



**Aberdeenshire**

COUNCIL



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## SQA Exams 25<sup>th</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019

Dear Parent / Guardian

This year's main SQA exam diet begins on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April** with the final exam being held on **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019**.

Due to our transport times and the increase in the amount of papers at Higher level, several exams have had their times changed from the published official SQA timetable, and all S4, S5 and S6 learners will be made aware of this through a school assembly and displays in school. The amended timetable is already on display in school, on the display screens and in the social area, with the exams that have had their start time changed highlighted in red. This timetable has also been placed onto the school website and Facebook page.

After the Easter break, I will place a copy of the schools Exam Assembly onto the website and ask that you discuss with your son / daughter the need to check their own individual times and the *SQA Do and Don't* slides along with an awareness of prohibited items.

All learners will receive an individual exam timetable which will detail the time and place of their exam along with their seat number and again this will be issued after the Easter break. Some learners will have Additional Assessment Arrangements put in place by our Additional Support for Learners (ASL) department and details of this have already been notified to those learners by a letter from our ASL department. If you receive such a letter, please return it to school as soon as possible to allow us to put the necessary support measures in place.

During exam leave, learners can come to school to study and seek support from their teachers, and staff will be available to support our learners during the exam period and when coming to school for study or exams all learners are expected to follow normal school behaviour and dress code guidelines.

There have been some significant changes to SQA exams this session, with some new written exams and several Higher exams now being two exam papers and I would refer you to the weblinks at the bottom of this letter for more information regarding the changes to the exams and the Post Results Service which replace the old appeals procedures.

### Exam Leave

All S4, S5 and S6 Learners will have exam leave and this exam leave will start on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019**, therefore the last day of attendance will be **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 19**. Those returning to school will be expected to return on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 19**, this being the date of our change of timetable.

If your son / daughter attends a course at NESCOL then to complete coursework it is expected they attend their college course up to and including **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April** unless they have an exam at the time of their college course.

### SQA Assessment Decisions

As we are now in the final weeks leading up to the SQA Examinations I want to share with you some information about how SQA ensures assessment decisions made either at school level by school staff or made externally by SQA markers are robust and made consistently across the country.

## Internal Assessments

Learners following courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher level will usually have to complete coursework components in addition examinations themselves. These components are either externally marked by an SQA marker or verifier or are internally assessed by school staff and contribute to the learner's overall course award in the subject. In both instances robust verification procedures exist to ensure that standards are consistent and national standards are maintained across the country.

In the case of all coursework, teachers will share success criteria with learners in order to maximise their chances of success. Where coursework is externally marked the learner's coursework grade will not be released to them before the exam results but will be identified to the school through the results process. If the coursework is internally assessed the teacher will share the mark awarded with the learner soon after the assessment.

If your child has any questions about the internally assessed coursework mark, their first step is to share those concerns with their teacher who will explain how the mark was arrived at. If your child still has concerns, their teacher will pass the concerns onto the Principal Teacher or the teacher who acts as the internal verifier for that element of the course so that further checks can be made.

If, after these steps have been followed your child still has concerns, then those concerns should be put in writing to the schools' SQA coordinator who will investigate the matter and then respond, in writing, explaining the outcome of the internal investigation. This procedure will also be shared with pupils. Because the school must meet SQA's deadline for submission of marks, any concerns should be raised promptly, and certainly no later than **29<sup>th</sup> March 2019**.

## External Assessment

SQA has equally rigorous procedures for assessments done by their own markers. The work of all markers is checked while the marking period is on-going, and any concerns addressed before final marks are decided.

SQA Post-results Services can be used where the school has significant concerns about a candidate's certificated result in August. If teachers believe the final mark does not reflect attainment through the year, they can request a marking review or a clerical check of the exam paper and other externally assessed components, such as externally assessed coursework.

The school must have robust evidence regarding specific elements of a pupils work and be able to fulfil several criteria in order to request a marking review and it is important to note that a candidates' grade can go down as well as up. If the school requests a review the candidate will be asked to sign a declaration recognising this.

This year, Results Day is **August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019**, and Review Request deadlines are as follows:

**16<sup>th</sup> August:** Deadline for Priority Marking Review Requests (only eligible for those whose results will determine whether a candidate can take up a place at college, university or with an employer)

**27<sup>th</sup> August:** All other Post Results Service Review Requests

## Exceptional Circumstances

Should any candidate suffer from an Exceptional Circumstance which may impact on their exam performance, please make your son / daughters Guidance teacher aware of this as soon as possible as we may be able to apply for an Exceptional Circumstances case under the SQA Post Results Service, a link to the relevant part of the SQA website is below.

I thank you in advance for your continued support of your son/daughter regarding their learning within school and should you have any queries or questions related to this letter or the SQA timetable then please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Changes to Higher courses and Exams  
Post Results Service  
SQA Exams 2019

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/78398.html>  
<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/65428.html>  
<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41266.html>

Kevin Buchan – SQA coordinator  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2019