

Higher National Certificates and Diplomas, SQA Advanced Certificates and Diplomas, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates, Skills for Work Awards and NQ Freestanding Units

We would like to acknowledge the collaboration and support of centres in working together to develop alternative assessment arrangements for learners during the unprecedented circumstances we have all had to face in the 2019–20 session.

We advised you on 26 June 2020 that work was underway to determine the approach for these qualifications for session 2020-21.

We appreciate that you will be considering a more blended learning environment in the year ahead, and to help with this, we have continued to focus on three areas which we believe will support you and your candidates.

Assessment Requirements

For session 2020-21, we are looking at opportunities to provide adaptations to assessment requirements which will support a blended learning environment. SQA will also offer centres the flexibility to adapt conditions of assessment, therefore reducing reliance on face-to-face assessment. We are currently reviewing these adaptations, given the return to unit requirements this year, and we will publish subject guidance by 1 September.

Combined Assessment

For some qualifications, there may be an opportunity to develop a combined assessment model. You may already take this approach for some of our qualifications. We have published generic guidance on implementing such a model, which you will find attached.

We will also be delivering a small number of online support events for our centres. We will email invitations for these shortly. We will also share recordings of the events, for those unable to attend.

For centres who would like to move to a combined assessment approach, we would recommend you notify operationshmvq@sqa.org.uk so our subject experts can provide virtual guidance and support at the planning stage. Your College or SQA Co-ordinator will provide further details of how to access this support later this month.

External Verification

We are finalising our approach to external verification for the year ahead. This will include virtual verification options, together with remote, visiting, and central activities. We will be publishing updated processes in the coming weeks.

We appreciate that some of your candidates may have been deferred due to specific conditions of assessment. For these candidates, you can continue to use the holistic approach set out in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for session 2019-20. However, you should continue to review course team judgements through your Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Panels.

If you have any candidates who are still deferred at 31 December 2020, please provide the relevant candidate details and Group Award code to operationshmvq@sqa.org.uk by 15 January 2021 at the latest. You should retain all evidence of IQA discussions and decisions until 31 May 2021. Thank you for your continued support and co-operation.