

Update from the National Qualifications 2021 Group – Alternative Certification Model Stage 2

Learners – 13 April 2021

DRAFT v4.5

As you return from your Easter break, the National Qualifications 2021 Group* appreciates that you may be feeling worried and have questions about assessment this year, and will be looking to your school, college or training provider for guidance and support.

Following the cancellation of exams by the Scottish Government, the way your results will be decided this year (known as the alternative certification model) has been created by the National Qualifications 2021 Group* which includes professionals from across the education system as well as parents/carers and young person's representatives.

The Group has been clear that results this year must be based on 'demonstrated attainment'. This means assessment evidence that shows you have the skills, knowledge, and understanding needed to be awarded your grade for the course. It is important that results are based on evidence of learning and skills, so you can have confidence in them. This means that you will have to undertake some assessments in your classroom. However, the Group has been clear that there is no need for schools, colleges and training providers to carry out formal replacement exams or prelims. There is flexibility in how assessments can be undertaken.

Gathering evidence

Your school, college or training provider has been given lots of guidance for each subject, to help teachers and lecturers assess the skills, knowledge, and understanding you need to demonstrate, to be awarded your grade for the course. We expected some disruption to learning this year, so the amount of evidence needed for each of your courses has been reduced to a minimum while making sure that your qualifications remain highly respected among future education providers and employers.

If you have questions about your assessments or any other concerns, including if your personal circumstances mean you are unable to take part in any assessments, you should speak to your school, college or training provider as soon as possible to let them know and to discuss an appropriate solution. Schools, colleges and training providers have established processes in place and will advise you on what to do should you remain unhappy with the outcomes of discussions. This may include, for example, at a later stage, further discussion with your headteacher or local authority.

Please remember: your school, college or training provider knows you best and they should work with you to decide how and when you will be assessed. They will let you know the arrangements for when assessments are taking place and which evidence will count towards your grade. You can also raise any issues or personal circumstances with your school or college at this time, and discuss potential supports or adjustments. This includes assessment arrangements if you need additional support or have been shielding.

Feedback on your progress

When you go back, learning and teaching will continue and your school, college or training provider will assess your evidence and provide you with feedback on your progress.

Next steps and further information

We all remain committed to working together to support your teachers and lecturers to provide provisional results for you in a way that is fair and upholds your rights. This will help to ensure you get the results that best reflect your knowledge and understanding and are able to progress to further learning or work with confidence.

For further information on National Qualifications for 2021, including access to the learner booklet and frequently asked questions, please visit www.sqa.org.uk/learners

* The National Qualifications 2021 Group is represented by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), School Leaders Scotland (SLS), the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Government, National Parent Forum of Scotland, and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

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