

TEACHER PANEL

REFLECTIONS ON THE SQA RESULTS 2020 AND ASSESSING THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN 2021

Purpose

1. This short paper is intended to assist the Teacher Panel with its discussion in relation to reflections on the SQA results 2020, and consideration of assessing the national qualifications in 2021.

Current context

2. Following results day 2020 an approach was adopted such that results would be awarded on the basis of teacher and lecturer estimates, or SQA-moderated grades if they were higher. A rapid review of the awarding process in 2020 was commissioned and the Priestley review will report by the end of the month.
3. The ambition of the Scottish Government remains to run a 2021 examination diet, however, in these exceptional times the SQA and the Education Recovery Group are looking at contingencies which will be appropriate to the circumstances. The SQA has conducted a consultation into potential course assessment modifications to increase teaching time and adapt to public health advice. It will be important to consider these changes alongside the findings of the Priestley review, and so the SQA has been asked to delay the publication of its report. It is important that the system can receive as much clarity and certainty as possible on a range of related issues and this will be set out in advance of the October half-term break.
4. In response to views expressed the decision has been taken to expand the scope of the current OECD review of Curriculum for Excellence to include a consideration of the approach to the assessment of national qualifications in Scotland. This will report later next year, and will be important as we consider if there is currently the correct balance in our approach to exams in assessment.

Points for discussion

5. The Teacher Panel is invited to discuss the following:
 - What important lessons need to be taken from awarding in 2020? This can be with regard to both the original process undertaken by the SQA, and the revised approach awarding on the basis of teacher and lecturer estimates.
 - How does the panel assess the position of learners who are studying for national qualifications this year with regard to the amount of teaching that has been able to be delivered so far, against what might have been expected in a non-disrupted year?

- How well does the panel feel that current contingency measures of blended learning and the national e-learning offer (including e-Sgoil) may support distance learning should there be local or national lockdowns?
- The SQA consultation report considered contingencies for course assessment. What are the views of the panel as to how robust and sufficient these measures may be, and are there any other measures the panel may want to see considered?

Learning Directorate
September 2020