

1 SQA update from **Fiona Robertson** SQA Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer - **Monday 20 April 2020**

Following the cancellation of the 2020 exam diet, I fully understand that this is an uncertain time for learners who have worked hard throughout the year and, with their parents and carers, are worried about what the current situation now means for them and their future. Together with Scotland's education system, SQA remains committed to delivering results to learners, in as fair a way as possible, at this exceptionally difficult time. We want to ensure that young people across Scotland get the results they deserve, so they can progress to further learning or work.

At the request of the Deputy First Minister, I have been asked to develop an alternative certification model for 2020. We are basing all of our work on three broad principles, whilst adapting to the current challenges we all face:

- Fairness to all learners;
- Safe and secure certification of our qualifications, while following the latest public health advice; and
- Maintaining the integrity and credibility of our qualifications system, ensuring that standards are maintained over time, in the interests of learners.

I would like to set out some further detail on this model today, so that we can provide results to learners by 4 August.

Step 1 - Estimates

With no exams taking place this year and no feasible way for SQA to mark coursework, this means estimated grades will be the core element of certification. Today, I have issued information to schools and colleges on the estimation process.

Teachers and lecturers are best placed to have a strong understanding of how their learners have performed and, based on their experience and the evidence available, what a learner would be expected to achieve in each course. An estimated grade is not just the result of one prelim or one project, but is an overall judgement based on all activity across the year. By Friday 29 May, schools and colleges will provide us with their estimates of the grades, bands and rank order for each learner, for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

Step 2 - Awarding

We will then check and validate that information. We will moderate it, if necessary, to ensure consistency across schools and colleges and with results from previous years. We will use the information from these estimates, in addition to prior learner attainment, where this is available. For example, if learners achieved National 5 or Higher courses, in a previous year. We will also look at schools' and colleges' previous history of estimating and attainment in each subject and level. We may moderate these estimates, up or down, if that is required.

This process will produce the results for learners, using our national grades for each subject and level.

Each year, we hold Awarding Meetings that bring together a range of people with subject expertise and people with experience of standard setting across different subjects and qualification levels. We will maintain this approach this year, as far as possible.

Step 3 - Results and Certification

We will then process the results to allow us to issue learners with their individual results by 4 August. We continue to strongly encourage all learners to [sign-up to MySQA](#), our online and text service, as a direct way to receive their results.

Step 4 - Appeals

After 4 August, a free appeals service will be available to schools and colleges, to allow them to request a review of the grade awarded for a learner or a group of learners. It is important that such a service is in place in this exceptional year.

Assessment evidence must be available to support an appeal and the evidence will be reviewed by senior examiners. We will provide schools and colleges with full details of this service shortly.

Further information is available for learners, parents and carers in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of our website - <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93778.html>