Qualifications Update – Senior Pupils

As you are aware, the Deputy First Minister has announced that this year’s exam diet will not go ahead. We will be doing everything we can to ensure no young person in the Senior Phase is disadvantaged and the Scottish Government, in-conjunction with the SQA, will be working with us on this. Firstly, and most importantly, please do not panic. We understand that this is an uncertain time for everyone, but we will keep you up to date with relevant information as soon as this is made available.

You can read the latest updates from the SQA [here](#).

In the meantime, here are the details we currently know and answers to some questions we know many of you are asking:

**Achievement, Certification and Coursework**

**Q1: Will my achievements this year be recognised?**

**National 3 and 4 (Full course award and units)**

Yes. Teachers will review pupils’ coursework and achievements to date, in accordance with SQA assessment standards, in order to determine the overall award.

**National 5 to Advanced Higher**

Yes. Your achievements in your courses will be recognised this year. The SQA will ask your teachers to provide an estimate grade for each course that you were due to complete. The estimate must be based on evidence. Teachers will consider a wide range of assessment evidence from throughout the year including the prelim. However it should be noted that the estimate is not based solely on your prelim results.

Estimate data is usually sent to SQA prior to the Spring Break, however this session it will not be sent to SQA until the end of May. SQA have advised that schools will receive further guidance to support the process of deciding an estimate grade.

**Q2: What happens if I did not complete the coursework for my course?**

Advice issued by SQA on Thursday 2 April stated that any coursework already submitted will now not be marked. Also that any work remaining in schools will not be submitted to SQA and/or marked either by SQA or teachers in schools. In addition any internally assessed course components will also now not be submitted to SQA. This applies to the following subjects: Languages (French and Spanish); PE; Practical Cookery; Practical Metalwork and Practical Woodwork. All of which is applicable to NPAs, Awards, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher SQA courses as appropriate.
Q3: Will I be able to do my coursework online with my teacher?

Every course is different with different course arrangements for each. The reason that work is not able to be completed online is that for some courses, it is mandatory that aspects of the course must be completed under exam conditions - for example this could be timed, without notes, and in full view of the teacher. We therefore cannot have a 'one size fits all' approach to coursework which is one of the reasons the SQA have decided that schools do not submit it this year.

Q4: Why should I continue to complete online tasks set by my teacher when I know that the school cannot submit this work to SQA for marking?

The SQA have advised that teachers may consider a ‘body of evidence’ to inform estimate grades. However it is still important that you continue to engage with your teachers online, despite the changes from SQA. If you are an S4 or S5 student, engaging with your teachers online will also ensure that you develop the knowledge and skills to progress to the next level in that subject. This also applies to you if you are in S6 and preparing for college, university, an apprenticeship etc Consequently you risk being ill-prepared for continuing with the academic study of the subject next session.

Q5: Will I receive certification for achievements this year?

Yes. The SQA have explained that results should be issued no later than Tuesday, 4 August 2020 as planned. SQA are also encouraging everyone to sign up for MySQA which you can access by clicking here.

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**Estimates**

An estimate grade is a number (from 1 – 9) that teachers provide to the SQA in advance of the final exam each year. This is to ‘estimate’ what students are likely to achieve. The number relates to the ‘band’ expected. This is shown in the table below. Valid estimate bands are from 1-9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid estimate bands are 1-9: Band</th>
<th>Estimated Performance</th>
<th>Notional % Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Band A (upper) range</td>
<td>85 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Band A (lower) range</td>
<td>70 – 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Band B (upper)</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Band B (lower)</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Band C (upper)</td>
<td>55 – 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Band C (lower)</td>
<td>50 – 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Band D</td>
<td>40 – 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No Award</td>
<td>30 – 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No Award</td>
<td>0 – 29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6: How do you decide on an estimate grade?

An estimate grade is normally based on a number of different factors including: how you perform in prelims; how you perform in any coursework, practical or performance elements; and your
teacher’s professional judgement of how you are progressing – based on evidence produced throughout the year.
Staff have received requests from students to take into account essays and practice exam papers that they’ve completed at home: we are asking that this does not continue. The reason for this is that whilst this work may have been completed under exam conditions, teachers cannot verify this and therefore it is not strong enough evidence to use in deriving an estimate grade.

This year we know these estimate grades matter more than ever. For this reason, once we have further guidance from SQA, we will work with all teachers to make sure they are truly representative of your performance in your subjects.

Q7: I was disappointed with my prelim grade – does that automatically mean a poor estimate grade?

No. In many cases a prelim does not provide ‘full’ evidence of your likely performance in the final exam. Often because the prelim has only assessed a portion of the whole course, it has been superseded by other exam practice and the mark for any coursework will not have been included. We know that there is often an improvement in performance between the prelims and the final exam and we will also take this into account as appropriate.

Q8: Can my teacher tell me what grade I am going to get in my exams?

No. We are currently awaiting more information from the SQA about estimation of grades and fuller details of the SQA’s approach to certification. We will update you once we know more details. We normally submit estimate grades by the end of April, this session these will be submitted by the end of May. As usual teachers do not know what you will get awarded for a subject and will not know until Tuesday 4 August when you receive your certificate. In the meantime please do not contact teachers directly about your estimated grades.

Q9: I have produced work at home – can that contribute to the estimate grade?

As already mentioned, you should continue to work with your teachers online in order to ensure that you have developed robust skills to support your transition to the next level of work. Our judgements for estimating grades will be based on work competed prior to the school closure. Our main aim is to be fair to everyone so we cannot take individual pieces of work into account which have not been completed in the conditions set by SQA. We have lots of work and information from this year already. SQA have also been clear that no further evidence is to be submitted.

Q10: Can I find out what my final grade will be before Tuesday 4 August?

No. You will receive the outcome of your courses this year from the SQA in the normal way, when on 4 August you will receive your exam certificate by post. You also have the option to receive your results by text or email by signing up to ‘My SQA’.
Q11: What do I do if I and my teachers are not sure I have received the correct grade?

SQA have indicated that there will, as normal, be a post results service available in August whereby such discussions can take place with the school. We are waiting further instruction on how the service will operate this year.

**College/UCAS Applicants**

Q12: What about my College/UCAS application?

UCAS have provided a statement on their website stating that the grades you receive will be equally as valid as those in previous years and that there is no reason for the usual admissions cycle to be disrupted. Universities UK has confirmed that institutions will be flexible and do all they can to support you to progress to higher education. You can read their full advice [here](https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus).

We anticipate that Colleges will follow the same procedures.

Remember all young people in the country are in the same position.

Q13: Will my estimated grade be the same as my UCAS predicted grades?

No. Your predicted grades were provided at a very early point in your course and based on your teachers’ judgement in November. Your estimated grades will be based on much more robust knowledge of your progress in your courses and might differ from grades provided at the time of your UCAS application. Further information is available here ([https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus](https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus)).

**S4, S5 and S6 School Based College Applicants**

Q14: Can I still apply for courses at College e.g. Gradu8, Foundation Apprenticeships?

Yes. As you will be aware, colleges, like your school, are currently closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. College staff are continuing to work remotely and will continue to process all applications. Names of pupils interested in Gradu8 college courses have been submitted to the South Lanarkshire Employability team, and these pupils don’t need to take any further action. Pupils interested in Foundation Apprenticeships must complete their applications online as soon as possible. If you have already applied to a course then you should receive an email from the college with details of what will happen next.

Pupils applying for FAs can contact Mrs Benn (gw07bennkaren3@glow.sch.uk) if they have a query. If pupils are applying for a FA and Mrs Benn does not know, they should email her in order that the school can support the pupil through this process. Please note it is not necessary to contact Mrs Benn for GradU8 as this application process has been completed and submitted to SLC.
Q15: Will I still get my Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) when the school is closed?

Yes. EMA payments will continue during the period of school closure. However, as per normal, EMA will not be paid during school holidays.

Q16: I am leaving this year and I need support with what to do next. How can I still get help with this?

We remain committed to supporting our leavers into a positive destination and will do all we can to continue to offer our support during these uncertain times. If you have any questions, then contact your Pupil Support teacher or Skills Development Scotland (SDS) advisers:

lorraine.blair@sds.co.uk or 07884454559
roberta.mackenzie@sds.co.uk or 07884463048
sarah.clacher@sds.co.uk or 07725328176
or visit myworldofwork.co.uk

Q17: I am currently involved in the Top-up program, is there anything I need to know?

The top-up team plan to award grades for the pupils involved in the program this session. Any pupils needing support with top-up should email topup@glasgow.ac.uk

Q18: What if I have any more questions?

You can contact us by emailing the school office: office@calderside.s-lanark.sch.uk. This email will be regularly checked and enquiries sent to the appropriate person.

Please be assured, you are our absolute priority. We are committed to supporting you and ensuring that your hard work throughout this year is recognised. We will all get through this difficult time together.

To ensure that you continue to get up to date information please continue to check the school website.

Calderside Academy, Friday, 03 April 2020