

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COVID19

The following provides answers to ongoing queries that staff are raising in preparation to support students through to achievement for the academic year 2019/20.

Date of Query	Tutor Question	Answer/Guidance
27.4.20	Will a student be able to submit mitigating circumstances for COVID19? If so, what evidence will be acceptable? Who will approve the mit circs?	<p><u>Mitigating Circumstances</u>: many of our students have been affected by COVID19 in different ways, ie illness, caring for someone who is ill, caring for children/vulnerable that they wouldn't normally have had to, work commitments increasing, volunteering etc. A codicil has been made to the current MC process to cover these circumstances and to streamline the approach:</p> <p>COVID19: Where possible, a student completes the form and submits to their PAT. Where not possible to complete the form then an email with explanation will suffice in lieu of the form (this will be evidence of application). Students should not be required to submit evidence.</p> <p>Normal mitigating circumstance: Where possible, a student completes the form and submits to their PAT. Where not possible to complete the form then an email with explanation will suffice in lieu of the form (this will be evidence of application). Students <u>should still be required</u> to submit evidence ie hospital record, etc.</p> <p>Rather than the protracted process of going from PAT to the SM for signoff the PAT accepts /reject the MC. All applications are to be noted on the IV10 and presented to the Progression Board as normal practice.</p> <p>A revised procedure for mitigating circumstances and form is stored on the student portal MyDay under 'Key Information for Students', this has been linked to within the COVID19 student advice page on the website.</p>
27.4.20	Will a student be able to appeal the judgement decision?	A student may submit an academic appeal but only if they have appropriate grounds to do so. They are not able to appeal the judgement itself but will

		<p>still be entitled to make an appeal based on the process used to make the judgement.</p> <p>A revised procedure for FE Academic Appeals is stored on the student portal MyDay under 'Key Information for Students', this has been linked to within the COVID19 student advice page on the website.</p>
14.4.20	In terms of units within the 15 credits delivered in year 1, we have talked about certification for group award (HNC) so far. What about the other 3 credits over and above the 12 that they would ordinarily need for HND? eg if these cannot be resulted as in the case of one which requires specialist software, do we build in a plan for next year in terms of the credit or will allowance be made somehow for this?	That decision needs to be taken by the course team (and that may be a networked course team) to determine if the additional 3 units can be seen as having been passed by referring to the HND course aims (as it is these aims that the credit will fall within). If a course cannot be passed due to unit having specialist knowledge being needed to be evidenced, and in this case the use of specialist software, then the unit may need to be deferred (kept open) until such a time that the assessment can be carried out. This is either in the late summer or during next teaching session. We also need to be mindful of not putting too much work onto students progressing next year.
14.4.20	Is there any timeline on the subject specific guidance that is mentioned to be forthcoming from SQA? Sport and Hosp particularly keen to see this.	Subject Specific Guidance will be released in w/b 20.4.20
14.4.20	In the SQA Guidance, Appendix 1, Q – Can we use Open book....? It states that a suitable alternative approach could be taken, in agreement with SQA – I presume this is not the case and refers to IV?	<p>An alternative assessment can be devised where the normal conditions of assessment are no longer suitable. This must be internally verified using the existing IV process. However, where a course is listed on the 'by exception' list then SQA will guide on the alternative assessment that can be used.</p> <p>If an open book is to be used, then be wary of using the original closed book exam for this open book version as the security of assessments must be contained.</p>
14.4.20	There was a request for a definition of 'course outcomes' - my understanding is that would be the overall aims of the course/group award rather than individual units to ensure students	A team needs to be familiar with the aims and objectives from overarching arrangement documents for each course, as well as any specific unit specification documents. Where awards are made up of stand-alone units and there are no overarching arrangement document ie our NQ courses,

	<p>achieved the group award rather than each individual unit aim/outcome.</p>	<p>then course teams should agree 'course outcomes' for those awards – bearing in mind that the internal approval documentation may already have some course aims written.</p> <p>Some general course aims are incredibly generic and thus can be satisfied by most units, although there are usually specific aims too. Teams are being asked to determine what the critical elements of any units are that will be unable to be completed by the normal assessment arrangements, and then map these against the course aims to see if this knowledge or skill has been obtained in another unit already. If not, then determine a plan on how students can complete this missing knowledge/skill ie by applying an alternative assessment or deferring the normal assessment until business resumes.</p>
14.4.20	<p>Learners within the same student group are engaging with formative homework tasks more than others and so I will have varying amounts of information on which to base any decision. Given that we don't know the personal circumstances of each individual student at this time, should students be penalised for this non engagement? In relation to this, I may have for example only one formative test to base a decision on (for student group in semester 2 only). Is this acceptable?</p>	<p>If there is insufficient evidence/non-engagement due to the current circumstances students can be deferred. However, a PAT should have reasonable knowledge of a student's situation. If this is Highers/Nat 5's then we have to use judgement to determine predicted grades in line with the predicted grades guidance due to come out. We have been given exemption from the Schools in that we should continue to gather evidence where we can in order to make good judgements. If it's NC then the flow chart should assist for a group decision but can also be applied to individual students where they are not engaging. A student who has not been able to engage will need to submit a mitigation form. Since we are now looking at a course judgement they will only need to put in one form for the course but to highlight which units they feel have been affected.</p>
14.4.20	<p>Learners have not taken part in any practical activity other than to plan an investigation and so cannot achieve outcome 1 of the unit. This cannot be assessed remotely for health and safety reasons and so I will be unable to result this outcome. Just to confirm, this decision will be passed by me to their PAT, and the student will be assessed holistically by the appropriate team, taking this into account.</p>	<p>This follows the procedure outlined on the flowchart. The lecturer should notify the PAT, Team holds a meeting where the student/unit is discussed and agreed on how to holistically assess. Again for Nat5/Higher it would need to follow the guidance that comes out for predicting grades. If this unit falls under a course listed by SQA as 'by exception' then no alternative assessment can yet be given. SQA will guide on alternative assessments. The course team will determine whether the LO of this unit can be met by another unit to meet the course aim. If not then this cohort may need to be deferred.</p>

14.4.20	Learners have not finished the course but my understanding at the moment is that we continue to facilitate learning and assess using assessments compiled by ourselves which need to be internally IV'd. How will this internal IV process take place? Yip yip	As any other IV of assessments would. It may mean collaborating using skype/webex if it cannot be done over email. The relevant IV4 form needs completing and a statement made that shows the IV has agreement that the conditions of assessment are appropriate and meet the unit criteria.
14.4.20	In relation to the last point, in the internal QA document you sent it said that SQA were "mooting" the possibility of secure assessment material to be used for timed assessments. Do we have any idea when a decision on this might be made?	This is in respect to the 'by exception courses' and subject specific information will be released early w/b 20.4.20
14.4.20	I would like to use my own internally verified end of unit assessment in a timed open book test. Can you please get clarification if possible that I can use this open book approach to generate evidence and results students for this unit through MIS in the normal way	Not knowing which unit this is for, I would say that as long as it is a not for any of the courses on the 'by exception list' then that is fine but record changes in the spreadsheet.. As long as the internal assessment has been adequately internally verified. If it is for a NQ award then this will only be formative and put forward as an estimate. If for any other award then it can be used for summative assessment which can be used by the team to determine an overall judgement of achievement.
14.4.20	Resulting of units through MIS in the normal way	Where an overall judgement has been made on a student course achievement without that student having completed all units as normal ie they haven't actually passed the unit through normal conditions of assessment, then, unless they have genuinely failed that unit, a result of pass should be resulted in SITS against the unit.
14.4.20	A crucial question can you clarify what "alternative assessment arrangements" the SQA would deem acceptable, as there is no point in use using them (eg sending out questions to be done at home) if come December the SQA may tell us they are not valid.	As long as the unit is not in the 'by exception' list then an alternative assessment arrangement can be used where the normal conditions of assessment are not able to be used. Any alternative assessment arrangements must be internally verified to ensure the new assessment still meets the conditions of assessment for that unit.
14.4.20	A second crucial question is to ask about the status of the EIS position and proposal, which, implied all assessment activity to be considered,	SQA guidance says to continue delivery and assessment as normal, up until the normal end of delivery time. I would suggest that tutors continue

	by colleges, should have ended on 2nd April at the latest, preferably 17th March!	to gather assessment evidence for a long as possible to ensure an appropriate judgement can be made for student achievement.
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