupils’ evidence gathered, with schools working with at least one other school to ensure consistency in their marking. Authority appointed Network Leaders are in place for most subjects and they will lead on this.
- Quality assurance at school and authority level of teacher judgements, based on each school’s attainment trends. The authority Performance Team will support this.
- An authority support package will be developed to reflect all of the above, with key dates.
- Authority resources created that schools can use or draw on when communicating with pupils and parents about SQA arrangements.

D2 WEST LOTHIAN SQA ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIGHER AND ADVANCED HIGHER AWARDS SESSION 2020-21

Although the SQA's current position is that these exams will go ahead as planned, the authority position is that schools must adopt a similar approach to the gathering of evidence for pupils in the event that exams have to be cancelled and pupils are reliant on teacher judgement. The same principles apply as for N5 above.

- Authority-wide agreement on broad "assessment windows" during the session when pupils will sit formal assessments contributing to their teacher estimate grade. These will replace traditional prelim dates in schools.
- Authority wide agreement on the range of evidence that each Higher and Advanced Higher pupil will gather during the year for every subject. This will be developed by Principal Teacher authority networks based on SQA advice. As far as possible, schools will use consistent assessment materials to ensure these are robust and support moderation across the authority.
- Authority online enhanced support for pupils in Higher English and Maths. A high-quality programme of sessions will be developed by a team of skilled teachers, directed by the Principal Teacher networks.
- Additional study support interventions at school level.
- An authority approach to moderation of pupils' evidence gathered.
- If exams cannot go ahead, there will be quality assurance at school and authority level of teacher judgements, based on each school's attainment trend, as with N5. The authority Performance Team will support this.
- An authority support package developed to reflect all of the above, including key dates.

D3 N3, N4 and SCQF awards

- Pupils entered for SQA N3 and N4 qualifications will gather evidence for and be awarded these on the basis of teacher judgement, as is currently the case. Schools will ensure that there are clear plans in place for this evidence to be complete in the event of school closure.
- Schools will continue to enter pupils in S4-S6 for a range of SCQF awards at the level of N5, Higher and Advanced Higher. These enhance the range of qualifications that pupils gather during their Senior Phase. These are assessed and awarded by class teachers. Again, schools will ensure that there are clear plans in place for these to be completed in the event of school closure.

E CONCLUSION

A consultative approach has been adopted across West Lothian Schools to ensure a robust and collaborative approach to ensuring the guiding principles of

- Fairness and equity for all learners
- Health and wellbeing of all learners

- Robustness and reliability of teacher judgements
- Operational practicality of arrangements

with SQA arrangements for session 2020/21.

F BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Appendices/Attachments: -

SQA update to Schools, Colleges, and Local Authorities on arrangements for National Qualifications in 2020-21 2/11/20

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95618.html>

SQA statement on arrangements for the assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2020-21 session 7/10/20

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95281.html>

National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates Oct 2020

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq-estimates-guidance-2020-21.pdf

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