

INDEX OF ENCLOSURES

No.	Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Clause
001	Attachment: Word doc	27 May 2021 14:30	Out of scope	~
002	Attachment: Word doc	10 June 2021 13:45	Out of scope	~
003	Attachment: 2022 National Qualifications Approach - Update	14 June 2021 17:42	Free and frank exchange of views Personal information	s.30(b)(ii) S38(1)(b)
004	Attachment: Summary of Young people's views about assessment 2022	18 June 2021 08:24		
005	Attachment: Word doc	24 June 2021 17:36	Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views Confidential Information Personal information	~ s.30(b)(ii) S36(1) S38(1)(b)
006	Attachment: Learner Panel V2	30 June 2021 13:06	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views Out of scope	S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii) ~
007	Attachment: FW: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments	14 July 2021 09:00	missing	
007.1	Letter from Secretary of State	13 July 2021 12:35		
008	FW: LETTER FROM UKG SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION - QUALIFICATIONS & ASSESSMENTS	16 July 2021 10:22	Personal information	S38(1)(b)
008.1	Attachment: Email FW: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments		Personal information	S38(1)(b)
008.2	Attachment: PDF		Out of scope	
009	Attachment: Options Paper ACM 2022 for NQ WG 21	21 July 2021 18:28	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
010	Attachment: Word Doc: Mr Hepburn briefing	22 July 2021 09:29	Possible out of scope	

011	Attachment: Word Doc: Learning for Sustainability and STEM - Briefing	27 July 2021 12:04	Out of scope	~
012	Attachment: PDF	29 July 2021 06:59	Out of scope	~
012.1	Attachment: PDF		Out of scope	~
012.2	Attachment: PDF		Out of scope	~
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013	Attachment: Word Doc: FE-HE and Students	02 August 2021 13:37	Out of scope	~
014	Attachment: Word Doc	04 August 2021 16:24	Free and frank exchange of views Personal information Out of scope Confidential Information Ministerial communications	s.30(b)(ii) S38(1)(b) ~ S36(1) S29(1)(b)
015	Attachment: Word Doc- Exam Diet 2021 - Briefing	5 August 2021 13:44	Out of scope	~
015.1	Attachment: Word Doc - Exam Diet 2021 – Summary Tables		Out of scope	~
016	Attachment: Word Doc: Exam Diet 2021 – Briefing – Ministerial Submission 01	5 August 2021 17:41	Out of scope	~
017	Attachment: Word Doc: Results Day Narrative 2021 Draft	6 August 2021 10:16	Out of scope	~
018	Attachment: Email: FW: FOR CLEARANCE: Media query - immediate - SQA op ed on exams - Herald	6 August 2021 17:36		
019	Attachment: Word Doc: Qualifications 2022 – Advice to Cab Sec	6 August 2021 18:00		
020	Attachment: Word Doc: Assessment 2022 – Ministerial Submission	06 August 2021 18:00	Personal information Out of scope	S38(1)(b) ~
021	Attachment: Word Doc: Exam Diet 2021 – Briefing	09 August 2021 15:30	Out of scope	~
022	Attachment: Word Doc	09 August 2021 19:54	Out of scope	~
022.1	Attachment: Word Doc		Out of scope	~
022.2	Attachment: Word Doc		Out of scope	~
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022.4	Attachment: Word Doc		Out of scope	~
023	Attachment: Word Doc –NQ – Results Day 10 Aug –	09 August 2021 20:47	Out of scope	~
023.1	Attachment: Word Doc – Core Narrative		Out of scope	~
024	Attachment: Word Doc – NQ- Results Day 10 Aug	09 August 2021 20:55	Out of scope	~
024.1	Attachment: Word Doc – Core	09 August 2021 20:55	Out of scope	~
025	Attachment: Word Doc	10 August 2021 08:59	Out of scope	~
026	Attachment: Word Doc	10 August 2021 08:59	Out of scope	~
027	Attachment: Word Doc	10 August 2021 09:38	Out of scope	~
027.1	Attachment: Word Doc		Out of scope	~
028	Attachment: Cab Sec ES to First Minister – School Exams 2021-2022	10 August 2021 16:46	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
029	Attachment: Word Doc	10 August 2021 17:46	Out of scope Personal information	~ S38(1)(b)
029.1	Attachment: Word Doc		Out of scope	~
030	Attachment: Word Doc – Briefing Pack	10 August 2021 18:42	Out of scope	~
031	Attachment: Word Doc	11 August 2021 19:34	Out of scope	~
031.1	Attachment: Word Doc		Out of scope	~
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032	Attachment: Word Doc	13 August 2021 17:13	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
033	Attachment: Word Doc	13 August 2021 17:59	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
034	Attachment: Word Doc	13 August 2021 20:50	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
035	Attachment: SAS_edit_QUALIFICATIONS 2022 Cabinet Paper	14 August 2021 09:43	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
036	Attachment: Word Doc	14 August 2021 16:34	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)

036.1	Attachment: Word Doc		Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
037	Attachment: Word Doc: Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper	15 August 2021 10:48	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
038	Attachment: Word Doc: Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper	15 August 2021 11:05	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
039	Attachment: Word Doc Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper – 17 Aug	15 August 2021 19:55	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
040	Attachment: Word Doc	16 August 2021 15:08	Out of scope	~
041	Attachment: FW: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	16 August 2021 19:09	Out of scope	~
042	Attachment: Qualification 2022 Cabinet Paper – 17 Aug – Speaking Note	16 August 2021 20:49	Free and frank exchange of views	s.30(b)(ii)
043	Attachment: Word Doc	17 August 2021 11:11		
044	Attachment: Word Doc	17 August 2021 19:12	Out of scope	~
045	Attachment: ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS 2022	18 August 2021 10:07	Information otherwise accessible	s.25(1)

Enclosure 001 Attachment: Word doc

Out of Scope

No decisions have yet been taken in relation to the 2021/22 qualifications approach.

- *Discussions will be held with stakeholders through the National Qualifications 2021 Group based on latest public health advice, and a decision made in time to allow centres to plan for delivery from the start of the new academic session.*
- *Contingencies will be considered to allow for any further disruption to learning that may occur.*

Out of scope

Enclosure 002 - Attachment: Word doc

Out of scope

No decisions have been taken in relation to the 2021/22 qualifications approach.

- Discussions will be held with stakeholders through the National Qualifications 2021 Group based on latest public health advice, and a decision made in time to allow centres to plan for delivery from the start of the new academic session.
- Contingencies will be considered to allow for any further disruption to learning that may occur.
- Decisions regarding timetabling are for individual local authorities and schools.
- The Scottish Government's key priority remains educating children safely while affording them the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Out of scope

Enclosure 003 - Attachment: 2022 National Qualifications Approach - Update

From: Malcolm Pentland

Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
14 June 2021

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

2022 National Qualifications Approach - Update

Purpose

1. To provide an update on SQA proposals in relation to arrangements for assessment of National Courses for academic year 2021-22 [redacted s.30 (b)(ii)]

Priority

2. **Urgent** – [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Background

3. Briefing on the working assumption in relation to the approach to the assessment of national qualifications in 2022 was set out in a submission from [Redacted s38(1)(b)] on 27 May 2021. Since then the SQA has ensured further consideration of the proposed approach by the National Qualifications 2021 Group and the SQA's Qualifications Committee. We understand that the SQA Board approved the approach last week and that the Chief Examiner will be writing to you imminently. She will set out the approach in more detail and seek your support for it.
4. The SQA recognises the significance of the work being done by the OECD and the implications of this for future of National Courses and their assessment but also emphasise that some time will be required to develop the next generation of National Courses. It will, therefore, propose that for the 2021-22 academic year:
 - an examination diet takes place in April/May 2022 with external assessment of both question papers and coursework (subject to the public health position making it safe to do so);
 - there would be course modifications to take account of the loss of learning and restrictions on time as learners; and
 - the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) developed for this year (and reviewed for potential improvements) would be used as the contingency should the examination diet subsequently need to be cancelled.

5. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Recommendation

6. The you:
 - note this update and that the Chief Examiner will be writing to you imminently setting out SQA's proposals for the assessment of National Courses next academic year;

- [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Malcolm Pentland
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
14 June 2021

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training			X		
DG Education and Justice Director of Learning [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Analysis Sam Anson, Learning Directorate Mick Wilson, Learning Directorate Andy Drought, Learning Directorate Liza McLean, Learning Directorate Alison Taylor, Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)], SGLD [Redacted s38(1)(b)], SGLD [Redacted s38(1)(b)], SGLD Comms Education [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Comms Colin McAllister, Special Adviser					

Enclosure 004 - Attachment: Summary of Young people's views about assessment 2022

Young people's views about assessment 2022 - Data gathered from young people in June 2021

Please note that we have gathered the views below from a small group of young people within a very tight timescale (less than 24 hours) at the request of Scottish Government officials. These views are not representative and, as such, we would be grateful if they were shared privately with officials and the Cabinet Secretary only.

Many young people feel their rights have not been upheld in decision-making on exams and assessment this year. Going forward, we feel it is essential that this is resolved, and that young people are put at the heart of these decisions.

While we recognise that timescales are very tight, we feel that young people do need to be consulted in a meaningful way on assessments 2022. The Learner Panel that we deliver for SQA would be a good vehicle for gathering these views in a meaningful way, with the appropriate timescales in place, and subject to agreement with SQA.

Should we go back to an exam system?

- *"I sat my Nat5 exams in the old system. I think it works for certain people and others not so much. I think it does not test pupils knowledge in a fair way and having one chance to prove yourself isn't enough."*
- *"Anyone I've spoke to all have different opinions, some people want the old exam system back and others are completely against it but I guess it just depends on how people learn and like to be tested on their knowledge".*
- *"I feel the old system tested everybody equally as we all sat the same exams at the same time therefore no cheating could be done like this years TikTok escapade. Also, the ACM is such a stress on teachers. They have to mark all the 'assessments' as well as keep up with teaching and other marking. This system is not fair on them."*
- *From what I've heard from my friends most people want the old exam system only because their qualifications are viewed as more valid and worth something - so if the other system could guarantee validity then more people would want it. There is a lot of misconceptions that grades were just handed out this year and last year and people worry that universities don't regard them to the same level as previous years. If we did return to an exam system i think significant modification would be necessary. it shouldn't all depend on a one day exam and should include more aspects of class work etc*

If we did go back to an exam system, what should we change about it to make it better?

- *"If we were to go back to the old exam system I think the SQA and the government need to ensure students are taught the areas that they will be questioned on in the paper because in subjects like Maths it's such a broad subject and having more specific teaching in the weeks leading up to the exam can help pupils understand certain areas to a better extent."*

- *“There has to be some sort of assurance that students are taught key areas in the exam for example this year for my higher RMPS, I was not taught the philosophical part of the course then the SQA said they needed that part and I had a week to learn the entire philosophical course and sit my ‘assessment’.”*

Should we keep the ACM assessments system in some form rather than returning to exams?

- *“I think the ACM in a way better state is what is best. But it only works if it’s used fairly and properly unlike this year.”*
- *“In my opinion the ACM was a duplicate of the old Exam system, the only difference is that we sat the papers at different times and they were internally marked.”*
- *“As someone that’s been doing them the past few days, and have one today, (the 2021 system) is not very good. As others have said; no study leave and still having to go to other classes even though you might have an exam later that day in another subject - additionally we’ve had very short notice about timetables + they’re all jam-packed together over the space of 1 or 2 weeks for the most part”*
- *“Papers must be sat at the same time to stop leaks, there must be clear rules about “resits”, there must be exceptional circumstances appeals”*

If we did keep the ACM assessment model, is there anything that needs to change about it?

- *“The teachers should not have to mark them, I’ve seen how stressed they’ve become with that extra workload and some teachers have told me it’s not even worth the money. All schools need to be as similar as possible, none of the one school does multiple exams in one week whereas the next school does them spaced out. They also need to space assessments out from the beginning till the end of the year so it doesn’t replicate a normal school year as it did this year. Also if COVID is still around, self isolation and being off because you have COVID need to be taken into consideration because some people I know have had weeks off school due to this.”*
- *“If they were continuing with the ACM, there would need to be assessments throughout the year and not just at the end of the year like this year was.”*
- *“The schools were left to their own devices, advising schools shouldn’t replicate exam diet but from my own experience we have been exam day after day with the papers reduced or halved and completed the following day. From looking on tiktok their have been students sitting in exam halls (I can send the video) replicating what looks to be an exam diet. Although schools had been left to do whatever they were giving no other choice considering the distribution the lockdown had brought. If someone is unhappy with their grade because they have missed a lot of content for example to Covid then they should be allowed to appeal that grade however the SQA have still not outlined what the appeals system will exactly have in it (who can appeal).”*

Enclosure 005 - Attachment: Word Doc

From: Malcolm Pentland
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
24 June 2021

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS

Purpose

1. To provide an overview of possible options for assessment of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2021-22 academic session, in advance of a meeting with officials on Friday 25 June.

Timing

2. **Urgent**; this paper is provided to support a meeting taking place at 1330 on Friday 25 June.

Detail

3.

[Out of scope]

OECD Review/Future Transformation

[Out of scope]

4. As such, it will be important to be clear in any messaging that any changes to the qualifications system that existed pre-Covid-19, for the 2022 qualifications, are based purely on ongoing effects of Covid-19, such as significant disruption to learning, and/or public health grounds. Any decisions on the 2021/22 academic session are not an indication of any future direction for the qualifications which will be considered separately after due consultation.

Stakeholder Views

5. Learners, teachers and the system are all keen to understand how qualifications will be assessed in 2022. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

6. The Chief Examiner wrote to you on 18 June, providing her strong advice that there should be an exam diet for the graded national courses (National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) in the 2021-22 academic session with minor modifications to the course requirements. The advice included retaining the 2020-21 ACM as a fall-back

contingency option with pre-determined check points through the year informed by public health advice.

- [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

7. You responded to the Chief Examiner on 22 June, and announced in parliament on the same day, that you wanted to take more time to gather wider views, consider the issues and take account of the latest public health advice before confirming any plans in advance of the new school term in August.

Options for 2021-22 National Qualifications

8. There are a range of possible options for the approach to graded national courses in 2021-22, although some carry significant risk:

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Public Health Advice

9. Key to making decisions on this issue will be any modelling around the state of the pandemic and access to public health advice in late July/early August.

10. Officials are continuing to work with key partners, including through the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group, to develop and issue updated guidance that will support schools to reopen safely after the summer holidays.

11. Guidance issued to local authorities last week, ahead of the end of term states that schools should retain the current mitigations until the end of term with the logistical starting point being the same mitigations after the summer holidays.

12. Mitigations will not be in place any longer than necessary. However, schools will need time to remove mitigations at the start of term if it is safe to do so, particularly the more logistically challenging ones (e.g. staggered start and stop times, groupings, etc).

13. A review is currently underway to consider how best to minimise disruption to children and young people's education, including, as you identified in your statement earlier this week, by identifying whether and to what extent the requirement for young people to self-isolate as contacts of positive cases can safely be reduced in future.

14. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

15. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Legal Advice

16.

[redacted s.36(1)]

Equality and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments

17. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

18.

[Out of scope]

rUK Position

-

[out of scope]

Next Steps

19. As Stage 4 (the submission of provisional results) of the ACM completes tomorrow (25 June), it is proposed that further engagement be carried out over the next two to three weeks to gather further views on options around assessment in 2021-22, particularly in relation to young people.

20. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

21. Once these views are gathered, they can be considered alongside the latest public health advice at that point to inform a decision in advance of the return of schools in August.

Recommendation

22. The Cabinet Secretary is invited to:

- Note potential options for approaching the assessment of graded national courses in the 2021-22 academic session;
- Agree to officials seeking seek advice from clinical advisors in early August to inform a final decision on the approach to assessment in 2021/22.
- Indicate whether she has any views on these options prior to officials taking forward any engagement with stakeholders.

Malcolm Pentland
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
24 June 2021

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training			x		
DG Education and Justice Director of Learning Director of Advanced Learning and Science Linda Pooley, Learning Directorate Malcolm Pentland, Learning Directorate [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Sam Anson, Learning Directorate Mick Wilson, Learning Directorate Andy Drought, Learning Directorate Liza McLean, Learning Directorate Alison Taylor, Learning Directorate [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Comms Education [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Colin McAllister, Special Adviser					

Enclosure 006 - Attachment: Learner Panel V2

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
30 June 2021

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

LEARNER VOICE THROUGH THE LEARNER PANEL

Purpose

1 To provide an overview of the SQA's Learner Panel, how learner voice has been heard as part of the ACM process in 2020-2021, and how this can be improved in session 2021-2022

Timing

2 Routine

Background

3 Following recent discussions at the NQ21 Group on SQA proposals for the assessment of NQs next academic year [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

This note provides an update on the role and work of the SQA Learner Panel to date. Annex A includes SQA Learner Engagement paper. Annex B highlights key outcomes and outputs from Learner Panel meetings.

Detail

4 The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) established a Learner Panel in November 2020. This panel allows Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) who are learning in schools and colleges, or to give honest and open feedback to the SQA on policies and decisions that impact young people. The SYP has been commissioned to support the SQA to ensure the learner panel is co-designed with a focus on themes including education recovery, assessment, equality, and attainment. Membership is from a range of learner organisations including the Scottish Youth Parliament, Carers Trust Scotland, SPARQS (college learners) as well as from individual school and college learners.

5 This follows previous work SYP has done in partnership with the SQA. SYP delivered a series of focus groups asking young people what they thought of the proposed changes to the assessment model and the equality impact the alternative certification model will have on learners, which was published in August 2020.

[Out of scope]

Session 2021/2022

7 The most recent meeting of the Learner Panel Meeting was on Tuesday 29 June at 5pm. The focus of this panel was a review of the ACM '21 model followed by a focus on 2022. This meeting took the form of a workshop, with SYP staff facilitating the session encouraging participation. Officials should receive notes on this meeting shortly and these will be shared with Cabinet Secretary.

8 A member of SQA staff has recorded a video message about 2022 options and the future of assessment and this was sent to the Learner Panel on 17 June. Feedback is currently being received and analysed.

9 The next again panel will take place on Tuesday 27 July and thereafter on the last Tuesday of every month.

10 Other planned Learner engagement

- Virtual event for young people to ask questions about NQ21 ACM/Appeals, with Capital FM – w/c 28/06/2021
- Enquire – the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning live event 23/06/2021
- Who Cares? Scotland – meeting took place on Friday 18th June to answer their questions about the ACM and Appeals. Further meeting being scheduled to discuss future Learner engagement and Certification Day event. Who Cares? Scotland have been asked to nominate Learners they work with to join the Learner Panel.
- Planning of a Q&A session over the summer on SQA Facebook platform for learners to ask SQA and partner agencies any questions they may have about results and appeals

Next Steps

11

[Out of scope]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
30 June 2021

Annex A



Learner engagement update

[Out of scope]

Annex B

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 007.1, Attachment: FW: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments

From: UNDERSTUDY, SOS1 <SOS1.UNDERSTUDY@education.gov.uk>

Sent: 13 July 2021 12:35

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: PS, Sec-OF-STATE <Sec-OF-STATE.PS@education.gov.uk>

Subject: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments

Dear Shirley-Anne,

Please find attached a letter from Secretary of State for Education, regarding 2021/22 qualifications and assessments in England.

Kind regards,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] to Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, Secretary of State for Education



Department
for Education

Enclosure 007.1 - Letter from Secretary of State

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 008 - FW: LETTER FROM UKG SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION - QUALIFICATIONS & ASSESSMENTS

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 16 July 2021 10:22

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning
<DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training
<MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DG Education &
Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science
<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Gorman G
(Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: LETTER FROM UKG SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION - QUALIFICATIONS &
ASSESSMENTS

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Response issued – copy attached.

Could I ask that all responses are, in future, put on to letter template with full address added.

Many thanks.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

T: 0131 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | M: 07 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | E: cabsecES@gov.scot

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

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From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 15 July 2021 07:27

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Director of Learning
<DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training
<MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DG Education &
Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science
<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Gorman G
(Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: LETTER FROM UKG SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION - QUALIFICATIONS &
ASSESSMENTS

PS

Hope you are well this morning?

I would suggest the following as reply. As confirmed yesterday this is more of a holding reply reflecting our current position. I would intend a more fulsome reply to Mr Williamson once Scottish arrangements are confirmed:

Dear Gavin Williamson,

Many thanks for your correspondence detailing qualification and assessment arrangements for session 2021/22 in England. I found it extremely helpful to see your latest thinking, including detail of subject level adaptations and the approach to formal assessments.

In Scotland, our approach for session 2021/22 continues to be developed.

With regards to course content, the Scottish Qualifications Agency issued subject specific guidelines in late June to teachers and lecturers. These confirmed the modifications to course content across subjects and levels.

In terms of formal assessment, the National Qualifications group, comprised of a range of educational stakeholders, are currently reviewing the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) used in session 2020-2021, with a view to identifying the best approach for the year ahead. Views are being sought from Parent/carer and learner groups to further inform our decisions.

It is my intention to confirm assessment arrangements for session 2021-2022 before centres re-open in mid-August. I will of course share details of these arrangements with you when confirmed.

I wish you lovely summer and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Thank you, have a lovely day

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning

Sent: 13 July 2021 12:58

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: LETTER FROM UKG SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION - QUALIFICATIONS & ASSESSMENTS

[Redacted s38(1)(b)],

In Malcolm's absence, please see attached.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Email: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Area: Currently working from home.

This chain diverges from Enclosure 015 at the email of 13 July 2021 12:56

Enclosure 008.1 - Attachment: Email FW: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 16 July 2021 10:21
To: UNDERSTUDY, SOS1 <SOS1.UNDERSTUDY@education.gov.uk>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>
Cc: PS, Sec-OF-STATE <Sec-OF-STATE.PS@education.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments

PS/Secretary of State

Please find attached a response from Shirley-Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills to the Secretary of State's letter.

Many thanks.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

T: 0131 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | M: 07 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | E: cabsecES@gov.scot
The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

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From: UNDERSTUDY, SOS1 <SOS1.UNDERSTUDY@education.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 July 2021 12:35
To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>
Cc: PS, Sec-OF- STATE <Sec-OF-STATE.PS@education.gov.uk>
Subject: Update from Secretary of State on 2020/21 qualifications and assessments

Dear Shirley-Anne,

Please find attached a letter from Secretary of State for Education, regarding 2021/22 qualifications and assessments in England.

Kind regards,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] to Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, Secretary of State for Education



Enclosure 008.2 - Attachment: PDF

16 July 2021

Dear Gavin

[Out of scope] In Scotland, our approach for session 2021/22 continues to be developed.

With regards to course content, the Scottish Qualifications Agency issued subject specific guidelines in late June to teachers and lecturers. These confirmed the modifications to course content across subjects and levels.

In terms of formal assessment, the National Qualifications group, comprised of a range of educational stakeholders, are currently reviewing the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) used in session 2020-2021, with a view to identifying the best approach for the year ahead. Views are being sought from Parent/carer and learner groups to further inform our decisions.

It is my intention to confirm assessment arrangements for session 2021-2022 before centres re-open in mid-August. I will of course share details of these arrangements with you when confirmed.

Yours sincerely

Enclosure 009 - Attachment: Options Paper ACM 2022 for NQ WG 21

Paper for discussion on ACM 2022 for NQ Working Group 21st July, 2021.

Recap from 13th July 2021 Working Group discussion

A short recap on what was discussed and agreed last week:

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Working Group discussion

It would be helpful to think around these models further. In the first place, it would be good to explore other advantages and disadvantages to these options, their workability; and in the second place, whether there are potential refinements to these options, and finally, exploring the group's preferences for an option.

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 010 - Attachment: Word Doc: Mr Hepburn briefing

OECD CFE REVIEW AND EDUCATION REFORM

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 011 - Attachment: Word Doc: Learning for Sustainability and STEM - Briefing

BRIEFING FOR THE MINISTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND FURTHER EDUCATION, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

[Out of scope]

MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN CFE AND SENIOR PHASE ASSESSMENT

We await with interest the outcomes of the OECD's comparative analysis of assessment and qualifications approaches, expected in the autumn.

- The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills confirmed on 22 June that the OECD will publish this by the end of August.

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012 - Attachment: PDF

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.1 - Attachment: PDF

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.2 - Attachment: PDF

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.3 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.4 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.5 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.6 -Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.7 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 012.8 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Out of Scope

7. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The last two academic sessions have been challenging ones, for learners, parents, teachers and others across our education system, particularly in relation to the qualifications.

One key decision, in 2020-21 reflecting disruption to learning as a result of Covid-19, was that a normal diet of examinations could not go ahead. Decisions such as this have been led, and will continue to be led, by the science, informed by the views and concerns of stakeholders.

An Alternative Certification Model (ACM) was put in place for 2020-21, taking into account the disruption to learning and providing a flexible framework for schools and colleges to draw upon a range of assessment tools in arriving at provisional results for learners based on demonstrated attainment.

Taking into account recommendations from the National Qualifications experience 2020 rapid review, the ACM was arrived at through a collaborative approach. The National Qualifications 2021 Group, chaired by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), co-created the model and continue to monitor and oversee implementation. The Group draws its membership from the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland, School Leaders Scotland, the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, the Scottish Government, the National Parent Forum of Scotland, and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Provisional results were shared with learners by their centres in advance of the 25 June deadline for submission to SQA. In line with the manifesto commitments for the first 100 days of the new government, SQA are progressing with formal certification of these results which will take place as previously scheduled on 10 August.

In recognition of the ongoing disruption through May and into June in some parts of Scotland, a contingency arrangement was put in place for learners who had completed their courses but for whom, due to particularly significant disruption the required evidence demonstrating their attainment could not be gathered within the flexibilities already provided. A later submission date for provisional results of 3 September was agreed for these candidates.

For learners unhappy with their results, the 2021 appeals process opened on 25 June allowing a direct right of appeal. From that date, learners were able to indicate an intention to appeal, with the formal appeals process commencing once results are published on 10 August. The closing date for priority appeals is Tuesday 24 August, and for non-priority appeals is Friday 27 August.

Ongoing support has been provided to learners throughout the summer from various agencies.

Next Steps

- (1) Consultation with stakeholders, particularly with learners, parents and carers, is underway to inform decisions on the approach to the assessment of National Qualifications in 2022 in advance of the new academic session. SQA have already confirmed [modifications](#) for NQ subjects for 2021/2022;
- (2) Throughout the remainder of 2021 and into 2022, we will continue to monitor the approach to National Qualifications, taking action and implementing any contingencies if necessary to mitigate any further disruption for learners and the teaching/lecturer workforce whilst ensuring that fairness and credibility of the qualifications is maintained; and
- (3) We will work with partners to develop the future approach to assessment beyond 2022, informed by the OECD's report on comparative analysis of assessment and qualifications approaches expected at the end of August.

Out of Scope

Out of Scope

ADDITIONAL 'SQA' PLACES IN HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
We are responding to the potential impact of the changes to the SQA process last year and this year on students looking to undertake further and higher courses in Scotland in the new academic year.

- Through the Scottish Funding Council, we will continue to provide additional support to our institutions to ensure that students are able to take up places at university through the provision of additional places.
- For 2021-22 we will continue to fund the additional 1,297 places that were made available last year for students impacted by the SQA changes.
- We are also making provision for further additional places, currently estimated to be around 2,500 for new students, starting courses in the next academic year.
- Colleges have also been supported to deliver additional flexibility within their courses including: providing additional funding to support students to complete their studies; providing additional funding for students who have to carry some learning forward and complete their course in 2021-22; and ensuring students who wish to move on to further study at university or college are treated flexibly if their learning has been impacted by the pandemic.
- Both Government and the SFC will continue to work with colleges and universities to build a full understanding of the needs for 2021-22 and beyond.

Out of Scope

Enclosure 014 - Attachment: Word Doc

From: Malcolm Pentland
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
04 August 2021

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

Purpose

1. To provide an update on a proposed approach for the assessment of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2021-22 academic session, following further engagement with stakeholders.

Timing

2. **Urgent.** It was agreed that a decision on this matter would be announced prior to schools returning. More details on potential handling of an announcement is set out below.

Background

3. The Chief Examiner previously provided advice on the qualifications situation for 2021/22. In addition to this you asked officials to gather wider views, consider the issues and take account of the latest public health advice in order to inform a decision on plans the coming school year, which could be confirmed in advance of the new school term in August.

Stakeholder Views

4. Officials have engaged further with learners and parents and their representative organisations, and an overview of their views is outlined below. Due to timelines involved, engagement with learners and parents has run in parallel to the development of a proposed approach undertaken by SQA, working in collaboration with the National Qualifications 2021 (NQ21) Group. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Learners

5. We sought the views of learners through a number of channels. These included the SQA Learner Panel; SYP (including views from [Redacted s38(1)(b)] MSYP and views gathered during SYP learner engagement); Career Ready^[1] students within Scottish Government and Education Scotland; the final meeting of the Youth Panel (Young Scot) and also a meeting of the Pupil Council at Denny High School.

[1] A programme available to S5 learners aimed at developing employability skills

6. As may be expected, there was no clear consensus of what assessment arrangements in session 2021-2022 should look like. However, key messages did emerge across and within groups of learners:

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Parents

7. The views of parents on the approach for 2022 have been gathered through an online session set up with NPFS regional representatives, attended by an SG official, along with feedback captured at an internal NPFS discussion, which NPFS have shared:

-

[Out of scope]

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)] National Qualifications Group

8. Over the summer period, the NQ21 Group has been giving further detailed consideration to a potential approach to the qualifications for the coming academic session, including contingencies. The Group is clear that demonstrated attainment should continue to form the basis of any approach to the qualifications in 2021-22 to ensure both fairness and validity.

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

17. We understand that the Chief Examiner will write the Cabinet Secretary shortly to provide an update from the National Qualifications Group on these proposals for session 2021/2022.

Public Health Advice

18. Public health advice remains key to decision making in this area.

19. Officials have engaged with the Deputy Chief Medical Officer (DCMO) who has indicated that, from a clinical and public health perspective, and taking into account the uncertainties around the future course of Covid19, the proposals relating to exams look sensible and appropriate.

20. The sub-group on Education and Children's Issues chaired by Carol Tannahill (on which the DCMO sits) considers evidence from a rounded perspective and feeds into CERG. Its advice is approved by the CMO office and the Chair of the overarching C19 Advisory Group. Officials will continue to ensure that proposals reflect and take account of the sub-group's advice – with flexibility to reflect any future advice in the practical arrangements for exams.

21. Officials will continue to monitor the position and any ongoing disruption to learning, although it is anticipated that [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

[Out of scope]

Legal Advice

25.

[Redacted s.36(1)]

Equality and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments

28. As was the case for 2020 and 2021, officials will need to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment in relation to the Scottish Government's policy on the model for the award of national qualifications in 2021-22.

29. In addition, in exercising its functions, the SQA is also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty and, as a public authority, it is subject to the same constraints as Ministers (mentioned in paragraph 25), as well as in compliance with the Convention rights. Subject to the outcome of the reference by the UK Government's Law Officers to the Supreme Court, the provisions of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill would apply to both Ministers and the SQA from the time it is commenced, which might conceivably be within school year 2021/22. The implications of that for Ministers would have to be assessed further once the outcome is known, and the SQA will wish to do the same.

[Out of scope]

Advice

31. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Handling strategy for announcement

35. [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Recommendation and Conclusion

40. You are invited to:

a) note the identified proposed option for approaching the assessment of graded national courses in the 2021-22 academic session, and indicate if you are content with this approach;

b) note the suggested handling strategy for making the announcement, and indicate if you are content; and

c) indicate whether you are content for the draft note at Annex A to be sent to FM.

Malcolm Pentland
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
04 August 2021

[redacted s.29(1)(b)]

Shirley-Anne Somerville

August 2021

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training			x		
Permanent Secretary DG Education and Justice Director of Learning Director of Advanced Learning and Science Gayle Gorman Ollie Bray Sam Anson Mick Wilson Andy Drought Liza McLean Alison Taylor [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Roddy Macdonald Linda Pooley [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Denise McKay [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Comms Education [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Colin McAllister					

Enclosure 015 - Attachment: Word Doc - Exam Diet 2021 – Briefing

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 015.1 Attachment: Word Doc - Exam Diet 2021 – Summary Tables

SQA Exam Results August (Pre-Review)

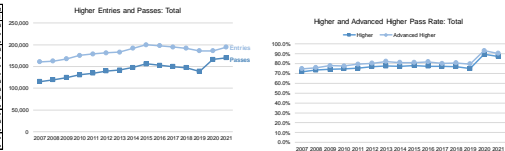
The different approach to deriving results for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher in 2021 should be borne in mind, particularly when commenting on 2021 results in the context of previous years. This includes comparisons with 2020 results, when grades were awarded primarily on the basis of teacher estimates.

Select a subject: **Total**

Skills for Work entries were included in Access, Intermediate and Higher depending on the SCQF level of the qualification until 2013.
In 2019 Higher Units were removed.

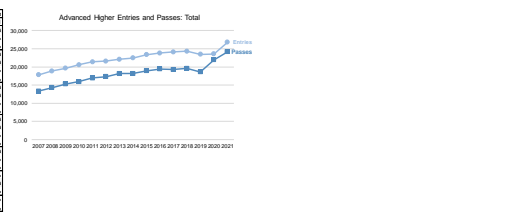
Entries

SCQF Level	Qualification	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2007-2021	2019-2021	2020-2021		
SCQF Level 2	National 2	2,700	3,938	2,427	2,573	3,138	3,159	1,822	438	158	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	
Total		2,700	3,938	2,427	2,573	3,138	3,159	1,822	438	158	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	
SCQF Level 3	National 3	23,951	30,521	31,648	33,261	32,826	38,677	33,422	10,339	3,340	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198
Total		23,951	30,521	31,648	33,261	32,826	38,677	33,422	10,339	3,340	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198



Passes

SCQF Level	Qualification	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2007-2021	2019-2021	2020-2021		
SCQF Level 2	National 2	1,950	2,076	1,560	1,615	1,338	1,324	1,300	252	48	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Total		1,950	2,076	1,560	1,615	1,338	1,324	1,300	252	48	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10



Pass Rate

SCQF Level	Qualification	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2007-2021	2019-2021	2020-2021			
SCQF Level 2	National 2	71.9%	52.7%	63.9%	62.6%	42.6%	41.9%	71.9%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%
Total		71.9%	52.7%	63.9%	62.6%	42.6%	41.9%	71.9%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%

Briefing table

Total	Entries		Passes		Pass Rate		PP		
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021			
Advanced Higher	23,970	26,795	3,222	21,939	24,162	2,227	83.1%	90.2%	-4.9
Higher	156,214	154,661	12,421	136,209	150,689	7,761	89.2%	87.3%	1.9
National 5	300,639	297,973	2,666	267,656	255,517	12,041	89.0%	85.8%	3.2
National 4	103,596	104,378	763	84,228	89,894	4,334	81.0%	85.1%	-4.1
National 3	21,708	21,046	722	13,821	13,131	1,151	61.3%	66.1%	-4.8

National 4	2014-2021		2020-2021	
	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	122,716	136,876	122,861	116,032
Passes	114,173	122,071	114,635	107,631
Pass Rate	93.0%	93.3%	93.2%	92.8%

National 5	2014-2021		2020-2021	
	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	212,595	288,076	295,083	293,220
Passes (A-C)	174,131	229,870	224,160	233,005
Pass Rate	81.1%	79.8%	79.4%	79.5%

Higher	2014-2021		2020-2021	
	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	181,855	188,882	187,774	194,813
Passes (A-C)	147,889	156,000	152,791	150,910
Pass Rate	77.1%	78.1%	77.2%	77.0%

Advanced Higher	2014-2021		2020-2021	
	change	%change	change	%change
Entries	22,430	23,348	23,705	24,112
Passes (A-C)	18,171	18,889	19,443	19,263
Pass Rate	81.0%	80.9%	81.7%	80.0%

a. Intermediate 1 and 2 is still available.
b. 2014 - Previous Higher only. 2015 - Previous Higher and New Higher combined.
c. 2014 - 2016 Previous Advanced Higher only.
pp = percentage point change.

The different approach to deriving results for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher in 2021 should be borne in mind, particularly when commenting on 2021 results in the context of previous years. This includes comparisons with 2020 results, when grades were awarded primarily on the basis of teacher estimates.

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 016-Attachment: Word Doc: Exam Diet 2021 – Briefing – Ministerial Submission 01

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 017 - Attachment: Word Doc: Results Day Narrative 2021 Draft

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 018 - Attachment: Email: FW: FOR CLEARANCE: Media query - immediate - SQA op ed on exams – Herald

The same as Enclosure 030

**Enclosure 019 - Attachment: Word Doc: Qualifications 2022 – Advice to Cab
Sec**

The same as Enclosure 024.1

Enclosure 020 - Attachment: Word Doc: Assessment 2022 – Ministerial Submission

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]
Learning Directorate
August 2021

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR SESSION 2021/2022 - GOVERNMENT INITIATED QUESTION

Purpose

1. To seek your approval for a Government Initiated Question (GIQ) to make public the decision to hold examinations for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021/2022.

Priority

2. **IMMEDIATE** – following discussion with special advisers it is suggested that a GIQ be lodged for answer on Wednesday 11 August.

Background

3. On 4 August 2021 Malcolm Pentland submitted to you a submission on the approach to assessing National Qualifications in 2021/22. Within this submission was a suggestion that a GIQ could be used to inform Parliament of the arrangements should Cabinet Secretary be content with the proposed approach.

Timing

4. Following discussion with special advisers, it is suggested that the GIQ should be lodged for answer on Wednesday 11 August.
5. I am currently checking timing for the lodging of the GIQ with Parliamentary Clerks and will confirm details with PO when known.

Recommendation

6. The Cabinet Secretary is invited to:
 - Approve the GIQ as set out in Annex A to this this submission and to nominate an MSP to lodge the question; and
 - Agree the proposed timescale to answering the GIQ.

**GOVERNMENT INITIATED QUESTION: ACADEMIC SESSION 2021/2022
ASSESSMENT**

QUESTION

“To ask the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to provide an update on the assessment plans for National 5/Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021/2022”

ANSWER

I can confirm that the central planning assumption is that an examination diet for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will be held in session 2021/2022.

My decision has been informed by the views of stakeholders, including the National Qualifications Group, and by public health advice.

Assessment modifications across National courses for the next academic session have already been confirmed by the SQA.

However, I can reassure Parliament that careful contingency planning is underway should there be further significant disruption to learning and teaching and, or public health conditions that do not allow for the holding of an examination diet. That planning is being done at pace by the National Qualifications Group, which has met frequently over the summer to consider options for the coming session. It will issue detailed guidance at the earliest opportunity.

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 021 - Attachment: Word Doc: Exam Diet 2021 – Briefing

Out of Scope

When will an announcement be made on next year's qualifications? Will exams go ahead next year?

- An announcement on plans for 2022 will be made soon.
- As always, the safety, wellbeing and education of our young people will be the top priority.

Out of Scope

Enclosure 022 Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 022.1 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 022.2 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 022.3 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 022.4 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

Out of scope

When will an announcement be made on next year's qualifications? Will exams go ahead next year?

- An announcement on plans for 2022 will be made soon.
- As always, the safety, wellbeing and education of our young people will be the top priority.

Out of scope

Out of scope

Enclosure 023.1 - Attachment: Word Doc – Core Narrative

Out of scope

When will an announcement be made on next year's qualifications? Will exams go ahead next year?

- An announcement on plans for 2022 will be made soon.
- As always, the safety, wellbeing and education of our young people will be the top priority.

Out of scope

Enclosure 024 - Attachment: Word Doc - NQ – Results Days 10 Aug

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 024.1 Attachment: Word Doc – Core Narrative

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 025 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

RESULTS DAY NARRATIVE

Out of scope

2022 Qualifications and Future of Assessment

When will an announcement be made on next year's qualifications? Will exams go ahead next year?

- An announcement on plans for 2022 will be made soon.
- As always, the safety, wellbeing and education of our young people will be the top priority.

Out of scope

RESULTS DAY NARRATIVE

Out of scope

2022 Qualifications and Future of Assessment

When will an announcement be made on next year's qualifications? Will exams go ahead next year?

- An announcement on plans for 2022 will be made soon.
- As always, the safety, wellbeing and education of our young people will be the top priority.

Out of scope

Enclosure 027.1 - Attachment: Word Doc

[Out of scope]

**Enclosure 028 - Attachment: Cab Sec ES to First Minister – School Exams
2021-2022**

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 029 - Attachment: Word Doc

From: Carolyn Younie/Amy Harron
Learning Directorate
Tuesday 10 August

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Education Recovery Strategy: Near final version for comment

[Out of scope]

5. Members of the Education Recovery Strategy Sub-Group previously agreed that the document should consist of the following short chapters:

- Overview
- ELC
- Health and Wellbeing
- Supporting Learning and Attainment
- Ensuring Equity
- Additional Support Needs
- National Qualifications
- Supporting Positive Destinations for Children and Young People
- Higher and Further Education
- Supporting the Workforce
- Summary and Next Steps

[Out of scope]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
10 August 2021

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery			X		
Minister for Children and Young People			X		
Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment & Training			X		
Permanent Secretary DG Education and Justice Director of Learning Alison Cumming Gayle Gorman Director of Advanced Learning and Science Director for Children and Families Mick Wilson Andrew Drought Malcolm Pentland Liza McLean Alison Taylor Linda Pooley [redacted s.38(1)(b)] SGLD Clare Hicks [redacted s.38(1)(b)] Gillian Hamilton Colin McAllister David Livey Comms Education & Skills [redacted s.38(1)(b)]					

Education Recovery Strategy

- Building a collaborative and pandemic-proof system to support excellence and equity

Out of scope

7. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

[Out of scope]

Work has been undertaken by the NQ21 Group over the summer to develop plans for the 2021/2022 academic session. Consultation with stakeholders, particularly learners and parents, has also informed decisions on the approach to the assessment of National Qualifications in 2022 which were announced on 11 August.

The central planning assumption will be for examinations to proceed in 2022 for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, with [modifications for NQ subjects confirmed by SQA prior to the summer break](#).

In the event that additional disruption is experienced, additional adaptations to the exams will be considered. These may include adaptations to the content of the papers, such as the removal of certain content, or an indication to learners of the topics to be covered, through to the physical arrangements for sitting the papers, such as the use of multiple classrooms rather than assembly or gym halls, if public health advice advises certain approaches to large gatherings.

A further contingency arrangement will be in place for the possibility of more significant disruption, and with it public health advice advising against large gatherings of people, which would lead to the cancellation of exams – such as we have seen in the past two academic sessions. In this case, we will look to draw on planned assessments gathered at appropriate times throughout the year. Guidance on this arrangement will be provided at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the volume and gathering of evidence is robust, reliable and proportionate.

Next Steps

(1) Throughout the remainder of 2021 and into 2022, we will continue to monitor the approach to National Qualifications, taking action and implementing any contingencies if necessary to mitigate any further disruption for learners and the teaching/lecturer workforce whilst ensuring that fairness and credibility of the qualifications is maintained; and

(2) We will work with partners to develop the future approach to assessment beyond 2022, informed by the OECD's report on comparative analysis of assessment and qualifications approaches expected at the end of August.

Out of scope

ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL COURSES IN 2021/22

Background

Advice from officials on 4 August provided an update on a proposed approach for the assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2021-22 academic year that has been developed by the SQA in collaboration with the National Qualifications Group. On 6 August, the Chief Examining Officer wrote to you also outlining the proposed approach (detail on approach provided below).

On 10 August you indicated that you were content with assessment proposals and for a headline announcement to be made on 11 August, with a GIQ being answered and a news release issuing.

[Out of scope]

The NQ Group will then issue its own communication providing more detail on the contingencies - in the shape of further modifications/adaptations should the level of disruption increase, and, in a scenario where the diet had to be cancelled, the use of in-year assessment evidence (demonstrated attainment) to support teacher judged grades. A draft of the NQ Group communication (which would be issued by SQA) is attached at Annex B.

Detail

Development of arrangements

- Over the summer period, the NQ21 Group has been giving further detailed consideration to a potential approach to the qualifications for the coming academic session, including contingencies.
- Creation of the assessment approach has been informed by experiences in session 2020/2021.
- The Group is clear that demonstrated attainment should continue to form the basis of any approach to the qualifications in 2021-22 to ensure both fairness and validity.
- Assessment modifications across National courses for the next academic session have already been confirmed by the SQA.

Detail of modifications

- Subject level modifications to assessment equate to reducing the expected course content by around 20% compared to a normal year. This reduction in course content, coupled with a reduction in assessment burden in almost all subject areas, should allow for a greater focus on learning and teaching.
- These existing modifications have been designed to create more flexibility to absorb some of the impact of disrupted learning, free up teachers and learners from some of the demands of the course, whilst having relatively minimal impacts upon validity and reliability.

- NQ21 has identified a preferred “gear change model” [formal name still to be confirmed] to include mitigations to offset any further disruption to learning whether through self-isolation or future lockdowns, and any public health conditions impacting on delivery of an exam diet.
- This model includes a set of contingencies, with a clear understanding of when we would shift to a different plan, and under what conditions, is still to be developed at pace by the National Qualifications Group, which has met frequently over the summer to consider options for the coming session. It will issue detailed guidance at the earliest opportunity.
- The intent would be to have three stages or gears to the contingency as follows:
 - (a) operate an exam diet with already announced modifications, and,
 - (b) if some degree of additional disruption is experienced, to insulate examinations against further disruption with further adaptation/modification to increase accessibility, decrease stress on learners etc – e.g. Advance Notice of Topic Areas for revision purposes, more use of Open Book etc.
 - (c) in the event that examinations become impossible because of public health restrictions / lockdown, then in-year assessment evidence will be used to support teacher judged grades.
- Any approach for the 2022 qualifications, will be based purely on ongoing effects of Covid-19, such as significant disruption to learning, and/or public health grounds. [Out of scope]

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[Out of scope]

Q&A

Who have you consulted?

- Over the summer period, the NQ21 Group has been giving further detailed consideration to a potential approach to the qualifications for the coming academic session, including contingencies.
- I've listened closely to what young people and their parents have been saying and my officials have engaged further with learners and parents and their representative organisations
- Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) and National Parents Forum for Scotland (NPFS) are both represented on the NQ21 Group
- We sought the views of learners through a number of channels. These included the SQA Learner Panel; SYP; Career Ready^[1] students within Scottish Government and Education Scotland; the final meeting of the Youth Panel (Young Scot) and also a meeting of the Pupil Council.
- The views of parents on the approach for 2022 have been gathered through an online session set up with NPFS regional representatives, attended by an SG official, along with feedback captured at an internal NPFS discussion, which NPFS have shared:

Why go back to exams? OECD reform – why go back?

- Any approach for the 2022 qualifications, will be based purely on ongoing effects of Covid-19, such as significant disruption to learning, and/or public health grounds.

[Out of scope]

How to avoid over-assessment / stress / workload

- Subject level modifications to assessment equate to reducing the expected course content by around 20% compared to a normal year.
- This reduction in course content, coupled with a reduction in assessment burden in almost all subject areas, should allow for a greater focus on learning and teaching.
- From the start of the course and throughout session 2021-22, teachers and lecturers should gather examples of learners' work and keep a record of any normal, planned assessments that take place. This will provide a reliable collection of evidence that can be used to determine learners' grades if the exams are cancelled.
- To avoid increased assessment and additional workload, it is important that the evidence gathered is based only on planned work that learners will already be doing throughout the course. There is no need to carry out additional assessments. We will provide all schools, colleges and training providers with more detailed information and guidance on our contingency arrangements for the 2022 exams.

When would mitigations come into effect?

- Public health advice remains key to decision making in this area.
- The National Qualifications Group will be setting out more detail on the a set of contingencies very soon.

^[1] A programme available to S5 learners aimed at developing employability skills

- We will continue to monitor the position and any ongoing disruption to learning, although it is anticipated that the approach developed provides the flexibility to adapt to any significant levels of disruption.

[Out of scope]

**GOVERNMENT INITIATED QUESTION: ACADEMIC SESSION 2021/2022
ASSESSMENT
QUESTION**

“To ask the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to provide an update on the assessment plans for National 5/Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021/2022”

ANSWER

I can confirm that the central planning assumption is that an examination diet for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will be held in session 2021/2022.

My decision has been informed by the views of stakeholders, including the National Qualifications Group, and by public health advice.

Assessment modifications across National courses for the next academic session have already been confirmed by the SQA.

However, I can reassure Parliament that careful contingency planning is underway should there be further significant disruption to learning and teaching and, or public health conditions that do not allow for the holding of an examination diet. That planning is being done at pace by the National Qualifications Group, which has met frequently over the summer to consider options for the coming session. It will issue detailed guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Annex B

- **National Qualifications in session 2021-22**

Response from the National Qualifications Group

Today, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills has confirmed plans to hold exams for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021-22. Addressing the Scottish Parliament, the Cabinet Secretary said, [insert statement]. The **National Qualifications Group*** will continue to support the delivery of National Qualifications in session 2021-22.

Planning for further disruption

While we are planning for exams to take place in 2022, it is important that we also plan for any additional disruption that may happen during session 2021-22. We are preparing robust contingency arrangements to respond to all scenarios and avoid a sudden change of plan if the public health situation changes. This includes looking at what further support measures could be put in place to ensure, as much as possible, that the 2022 exams can still go ahead.

However, if there is significant disruption, where public health advice no longer permits large gatherings of people, it is possible that this could lead to the 2022 exams being cancelled. If this happens, we will ask teachers and lecturers to use their professional judgement to determine learners' grades, based on work that learners have already completed throughout the course.

To prepare for this scenario, from the start of the course and throughout session 2021-22, teachers and lecturers should gather examples of learners' work and keep a record of any normal, planned assessments that take place. This will provide a reliable collection of evidence that can be used to determine learners' grades if the exams are cancelled.

To avoid increased assessment and additional workload, it is important that the evidence gathered is based only on planned work that learners will already be doing throughout the course. There is no need to carry out additional assessments. We will provide all schools, colleges and training providers with more detailed information and guidance on our contingency arrangements for the 2022 exams.

Modified course assessments 2021-22

SQA has modified the course assessment requirements for each National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher course, to reduce the volume of assessment and to ease teacher, lecturer and learner workload as much as possible, while still maintaining the credibility of the qualifications. This will allow for any lost learning caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and will support learners as they progress to the next stage of their qualifications.

For most courses, these are the same modifications that were put in place for session 2020-21. For some courses, SQA has adjusted the modifications to give learners more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, in response to feedback from teachers and lecturers and the easing of public health restrictions.

In June, SQA published a brief overview of the modifications for each subject, which you can view by visiting www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects, selecting a subject, and clicking on the 'course information 2021-22' tab.

From Monday 16 August, SQA will publish 'modification summary documents' that provide more detail on these modifications and explain the assessment requirements for this year. This will help teachers and lecturers to prepare their learners for assessment.

We look forward to working with and supporting the whole education system to deliver National Qualifications for Scotland's learners.

The National Qualifications Group

*The **National Qualifications Group** consists of representatives of the following organisations:

- Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)
- Colleges Scotland
- Education Scotland
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
- National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)
- School Leaders Scotland (SLS)
- Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP)

-ENDS-

Enclosure 031 - Attachment: Word doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 031.1 - Attachment: Word doc

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 031.2 - Attachment: Word doc

CERG - weekly feedback

Out of scope

GTCS

Queries and concerns from teacher and lecturers about transition arrangements from the start of session to whatever the new plans will be in relation particularly to the support and expectations around about exams. There is an acceptance (and expectation) that something different will happen but a need for information in relation to likely speed of any change and what that means for the provision of education now.

We recognise these understandable concerns. An announcement on plans for 2022 will be made soon.

Out of scope

EDUCATION RECOVERY STRATEGY

Out of scope

7. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

[Out of scope]

Work has been undertaken by the NQ21 Group over the summer to develop plans for the 2021/2022 academic session. Consultation with stakeholders, particularly learners and parents, has also informed decisions on the approach to the assessment of National Qualifications in 2022 which were announced on 11 August.

The central planning assumption will be for examinations to proceed in 2022 for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, with [modifications for NQ subjects confirmed by SQA prior to the summer break](#).

In the event that additional disruption is experienced, additional adaptations to the exams will be considered. These may include adaptations to the content of the papers, such as the removal of certain content, or an indication to learners of the topics to be covered, through to the physical arrangements for sitting the papers, such as the use of multiple classrooms rather than assembly or gym halls, if public health advice advises certain approaches to large gatherings.

A further contingency arrangement will be in place for the possibility of more significant disruption, and with it public health advice advising against large gatherings of people, which would lead to the cancellation of exams – such as we have seen in the past two academic sessions. In this case, we will look to draw on planned assessments gathered at appropriate times throughout the year. Guidance on this arrangement will be provided at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the volume and gathering of evidence is robust, reliable and proportionate.

Next Steps

(1) Throughout the remainder of 2021 and into 2022, we will continue to monitor the approach to National Qualifications, taking action and implementing any contingencies if necessary to mitigate any further disruption for learners and the teaching/lecturer workforce whilst ensuring that fairness and credibility of the qualifications is maintained; and

(2) We will work with partners to develop the future approach to assessment beyond 2022, informed by the OECD's report on comparative analysis of assessment and qualifications approaches expected at the end of August.

Out of scope

Enclosure 031.4 - Attachment: PDF

[Out of scope]

Enclosure 032 - Attachment: Word Doc

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 033 - Attachment: Word Doc

From: Malcolm Pentland
DD Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic

13 August 2021

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

**ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN 2022 – POSSIBLE OPTIONS
BEING EXPLORED BY SQA**

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Malcolm Pentland
13 August 2021

Enclosure 034 - Attachment: Word Doc

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 035 - Attachment: SAS_edit_QUALIFICATIONS 2022 Cabinet Paper

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 036 - Attachment: Word Doc

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 036.1- Attachment: Word Doc

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 037 - Attachment: Word Doc: Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 038 - Attachment: Word Doc: Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 039 - Attachment: Word Doc Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper – 17 Aug

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 040 - Attachment: Word Doc

Out of scope

2022 QUALIFICATIONS AND FUTURE OF ASSESSMENT

We will advise our central planning assumption for awarding qualifications in 2022 as soon as possible, taking account of the latest state of the pandemic.

- We know that learners, teachers and lecturers are keen to understand how qualifications will be awarded in 2022.
- Work has been undertaken by the National Qualifications Group over the summer to develop plans for the 2021/22 academic session, and consultation has also been carried out with learners and parents.
- We are giving this careful consideration taking on board, reflecting on, and learning from, the on-going experience of this year, and informed by public health advice.

Any decision on the 2022 approach is not an indication of any future direction for the qualifications which will be considered separately after due consultation.

- Any revised or new system of qualifications, will need to be informed by the outcomes from the OECD comparative research on assessment and qualifications that is due to publish at the end of this month, along with full stakeholder engagement.
- Whilst alternative approaches were adopted in 2020 and 2021, these were temporary, emergency measures in response to the pandemic.
- Any major reform of the qualifications system will likely take at least three years to develop and fully implement.

Out of scope

**Enclosure 041 - Attachment: FW: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper:
ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**Enclosure 042 - Attachment: Qualification 2022 Cabinet Paper – 17 Aug –
Speaking Note**

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 043 - Attachment: Word Doc

GIQ – Wednesday

QUESTION

“To ask the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to provide an update on the assessment plans for National 5/Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021/2022”

ANSWER

I can confirm that the central planning assumption is that an examination diet for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will be held in session 2021/2022.

My decision has been informed by the views of stakeholders, including the National Qualifications Group, and by public health advice.

Assessment modifications across National courses for the next academic session have already been confirmed by the SQA. **These modifications reduce the expected course content compared to a normal year, in recognition of the disruption learners have experienced. Fairness for learners sitting exams in 2022 is a central concern for me. We will set out details on further support available for learners, particularly those living in poverty, in September.**

I can reassure Parliament that careful contingency planning is underway should there be further significant disruption to learning and teaching and, or public health conditions that do not allow for the holding of an examination diet. That planning is being done at pace by the National Qualifications Group, which has met frequently over the summer to consider options for the coming session. It will issue detailed guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Education Recovery: Key Actions and Next Steps

Out of scope

7. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

[Out of scope]

[FINAL TEXT ON NQ 22 TO BE CONFIRMED]

Next Steps

In addition to the work set out above, we will take the following key next steps to ensure our approach to national qualifications and assessment is robust and resilient, and supports recovery from the impacts of COVID-19:

- (1) Throughout the remainder of 2021 and into 2022, we will continue to monitor the approach to National Qualifications, taking action and implementing any contingencies if necessary to mitigate any further disruption for learners and the teaching/lecturer workforce whilst ensuring that fairness and credibility of the qualifications is maintained;
- (2) Fairness for learners sitting exams in 2022 is a central concern. We will set out details on further support available for learners in September; and
- (3) We will work with partners to develop the future approach to assessment beyond 2022, informed by the OECD's report on comparative analysis of assessment and qualifications approaches expected at the end of August.

Out of scope

ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL COURSES IN 2021/22

Background

Advice from officials on 4 August provided an update on a proposed approach for the assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in the 2021-22 academic year that has been developed by the SQA in collaboration with the National Qualifications Group. On 6 August, the Chief Examining Officer wrote to you also outlining the proposed approach (detail on approach provided below).

On 10 August you indicated that you were content with assessment proposals.

Following a request from the First Minister for further information, Cabinet approved the proposals on 17 August.

The plan is that the GIQ (attached at Annex A) is lodged at 9:30 on 18 August with a news release issuing at approximately 10:00 confirming the central planning assumption for 2021/22 being the delivery of an exam diet with the already announced modifications take place but with contingencies developed for deploying if later required.

The NQ Group will then issue its own communication providing more detail on the contingencies - in the shape of further modifications/adaptations should the level of disruption increase, and, in a scenario where the diet had to be cancelled, the use of in-year assessment evidence (demonstrated attainment) to support teacher judged grades.

Detail

Development of arrangements

- Over the summer period, the NQ21 Group has been giving further detailed consideration to a potential approach to the qualifications for the coming academic session, including contingencies.
- Creation of the assessment approach has been informed by experiences in session 2020/2021.
- The Group is clear that demonstrated attainment should continue to form the basis of any approach to the qualifications in 2021-22 to ensure both fairness and validity.
- Assessment modifications across National courses for the next academic session have already been confirmed by the SQA.

Detail of modifications

- Subject level modifications to assessment equate to reducing the expected course content by around 20% compared to a normal year. This reduction in course content, coupled with a reduction in assessment burden in almost all subject areas, should allow for a greater focus on learning and teaching.

- These existing modifications have been designed to create more flexibility to absorb some of the impact of disrupted learning, free up teachers and learners from some of the demands of the course, whilst having relatively minimal impacts upon validity and reliability.
- NQ21 has identified a preferred model to include mitigations to offset any further disruption to learning whether through self-isolation or future lockdowns, and any public health conditions impacting on delivery of an exam diet.
- This model includes a set of contingencies, with a clear understanding of when we would shift to a different plan, and under what conditions, is still to be developed at pace by the National Qualifications Group, which has met frequently over the summer to consider options for the coming session. It will issue detailed guidance at the earliest opportunity.
- The intent would be to have three stages to the contingency as follows:
 - (a) operate an exam diet with already announced modifications, and,
 - (b) if some degree of additional disruption is experienced, to insulate examinations against further disruption with further adaptation/modification to increase accessibility, decrease stress on learners etc – e.g. Advance Notice of Topic Areas for revision purposes, more use of Open Book etc.
 - (c) in the event that examinations become impossible because of public health restrictions / lockdown, then in-year assessment evidence will be used to support teacher judged grades.
- Fairness for learners sitting exams in 2022 is a central concern. Further support that will be available for learners will be issued in September.
- Any approach for the 2022 qualifications, will be based purely on ongoing effects of Covid-19, such as significant disruption to learning, and/or public health grounds. Decisions on the 2021/22 academic session are not an indication of any future direction for the qualifications which will be considered separately after due consultation.

[Out of scope]

Q&A

Who have you consulted?

- Over the summer period, the NQ21 Group has been giving further detailed consideration to a potential approach to the qualifications for the coming academic session, including contingencies.
- I've listened closely to what young people and their parents have been saying and my officials have engaged further with learners and parents and their representative organisations
- Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) and National Parents Forum for Scotland (NPFs) are both represented on the NQ21 Group
- We sought the views of learners through a number of channels. These included the SQA Learner Panel; SYP; Career Ready^[1] students within Scottish

^[1] A programme available to S5 learners aimed at developing employability skills

Government and Education Scotland; the final meeting of the Youth Panel (Young Scot) and also a meeting of the Pupil Council.

- The views of parents on the approach for 2022 have been gathered through an online session set up with NPFS regional representatives, attended by an SG official, along with feedback captured at an internal NPFS discussion, which NPFS have shared:

How will learners be supported?

- We will meet with Education Scotland urgently (initial meeting scheduled for Friday 20 August at 9am), to discuss a support package. This could include study support sessions, increasing the e-sgoil/ national e-learning offer, Easter revision classes and how the attainment advisors could be deployed to support learners living in poverty sitting exams in 2022.
- We will also discuss how we can ensure that the £215m SAC funding for this year supports learners ahead of the exam diet, including the possibility of engaging with local authority officers and head teachers on these issues, through ES.
- We will meet with SQA to discuss further the mitigations/ adaptations to exams and further comms through the NQ group on the contingency plan.
- The possible contents of the support package will be discussed with stakeholders, including young people, and at the forthcoming meetings of the Scottish Education Council and Children and Young People's Education Council.

Why go back to exams? OECD reform – why go back?

- Any approach for the 2022 qualifications, will be based purely on ongoing effects of Covid-19, such as significant disruption to learning, and/or public health grounds.
- Decisions on the 2021/22 academic session are not an indication of any future direction for the qualifications which will be considered separately after due consultation.
- The recent OECD report made clear that Scotland needs assessment methods that better align with the aims of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Over the coming months, we will work to do that and we will be seeking views from across all shades of opinion to inform that work. This is, therefore, a welcome contribution to the debate that the OECD report sparked on the future of the awards system.

How to avoid over-assessment / stress / workload

- Subject level modifications to assessment equate to reducing the expected course content by around 20% compared to a normal year.
- This reduction in course content, coupled with a reduction in assessment burden in almost all subject areas, should allow for a greater focus on learning and teaching.
- From the start of the course and throughout session 2021-22, teachers and lecturers should gather examples of learners' work and keep a record of any normal, planned assessments that take place. This will provide a reliable collection of evidence that can be used to determine learners' grades if the exams are cancelled.

- To avoid increased assessment and additional workload, it is important that the evidence gathered is based only on planned work that learners will already be doing throughout the course. There is no need to carry out additional assessments. We will provide all schools, colleges and training providers with more detailed information and guidance on our contingency arrangements for the 2022 exams.

When would mitigations come into effect?

- Public health advice remains key to decision making in this area.
- The National Qualifications Group will be setting out more detail on the a set of contingencies very soon.
- We will continue to monitor the position and any ongoing disruption to learning, although it is anticipated that the approach developed provides the flexibility to adapt to any significant levels of disruption.

[Out of scope]

**GOVERNMENT INITIATED QUESTION: ACADEMIC SESSION 2021/2022
ASSESSMENT**

[redacted s. 25(1): [Written question and answer: S6W-02185 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)]