

Update from the National Qualifications 2021 Group: National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

27 January 2021

The First Minister's announcement on 19 January 2021 confirmed that remote learning will continue until at least mid-February. Given this announcement the National Qualifications 2021 Group* is overseeing changes to the alternative certification model and associated timeline that was announced in December. This includes moving the final date for schools and colleges to submit provisional grades from Friday 28 May 2021 to **Friday 18 June 2021**.

Learning and teaching

During the period of remote learning the Group is clear that maximising learning and teaching remains the current priority for schools and colleges.

Assessment

Assessment cannot be undertaken unless young people understand the foundations of their course content and have had time to consolidate their learning once they return to school. Overall assessment of learner attainment should therefore take place later in the 2020-21 session.

Demonstrated attainment remains a key principle for awarding in 2021. During January and February 2021, SQA is publishing subject-specific guidance and assessment resources for Higher and Advanced Higher courses. This will support teachers and lecturers with assessment planning for later in the 2020-21 session.

Understanding Standards

The Understanding Standards resources produced by SQA form an important part of quality assurance. The materials can also be used by Communities of Practice as a focus for professional dialogue in relation to national qualifications and their assessment.

SQA is therefore adding to the broad range of subject-specific materials that are already available. This includes a programme of new webinars as well as creation of other materials for subjects that have identified the need for additional support. Additional webinars and materials may be added depending on teacher and lecturer needs. Recordings are made available on SQA's website for anyone who is unable to attend the live webinar.

Understanding Standards materials are available from SQA's [NQ subject pages](#) and their [Understanding Standards website](#).

Quality assurance

As the date for the submission of provisional grades is now Friday 18 June, some quality assurance activity will be delayed. A fully revised timetable of quality assurance activities will be published as soon as it is finalised.

Keeping you updated

The National Qualifications 2021 Group knows that the current health situation is proving to be extremely challenging and that teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and learners have questions they would like answered.

All partners are working as quickly as possible in an evolving situation and will continue to issue regular updates on the next steps. These will be dependent upon the length of time that remote learning is in place for public health reasons.

Ministers will update Parliament about lockdown measures and the reopening of schools and colleges on 2 February 2021.

Stay up to date on [2021 National Qualifications](#).

National Qualifications 2021 Group

*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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