

Enclosure 06. FMQ Brief on 2019 SQA Results – Travelling Cabinet

ISSUE:

6 August: SQA Results data published, with over **133,000** candidates receiving their certificates. Key headline data:

Decreases in numbers at **Higher:**

- total number of entries at Higher is 185,914 – **down 3.1%**
- total number of passes at Higher is 138,972 - **down 5.7%**
- pass rate for 2019 was 74.8% compared to 76.8% in 2018 (down 2.0 percentage points)

Increases in numbers at **National 5:**

- total number of entries at National 5 is 288,552 – **up 2.4%**
 - total number of passes at National 5 is 225,594 – **up 3.4%**
- pass rate for 2019 was 78.2% compared to 77.4% in 2018 (up 0.7 percentage points)

Top Lines:

- Results Day is a time to celebrate learners achievements.
- Today [6 August] the Deputy First Minister met with learners at Forth Valley College in Stirling receiving their results in a variety of qualifications and awards.
- The First Minister is also meeting with care experience young people receiving their results at SQA's 'Who Cares' event in Glasgow [6 August].
- Congratulations to learners and everyone who has worked so hard and achieved so much this year.
- Today's results show again that Scotland's school and colleges are generally high performing with a robust qualifications system that sees three-quarters of candidates at Higher getting a pass at A-C.
- These results are a testament to the hard work young people have put in, not just in the exam hall but also those who have completed coursework and undertaken other assessments.
- This year, we have seen an increase in entries and pass rates in National 5, including a rise in passes for English (up 4.4%) and Maths (up 1.3%).
- We have also seen a welcome rise in Higher passes in the Sciences overall – something that has been focus of efforts for some time.
- At Higher level there is an overall fall in pass rates. All high performing education systems see year on year variation. There has also been a slight fall in relevant pupil numbers.
- If the exam pass rate only ever went up people would rightly question their robustness.
- Scotland enjoys a robust, credible assessment system and as a result, we expect some differing performance between age groups as they move through the system.

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I am encouraged by improvements at National 5

- We have seen increases in the number of entries (up 2.4%) and passes (up 3.4%), as well as an improvement to the pass rate (up 0.7 percentage points).
- The pass rates for both National 5 English and Mathematics have also improved - by 1.5 and 0.8 percentage points respectively.

As always, there are issues we need to understand further in some subjects, not least History and Languages, at Higher Level.

- That is a core part of the work every year after the exam results with a report by the Principal Assessor for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

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