

## Calderglen High School

### National Qualifications 2020 - FAQs

**We have prepared some answers to a few questions which you as parents and our senior pupils will have with regards to National Qualifications. We hope you find this helpful.**

#### **1. Can some courses and coursework continue online?**

Work for some courses may continue online. Award courses, such as Leadership, Personal Development and Volunteering are good examples of this, as they can be finished using the materials staff have provided on the relevant Google Classrooms. In addition, some other National Courses can also continue online, many of the AH projects and dissertations can be completed and submitted to staff for consideration. It is important the students check in with each of their teachers to ascertain what can be completed. This work needs to be completed within the next 2-3 week timeframe.

#### **2. Why can't all courses continue online?**

The reason that other courses cannot be continued online is that mandatory aspects of some courses must be completed under exam conditions – timed, without notes, and in full view of the teacher. Science and Social Studies assignments are examples of this kind of coursework. These aspects of coursework cannot be facilitated online and therefore teachers accepting anything produced in this way are breaching assessment arrangements and committing malpractice by undermining the integrity of the assessment.

#### **3. What about coursework that has already been submitted?**

National 5 coursework that has already been submitted and uplifted by the SQA will most likely be marked by the SQA. Subjects that produce an assignment, such as English, Modern Languages, Computer Science, Science and Social Subjects will all be marked in this way. Other National 5 subjects, which had a submission date in April, such as PE, Art & Design and Fashion & Textiles, will not be marked by the SQA. In addition, all Higher and Advanced Higher coursework will not be uplifted or marked by the SQA.

The SQA has advised that staff may consider work that will not be uplifted and marked by the SQA as part of the 'body of evidence' they used to devise estimate grades. Currently we are working through this with staff teams to consider the best approach here.

#### **4. What is an estimate grade?**

An estimate grade is a number (from 1 – 9) that teachers provide to the SQA, in advance of the final exam each year, to 'estimate' what students are likely to achieve. The number relates to the 'band' expected. This is shown in the table below.

Valid estimate bands are 1-9: Band

Valid estimate bands are 1-9: Band	Estimated Performance	Notional % Range
1	Band A (upper) range	85 – 100
2	Band A (lower) range	70 – 84
3	Band B (upper)	65 – 69
4	Band B (lower)	60 – 64
5	Band C (upper)	55 – 59
6	Band C (lower)	50 – 54
7	Band D	40 – 49
8	No Award	30 – 39
9	No Award	0 – 29

This grade is used by the SQA to support their creation of ‘cut off scores’ in different subjects and to undertake quality assurance of their examination processes. This grade can also be used if a candidate is unable to attend an exam, as long as we can provide the evidence used to arrive at our estimate.

#### **5. How do you derive an estimate grade?**

Typically an estimate grade is derived using the following evidence:

- A student’s performance in prelims/ practice tests under secure conditions
- A student’s performance in any coursework, practical or performance elements
- The teacher’s professional judgement of how the student is progressing – based on evidence produced throughout the course of the year.

This year we know these estimate grades matter more than ever. For this reason, we are taking more time over this. We are advising staff to engage in more moderation and discussion around evidence (this started prior to the school closures) and we are also requesting that staff analyse their data for the past three years, looking at the typical accuracy of their estimates and how our previous cohorts have performed in the final exam. The SQA has also stated that they will provide more guidance on this, some at subject specific level.

#### **6. My child did poorly in the prelim – does that automatically mean a poor estimate grade?**

No. The prelim is considered to be ‘strong’ evidence, as it has been conducted in exactly the same conditions as the final exam. However, in many cases it does not provide ‘full’ evidence of a student’s likely performance in the final exam often because;

- the prelim has only assessed a portion of the whole course

- it has been superseded by other examination practice
- the 'written' element of the course has to be considered with the practical/ performance element of the course

Staff will take a 'body of evidence' into account, this will vary from team to team depending upon the weightings and components of different courses. Evidence may be class work, tests, performances, folios of work, or creative projects.

## **7. My child has produced work at home – can that contribute to the estimate grade?**

As outlined in Q1, it may be possible for some students to continue working on courses at home, producing work that can be considered when deriving their estimate grade. Teachers can guide on what can be completed. However, In other courses this is not possible.

Staff have received requests from students to take into account essays and practice exam papers that they have completed at home and which would normally be conducted under secure conditions. **We are asking that this does not continue.** The reason for this is that, whilst this work may have been completed under exam conditions at home, teachers cannot verify this and therefore it is not strong enough evidence to use in deriving an estimate grade.

As stated at the beginning of the FAQs document, we are aiming to provide a fair service for all students. Not all of our students have equitable access to technology to use at home at the moment and a range of domestic and health circumstances are also preventing other students from continuing with work. By disallowing additional evidence to be submitted we are ensuring a fair system for our students and prioritising a consideration of the 'strong evidence' already available.

This means that all students will be considered using the same estimate 'model' in each course and teams are being asked to consider a broad range of evidence as part of this.

## **8. What do I do if I don't believe the grade to be fair?**

The SQA has announced that their 'post-results' service, whereby students can ask for a marking review of their work, will be available for free this year. What this will involve as yet, we don't know. Currently we are working with our colleagues across the education sector to ascertain what the process will be for this service. We will update this section of our FAQs when we are clearer on this process.

## **9. It feels as though there is a lot of different information out there, why is that?**

Our aim throughout this situation has been to communicate clear messages with all of our community to allay fears and answer questions. This has been challenging – the National situation has changed rapidly and we are reliant on communications from the SQA to respond to many of your queries. All staff have been given the same guidance and they should follow the channels available to them to ensure that students are provided with accurate and fair information. For many of the questions we are being asked we simply do not know the answers at this stage. We are however absolutely committed to ensuring that our young people are not disadvantaged this year and our staff are working hard to give our young people the very best chance of success in what is a very challenging time.