



Delivering National 5 results in 2020–21

8 December 2020

On 7 October, the Deputy First Minister announced that for 2020-21, National 5 will be based on teacher and lecturer judgement supported by quality assurance. Key educational stakeholders recognise the difficult times that everyone is experiencing and are working together to develop contingencies that support the delivery of National Qualifications in 2020-21.

The National Qualifications 2021 Group has overseen development of the quality assurance model which will support teachers and lecturers in providing provisional results for National 5 candidates in session 2020-21. Provisional results will be based on teacher and lecturer professional judgement of learner evidence. The model also confirms how provisional results will become final results.

Combined support from SQA, local authorities, colleges, independent schools and Education Scotland aims to enhance teachers' and lecturers' understanding of the consistent application of the national standard and in making accurate judgements. Schools and colleges can also ask SQA for further support and advice regarding the national standard should they find it helpful.

These processes should ensure trust and consistency across the country so that a National 5 awarded in the north of Scotland is of the same standard as one which is awarded in the south of Scotland and everywhere in between.

Most of the support will be provided in advance of schools and colleges submitting their provisional results by 28 May 2021. The model has five key stages:

Stage 1: November 2020 to March 2021 – *Teachers and lecturers can access subject specific guidance, assessment resources and Understanding Standards materials*

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Schools and colleges are supported by local and national subject networks.
- SQA provides ongoing Understanding Standards support for schools and colleges.
- Schools and colleges gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback.
- School, college and local authority quality assurance takes place.

Stage 2: end-January to beginning of April – *SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on samples of assessment evidence from each school and college*

- Learning and teaching ongoing.

- Schools and colleges continue to gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback on progress as supported by existing evidence.
- School, college and local authority quality assurance continues.
- SQA samples candidate evidence from all schools and colleges, and provides feedback.
- Schools and colleges start to develop provisional results based on the available evidence and feedback from SQA sampling.
- Schools, colleges or local authorities can engage in dialogue with SQA where further support is required.

Stage 3: end March to 28 May – *Schools, colleges and local authorities will work through feedback and implement their own quality assurance of the provisional results*

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Schools and colleges continue to gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback on progress as supported by available evidence.
- Schools and colleges take actions in relation to SQA feedback.
- Schools and colleges carry out quality assurance checks. Heads of centre endorse the process and outcomes per subject.
- Local authorities (where applicable) engage with schools to carry out quality assurance checks.
- Schools, colleges or local authorities can speak with SQA where further support is required.

Stage 4: by 28 May 2021 – *Schools and colleges submit quality assured provisional results*

Further information on how to submit the provisional results to SQA will be issued to schools and colleges.

Stage 5: June 2021 – *SQA carries out national check of provisional results and discusses any issues with schools, colleges and local authorities*

- SQA undertakes post-submission data checks.
- If SQA identifies any issues with the provisional results, these will be checked with schools and colleges and, if appropriate, local authorities. This should be by exception.
- Following this check, SQA subject specialists may sample learner evidence for final quality assurance.
- In instances where SQA subject specialists determine that assessment evidence is found not to meet the standard, schools and colleges will be asked to resubmit provisional results that reflect the standard of the evidence so that certification can proceed.

The above model requires all stakeholders, at all stages, to be fully involved and work in partnership. By doing so, learners will have the best chance of securing the outcomes that their efforts deserve.

Fairness for learners

SQA is co-ordinating the development of an equality impact assessment as part of this quality assurance model which aims to ensure fair and credible results for all National 5 learners. Schools, colleges, local authorities and SQA are committed to working together to support teachers and lecturers in providing their provisional results in 2020-21.

We will continue to discuss the appeals process for 2020-21 and will keep you informed of progress. To stay up to date on 2021 National Qualifications visit www.sqa.org.uk/NQ2021.

The National Qualifications 2021 Group*

**Represented by the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), School Leaders Scotland (SLS), the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Government, National Parent Forum of Scotland and, from this week, the Scottish Youth Parliament.*