

Is support available for Parents?

Any queries please see the contact details for the SQA Coordinator at your school.

Nationals in a Nutshell

<http://www.npfs.org.uk/nationals-in-a-nutshell/>

MySQA – Sign Up for Exam Results by Text Message

https://www.mysqa.org.uk/cs8/content/secure/my_homepage.jsp

SQA – Tools and Exam Apps

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41619.html>

Contact Details

Nicky Grant (Depute Head Teacher)
SQA Coordinator
Elgin High School
High School Drive
ELGIN
Moray
IV30 6UD

Tel: (01343) 545181

Email: admin.elginhigh@moray-edunet.gov.uk



August 2017



"Working together for success"

ELGIN HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT LEAFLET

CHANGES TO SQA NATIONAL COURSES 2017

Why are changes being made to the National Courses?

The Deputy First Minister announced in September that they wanted to reduce workload for students and teachers by removing units and unit assessment from National 5 to Advanced Higher courses. The common goal of everyone involved should be to reduce the volume of assessment, while maintaining the standards and integrity of National Qualifications.

What are the changes to assessment in National 5 to Advanced Higher courses?

The current course assessment approach requires students to complete internally assessed National Units and a course assessment, which is normally a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both. Removing the units and unit assessments means that the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) need to strengthen the course assessments to ensure that they assess the full content of the course.

For each course, one or more of the following changes to the course assessment could take place:

- extend the existing question paper
- extend the existing item of coursework
- introduce a new question paper component
- introduce a new coursework component

There will be no change to the aims, rationale or content of the courses.



August 2017



When will the changes take effect?

The timeline for removing units and unit assessments from National Courses, and implementing the revised course assessments, will be:

- National 5 from session 2017–18
- Higher from session 2018–19
- Advanced Higher from session 2019–20

Are any changes being made to assessment in National 4 courses?

At present, the SQA have only been asked to take forward the nationally-agreed revisions to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. The Assessment and National Qualifications Group (ANQ) has begun to consider the approach to assessment in National 4 courses, with its initial focus on the value of a form of external assessment, and a means of differentiation through grading.

What will happen to the National 5 units once they are removed from the National 5 courses?

The units will remain available as free-standing units at SCQF level 5. They will no longer contribute to the achievement of a National 5 course. Students can be presented for the free-standing units as an alternative to National 5 courses, and this will give schools some flexibility in meeting the needs of individual students.

For example, some students might be presented for National 5 courses in some subjects and presented for free-standing SCQF level 5 units and/or National 4 courses in other subjects. For other students, schools may, following discussions with parents, consider planning their learning experience over a two year period.

What are the entry requirements for National 5 courses?

The revised specifications state that ‘students should have achieved the curriculum level 4 or the National 4 course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting the course’. This ensures that students have a reasonable chance of success at National 5, given sufficient time for delivery and assessment.

How long does it take to complete a National 5 course?

National 5 courses consist of 24 SCQF credit points and this includes additional time for preparing for course assessment.

For a student who meets the minimum recommended entry requirements, the notional length of time for a student to complete a National 5 course is 160 hours (approx. 1 year’s work). If a student does not meet the minimum entry requirements, more time may be required for learning than the 160 hours.

What progression will there be for students who have achieved National 4 but who are not ready for the National 5 course assessment?

The achievement of a National 4 course provides students with a number of progression routes, including Skills for Work courses, National Certificates and Modern Apprenticeships.

Students who wish to progress to the National 5 course, but are not yet performing at the level required for the course assessment, could be entered for the free-standing SCQF level 5 units as an alternative. They will be certificated for the units, and this may also prepare them for entering the National 5 course in future — for example, as part of a two-year course.

Which qualifications a student is entered for is a decision for the school. It is important that students are entered for the appropriate level of qualification.

Reliable assessment information will be used to inform these discussions, for example on whether a young person has achieved the third or fourth curriculum level by the end of S3. This will inform the decision on whether a learner should embark on a course leading to National 4, National 5 or Higher, whether that be a one year or two year pathway, or pursue other more appropriate qualifications pathways.’