



SQA Alternative Certification 2021

Braidhurst HS

Policy

Rationale

The alternative certification model, developed by the National Qualifications Group (published 16th Feb 2021) [Alternative Certification Model](#), has charged schools with the task of producing accurate grades for candidates that are based upon valid and reliable evidence in line with national standards. The ACM is based on the professional judgement of teachers, supported by local and national quality assurance with Provisional Results based on evidence of knowledge, skills and understanding of individual candidates.

Teachers will determine results based on the evidence generated by individual learners and the level of attainment they demonstrate when compared against national standards - '**demonstrated attainment**'. The implication being that schools now become the awarding centre with the resulting increase in accountability.

Specific guidance from the SQA subject pages has been provided that highlights the amendments to National 5, Higher and Adv Higher courses. Updated question papers from 2020 have also been made available, however freedom for centres and teachers to amend these or create their own still remains. Significant freedoms also exist in the manner in which these are delivered to candidates, marked and graded.

UNCRC, which has been signed into Scots Law, places pupils at the centre of decision making with their voice a pivotal aspect of any process that directly impacts upon them. This includes the revised SQA assessment and appeals process.

The resulting requirement for robust quality assurance procedures outlined in a policy will ensure that all pupils can be confident that they have been treated consistency, equitably and without bias within the detailed processes of moderation, assessment, verification and appeals.

This policy which incorporates the North Lanarkshire Quality Assurance Toolkit provides a mixture of standard templates required of all schools and advisory guidance in order to meet the following aims:

- To provide consistency and coherence in the management of school-based assessment judgements
- To provide flexibility for schools to reflect their own contexts
- To ensure consistent and robust school-based and local authority quality assurance

Contents:

- Inclusion & Fairness
- Bias
- Additional Assessment Arrangements
- Assessment Timeline
- Assessment Integrity
- Determining Provisional Results
- Assessment Resources
- Grade Boundaries
- Awarding Provisional Bands and Grades
- Communicating with Pupil and Parents / Carers
- Appeals
- Quality Assurance Procedures
- SQA Submission Timeline
- Malpractice Policy
- NLC Quality Assurance Toolkit – version 6

Inclusion & Fairness

When planning assessments and making judgements on provisional grades, teachers in Braidhurst HS will bear this in mind, especially in the following cases:

- AAA requirements (see additional section)
- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance, staff will consider candidate performance in alternative assessments of similar demand when making their judgements.
- Candidates who experience barriers to learning including those who have caring responsibilities, those who are care experienced, and those who may have further interrupted learning due to illness or disability.

Bias

Any discussion of fairness must take account of the possibility of bias. When coming to a decision about a candidate's estimate, Braidhurst HS staff will base our decision on a candidate's evidence rather than their personal circumstances, so that they are as objective and as consistent in your decisions as possible. Special mention must be made of what might be called 'implicit bias'. Implicit bias originates from assumptions or stereotypes based on characteristics such as background, gender, disability, race and ethnicity. Candidate evidence will be valued for its own worth and merit as an indicator of course attainment, and a conscious effort will be made to consider and avoid the negative impact of potential implicit bias. All staff will do this by considering the accuracy of the decisions made alongside candidate data on background, gender, disability, race and ethnicity, at both class and cohort presentation level. Moderation across departments, learning areas and faculties will ensure fairness for all candidates and that robust standards are maintained.

Additional Assessment Arrangements

For all classrooms assessments taking place within the Alternative Certification Model to provide evidence to support provisional grades, established procedures will continued to provide support for pupils who qualify for such arrangements. Evidence will be generated by staff and moderated by the PT Support for Learning to ensure arrangements comply with all SQA requirements. All staff will be required to facilitate these arrangements within the class assessment process.

Assessment Timeline

A spreadsheet will be posted in the staff team to allow staff to populate with intended assessments dates and times. The purpose is to identify and then mitigate for any assessment 'hot spots' that might overload pupils.

Assessment Integrity

To help preserve the security of assessments advice should be followed: as published by the SQA on 20th April 2021.

- Pupils should not be made aware the origin of any assessment.
- If pupils from different classes are sitting the same assessment the member of staff should refrain from going over any assessed work until all pupils have completed that particular assessment. Again the origin of the assessment should be kept from pupils.
- All question papers and pupil answers must remain in school.
- Ensure that the question papers are stored securely when not in use.
- Do not share or discuss the question papers and marking instructions online, including on social media, chat forums or in any other location where they could be accessed by unauthorised persons.

Determining Provisional Results

Judgements should be based on a holistic view of demonstrated pupil attainment across all the key evidence gathered.

All staff should start by undertaking a **holistic** review of the key evidence they have gathered for each candidate. This must be made on **demonstrated**, not inferred attainment.

Evidence of demonstrated attainment is crucial but does **not** have to be identical for every candidate. It should, however, be consistent with the requirements set out in subject-specific guidance.

This may involve looking across a number of pieces of key evidence, particularly where there is more than one component for a National Course. They should focus on the **quality** of the key evidence — not the quantity.

There is **no** minimum requirement for the number of pieces of evidence. One robust piece from an assessment that covers the course would be sufficient if it satisfies the criteria for breadth and depth, however additional pieces of work could help to supplement this.

Candidates must not be disadvantaged by an over reliance on one piece of evidence, if other supporting evidence would indicate a higher level of attainment. Any such additional evidence should be considered, factoring in the level of demand, the breadth of the course that it assessed, when in the course it was completed and the conditions under which it was produced. These factors would allow for a professional judgment to be made regarding the influence that it has on the holistic overview of the candidate evidence.

Staff should look at the quality of the key evidence as measured against the requirements outlined in the subject-specific guidance and the national standards as exemplified in the [SQA Understanding Standards](#) materials.

Additional moderation activity will be conducted in line with NLC and SQA requirements as outlined in the QA processes below.

Assessment Resources

SQA question papers (2020–21 additional resource)

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher question papers and marking instructions. Staff have the opportunity to use these flexibly in their entirety, in part or not at all creating their own assessments. Any created assessments must be quality assured within the department and local moderation groups to ensure that they meet the appropriate course coverage and demand.

Coursework assessment tasks

Published coursework assessment tasks from the SQA Secure website for subjects that normally have an annually released coursework assessment. Staff have the opportunity to use these in order to generate key evidence in line with the subject-specific guidance.

Grade Boundaries

For full course assessments that utilise an SQA or SQA equivalent paper, notional grade boundaries will be applied in the first instance to establish candidate performance.

| Band | Estimated Performance | Notional % Range |
|------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Grade A (upper) | 85 – 100 |
| 2 | Grade A (lower) | 70 – 84 |
| 3 | Grade B (upper) | 65 – 69 |
| 4 | Grade B (lower) | 60 – 64 |
| 5 | Grade C (upper) | 55 – 59 |
| 6 | Grade C (lower) | 50 – 54 |
| 7 | Grade D | 40 – 49 |
| 8 | No Award | 30 – 39 |
| 9 | No Award | 0 – 29 |

Quality assurance procedures that include an analysis of previous subject & level attainment (2017-19) will be applied to identify grounds for the possible revision of grade boundaries. These procedures will follow NLC QA toolkit guidelines.

The following criteria could be included when considering altering a grade boundary.

- changes in staff delivering courses
- changes staffing teaching methodology
- changes in faculty procedures
- changes in instruments of assessment used
- changes in national SQA course arrangements
- significance of cohort prior attainment

Awarding Provisional Bands and Grades

All bands and grades awarded to candidates should be based upon demonstrated performance against the national standard. There is no requirement to rank pupils in order. Final bands and grades will be all that is required.

Communicating with Pupil and Parents / Carers

S4-6 pupils received a tracking report in November and a more detailed subject report in February. In order to comply with national and NLC guidance, additional information will be provided to pupils and parents / carers indicating the current provisional grades that they have achieved in each subject. These grades will be based upon the evidence that staff hold to demonstrate attainment. This information will be drawn from subject spreadsheets that are placed on staff teams. As assessments are completed, marked and moderated, pupil bands and grades will be entered onto the spreadsheet which will operate as a 'live' document.

Unless it is due to moderation activity or alterations to grade boundaries these grades will only be able to be moved up. If a grade is moved down as a result of QA activity, this must be communicated to both the pupil and parent / carer immediately.

- 16th-26th April: Pupil informed of working level
- 10th-21st May: Window for provisional grades to be shared with parents / carers
- 21st June: Provisional grades shared with pupils

Appeals

The process for candidates appealing provisional grades is currently still being consulted upon by the SQA. Regardless of the final decision on this process, pupil and parent / carers will be able to seek clarification from the school regarding judgements made both in the actual judgements themselves and the processes which were followed to achieve these.

Quality Assurance Procedures

All Quality Assurance procedures will follow the guidance and protocols set out in the NLC QA Toolkit. At present this is **version 8**.

SQA Submission Timeline

| April | |
|------------------------|--|
| 30 th April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing date for changes to entries for free-standing units at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7 <p>If you enter after this date, evidence should be kept until the end of September to support potential quality assurance activity.</p> |
| May | |
| 14 th May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing date for changes of level/entry withdrawals to be submitted for National Courses and Units |
| June | |
| 4 th June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing date for submission of outstanding National 1–4 unit results (schools and colleges) • Closing date for submission of outstanding SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7 free-standing unit results (schools and colleges) <p>Please note that unit results must be received by this date to ensure that they are included in the August certification process.</p> |
| Early June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the following reports and submit outstanding results for National 2–4 and Skills for Work courses (as appropriate): <p>Outstanding Unit Results Eligibility Report(s)</p> <p>Please note that urgent submission is required as any missing data will impact on August certification.</p> |
| 11 th June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive notification to submit evidence for post-certification quality assurance |
| 18 th June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing date for submission of verification follow-up materials for Skills for Work. <p>Please note that materials must be received by this date to ensure they can be reviewed in time to allow any certification holds to be lifted and August certification to proceed.</p> |
| 25 th June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing date for submission of provisional results for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher under the alternative certification model |

Aim

- To ensure the evidence of candidates is genuinely produced by them and authenticated by the centre
- To ensure all candidates and staff are aware of the school's policy for malpractice, and their responsibilities and rights during and following an investigation into alleged malpractice, including their rights of appeal
- ensuring that no candidate results relevant to an investigation are submitted to SQA during the course of the investigation
- conducting any investigation in accordance with the SQA Standards for Devolved Investigations

Malpractice

Malpractice issues arise when candidates are found to have been involved in the following practice:

- Receiving assistance from others.
- Plagiarising the work of other candidates /authors or using other source material that is not referenced.
- Failing to abide by the conditions of assessment (internal and external); this may refer to the use of resources (digital and non-digital) which the candidate has been specifically told not to use.

Malpractice by a candidate during assessment can occur in:

- The preparation and authentication of coursework.
- The preparation and presentation of practical work.
- The compilation of a portfolio for assessment evidence.
- Conduct during an internal school-based assessment.

Preventing Malpractice

Centre authentication is achieved using a variety of quality assurance strategies such as controlled access to online materials, personal statements produced by candidates, write-ups under supervised etc.

School/Centre Malpractice

In the event of alleged centre malpractice for internal assessments, the following procedures will take place:

- The SQA Co-ordinator will inform those involved of the allegations (See Appendices A & B)
- The SQA Co-ordinator will investigate the allegations and gather statements from those involved (See Appendix C)
- In the event that malpractice is judged to have taken place by the centre, the SQA Co-ordinator will take steps to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged, in liaison with SQA if required.

Appeals

In the event that a malpractice decision is made which a candidate feels is unfair, the candidate has the right to appeal in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will consider whether the malpractice decision should be upheld.

Internal Assessment Procedures (including SQA Internally Assessed Course Components)

If a teacher suspects a candidate of malpractice in the process of internal assessment, the following procedures will take place:

- The candidate will be informed, and the allegations will be explained.
- The allegation of malpractice will be investigated.
- The candidate will have the opportunity to provide a statement of the facts.
- Witness statements will be gathered.
- The SQA Co-ordinator will complete the "SQA Internal Assessment – Investigation of Malpractice" checklist and sign with the Head Teacher. (See Appendix D)

If the school judges the candidate to have engaged in malpractice or if the candidate accepts that malpractice has occurred:

- The SQA Co-ordinator will issue an official written warning which must be signed by the candidate and the parent/carer will be informed.
- The assessment involved in malpractice will be disqualified. The candidate may be given the opportunity to repeat the assessment.
- Given the context of the malpractice, the teacher may decide to re-mark previous assessments and these could also be rejected if similar concerns of malpractice are identified.
- In the event that the centre cannot authenticate the previous evidence of a candidate due to malpractice or due to malpractice on more than one occasion, the centre reserves the right to disqualify the candidate's previous assessment evidence.
- Assessment evidence where malpractice has been found to take place will be disqualified in assessments that contribute to a candidate's final grade. In these circumstances, the school reserves the right to withdraw a candidate's opportunity to repeat the assessment.

Appendix A

Our Ref: CR/DG
Your Ref:
Contact:
Tel: 01698 274999
Email: ht@braidhurst.n-lanak.sch.uk



Mrs Carolyn Rooney MA, MSc

Head Teacher

Education and Families

Braidhurst High School
Dalriada Crescent
Motherwell
ML1 3XF
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Dear [PUPIL]

SQA Malpractice Investigation

The school will be undertaking an investigation into alleged malpractice during an internal SQA assessment.

Please find the details of this investigation below:

Qualification title: [SUBJECT COURSE]

Level: [N3/N4/N5/HIGHER/ADV HIGHER]

Area of concern: Centre Malpractice

In order to ensure that the national standards for assessment are upheld, as prescribed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the school will now be gathering evidence and witness statements to inform a decision about the alleged malpractice claim.

I invite you to attend an evidence gathering meeting on [DATE] at [TIME].

Yours sincerely

[NAME]

Depute Head Teacher

SQA Co-ordinator

Appendix B

Our Ref: CR/DG
Your Ref:
Contact:
Tel: 01698 274999
Email: ht@braidhurst.n-lanak.sch.uk



Mrs Carolyn Rooney MA, MSc

Head Teacher

Education and Families

Braidhurst High School
Dalriada Crescent
Motherwell
ML1 3XF
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Dear [Parent Name]

SQA Malpractice Investigation Outcome

The school has undertaken an investigation into alleged malpractice during an assessment. Please find the details of this investigation below:

- Qualification title:
- Level:
- Assessment Component: (if appropriate):
- Date of assessment:
- Venue of assessment:
- Candidate(s) involved (if appropriate):
- Staff involved (if appropriate):
- Area of concern:

Following investigation, the school concludes that malpractice did occur during this assessment.

In order to ensure that the national standards for assessment are upheld, as prescribed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the school is taking the following action:

[Insert action taken here]

In order to conclude this investigation and to support your child in future assessments, please sign and return the slip below to confirm that you are aware of the investigation and action taken by the school. If you wish to appeal the school's decision, please respond in writing to the Headteacher within 5 working days.

Yours faithfully

[NAME]

Depute Head Teacher

SQA Co-ordinator

SQA Malpractice Investigation Outcome

I confirm that I have read the investigation outcome and accept the action taken by the school in following SQA guidelines.

Pupil Name: _____

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

To Teacher/Faculty PT

The school will be undertaking an investigation into alleged malpractice during an internal SQA assessment by the following pupil:

Pupil Name: [NAME]

Please find the details of this investigation below:

Qualification title: [SUBJECT COURSE]

Level: [N3/N4/N5/HIGHER/ADV HIGHER]

Area of concern: Centre Malpractice

Date of assessment: [DATE]

In order to ensure that the national standards for assessment are upheld, as prescribed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), please provide in writing a statement of what happened during the internal assessment. Please include in this statement any details that may relate to malpractice:

- Receiving assistance from others.
- Plagiarising the work of other candidates /authors or using other source material that is not referenced.
- Failing to abide by the conditions of assessment (internal and external); this may refer to the use of resources (digital and non-digital) which the candidate has been specifically told not to use.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

[NAME]

SQA Co-ordinator

Appendix D

SQA Internal Assessment – Investigation of Malpractice

All records of the investigation must be retained by SQA Co-ordinator until SQA results are posted in August. Thereafter these will be placed in the pupil's confidential file.

| Task | Details | Tick |
|--------------------------|--|------|
| Assessment | | |
| Date | | |
| Candidate | | |
| SCN | | |
| Date of Birth | | |
| Malpractice Allegation | | |
| Procedures | | |
| | Candidate informed and allegations explained. Date: | |
| | Allegation of malpractice has been investigated. Candidate has been given opportunity to provide a statement of facts. Date: | |
| | Witness statements have been gathered. Date(s): | |
| | Parents/carers have been informed/Parental interview Date: | |
| | Letter issued to inform candidate of outcome of investigation (If applicable candidate is informed s/he has the right to appeal) Date: | |
| | If applicable, outcome of appeal has been documented Date: | |
| Outcome of investigation | | |

SQA Co-ordinator's Signature Date:.....

Head of Centre's Signature Date:.....