

2020-2021 SQA Assessment Arrangements

Parental FAQs



How do you arrive at an overall grade?

We are working on a “best of” system this year, meaning that the final grade that is entered will be based on the best possible performance of young people across the entire 2020-2021 session. That means the results of different assessments will be considered on a holistic level and all materials from robust assessments (not past papers or class groups tasks) will be used to select the best evidence which matches the criteria that SQA require in each subject area. The materials completed throughout lockdown counts as learning evidence, but not for assessment purposes.

Will there be prelims?

Not in the traditional sense, no. “Prelim” comes from Preliminary Examination, meaning something that comes before an exam. As there are no exams this year, all assessments will be taking place in school, within timetabled class time.

Where will pupils be sitting assessments?

All assessments will be taking place within classes, during timetabled periods. The maximum length of time that an assessment will last is a double period and papers will be adapted to suit that time scale.

Do pupils still have to sit papers which cover entire courses?

No. All courses have had their content reduced in response to the pandemic and we have been given permission to separate papers which would have previously taken longer to complete. We will only be assessing what has been taught. We do still have to work around guidelines regarding how secure and robust the papers are and there is a certain coverage in all subject areas that we need to comply with.

How many assessments will each department give?

That very much depends on different subject areas and the materials that they need to gather evidence for. Specific information will be communicated to young people and posted on Teams for parents and carers to view. There will also be a generic assessment list made available via email and text message, which will contain information on how each department is splitting their assessment up. For example, N5 and Higher English are taking the three “exam” components and splitting them into three different assessment pieces.

How will the dates and times for assessments be communicated to pupils and parents/carers?

The assessment period will run from Wednesday 21st of April through to Friday 29th of May. All dates and times will be communicated to young people in classes, but they will also be posted on class Teams. Because there are multiple assessments across a six-week period

and they are taking place within classes across multiple columns, it is not possible to produce an assessment timetable in the same way that we normally would. Young people will be issued with a blank calendar in which to enter their assessments but they can also record these on their phones, in their Teams calendars etc.

Will there be more than one opportunity to gather evidence?

*Formal assessment are taking place during the identified assessment times. There are opportunities for young people to demonstrate attainment at other times in classes as well, but this very much comes down to individual subject areas, what still needs taught and how assessments can be administered. There may be opportunities within classes to generate other materials which could be used as evidence as required. As aforementioned, the system this year is very much focused on a “best of” approach. **The general advice would be for young people is to try their best within all class and assessment tasks between now and the end of May.***

How will final results be communicated to pupils and parents?

Young people should be made aware at all stages of what their working grade is and how to improve upon it. That information will come from learning conversations between pupils and teachers. Parents and carers will get official notification of the final provisional awards by mid-June.

How do I know that you are ensuring fairness and consistency?

Both SQA and Dundee City Council have put together Quality Assurance documents and guidance for us to follow. This involves all materials used being robust and secure and of the necessary standard, modified to suit the changes for this session and the young people within schools. We are cross-marking within schools, but also working with school partners across the authority and in other local authorities across the country. SQA will also be sampling assessment evidence to ensure application of standards across the month of May.

When do final results have to be submitted?

We need to submit our final results to Dundee City Council by early June. They will complete some further quality assurance and return to schools with findings. The final provisional awards are sent to SQA by the 25th of June.

Will alternative assessment arrangements still be met?

Yes. If a young person is entitled to alternative arrangements for examinations, these same arrangements will be in place for all assessments they sit between Easter and the end of May. Please note, this might mean that certain arrangements dictate your child sitting the paper at a different time from others in the class.

Will there be an option to appeal grades?

Yes. How exactly that will look is still to be determined. A recent consultation was taken and SQA are going to feed back on that in due course. We encouraged as many of our staff to

take part in it as possible and the links to it were tweeted and sent out via the school website. Further information to follow once it becomes available.

When will the timetable change?

There will be a city-wide change to timetable on Monday 7th of June 2021. All year groups will move up a stage at that point and start their 2021-2022 timetables.

Where can I get more information?

bit.ly/3cHPMif - this is an SQA produced guide to assessments for this session which has already been tweeted and put on the school website

Twitter, Teams, the SQA website, our own school website.