



Mrs I Sharp - Rector
Fraserburgh Academy
Dennyduff Road
Fraserburgh AB43 9NA
Telephone 01846 417400
fraserburgh.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
www.fraserburgh.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

Dear Parent / Carer

Senior Phase Assessments and SQA Evidence Gathering 2021

I write to you again regarding the current Covid 19 pandemic and the changes this has brought to school assessments, estimates and finally SQA awards.

What's changed?

The Scottish Government has:

- Extended the Christmas holiday period for most learners
- Triggered home learning until 1st Feb 2021
- Cancelled final exams for Higher & Advanced Higher courses

This means that at Fraserburgh Academy we need to

- Take stock of where S4, S5 and S6 learners are in their attainment
- Give feedback to S4, S5 and S6 learners and their parents/carers on this progress
- Gather reliable and valid evidence of learner attainment in all senior courses
- Make provisional estimate decisions to be submitted to the SQA, who will confirm these grades through their own processes

Evidence Requirements for Provisional SQA Estimate Grades

We now find ourselves in the position where all course results will be based on two to four pieces of school evidence, this evidence showing achievement at the estimated grade and having a strong predicative element indicating that any learner who performs well in a task used for evidence would reasonably be expected to have performed equally well in any final course assessment.

Therefore, instead of the planned formal prelim exam diet for Higher and Advanced Higher Courses, we will

- Change the normal prelim diet for Higher and Advanced Higher Courses, switching to the model in place for National 5 courses
- This will take the form of in class assessments allowing us to gather evidence and to give feedback.
- Learners will be given advance notice of when these assessments are to take place
- This saves time by not having to suspend the timetable

- We will send home a **tracking report** advising of:
 - o progress
 - o our current estimate grades
 - o specific concerns
 - o any recommendations for change of presentation levels

It is likely that these assessments will be based on unseen exam standard questions and in light of the fact that any in-school assessment could be used as a final piece of evidence, I cannot stress enough how important it is that learners understand and accept that any class test, unit assessment etc. could be used as evidence for their final provisional estimate grade and it is crucial that learners give all such pieces of work their fullest attention producing their best work at all times.

The provisional estimate grade in this report is not to be taken as what the final estimate will be.

Historically we find that many learners assume that their grade in January will be the same as their final grade, but due to the many different assessed components of our courses and the fact that for the vast majority of subjects that the January assessment does not reflect full course coverage, the estimate grade reported is a measure of progress at that time and can change dependant on future work and assessment results, therefore it is crucial that learners continue to focus on their learning and assessments to ensure they continue to produce their best work at all times.

Additional Assessment Arrangements

Some learners will have Additional Assessment Arrangements put in place by our Additional Support for Learners faculty and exact details of this support can be confirmed with their class teachers.

We all appreciate how difficult this time is for our learners and their families and much of what is contained in this letter is dependant on a return to school and further SQA guidance, but I wanted to re-assure our learners and families that we are constantly considering and re-evaluating our plans, all with the aim of trying to prepare our learners for the challenges ahead and to try and ensure we have the best evidence possible allowing us to provide the best estimate grades we can for our learners.

Should you wish to discuss any issues contained within this letter then please do not hesitate to contact me by email.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Buchan

Mr K Buchan
SQA coordinator, Fraserburgh Academy
k.buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
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