

## FOI REFERENCE 202100231963 – FOI REVIEW

### Colour coding FOR EASE OF REFERENCE IN NAVIGATING THE UPDATED RELEASE

Information highlighted where the review has decided that further information should now to be released

Initial FOI Request:

“The Scottish Government has today confirmed that exams will take place in 2022 (if safe to do so) - <https://www.gov.scot/news/national-qualifications-2022/>

Please release details of any meetings (dates, attendees, whether it was in person/online/telephone) and associated documents (emails, minutes, briefing documents, personal notes – and where any of these do not exist please confirm that fact) involving Scottish Government members or staff (first minister, education secretary, special advisers, learning directorate staff).

Date range: 20/5/21 – present [18 August]”

### UPDATED INDEX OF ENCLOSURES – FOLLOWING FOI REVIEW

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
Enclosure 01: Email, ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS	24 June 2021 17:36	Personal information	Retain		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 01.1: Word attachment		Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views Confidential Information Personal information	Release further information	Some of the information initially redacted does not in fact fall under the scope of “free and frank”. Conclusion is that other items do, and should be withheld on the same basis as initially.	s.30(b)(ii) S36(1) S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 02: Email, RE: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS	28 June 2021 15:01	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Release further information	Should be released on the basis that this is factual context and not free and frank exchange of views on policy considerations.	S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
Enclosure 03: Email, RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021	30 June 2021 13:06	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 03.1: Word attachment		Personal information Out of scope	Release further information	Some info should continue to be withheld because it contains exchanges, the release of which would impact on the future free and frank exchange of views on policy considerations. Other items (a portion of the main covering paper and the entire annex) should be released as the information is factual and does not constitute the exchange of views on policy considerations	S38(1)(b) ~
Enclosure 04: Email, RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021	01 July 2021 08:08	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Release further information	Content in the 01 July 2021 (08:08) should be released – the email contains views relating to process rather than free and frank exchange of views on substantive policy. The content in the email 21 June 2021 13:33 should continue to be withheld as the policy discussions remain relevant to decisions still to be taken on the exam diet in 2023 given the ongoing impacts of the pandemic (i.e. adaptations will need to continue to be made, not a normal exam year and process).	S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 05: Email, NQ21 WG Tuesday 27 July	26 July 2021 11:02	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 05.1: Word attachment		Personal information Out of scope	Release further information	There is some information highlighted for release that is straightforward discussion of the technical details of how the	S38(1)(b) ~

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
				arrangements would work across different subject areas. Given the 2022 diet has now concluded and the material in question is relatively technical rather than free and frank exchange of views, there is no clear reason to continue to withhold this.	
Enclosure 05.2: Word attachment		Out of scope	Retain as per initial FOI release		~
Enclosure 05.3: Word attachment		Personal information Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release	Information withheld under free and frank should remain withheld.	S38(1)(b) ~ s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 06: Email, NQ21 WG workshop 27 July .pptx	28 July 2021 12:53	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 06.1: PowerPoint attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release	Information withheld under free and frank should remain withheld.	s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 07: Email, National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 4th August 2021	03 August 2021 15:27	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 07.1: Word attachment		Out of scope	Retain as per initial FOI release		~
Enclosure 07.2: Word attachment		Personal information Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views	Release further information	Recommended that some individual lines of content be released as it was unclear why those particular lines met a higher threshold of Free and frank” compared to the remainder of the content in this enclosure.	S38(1)(b) ~ s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 07.3: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release	Information withheld under free and frank should remain withheld.	s.30(b)(ii)

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
Enclosure 08: Email, RE: Urgent: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	05 August 2021 09:54	Personal information Out of scope	Partial Release of further information	The line was redacted from initial release as it relates to 2020/21 results, therefore deemed to be out of scope, but no material reason to redacted this.	S38(1)(b) ~
Enclosure 09: Email, FW: CERG member feedback - by 10am Weds 11/8	10 August 2021 14:19	Personal information Out of scope	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) ~
Enclosure 09.1: Word attachment		Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		~ s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 10: Email, National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 11 August 2021	10 August 2021 16:39	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 10.1: Word attachment		Out of scope	Retain initial decision	Retain initial decision	~
Enclosure 10.2: Word attachment		Personal information Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release	Information withheld under free and frank should remain withheld.	S38(1)(b) ~ s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 10.3: Word attachment			Retain initial decision which was to release the content in full.		
Enclosure 11: Email, RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS	11 August 2021 12:32	Personal information Ministerial communications	Release further information	Recommended that some individual lines of content be released as set out in the Enclosure itself. The content for release, which is concerned with matters of process, would not constitute a reasonable exemption.	S38(1)(b) S29(1)(b)
Enclosure 12: Email, RE: Urgent: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	11 August 2021 13:35	Personal information	Partial release of further information		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 12.1: Email attached		Personal information Ministerial communications	Release further information	The content which is now proposed for release is	S38(1)(b) S29(1)(b)

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
				marked in the Enclosure itself. The content in question is relating to matters of process, which in my opinion would not constitute a reasonable exemption.	
Enclosure 13: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	13 August 2021 17:13	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release	Would also argue that section 29(1) (b) is also relevant and reasonable basis on which to withhold Cabinet-related correspondence.	S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 13.1: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 14: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	13 August 2021 17:59	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 14.1: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views Out of scope	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii) ~
Enclosure 15: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	13 August 2021 20:50	Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 15.1		Word attachment			s.30(b)(ii)]
Enclosure 16: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	14 August 2021 09:43	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 16.1: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 17: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	14 August 2021 11:07	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 18: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	14 August 2021 16:34	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
Enclosure 18.1: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 18.2: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 19: Email, Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	15 August 2021 10:48		Retain as per initial FOI release	Would also argue that section 29(1) (b) is also relevant and reasonable basis on which to withhold Cabinet-related correspondence.	s.30(b)(ii) section 29(1) (b)
Enclosure 19.1: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 20: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	15 August 2021 10:51	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Release further information	The short line which was previously redacted should be released. It's not entirely clear why it was appropriate to redact under "free and frank" 30 (b) ii)? It is not substantive exchange of views.	S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 21: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	16 August 2021 10:48	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 22: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	16 August 2021 18:08	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 23: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	16 August 2021 18:22	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 24: Email, RE: Speaking note	16 August 2021 19:09	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 24.1: Email attached			Retain as per initial FOI release		
Enclosure 25: Email, RE: Speaking note	16 August	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
	2021 20:49				
Enclosure 25.1: Word attachment		Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 26: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22	16 August 2021 21:58	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 27: Email, RE: Speaking note	17 August 2021 08:04	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 28: Email, National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 18 August 2021	17 August 2021 10:40	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 28.1: Word attachment		Out of scope	Retain as per initial FOI release		~
Enclosure 28.2: Word attachment		Personal information Out of scope Free and frank exchange of views	Retain initial decision	Retain initial decision	S38(1)(b) ~ s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 29: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022	17 August 2021 11:11	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)
Enclosure 29.1: Word document			Retain as per initial FOI release		

Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Review – Retain initial decision / change decision	Review – Explanation of Redactions or amended decision	Clause
Enclosure 30: Email, RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022	17 August 2021 21:35	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 31: Email, RE: NQ21 Group - comms strategy for the 2022 model	18 August 2021 12:03	Personal information	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b)
Enclosure 31.1: PowerPoint attachment			Retain as per initial FOI release		
Enclosure 32: Email, RE: Assessment 2022 - briefing pack	18 August 2021 14:49	Personal information Free and frank exchange of views	Retain as per initial FOI release		S38(1)(b) s.30(b)(ii)



**Enclosure 01: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS**

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 24 June 2021 17:36

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

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>

**Subject:** ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

As requested, please find attached a paper to support tomorrow's discussion.

Thanks  
Malcolm

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

**Sent:** 22 June 2021 16:19

**To:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Qualifications next year - 1330 Friday 25th

Thanks Graeme

Ms Somerville is keen to discuss what options are available to her around this – is there a short note that could be prepared in advance to help discussion? Even if it was something relatively unpolished.

[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> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning

**Sent:** 22 June 2021 16:17

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Qualifications next year - 1330 Friday 25th

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

This is good for Graeme

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 22 June 2021 16:07

**To:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Qualifications next year - 1330 Friday 25th

Hi folks,

Cab Sec would like to have a discussing about Qualifications next year, ideally before end of the week. I have held **1330 on Friday** for this. I would be grateful if you could please let me know if this time is ok, and if anyone else should be added to the CC list.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

## **Enclosure 01.1: Word attachment**

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**

##### 2020

3. In 2019/20 exams were cancelled on 19 March 2020 on the basis of public health advice that it was not safe to proceed with an examination diet. The SQA was asked to develop an alternative approach to certification. An alternative model based on teacher estimates of learner attainment was used with the SQA applying an algorithm to moderate teacher estimates. Due to public perceptions of unfairness a Ministerial Direction issued to SQA following Results Day in August 2020 and the results were subsequently reverted to teacher estimates where their moderated result was lower.

##### 2021

4. In 2020/21, informed by the recommendations of the Priestley Review of the 2020 National Qualifications experience, the examination diet for National 5 qualifications was cancelled on 7 October 2020 due to the level of disruption already experienced by, and likely to be experienced by, many learners and on the basis that a full diet was, at that point in the pandemic, considered too great a risk in terms of public health.

5. The examination diet for Highers and Advanced Highers was subsequently also cancelled, on 8 December 2020. This decision was taken on the basis that, in order to take place, exams had to be safe and fair. At that time, ahead of the pandemic's second wave, public health prospects had improved but disruption to learning for many learners (including a significant percentage of the most deprived)

had already been significant. It was on this basis, and the uncertain public health position, that the decision was taken to cancel all exams in 2020.

6. Following the cancellation of the National 5 exams, the National Qualifications 2021 Group was established. The Group developed the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) as a temporary measure for this year, based on teacher judgement of demonstrated learner attainment, to ensure delivery of a credible and fair set of results .

#### OECD Review/Future Transformation

7. Prior to the decision to cancel the 2020 examination diet, exams had been held in Scotland every year for over 130 years. The decision, and developments since it, sparked significant debate about the future of assessment and qualifications in Scotland and the best way to recognise learners' achievements. One of the measures taken following Results Day in 2020 was to commission the OECD to extend its review and consider options for transforming the Scottish approach to assessment and qualifications.

8. 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 in August, along with full stakeholder engagement. It should be noted that any major reform of the qualifications system will likely take at least three years to develop and fully implement. However, any decision about how to assess National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses next year will inevitably be set against the OECD Review published on 21 June and the forthcoming OECD Report from Professor Stobart on Qualifications and Assessment.

9. 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

10. Learners, teachers and the system are all keen to understand how qualifications will be assessed in 2022. [Review decision: Redacted under s.30(b)(ii)]

11. 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.

12. [Review decision: Redacted under s.30(b)(ii)]

13. 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

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

[Review decision: Redacted under s.30(b)(ii)]

#### Public Health Advice

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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).

19. 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.

20. Any changes here could have a significant bearing on the extent of disruption for individual learners in the next school year, and in turn any decision on whether to hold an exam diet or use an ACM.

21. We will continue to draw on the expert advice of clinicians and the Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues to inform any decisions and, with your approval, we suggest we seek advice from clinical advisors in early August to inform a final decision on the approach to assessment in 2021/22.

#### Legal Advice

Review decision:: Redacted under S 36 (1)

### Equality and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments

22. 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 for any decision not to proceed with an exam diet again in 2021-22.

23. In addition, in implementing any decision, 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.

### rUK Position

24. In the rest of the UK:

- England have now confirmed that they plan to go ahead with an exam diet in 2022 with possible modifications to take account of disruption.
- Wales officials have advised that adaptations that were planned for summer 2021 will be a starting point for 2022, with reduced assessment content. They are consulting with teaching unions.
- On 17 May, Northern Ireland announced their intention to proceed with exams in 2022, with adaptations and a reduced number of exams. It was confirmed that there would also be contingency arrangements for alternative awarding based on centre professional judgement if required.

### **Next Steps**

25. 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.

26. This engagement could include input from SQA's Learner Panel, as suggested by the Scottish Youth Parliament. We are exploring this possibility with SQA as a matter of urgency. We can also seek further input from the teaching unions.

27. In addition, officials could explore with NPFS options for gathering wider parental views although, as with learners, these are likely to generate a range of opposing views given the disparate nature of these stakeholders.

28. 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**

29. 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 s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [redacted s38(1)(b)] Sam Anson, Learning Directorate Mick Wilson, Learning Directorate Andy Drought, Learning Directorate Liza McLean, Learning Directorate Alison Taylor, Learning Directorate [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] Comms Education [Redacted s38(1)(b)] Colin McAllister, Special Adviser					



## **Enclosure 02: Email, RE: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS**

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 28 June 2021 15:01

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

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Ansongov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22: OPTIONS

PS/Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Copy: as above

### **Meeting on Assessment of National Qualifications in 2021/22 – 25 June 2021**

Graeme Logan and I met with Ms Somerville on Friday afternoon to discuss the assessment of national qualifications in the 2021/22 academic year. You also attended. Please find below a draft note of the key points from the discussion. Grateful for confirmation that the Cabinet Secretary is content that this accurately reflects the areas covered in the meeting.

Key points discussed:

- The **process for any decision** on the holding of an exam diet or not in 2022, noting that there was no statutory requirement for an exam diet and noting the process followed in relation to the cancellation of the diets in 2020 and 2021.
- The importance of **clinical advice** in relation to any decision on assessment of NQs next academic year and the expectation that advice on options for potential change on the policy of self-isolation for children and young people would be provided over the coming weeks and in advance of the start of the new school term in mid-August. Learning and Health officials to work with clinical advisors to provide advice to Ministers and FM.
- Various **stakeholders' views** on the approach to assessment of NQs in 2021/22 and, in particular, the need to understand the views of young people. It was noted that the SQA Learner Panel is meeting on 29 June and that officials will be providing further advice on engagement with young people on the subject of qualifications.
- Update on key points from the **NQ21 Group's meeting** of earlier that day (25 June) and its reflections on the 2021 Alternative Certification Model and on the operation and effectiveness of the Group over the previous 9 months. It was noted that the NQ21 Group will be considering what revisions might be made to the 2021 ACM for the coming academic

year should it be required as a contingency or an alternative and that further advice would be provided on this.

Thanks  
Malcolm

**Malcolm Pentland** | Deputy Director  
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131  
244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)]  
Learning Directorate | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ  
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*The rest of this chain is the same as Enclosure 01*

**Enclosure 03: Email, RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021**

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

**Sent:** 30 June 2021 13:06

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

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

PS/Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Please find attached a note in relation to the points raised in your previous email.

Thank you

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 21 June 2021 13:33

**To:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

Hi Malcolm

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

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:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 18 June 2021 08:24

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

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>;

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

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

Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Ansan@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A

(Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison)

<Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; SGLD School

Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills

<CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

DPS/Cabinet Secretary

Copy: as above

## National Qualifications - 2022 approach – SYP Views

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)] We can explore the possibility of that with SQA immediately if it would be helpful.

Malcolm

**Malcolm Pentland** | Deputy Director

Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel: +44(0) 131 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

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**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Sent:** 16 June 2021 10:13  
**To:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

Hi Malcolm,

Thank you for sending up, Ms Somerville would like to know what the SYP think [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 15 June 2021 17:04  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

On the approach to **course modifications**, the NQ21 Group agreed the parameters for retaining or amending modifications to National Course assessments for 2021-22 at its 21 April meeting.

On the holding of an **exam diet** in 2022 (with the ACM as contingency), the SQA provided the NQ21 Group with an update on its proposals at the last meeting (11 June).

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

Thanks  
Malcolm

**Malcolm Pentland** | Deputy Director

Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 15 June 2021 13:28

**To:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>;

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

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

Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A

(Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison)

<Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education

<SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills

<CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

Hi Malcolm,

[redacted s.30(b)(ii)] I would be grateful for further advice.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 14 June 2021 17:42

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

**Cc:** Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>;

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

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

@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anon@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>;

Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor

A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

PS/Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Please find attached a short, urgent update on SQA proposals in relation to arrangements for assessment of National Courses for academic year 2021-22. Subject to her being content with the proposals, this seeks Ms Somerville's agreement to including confirmation of 2022 plans in her parliamentary statement on 22 June.

Thanks  
Malcolm

**Malcolm Pentland** | Deputy Director  
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division

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

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

## **LEARNER VOICE THROUGH THE LEARNER PANEL**

### **Annex A**

#### **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.

#### **Session 2020/2021**



6 Below is a summary of Learner Panel meetings and topics discussed:

Date	Main Topics Discussed
26 November 2020	Quality Assurance related to the ACM
17 December 2020	Learner Disruption
25 January 2021	Appeals
25 February 2021	ACM & The Learner Booklet
23 March 2021	Appeals Consultation; Planning sub-group; SQA Branding
26 April 2021	Assessment; Appeals; Communication

### 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 [Redacted Section 30(b)(ii) ]

12 [Redacted Section 30(b)(ii) ]

13 [Redacted Section 30(b)(ii) ]

### **Recommendation**

14 [Redacted Section 30(b)(ii) ]

## Learner engagement update

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of SQA's learner engagement activities is to ensure that learners have a voice and input into the work that we do and on the decisions that affect them – they need to be an integral part of our work as our success relies on having a deep understanding of their needs as a key audience group.

We want to ensure that SQA is a leading public body in ensuring that children's rights are recognised, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We have an overarching commitment to increasing engagement with young people by recognising and listening to them in our work.

We want to reassure learners and their parents/carers that they are at the heart of what we do, that we are collaborating with learner/parent/carer representative organisations, and that the standards of the qualifications learners are working on are valuable and will help them take their next steps into further learning, training or employment.

This paper provides a summary on work to date and next steps to progress this important work.

### 2. Approach

Many learners view SQA as distant and bureaucratic. It should therefore be our goal to build a two-way relationship with our learners, in particular ensuring that they feel a key part of SQA, that their opinions are valued and that they can help to shape and influence SQA activity.

SQA's learner strategy will strengthen our approach and provide consistency to learner engagement. It will include a framework that best suits the needs of our learners and will potentially find new ways to engage with them. It will also ensure that parents and carers are considered and included as part of this work.

Our learners come from a variety of backgrounds and are at different stages in their learning. They include school pupils and college students, those learning through training providers, apprentices, adult learners, those learning in employment and those keen to return to employment.

This strategy will enhance and support SQA's approach in relation to learners and will help us to ensure that learners are at the heart of our delivery. The development of our learner strategy will help ensure that SQA works in a consistent way across the business, for all learner groups. In addition, engaging with our learners will help to build on, and improve our profile and reputation. In understanding an appropriate level of engagement with learners, the strategy will consider examples of established engagement models such as the International Association for Public Perception (IAP2) and the Scottish Community Engagement Framework. The strategy will then propose and implement a suitable model for SQA to engage with our learners.

### 3. Where are we now

There is already a great deal of direct engagement with young people in different areas of SQA, however, this activity is not co-ordinated or reported on consistently.

- Bespoke engagement work such as the Young Scot Future of Assessment report and its recommendations
- Ongoing engagement and improvement of content and services eg. Your Exams, Your Coursework, mobile apps, websites where young people come into SQA and test/provide feedback on content and services
- HN redevelopment – engaging with students to get their views on proposals
- Direct feedback from young people through SQA’s communication channels
- OD engagement with young people through SQA’s apprenticeship programme
- Operations and corporate engagement with the Scottish Youth Parliament, and in particular their Education committee
- As a national corporate parent, SQA’s support of care experienced young people, including engagement with organisations such as Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways
- As part of our Responsible Business strategy, providing volunteering opportunities for our staff to provide mentoring, reading and writing, and employability advice and support, to young people in our local communities
- As a responsible public body, providing work experience opportunities to young people from local schools
- Young person representatives on our senior committees – Qualifications Committee, NQ 2021 Group
- SQA Learner Panels – listening to the views of learners and creating an opportunity for openness and transparency

As part of the work relating to qualification delivery in NQ2021 additional activities and measures have been undertaken to ensure that young people’s voices are heard.

### **3.1 Communications and Marketing learner engagement project**

A strategic project within Communications & Marketing commenced in late 2020, with representation from all areas of Communications as well as Operations (Liaison Managers) and Business Development (Regional Managers). The group has been liaising with other colleagues from across the business as required to obtain insights and feedback to help with this work.

As our learner audience is so diverse the group has been taking a phased approach. In recognising the need to support work on the 2021 exam diet and alternative certification model for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the immediate focus has been on National Qualification (NQ) learners and considering how best to support them. A variety of innovative content proposals have been developed that are now being developed for use, peer reviewed by young people.

The National Qualifications 2021 Group includes representation from the Scottish Youth Parliament. We work with them on developing and distributing the group updates to young people, ensuring that the messages are relevant and understandable and issued to them through appropriate channels.

Young people have told us that they want to receive information directly from SQA. We therefore developed two printed information booklets and associated digital campaigns which were distributed to all National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher learners in March and June 2021. These booklets provide learners with the most up to date information and provide links to learner support

and a dedicated learner page on SQA's website so that they can keep up to date on the arrangements for 2020-21.

SQA continues to engage and share messages with learner agencies, such as Young Scot, the Scottish Youth Parliament, and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland. We are also co-ordinating our activities with the Scottish Government's Youth Education Recovery Group to ensure broad engagement with learners on issues that affect them.

The group continues to focus on providing useful communications and content for SQA's learners and parents/carers.

### **3.2 Learner strategy development**

Given the importance of progressing this work, a dedicated project lead, [Redacted S38(1)(b)] was appointed in January 2021, to consider all aspects of our work with young people and their parents/carers, and to turn this into a programme of work that meets our strategic ambitions and puts learners at the heart of our work.

### **3.3 Learner panels**

As part of our commitment to engaging with learners and their parents and carers we have established a Learner Panel, with representation from learners in schools and colleges across Scotland, as well as young representatives from learner organisations. The Panel ensures the views of young people are fully heard.

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. SQA organised a number of panels, covering topics such as the Quality Assurance model for National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers, Learning Disruption and Appeals.

Following the first few meetings we engaged with the Scottish Youth Parliament, who have agreed to manage future panels on behalf of SQA, to ensure independence and that young people's voices are fully heard. Meetings are scheduled regularly and a programme of topic areas has been developed, in line with 2020-21 awarding activities and to reflect the issues that young people have told us they are concerned about – directly and through research feedback.

We have worked with SYP to put in place a mechanism for agreeing the panel schedule, working with colleagues and partners to agree content areas and engagement methodology to be used at each session. This helps us to make the most of the collaborative engagement.

### **3.4 Pulse surveys**

To ensure SQA remains informed of what learners think about important issues, we have set up groups so that we can undertake short pulse surveys. Currently, 1,000 learners have signed up to take part. In addition, 2,000 parents/carers and 350 practitioners are involved. We are also developing governance arrangements to ensure that the correct topics are covered in pulse surveys, while retaining the flexibility required to get a speedy turnaround.

The first pulse survey was issued to learners on 27 January 2021, to ask them about their experiences of using our website. Following the election in May, we are now looking to use this mechanism to obtain feedback from young people.

## **4. Next steps**

The work outlined above is being progressed through two key strands of work:

#### **4.1 2021 Learner engagement activities**

The recent work we have undertaken with young people will continue, supporting 2021 activities and ongoing learner engagement and will be integrated and monitored as part of Communications and engagement planned activities. The primary focus areas will be:

- Learner focussed content and assets
- Learner panels and direct learner engagement
- Learner research and pulse surveys

#### **4.2 Learner and parent/carer strategy**

The overarching strategy for SQA's engagement with young people and their parents and carers will extend beyond 2021 and will become a key strand in the organisation's approach to stakeholder engagement.

#### **Annex B**

SYP produced a proposal outlining how they are delivering panels – the key outcomes and outputs are:

##### **Outcomes:**

- Young people will have a meaningful opportunity to share their views and opinions on crucial decisions that will affect them
- The SQA will get an accurate perspective of the views of young people from across Scotland on key issues, including from groups who might otherwise be hard to reach
- The SQA will be perceived as a trail-blazer in the area of young people's rights and participation, in advance of the likely implementation of the legislation that will incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law next year

##### **Outputs:**

- Recruit around ten young people for Learner Panel, including one or more Panel Chairs
- Convene monthly Learner Panel Meetings
- One short report after each Learner Panel, to be shared with SQA and published on SYP's website
- Meet monthly with SQA staff to present the report on each panel, to discuss feedback and agree topics for discussion at future learner panel meetings.
- Quarterly meetings with SQA senior team young people from the learner panel (as required).

#### **Enclosure 04: RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021**

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

**Sent:** 01 July 2021 08:08

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

<CabSecES@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Ansan@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) <Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; SGLD School Education <SGLDSE@gov.scot>; Communications Education & Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: National Qualifications - 2022 approach - update - 14 June 2021

Good Morning [Redacted s38(1)(b)] ,

Ms Somerville has noted. She has commented that things seem to be moving in a better direction but can we please ensure that the material beiRng put out is engaging and appropriate and not jargon led. Working with others outwith SQA will be vital to ensuring this happens. The Cab Sec also expects this work going forward to also check with trusted third parties whether we are using appropriate communication channels eg Facebook may work for stakeholders but my understanding is that's not what young people use. We need to always ensure our work is genuinely open and available and that means a focus on effective content and channelling. She hopes that engrained in all of this is an expectation that we know the thoughts of young people on core issues going forward.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

*The rest of this chain is the same as Enclosure 03*

**Enclosure 05: Email, NQ21 WG Tuesday 27 July**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 26 July 2021 11:02

**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Ann.Heron@ayrshire.ac.uk; graham.hutton@dundeecity.gov.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Nicolson, Stewart <Stewart.Nicolson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Andrea Bradley <abradley@eis.org.uk>; Gail Graham <g.graham@dundeeandangus.ac.uk>; Margaret Lannon <margaret@scis.org.uk>; rector@hsog.co.uk; Bray O (Ollie)<Ollie.Bray@educationscotland.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Graham Hutton <ghutton859@dundeeschools.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** NQ21 WG Tuesday 27 July

Good morning,

Please find attached the papers for tomorrows National Qualifications 2021 Working Group.

Kind regards,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Corporate Office

## **Enclosure 05.1: Word attachment**

### **Notes of NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting 23 June 2021**

**Attendees:** Jean Blair (Chair) (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Stewart Nicolson (ADES and RICs), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Graham Hutton (SLS), Gail Graham (Colleges Scotland), Andrea Bradley (EIS), Sue Pope (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Margaret Lannon (SCIS), Gill Stewart (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Ollie Bray (Education Scotland), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Beth Black (SQA)

**Apologies:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Matthew McCullagh (SQA), Ann Heron (Colleges Scotland), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), John O'Neill (SCIS)

## **Plans for 2022**

### **Background**

The modifications to courses were published on 23 June. The modifications are designed to work with an exam diet but can work with an ACM model if needed as a contingency. The decision regarding an exam diet for 2022 is a matter for Scottish Government. They will communicate this in August 2021.

### **Discussion:**

- It was suggested that there was a mixed message on how to assess mathematics and science. It was explained that some subjects don't lend themselves well to internal assessment. It would be good to hear of centres that had creative approaches to assessing these subjects.
- It will remain the case that Equality Impact Assessments must underpin and be fully integrated into all decisions affecting learners.

### **Action**

Contact if any member can share good practice in assessing Mathematics and Science.

### **Out of scope**



**Enclosure 05.2: Word attachment**

- **NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting**

Meeting to be held on 27 July 2021.

- **Agenda**

Item	Topic	Paper
	Out of Scope	
	Out of Scope	
4	Planning for 2022 - Contingencies	
AOB		

## **Enclosure 05.3: Word attachment**

### **Notes of NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting 21 July 2021**

**Attendees:** Gill Stewart (Chair) (SQA), Beth Black (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Gail Graham (Colleges Scotland), Andrea Bradley (EIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), John O'Neill (SCIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Stewart Nicolson (ADES and RICs), Ollie Bray (Education Scotland), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Graham Hutton (SLS), Margaret Lannon (SCIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA)

**Apologies:** Jean Blair (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Ann Heron (Colleges Scotland)

[Out of scope]

### **Planning for 2022 – Contingencies**

Beth Black led discussion on 2022 contingencies with some use of a Powerpoint presentation 'Contingency Planning for 2022' which recapped the NQ21 WG discussion of 13 July and summarised a draft options paper previously sent to members. This paper (once finalised) will be presented to the NQ21 Steering Group on Friday 23 July.

### **Background**

A reminder was given that there are distinct challenges for the education sector in dealing with uncertainty and for all stakeholders, the focus is on learners' education and well-being.

The decision whether to proceed with or cancel the exam diet for 2021/21 rests with the Scottish Government.

Plan A – Exam Diet goes ahead

Plan B – Contingencies (3 options proposed, to be considered by members)

The current position is that there will be an exam diet unless told otherwise.

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

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

### **Contingencies for Plan B (no exams)**

The following three options do not represent all possible options, but a consideration and discussion of these should be helpful in making recommendations.

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

Area	Action	Owner	Update

[out of scope]

**Enclosure 06: Email, NQ21 WG workshop 27 July .pptx**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 28 July 2021 12:53

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

**Cc:** Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** NQ21 WG workshop 27 July .pptx

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Good to catch up earlier. As promised, here is the powerpoint. Thought you might find the 'parameters' section (page 3) quite useful.

Do drop me a line if there's anything.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**Enclosure 06.1: PowerPoint attachment**

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

**Enclosure 07: Email, National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 4th August 2021**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 03 August 2021 15:27

**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Ann.Heron@ayrshire.ac.uk; graham.hutton@dundeecity.gov.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Nicolson, Stewart <Stewart.Nicolson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Andrea Bradley <abradley@eis.org.uk>; Gail Graham <g.graham@dundeeandangus.ac.uk>; Margaret Lannon <margaret@scis.org.uk>; rector@hsog.co.uk; Bray O (Ollie) <Ollie.Bray@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Graham Hutton <ghutton859@dundeeschools.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Cc:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 4th August 2021

Good afternoon,

Please find attached the papers for tomorrows NQ21WG meeting.

Kind regards,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Corporate Office

## Enclosure 07.1: Word attachment

### 1. NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

Meeting to be held on 4 Aug 2021.

### 2. Agenda

Item	Topic	Paper
	Out of Scope	
	Out of Scope	
4	<p>Planning for 2022 – Contingencies: the design of Plan C</p> <p>Discussion question:</p> <p><i>what should be the principles or examples of how SQA or others can help support teachers for in-year assessment, without creating additional burden for teachers and learners?</i></p> <p>For information:  <u>Paper for discussion on ACM 2022 for NQ Steering Group 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.</u></p>	BB
	Out of Scope	

## **Enclosure 07.2: Word attachment**

### **Notes of NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting 27 July 2021**

**Attendees:** Gill Stewart (Chair) (SQA), Beth Black (SQA), Gail Graham (Colleges Scotland), Matthew McCullagh (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), John O'Neill (SCIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Stewart Nicolson (ADES and RICs), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Sue Pope (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov)

**Apologies:** Jean Blair (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Fiona Gunn (SQA), Ann Heron (Colleges Scotland), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Andrea Bradley (EIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Ollie Bray (Education Scotland), Graham Hutton (SLS), Margaret Lannon (SCIS)

[Out of scope]

#### **Planning for 2022 – Contingencies**

Beth Black gave a verbal update on the Steering Group Meeting of 23 July, led a discussion on the 'Gear Change Model' contingency with use of a Powerpoint presentation, and posed further questions for consideration.

#### **Background**

The current position is that there will be an exam diet unless told otherwise. The decision whether to proceed with or cancel the exam diet for 2021-22 rests with the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government has stated that schools will have a decision on this by the time schools return after the Summer Break (for some schools, this is 9 August).

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

Plan A – Exam Diet goes ahead

Plan B – Contingencies (three options proposed, for consideration by members)

The agreed parameters in opting for a certain contingency include:

- They must be engineered to respond to the problem scenario
- They must be based on demonstrated attainment
- They must be clear about the 'trade offs'
- They must support time for teaching and learning and enabling learner progression to the next stage
- They must be clearly communicated as soon as possible
- They are not a system redesign
- They must be 'pandemic proof'
- They must be easy to pivot to (if needed)

Whichever option needs to respond to the scenario and be workable for schools, colleges, ETPs and SQA. The plan might need to change, but not the course.

## Discussion about the detail of the powerpoint

### The 'Gear Change Model'

*A set of contingencies, with a clear understanding of when we would shift to a different plan, under what conditions. The intent would be 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 this against further disruption with further adaptation/modification where possible.*
- (c) In the event that examinations become impossible because of health restrictions / lockdown, then in-year assessment evidence will be used to support teacher determined grades.*

## Discussion

- The 'trigger points' will need to be determined for if/when to move 'through the gears'.
- This would depend on whether national/regionally/locally centres have to move to blended learning/full lockdown.
- Some specification around the number of 'lost' days could be a trigger.
- The gear change approach could take into account when these lockdowns might happen eg after February most centres would have available summative evidence because of preliminary exams.
- 'Pivoting' to Stage C prior to, say, February would not be appropriate (as it would not at that point be clear that examinations could not go ahead).
- Even within small areas, schools can have very different experiences in the amount of disruption they experience. This might be related to socio-economic factors.
- Further modifications around Plan B ('easement') would help learners with studying and alleviate stress.
- Suggestion that it might be easier for some subjects to have further modifications than others – practical subjects may find it difficult, but that over any set of qualifications, learners would expect some easement
- Exams should not need to be re-written but advance notification of topics sampled could be given.
- An addendum could be made to question papers, and reminders given by invigilators to ensure learners are aware of the changes.
- Other options might include open book, advance notification of topics, fewer question papers, more optionality.
- Being able to sit an 'open book' exam is a skill that needs to be taught. A high-level principle should be that no new skill needs to be taught should be part of Plan B.
- Another high-level principle would be not to dilute course content but to alleviate the stress of exams.
- This would help to keep exams running, which most stakeholders want.

NB Not all SQA qualification managers are available just now to discuss potential further modifications in detail.

## Addition 1 for consideration: National 5 to be used as exit qualification only



*This option would involve the National 5 diet being available, but qualifications only taken in S4 by those learners intending to exit school at this point and not continue to Higher and Advanced Highers in S5 and S6.*

## **Discussion**

- Suggestion that this option would require consultation especially with learners and parents/carers (this might take until November).
- Suggestion that this is in effect system re-design as opposed to responding to the pandemic and is therefore beyond the remit of this group.
- Schools are already able to take the option of bypassing National 5, but few do as they see its limitations.
- Learners don't always know when they might leave, which creates a risk of no certification, and an impact on their future opportunities.
- Some learners thrive on having an exam as a focus, and it's risky to wait until S5 before a formal exam.
- It would be difficult to explain to parents/learners that there would be no exam if there are no public health grounds. It could make National 5 look 'less important'.
- The data shows that there is considerable impact on learners that achieve five or fewer National 5 results in terms of success at Higher.
- Suggestion that it's the quality of learning in S4, rather than results that affect the number of Highers, and that the data should be used with caution.
- Suggestion that National 5 could be internally assessed, which would help 'protect' Higher and Advanced Higher but this could be difficult to justify to learners and parents/carers.
- It would be very difficult to 'juggle' different options for learners in a classroom context.
- Results for National 5 courses help learners make option choices.
- Fewer exams taking place in S4 would mean more time for learning and preparing for the following year.

## **Addition 2 for consideration: National 5 ACM Model**

*This option represents something relatively close to ACM 2021 as a contingency should exams not be able to go ahead. It would retain many of the key features of ACM 2021 including:*

1. *Teacher assessment of evidence of demonstrated attainment*
2. *Understanding Standards*
3. *Quality Assurance*

*But would incorporate some modifications based on evaluation, such as, but not limited to:*

1. *Some thinking on the nature of the assessment experience including timing of assessment and the evidence base*
2. *Timing of Quality Assurance process to confirm consistent application of national standards*
3. *Perhaps some post-hoc Quality Assurance*

## **Discussion**

- The difficulty is how to enrich the quality of evidence without increasing workload.
- Learners will understandably want to know when an assessment 'counts'.
- Internal, moderated assessment evidence could have a dual purpose, and only be used for provisional results if needed. This would help reduce the number of assessments, but learners should be clear on whether it might be 'used' prior to the assessment.

- Clear guidance would need to be given as to what constitutes suitable evidence and there is no time to prepare this as people would expect it for the start of the session.
- Suggestion that splitting prelim papers could be an option. This could be planned as naturally occurring evidence, which wouldn't constitute extra work.
- Clear guidance would need to be given as to what constitutes course coverage.
- Centres will need to plan to ensure there is evidence because it's not in our control as to whether exams are cancelled. It's likely that this will be considered naturally by centres given the difficulties of 2020-21.
- Centres have always known they have to plan in case an exceptional circumstance consideration request has to be made.
- SQA can only deal with a certain number of ECs (4K if certification is to take place in August)- capacity would need to be increased if EC was to be an option.
- EC could only be used for a regional/local lockdown, not a national.
- Suggestion that SQA could be involved in the quality assurance of internal assessment prior to an exam diet ('just in case').
- Suggestion that we should only invoke Addition 2 (but also for H/AH) if large scale gatherings can't go ahead, thus cancelling exams.
- Subject-specific guidance wouldn't be issued for this option. The guidance would be generic, and assessment materials wouldn't be provided.
- Issuing question papers this year has been highly-problematic due to 'leaks', despite being released with the best of intentions.
- Managing leaked content on social media platforms took up a great deal of SQA resource. It is very difficult to have material taken down from social media platforms.
- Some centres ignored the caveats and used the question papers in entirety regardless of when the assessment took place.
- Lessons must be learned about this for next year.
- SQA could provide more Understanding Standards material and events/webinars.

### **All options**

- Incorporating different models would create considerable workload for centres and SQA (exam model for H/AH plus ACM model for National 5 plus 'gear change' model including further modifications).
- One suggestion was that SQA would mark all internal assessment evidence, but this would not be possible because of different approaches to assessment and marking taken in centres.
- Learners should be involved in making any decisions, and Equality Impact Assessments must be undertaken.
- All stakeholders should understand that awards will be based on demonstrated attainment from the very start of the academic year.
- Clear communications, in a timely fashion, are extremely important.
- There could be legacy impacts for learners that have/have not sat an exam. It could be perceived that the results are 'worth less' if centre-assessed or the exceptional circumstances consideration service is used. However, this would not necessarily be known externally.

### **Action**

SQA will consider options for further 'easement' if the gear change model has to be invoked. Beth Black thanked everyone for their input.

AOB

Out of Scope

Gill Stewart closed the meeting by expressing her thanks to all members.

**Agenda for next meeting, Wednesday 4 August 2pm.**

Contingency Planning for 2022

<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Update</b>
Previous Minutes	Previous minutes sent for review.	ALL	Minutes of 27 July to be reviewed by all members
Further Modifications	Consider possibilities for different subjects/levels	GS	

## **Paper for discussion on ACM 2022 for NQ Steering Group 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.**

This paper represents an extension of the discussion paper presented on 23rd July 2021 to the NQ Steering Group. The purpose of this paper today is to set out the preferred model for assessment of National Qualifications in 2021/2022, to clearly set out the rationale, the fit to agreed properties of an effective contingency and to invite comments on ways in which the model can be strengthened.

The paper is structured into the following 7 sections as follows, with discussion points accompanying each section.

1. Recap on context and the purpose of contingency planning
2. Agreed properties of any contingency plan
3. Reasons some options are not being recommended as part of a contingency approach
4. The preferred option: ‘The Gear Change Model’ – a recap
5. Consideration of triggers for invoking different parts of the model
6. Particular scenarios of disruption and how the Gear Change Model could respond
7. Communications considerations

Discussion is also invited on any other areas related to contingency planning.

### **I Recap on context and purpose of contingency planning**

Scottish Government aims to confirm its central planning assumption for awarding National Qualifications in 2022 around the start of the new term in August. It is Scottish Government’s decision whether or not a normal exam diet takes place, and not a decision for this group. Therefore we are focusing our discussions on different forms of provision should the course of the pandemic in the coming academic year require some alterations to the expected way in which qualification assessment takes place.

Thus, the purpose of contingency planning is to be able to respond to the course of the pandemic which creates deteriorating conditions and negative impacts in educational provision such that learners can still access national qualifications and progress onto the next stage of their learning or employment.

At the time of writing, we have now around 16 months experience of the pandemic in the UK, and elsewhere. We should hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

There are essentially two different scenarios which need particular contingency planning. These are outlined in Table 1 below overleaf.

As noted at earlier NQ working group and steering group meetings, the mitigations for these different scenarios are necessarily different. Good contingency planning requires responding to the specific anticipated problem

Table 1: different scenarios of disruption and mitigation aims

Scenario	Detail of possible impacts	Mitigation aims
Disruption to learning	Social isolation (individual/bubbles?) High absence rates for covid- related reasons? Lock downs?	To help increase teaching time versus assessment/preparation for assessment time
Public health conditions do not allow large gatherings & therefore examinations	Examinations in exam halls cannot go ahead. May or may not allow smaller gatherings of learners if schools are open	To assess students with sufficient credibility, reliability, validity in ways which do not involve large gatherings in exam halls.

## **II Agreed properties of any effective contingency plan for qualification assessment**

It is helpful to describe some underpinning properties, parameters or features of good contingency planning in our context. These have been agreed in discussions with working group and steering group, or, in the case of #9, is a legal requirement.

1. Contingency solutions need to be 'engineered' to mitigate the particular problem or scenario it is seeking to respond to, as briefly outlined in table 1... rather than try to seek to be a general response to any or all pandemic related educational disruption.
2. Demonstrated attainment should be at the heart of any contingency for qualifications assessment.

This is the safest way to promote both fairness and validity. It is also the best way to ensure learner agency and learner engagement, and absolutely essential for operating any appeals system.

3. To be able to be clear and explicit on any trade-offs between validity, reliability (fairness, consistency across learners, centres, local authorities) and practicability.

The working group and steering group have considered Gordon Stobart's one-handed clock, noting that any assessment system even in the best of circumstances always represents some sort of trade-off and choices. Any contingency will also offer choices in where the trade-offs can be made and we should do this knowingly and explicitly.

4. To support more time for teaching and learning and equipping learners to progress to the next stage.

Given the circumstances of the cohort of learners embarking upon the next academic year, it is even more important that, assessment arrangements should aim to, as far as possible, support teaching and learning and equipping learners and not get in the way, whilst also recognising the value of valid, reliable qualifications in helping learners succeed.

5. Any contingency should be able to be clearly communicated to the system from the outset.

This takes on board one of the key points of evaluation activities so far – that communication is critical to the success of any contingency, and should give as much certainty and reassurance to the learners and teachers.

6. Any contingency should be just that – a contingency. It should not represent a ‘system redesign’ to respond to, for example, the OECD reports.

A response to the OECD report should happen in the fullness of time and needs proper consideration, re-design and lead-in time for schools and colleges.

7. Be pandemic proof

In as much as we can anticipate all possible types of disruption, or patterns of disruption, the contingency arrangements should seek to cover these eventualities as far as possible.

8. Any contingency should be relatively easy to pivot to.

Bearing in mind the size of the system, the number of learners and teachers and number of qualifications and qualification combinations, contingencies, , should as far as possible, be relatively easy for the system to move to. This is particularly important given that a contingency might need to be invoked at relatively short notice, if perhaps, a new variant rapidly changes the case rate/hospitalisation rate and impacts upon learning or creates a sudden change in the public health requirements or advice. This feature is particularly important to help provide as much confidence in the coming year. It feels important that learners and teachers are not anticipating/fearing a big change or revolution in what they are heading for or preparing for.

9. An equalities impact assessment should not reveal any potential equalities issues.

### **III Reasons some options are not being recommended as part of a contingency approach**

A number of possibilities were considered as options in themselves or as additions or features to be used alongside or within the preferred model. While these all had some good reasons for consideration, none of them form part of the preferred contingency model.

These options or features can be summarised as follows.

**A. National 5 qualifications to be taken only for learners exiting education.**

While it has been discussed that this could have significant impact upon teacher workload in removing the focus of learners' preparation for qualifications, and which could increase teachers' ability to focus upon supporting S5 and S6 learners, there have been a number of disadvantages noted. These include:

1. A big system change in this being communicated as a policy rather than it being currently a choice for centres.
2. As a big system change, it would need to widescale consideration and consultation and as such would not be decision that could be announced around the beginning of the academic year.
3. Such a system decision is likely to raise significant concerns in a full equalities impact assessment
4. It is not clear that this would command public and parental confidence given that learners in this cohort would have significantly fewer qualifications compared to their counterparts in adjacent years and their counterparts in other parts of the UK. This might put them at considerable disadvantage in applying for educational and employment opportunities in the future.
5. It meets few, of the 'Agreed Properties' of any contingency plan, particularly #1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9.

**B. National 5 qualifications to be assessed via teacher-based assessment only, similar to the ACM 21**

While this option has some advantages, particularly around a sense of giving certainty if announced early on, it has some drawbacks.

1. In terms of practicability and teacher workload, this option would represent an increased workload for teachers compared to a normal examination model of assessment for National 5s<sup>1</sup>
2. It is not clear which scenario in table 1 it would be responding to.
3. There are other practicalities to consider if used in conjunction in with "the gear change model", not least that the system would be using or need to be prepared to use 4 different models or contingencies. This in itself creates enormous risk to the system in being able to process results in any scenario.

**C. Something similar to ACM 21 being part of 'the gear change model' – as either gear 2 or gear 3.**

While we know there is a sense that the ACM 21 by now feels somewhat familiar, again, it is not clear which scenario (cf table 1) it is responding to. If it is invoked 'early' eg December or January, it would be far from clear that examinations in May would not be able to take place. And, in itself, it does not respond to disruption in learning. Furthermore, a 'full' ACM 21 type model requires significant teacher

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<sup>1</sup> Please accept as shorthand for 'normal assessment' – noting that normal assessment often contains a coursework element; and that modifications are also in place for 2022.

assessment and workload. As such, it would require a significant re-orientation if not re-drawing teaching plans for the year.

Similar drawbacks to those identified in Section B would also apply in this context.

#### **D. SQA marks normally occurring assessment**

The potential advantage of this addition is that it lightens the teacher workload and pressure to provide a student grade should examinations not be able to go ahead, and in theory would bring with those advantages of having an exam board-led approach to marking with blind allocation of ‘scripts’ to markers, all the training and monitoring of markers. However, there are significant practical barriers to this including:

1. Recognising that as markers, they would be paid for marking tasks, markers are generally drawn from the active teaching population and so would create a significant drain on teachers’ time and focus for example through much additional training and marking at weekends and in evenings.
2. Significant logistical considerations: there are well-developed means of collecting, scanning and distributing exam scripts – which is any year a large undertaking with regard to around 500k qualifications. These means would not work for much more diverse portfolios of work which are not standardised in terms of booklet size, booklet length etc.
3. As a marking task, this is greater and more challenging than normal marking because the range of evidence provided would be much more variable. It would represent the most extreme form of ‘divergent outcome space’ (Pollitt, 2002; Black, Suto and Bramley 2011) and associated with lower levels of marking reliability

### **IV The gear change model – the preferred model**

In essence this is tabled as a relatively agile model that has a set of contingencies designed to fit particular scenarios (as per table 1) and would be articulated alongside a clear understanding of under what conditions or trigger points we would shift to a different part of the plan. It is anticipated that these trigger points could be specified by government but some qualitative triggers are included for illustration to support understanding of the model. Table 2 below provides a brief summary.

Table 2: Table summarising the 3 parts of the ‘Gear Change Model’

	Plan	Detail	Trigger for illustrative purposes
A	Default: exams plus modifications as currently announced	Modifications as currently detailed correspond to around 20% of the course.	These modifications were introduced to absorb some of the impacts of disruption carried into the coming year, but should also absorb some further disruption



B	Further examination modifications	Modifications should help support the examination and revision experience and could include, for example, Advance Notice of Topic Area to help narrow revision	Disruption to learning and teaching beyond a certain point, around somewhere in the region of that experienced in 2020/2021
C	Teacher judged grades based on normal in-year assessment evidence should examinations become impossible	Teachers in any ordinary year undertake a range of assessment tasks with their students.	Only in the event that public health guidance does not allow for large gatherings and examinations to take place would this be mitigation be invoked.

### **More detail on Plan A, default**

In relation to more time for teaching and learning, various modifications already in place across NQs support point 3. These include:

- Removal of coursework assessment components
- Increase in optionality
- Reduction of examined time by removing some assessment tasks/areas from the examinations.
- Relaxation of coursework/assignment conditions
- Announcement of topics/themes which will not be assessed.

Overall, 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. For more information, please see [LINK. - \[redacted s.30\(b\)\(ii\)\]](#)

Because these modifications have already been announced and because they represent substantial allowances, they respond to both the impact of legacy disruption for learners, and also some further anticipated disruption.

### **More detail on Plan B: Further modifications to examinations**

Should the disruption in the coming year exceed a certain level, and be beyond the point of 'recovery' through any other means available to schools e.g. additional classes, tutoring, catch-up, streamlining etc, further modifications could be implemented that would ease the experience and stress of examinations.

One key further modification that could be implemented in a number of subject/course areas would be Advance Notice of Topic Areas. This would involve letting schools and colleges know the topic areas included in the upcoming examinations. If announced around late March, rather than narrowing the teaching curriculum, this would instead serve to help focus the revision efforts of learners and teachers and support a less stressful experience of the examination in circumstances where there might otherwise have been a more patchy or less consolidated understanding of the whole course.

Other modifications that could be considered in other subjects/courses might include 'open book', some increase in optionality (for example 'answer 2 out of 5 questions instead of 3 out of 5 questions', or possibly (more extreme) a reduction in the number of examination papers taken.

There would be some general principles to any modifications to ensure they serve the purpose as identified, and to retain the validity and meaning of the qualifications as far as possible. These principles might include:

1. They should not seek to reduce course content per se (hence announcement in March), but should seek to ease the experience of revision and examinations.
2. They should be able to be implemented around the pre-existing version of examinations papers, rather than require a different version or a re-write; though they could, only if necessary, involve an 'addendum' notice (not dissimilar to an erratum notice).
3. They should not require some additional acquisition of a new skill for learners – for example in some subjects, an 'open book' examination might mean rehearsing a new skill of how to use such information in a timely and effective way in an examination. In other words, any modification should most definitely be designed to help and not hinder.

***Discussion Question: are there other modifications the group would like to suggest which would meet these 3 principles; or additional or different principles that should be considered?***

### **More detail on Plan C: Teacher judged grades based on normal in-year assessment evidence should examinations become impossible**

This plan would only be invoked should examinations not be able to go ahead due to public health restrictions being invoked such that large gatherings are not allowed.

Because:

- (a) this is a response to examinations not being able to go ahead on the basis of public health grounds only and so could, in theory, be a decision based on a suddenly emerging scenario (as all national lockdowns have been to date) *and*
- (b) to avoid the pitfalls of 'dual assessment' (where, potentially, a student feels they are undertaking preparation for examinations as well as undertaking perceived high stakes assessment throughout the year)

the emphasis has to be on this being 'normal' or 'naturally-occurring' in-year assessment that teachers and learners would normally plan and undertake. However, it might be teachers can take relatively easy steps to enhance the reliability or validity of any such assessment through for example, making use of Understanding Standards, choice of assessment materials, any steps that might be judged appropriate in regards to the settings of assessments.

The way Plan C is expressed is that it only represents a last minute contingency. On this basis, it should not be invoked e.g. in January or February when we cannot know that public health restrictions would mean that examinations cannot take place. Teachers and learners, therefore, should have certainty that, in any eventuality, they should have the full year to undertake assessments as normal.

This is not an 'SQA-led' approach and cannot be an SQA-led approach. If so, this then becomes a different assessment model through the year, and one which would carry the risk of the sense of 'dual assessment' as well as potentially 'getting in the way' of normal teaching and learning and normal in-year assessment or creating burden to teachers.

But SQA would 'support' through mechanisms such as 'Understanding Standards', SQA Academy Modules and such like, which could and should have longer positive impacts on teacher professional understanding of their subject areas and assessments.

***Discussion questions: what should be the principles or examples of how SQA or others can help support teachers for in-year assessment, without creating additional burden for teachers***

Other aspects of 'The Gear Change Model' that would need some further work to help insulate from disruption and support learners' progression:

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

### **Advantages of the Gear Change Model**

1. It meets all parameters and requirements outlined in "agreed properties of any contingency plan". This is significant.
2. It clearly responds to different scenarios, rather than trying to achieve a 'catch-all' contingency.
3. It makes the most of already consulted upon and announced modifications and so should represent relative stability and clear picture for teachers and learners starting the academic year.
4. It only enacts further contingency if needed.
5. (a) and (b) would take a significant amount of stress and heat out of a set of 'normal arrangements' for learners and also teachers.
6. As a set of contingencies, with clearly communicated trigger points, they work together as a whole. For example, preparing for (a) and/or (b) does not undermine or work against having (c) as a contingency for the worst case scenario.
7. It can be communicated clearly and would create a clear course through the coming session.
8. It should not create as heavy workload for teachers as, say, ACM 21, in any of the three gears because (a) and (b) are SQA marked, and (c) makes the most of 'naturally occurring assessment' in schools – though with some enhancements such as the benefits of last year's Understand Standards, and mindfulness of arrangements which support fairness etc.
9. In this model, learners should not feel like they are being 'dual assessed'. This is a key aim of the model.

10. Because, for parts (a) and (b), it is SQA marked, there should be consistency across learners, centres, local authorities etc in terms of the marking and grading judgements. This supports our aims of fairness, reliability but also credibility and validity.
11. For (a) and (b), could produce a set of results which are *relatively similar* to normal years and so should command confidence. As such, they would fit well into the developed ecosystem of how qualifications and qualification grades are used for progression and selection.
12. Should make the most of 'naturally-occurring' assessments during the academic year, rather than end-loading exam-style assessments. This may include prelims.
13. Unlike the ACM 21, which had a 'go/no-go' cut off point, this model has sufficient flexibility in that Plan C could be invoked on the eve of a normal exam diet.
14. As such, if Plan C is invoked, it should create less revolution and disruption and more an 'orderly' response that the system can pivot to.
15. It responds to some peoples' reflections on 2020-2021 that an examination session could have been run.

## **V Consideration of triggers for invoking different parts of the model**

While it is not for the steering group to define, numerically, the exact triggers for Plan B this might be an area for discussion to get a sense, qualitatively, of the degree of disruption that should trigger plan B.

[To note, Plan C, should only be invoked if Public Health restrictions necessitate the cancellation of examinations. This trigger point therefore is likely to be a matter just for Scottish Government.]

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

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

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

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

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

## **VII. Communications considerations**

One of the key things about this model is communication of the model, and being as clear as possible about it up front to give as much certainty and reassurance to the learners and teachers.

Key elements of successful communication are likely to include the following:

1. We want to all try to get back to normal as far as possible. [These qualifications and courses were designed with these kinds of assessment in mind].

2. Explaining why this is a best set of contingencies [responds in a more targeted way to the different scenarios we are likely to encounter].
3. Some explanation of the nature of Plan B and the nature of Plan C and the trigger points or circumstances in which they would be invoked and what they would mean for learners and teachers.
4. Clear signalling around the system heading for examinations – there is only one scenario which would result in cancellation of examinations [there is no need to create ambiguity or confusion on this point].
5. Clear intentions to avoid the ‘dual assessment’ [normal assessment practices in schools contributing to a mosaic of evidence for teacher judgement; this is very much based on what teachers normally do as part of their good practice].
6. Clear messaging on why ACM is not the chosen contingency this year [we are learning how the pandemic works, and [likely] we are moving into a different position on social isolation and disruption which means ACM would not be an effective or targeted contingency position].
7. Clear signalling on what this means for teacher workload compared to last year and compared to normal years (we have listened to teachers’ experiences of ACM; teacher workload better than last year; should not be really more onerous than a normal year)

*Discussion points: can we discuss views on how communications messages can help give clear expectations and reassurance and command confidence in the system?*





## **Enclosure 09: Email, CERG member feedback - by 10am Weds 11/8**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 10 August 2021 14:19  
**To:** CERG <CERG@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: CERG member feedback - by 10am Weds 11/8  
**Importance:** High

Thanks [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]/[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – suggest we wait to as close to the time as possible tomorrow (10am) as we might be able to give a bit more information if Cab Sec has come back to us. Will only be a few bullet points anyway I suspect.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]  
[Redacted s38(1)(b)] | [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government |

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** CERG  
**Sent:** 10 August 2021 14:15  
**To:** O'Connor N (Niamh) <Niamh.O'Connor@gov.scot>; Nicholson J (John) <John.Nicholson@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** CERG <CERG@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** CERG member feedback - by 10am Weds 11/8  
**Importance:** High

Colleagues

Please see attached feedback from Education Recovery Group (CERG) members. I would be grateful for your consideration. Helpful to have any contributions relevant to Cab Sec's chair's brief by 10am tomorrow.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-guidance-reducing-risks-schools)

[Out of scope]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]/[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – GTCS comments about exams 2022 – probably will be covered in announcement this week?

[Out of scope]

Thanks  
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]  
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]  
Learning Directorate | Scottish Government



**Enclosure 09.1: Word attachment  
CERG - weekly feedback**

[Out of scope]

**National/strategic issues** – issues that you believe require CERG discussion or, potentially, national level guidance updates, and which cannot be addressed effectively through dialogue at local level. (Note: If possible, please include any information you have about the scale and severity of any such issues – e.g. geographical spread, numbers, involved, amount of feedback received, etc. The secretariat may liaise with you to determine how best to approach these issues.)

[Out of scope]

**GTCS**

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

[Out of scope]

[Out of scope]

**Enclosure 10: Email, National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 11 August 2021**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 10 August 2021 16:39

**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; abradley@eis.org.uk; Ann Heron <Ann.Heron@ayrshire.ac.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; g.graham@dundeeandangus.ac.uk; ghutton859@dundeeschools.scot; rector@hsog.co.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; margaret@scis.org.uk; Bray O (Ollie) <Ollie.Bray@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; stewart.nicolson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Cc:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 11 August 2021

Good afternoon,

Please find attached the papers for tomorrows NQ21 WG meeting.

Kind regards,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Operations

**Enclosure 10.1:**

**AGENDA**

**Meeting: NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group**

**Date: Wednesday 11 August 2021**

**Time: 11:00 – 12:30**

**Location: via MS Teams**

No.	Item Description	Paper	Who
	Out of Scope		
	Out of Scope		
3	Planning for 2022 – Contingencies	Plan C- Further developing the model	BB
	Out of Scope		

## **Enclosure 10.2:**

### **Notes of NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting 4 August 2021**

**Attendees:** Jean Blair (Chair) (SQA), Gill Stewart (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), John O'Neill (SCIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Stewart Nicolson (ADES and RICs), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Angela Mulgrew (SQA), Ollie Bray (Education Scotland), Graham Hutton (SLS), Ann Heron (Colleges Scotland), Andrea Bradley (EIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA)

**Apologies:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Margaret Lannon (SCIS), Gail Graham (Colleges Scotland), John Meehan (SQA), Kerry McMillan (SQA)

[Out of scope]

### **Planning for 2022 – Contingencies: The Design of Plan C**

Beth Black highlighted that the paper shared ahead of this meeting 'ACM 2022 for NQ Steering Group 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021' explained some of the rationale and thinking behind the potential models and contingencies being considered. The paper also includes some scenarios that might trigger contingencies.

#### **Background**

The current position is that there will be an exam diet unless told otherwise. The decision whether the exam diet for 2021-22 will go ahead rests with the Scottish Government.

The group had previously agreed the following parameters of any contingency plan:

1. be engineered to respond to the problem scenario
2. be based on demonstrated attainment
3. be clear about the 'trade offs'
4. support time for teaching and learning and enabling learner progression to the next stage
5. be clearly communicated as soon as possible
6. not be a system redesign
7. be 'pandemic proof'
8. easy to pivot to (if needed)

#### **The 'Gear Change Model' (name subject to change)**

*A set of contingencies, with a clear understanding of when we would shift to a different plan, under what conditions. The intent would be 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 this against further disruption with further adaptation/modification where possible.*

*(c) In the event that examinations become impossible because of health restrictions / lockdown, then in-year assessment evidence will be used to support teacher determined grades.*

Focus for the meeting:

In the event that examinations cannot go ahead, *what should be the principles or examples of how SQA or others can help support teachers for in-year assessment, without creating additional burden for teachers and learners*

- [redacted s.30(b)(ii)]
- Consider that any ACM gives better outcomes/results for learners so Plan A or B would potentially see results return to 2019 levels.

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

### Summary

In the event that examinations cannot go ahead, *what should be the principles or examples of how SQA or others can help support teachers for in-year assessment, without creating additional burden for teachers and learners*

Activities... e.g.

- Nature of assessment tasks *Prelims & availability of assessments; workshops, prelims = high value evidence; discussions around minimum and maximum versus holistic, 2022 papers?*
- Nature of assessment settings; *School only? Remote too?*
- Understanding Standards *and SQA Academy*
- Quality Assurance, when, and to what end? *timing? Dangers of announcing or conducting SQA QA in Spring? Related to digitisation; SQA support of LA QA (as well, instead of); 2021 amount about right; digitised records of marks/grades just in case*

Principles e.g.

- Light touch; Minimum viable? *Goldilocks; intrinsic value e.g., understanding standards*

[Out of scope]

Next meeting, Wednesday 11 August 11am.

Area	Action	Owner	Update
		[Out of scope]	
Plan C	Provide a 'very' draft outline to support further discussion	BB	

## **Enclosure 10.3: Word attachment**

**NQ 2021 Working Group, Wednesday 11 August 2021**

### **Plan C – Further developing the model**

#### **Context and background**

At its recent meetings the Working Group has developed the thinking behind the 'Gear Change' model for National Courses for AY 2021 – 22. This model comprises three stages:

- PLAN A: Exam diet + modifications
- PLAN B: Exam diet + modifications + additional adaptations to insulate against lost learning
- PLAN C: non-exam contingency – fall back on “normal assessment” during the year (though done under 'enhanced' conditions/guidance)

Discussion at the last meeting of the Group on 4 August focused on Plan C and in particular on the question of: ***'what should be the principles or examples of how SQA or others can help support teachers for in-year assessment, without creating additional burden for teachers and learners?'***

In considering the model the Group explored issues under a number of headings including:

#### **Activities... e.g.**

Keeping records up to date and available  
Nature of assessment tasks Prelims & availability of assessments;  
Nature of assessment settings;  
Understanding Standards and SQA Academy  
Quality Assurance, when, and to what end? timing?

#### **Principles e.g.**

Light touch; Minimum viable mosaic of evidence?  
Teacher activities beyond normal in-year assessments should have intrinsic value; in other words should have a longer term professional capacity and capability building for teachers such as Understanding Standards.

#### **How teachers communicate with Learners e.g.**

What matters, what doesn't matter in assessment  
Broad picture of evidence that any teacher judgement would be based upon – should not worry unnecessarily about any particular assessment.  
There will be a body or mosaic of evidence that teachers will base judgements.

This paper captures the outcomes of discussion of these and a range of other themes at the Group's meeting on 4 August in a way that allows the activities needed to implement the plan to be defined further. It is written in a way that may, in time, provide the basis of a version to be shared with teachers/lecturers and others in the system to provide them with an understanding of:

- What Plan C is in the context of the overall plan for AY 2021 – 22
- The principles behind the model
- Key features of the way the model will operate in particular in relation to assessment and quality assurance
- The roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders in the system including local authorities

- What is - and is not - expected of them

### **Description of Plan C**

Plan C would see certificates awarded on the basis of teacher judgement based on 'normal' in-year assessment. It would be invoked only in the event that examinations could not be held because of public health restrictions in place (or likely to be in place) for May. As such it is a final resort and will only be invoked for the situation of public examinations not being able to go ahead, rather than for more general disruption to teaching and learning.

### **Principles**

The principles on which Plan C is based are that:

- a. It is based on 'normal' in-year assessment. This should ensure that it is manageable at a local, regional and national level and avoid running two parallel systems, one in which learners are prepared for exams and the other in which they are assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure that evidence is available to support teachers' professional judgement. All the activities required to support teachers in coming to any grading judgements should have intrinsic value i.e. they should not only be valuable for supporting certification in 2021 – 22 should Plan C be invoked, but have wider and longer term value to the teachers' professionalism.
- b. The approach will be one of teachers' professional judgement in regard to a mosaic of available evidence of learner performance and attainment, making the most of normal assessment practices
- c. The approach should seek to make the most of particularly positive features of the 2020 – 21 ACM and the resources developed to support it. These features include Understanding Standards, the quality assurance model, aiming for a light touch that is consistent with protection of national standards and the teacher – learner dialogue that was at the heart of the ACM 21
- d. Clear and effective communication, in particular between centres and their learners, will be key to the successful operation of the model. Some work across the system over the course of the year is necessary, based on the principles above, to enable the plan to be readily and easily invoked if needed at a late stage. It is critical that there is an understanding of this amongst all key stakeholders.

### **Activities required to enable Plan C**

As noted above the model is based on capturing the evidence that would be generated through the assessment activities undertaken in a school or college as part of the 'normal' teaching, learning and assessment cycle so that this evidence can, if required, form the basis of teachers'/lecturers' judgements on grades for certification.

It is not intended that the model requires additional assessment to be undertaken above and beyond that which would form part of support for teaching and learning in a 'normal' year. It does require that that particular attention is paid to all aspects of assessment in the senior phase over the course of the year including:

- Assessment planning
- Assessment materials
- Conditions under which assessment is undertaken, including the medium and location of assessment
- Initial assessment judgements, to ensure they reliably reflect the national standard and
- Quality assurance of the assessment judgements

- Records of assessment and quality assurance activity and outcomes
- 
- In addition to these points specifically related to assessment, as noted earlier clear and effective communication will be key to the successful implementation of the model. Support from SQA is already available in a number of areas highlighted. This can be revisited and, where necessary and possible, strengthened to support assessment activity. Support may also be available from others in the system at a local, regional and national level.

Each of these points is explored further below in the context of Plan C.

**Assessment planning** – effective planning of assessment for the year and communication of these plans to learners will be key to the success of this model. Consistent with the principle of the model not being assessment-led, the expectation should be that assessment planning should follow a similar pattern to that in a ‘normal’ year. The purpose of assessment should be to support effective teaching and learning and to generate the type and volume of evidence that would be required to support a request for Exceptional Circumstances consideration or an appeal in a ‘normal’ year.

In planning assessment and communicating these plans, clarity for learners over ‘what counts’ i.e. what evidence would be considered high value or higher value in informing teachers’ judgements will be essential. This will allow learners to plan their learning effectively and so help in reducing levels of stress and anxiety associated with any perceptions of an excessive burden of assessment.

**Assessment materials** – guidance through Understanding Standards and SQA Academy already exists to support the creation of assessments that are valid, reliable and fair. At its meeting on 4 August the Group considered the scope for further strengthening this support in some areas. SQA could also review whether additional assessment materials could be made available in formats that would encourage and facilitate their use. Based on the experience of 2020 – 21 it is unlikely that SQA would make 2022 examination papers available for use.

**Conditions of assessment** – SQA could provide further guidance in this area to ensure that, where this is the intention, assessments are undertaken in conditions that allow them to be used more safely as the basis of teachers’ judgements for awards

**Medium of assessment** – the Group discussed the principle that wherever possible assessment should be undertaken in a way that generates digital evidence or evidence that can easily be digitised. This facilitates easier movement of materials for QA or other purposes should that be required and does not raise public health concerns about the movement of paper-based materials. Generation, storage and movement of digital evidence creates some challenges or centres and SQA although progress was made in this area in 2020 – 21 and provides the basis for further development in the 2021 – 22 AY.

**Location of assessment** – this is an area that requires further exploration within SQA and by the Group. Under the 2020 – 21 ACM only assessment undertaken in a centre was permitted to be used to support teachers’ judgements. This reflected concern to ensure the authenticity of that evidence. It also reduced the flexibility available to learners and centres to generate evidence when a learner was absent e.g. for a period of self-isolation. SQA issued guidance on remote invigilation that was used to support other qualification types and is reviewing this guidance and its position on remote invigilation more generally. This review



should include consideration of whether and under what circumstances use of remote assessment should be permitted to support Plan C.

**Initial assessment judgements** – the reliability and fairness of assessment judgements will be key to the success of the model. Feedback from the 2020 – 21 ACM indicates that teachers’ understanding of and ability to apply national standards was significantly enhanced as a result of their engagement with the Understanding Standards materials and support provided by SQA. This support will continue to be available and could be further enhanced in some areas e.g. assessment construction, as outlined above.

**Quality assurance of assessment judgements** – the quality assurance mechanisms within centres and across local authorities that were used to support the 2020 – 21 ACM would also be important in supporting the approach outlined in this paper. Consistent with the principle of quality assurance being sufficient to assure the standard of the assessment judgements made and based on our collective experience of 2020 – 21, it is possible that there may be opportunities to streamline this activity in centres and local authorities.

**Records of assessment and quality assurance activity and outcomes** – the records of the assessments undertaken for each learner should provide an audit trail sufficiently robust to allow them to be used as the basis of judgements for certification. This will build on existing practice but may need to be supplemented to take account of other points in this outline.

### **SQA quality assurance activity**

The timing and extent of SQA quality assurance requires further consideration and discussion. As the model outlined in this paper would not be invoked unless and until it is clear that examinations cannot run on public health grounds and this may be late in the academic year, planning and delivery of QA activity will need to take place at an earlier point in the year. It will need to be undertaken in a way that supports robust, reliable and fair decision making and is manageable for SQA and centres. Discussion of the most appropriate approach in these circumstances also needs to consider the relationship between QA undertaken by SQA and by schools and local authorities. The point above about digitising assessment evidence is also key in streamlining QA processes.

### **Teacher/learner dialogue**

As noted earlier, clear and effective communication, in particular between centres and their learners, will be key to the successful operation of the model. In keeping with the principle behind the model this communication should, as far as possible, be based on the communication that would take place in a ‘normal’ year.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Based on the overview and questions above roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing the model should be defined. This can form a future activity for the Group.

Roles and responsibilities need to be considered carefully to ensure that all stakeholders are contributing in a way that supports delivery and manageability of the model without adding unnecessarily to workload or complexity.

A table along the lines below setting out key messages for teacher and lecturers for the implementation of the model may be helpful in informing communications and roles and responsibilities.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Assessment planning	Plan assessment activity in the same way as for a 'normal' year to support effective teaching and learning and generate the type of evidence that would be required to support an Exceptional Circumstances review or Appeal	Take an assessment-led approach by adding multiple medium/high stakes assessments.
Communicating assessment plans	Be clear about the pieces of assessment that are of highest value in informing judgements to allow learners to focus their learning	Make it difficult for learners to understand and work towards the assessments that will generate the highest value evidence as compared with other, more routine, assessments
Assessment materials	Ensure high value assessments and their marks schemes are consistent with guidance and support provided by SQA [through Understanding Standards and SQA Academy]	
Conditions of assessment	Pay attention to the conditions under which assessment is undertaken, in particular those assessments that have highest value. What really matters is that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners feel like the conditions of assessment have not made it difficult for them to perform</li> <li>• Authentication of learner work – that conditions are sufficient to ensure authentication of learner work.</li> </ul>	Jeopardise the potential validity of assessment evidence by paying insufficient attention to the conditions under which the assessment was undertaken
Initial assessment judgements	Ensure that you have clear understanding of the national standard before marking assessments through review of Understanding Standards materials	
Quality assurance of assessment judgements	Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for quality assuring the reliability of the assessment judgements made	
	Ensure that robust and accurate records are kept of all assessment activity, particularly high value	

	assessment, so there is a clear audit trail	
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### **Recommendation**

The Working Group is asked to further explore the issues raised in this paper to help further develop our understanding of how this model can be made to work as effectively as possible.

In particular the Group is asked to discuss how we achieve the appropriate balance in the tensions and trade-off between control/prescription versus flexibility for a number of aspects of the model including:

- Assessment location/conditions
- Assessment materials
- The number and type of assessments that are regarded as suitable for contributing to assessment judgements i.e. a small number of high value assessments versus a larger/broader range of more normal occurring assessments.

10 August 2021

**Enclosure 11: Email, RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 11 August 2021 12:32

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted - 29(1)(b) and 30(a).]

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Private Office to the First Minister

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

**Sent:** 10 August 2021 19:47

**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

[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

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**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 10 August 2021 19:22

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)],

FM does not want this to issue via GIQ tomorrow – I would therefore be grateful if you could arrange for this to be postponed.

I will be in touch again with comments from the First Minister when I have them.

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

Best wishes

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] | [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | T: 0131 24 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | M: 07 [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 10 August 2021 16:46

**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin)

<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

**Importance:** High

PS/First Minister

Please find attached a note from Ms Somerville to the First Minister regarding the above. Please note the intention is that this will be announced via GIQ tomorrow AM.

Many thanks.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

## **Enclosure 12 Email, RE: Urgent: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

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

**Sent:** 11 August 2021 13:35

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

<CabSecES@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; Permanent

Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of

Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle)

<Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; EdS\_OCEX@educationscotland.gov.uk; Bray O (Ollie)

<Ollie.Bray@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Ansongov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick)

<Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza)

<Liza.McLean@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted

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

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

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy)

<Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [Redacted

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

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

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McKay D (Denise) <Denise.McKay@gov.scot>; Communications Education &

Skills <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David)

<David.Livey@gov.scot>; ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat

inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]/Malcolm

To see response from First Minister to the note from Cab Sec's note yesterday and to note that this will now be discussed at Cabinet on Tuesday. I would be grateful if you could liaise with Cabinet Secretariat about their timing/format requirements for paper (bearing in mind Ms Somerville's will require to sign off the paper prior to being submitted).

Happy to discuss practicalities around this.

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

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*This chain diverges from Enclosure 11 after the email of 06 August 2021 at 18:00*

## Enclosure 12.1: Email attachment

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister  
**Sent:** 11 August 2021 12:32  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted - 29(1)(b) and 30(a).]

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Sent:** 10 August 2021 19:47  
**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Noted and actioned



[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

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**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 10 August 2021 19:22

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

FM does not want this to issue via GIQ tomorrow – I would therefore be grateful if you could arrange for this to be postponed.

I will be in touch again with comments from the First Minister when I have them.

Best wishes

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] | [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | T: 0131 24 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | M: 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 10 August 2021 16:46

**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice

<dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)  
<Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** SCHOOL EXAMINATION DIET 2022 : NOTE FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION &  
SKILLS

**Importance:** High

PS/First Minister

Please find attached a note from Ms Somerville to the First Minister regarding the above. Please  
note the intention is that this will be announced via GIQ tomorrow AM.

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

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**Enclosure 13.1: Word attachment**

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

**Enclosure 14: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 13 August 2021 17:59

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

**Cc:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin)

<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

As per below, please find attached a short note to Ms Somerville.

Thanks  
Malcolm

*The rest of this chain is the same as Enclosure 14*

**Enclosure 14.1: Word attachment**

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]





**Enclosure 15.1: Word attachment**

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



**Enclosure 16.1: Word attachment**

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





***Enclosure 18.1: Word attachment***

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

**Enclosure 18.2: Word attachment**

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

**Enclosure 19: Email, Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Sent:** 15 August 2021 10:48  
**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSR@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22  
**Importance:** High

PS/First Minister

PS/Deputy First Minister

Please find attached a draft Cabinet paper on Assessment of National Qualification 2021/22 for discussion at Cabinet on Tuesday as requested by the First Minister.

Apologies for the delay in getting this to you but grateful for confirmation on Monday that the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are content for this paper to be discussed at Tuesday's Cabinet.

Many thanks.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]



***Enclosure 19.1: Word attachment***

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



**Enclosure 21: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery

**Sent:** 16 August 2021 10:48

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lively D (David) <David.Lively@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

The DFM is content for the paper to go to Cabinet.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] | [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | The Scottish Government | Web: [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot) | Tel: 0131 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | Mob: 07 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | Email: [DFMCSCR@gov.scot](mailto:DFMCSCR@gov.scot)

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

**Sent:** 15 August 2021 19:55

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lively D (David) <David.Lively@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

Apologies, I missed Lord Advocate off copylist first time round.

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> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

**Sent:** 15 August 2021 10:48

**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

**Importance:** High

PS/First Minister

PS/Deputy First Minister

Please find attached a draft Cabinet paper on Assessment of National Qualification 2021/22 for discussion at Cabinet on Tuesday as requested by the First Minister.

Apologies for the delay in getting this to you but grateful for confirmation on Monday that the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are content for this paper to be discussed at Tuesday's Cabinet.

Many thanks.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**Enclosure 22: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**From:** Sturgeon N (Nicola) [redacted s.38(1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 16 August 2021 18:08  
**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

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

Sent with BlackBerry Work  
([www.blackberry.com](http://www.blackberry.com))

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot on behalf of: First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Date:** Monday, 16 Aug 2021, 5:48 pm  
**To:** Sturgeon N (Nicola) <[Nicola.Sturgeon@gov.scot](mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon@gov.scot)>, First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

FM

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

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Private Office to the First Minister  
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG



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**From:** Sturgeon N (Nicola) [redacted s.38(1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 16 August 2021 17:28  
**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

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

Sent with BlackBerry Work

([www.blackberry.com](http://www.blackberry.com))

**From:** [redacted] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]> on behalf of: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Date:** Sunday, 15 Aug 2021, 11:04 am

**To:** Sturgeon N (Nicola) [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

**Subject:** FW: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

Cabinet paper for Tuesday.

Happy for it to issue?

Ta

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] | [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **T: 0131 24** [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **M: 07**[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

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

**Sent:** 15 August 2021 10:48

**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

**Importance:** High

PS/First Minister

PS/Deputy First Minister

Please find attached a draft Cabinet paper on Assessment of National Qualification 2021/22 for discussion at Cabinet on Tuesday as requested by the First Minister.

Apologies for the delay in getting this to you but grateful for confirmation on Monday that the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are content for this paper to be discussed at Tuesday's Cabinet. Many thanks.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**Enclosure 23: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 16 August 2021 18:22

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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5th Floor| St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG



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**This chain diverges from Enclosure 22 after the email of 15 August 2021 at 19:55**







**Enclosure 24.1: Email attached**

*Duplicate of Enclosure 24*



***Enclosure 25.1: Word attachment***

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

**Enclosure 26: Email, RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22**

**From:** Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 16 August 2021 21:58

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery <DFMCSCR@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Cabinet Secretariat inbox <CabinetSecretariat3@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Cabinet: 17 August: Cabinet Paper: ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021/22

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

I'm sorry for the late response – the Lord Advocate has noted the Cabinet paper and is content for it to proceed to Cabinet for discussion.

Many thanks,

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Acting Private Secretary – Lord Advocate

Crown Office, 25 Chambers Street, Edinburgh  
E-mail: Lordadvocate@gov.scot

This chain diverges from Enclosure 22 after the email of 15 August 2021 at 19:55

***Enclosure 27: RE: Speaking note***

**From:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 08:04

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) <Joe.Griffin@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Speaking note

Cabinet Secretary

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

*The rest of this chain is the same as Enclosure 26*



**Enclosure 28.1: Word attachment**

**AGENDA**

**Meeting: NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group**

**Date: Wednesday 18 August 2021**

**Time: 16:00-17:00**

**Location: via MS Teams**

	Out of Scope		
	Out of Scope		
3	Planning for 2022 – Contingencies		BB
	Out of Scope		
	Out of Scope		
	Out of Scope		



## Enclosure 28.2: Word attachment

### Notes of NQ 2021 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting 11 August 2021

**Attendees:** Jean Blair (Chair) (SQA), Gill Stewart (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), ([Redacted s38(1)(b)]SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), Ollie Bray (Education Scotland), Graham Hutton (SLS), Ann Heron (Colleges Scotland), Andrea Bradley (EIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (SQA), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), Margaret Lannon (SCIS), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA)

**Apologies:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](ScotGov), [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (ScotGov), Gail Graham (Colleges Scotland), [Redacted s38(1)(b)](SQA), John O'Neill (SCIS), Stewart Nicolson (ADES and RICs)

[Out of scope]

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

[Out of scope]

Next meeting, Wednesday 18 August 4pm.

Area	Action	Owner	Update
Further Modifications	Consider possibilities for use of smaller examination venues	JB	
Assessment planning	Consider support for practitioners on assessment planning	GS	
Plan C	Further consideration ahead of the next meeting.	BB	
			[Out of scope]

## Enclosure 29: Email, National Qualifications 2021 Working Group - 18 August 2021

**From:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 11:11

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle)

<Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

Cabinet Secretary

Following this morning's Cabinet discussion, I attached an updated GIQ for your clearance (amendments shown in red). Comms colleagues will provide an updated draft NR for you to review ASAP.

In addition, please note the following:

- We will work with PO to lodge the GIQ for tomorrow.
- The NQ policy team will provide you with updated briefing on the approach, given the likelihood of media bids following the GIQ tomorrow.
- We will meet with Education Scotland urgently as you mentioned at Cabinet, to discuss the 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 headteachers 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.

Thanks  
Graeme.

## **Enclosure 29.1: Word attachment**

**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.

### **Enclosure 30: Email, RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 21:35  
**To:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

Hi Malcolm, [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

The Cab Sec is content with below. I would be grateful if you could please update on th tracker and send through to us so I can issue tomorrow for 0930.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 18:57  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Please see proposed revised GIQ answer below for Ms Somerville's consideration. This now includes setting out, at a headline level, the key contingency measures. We recommend that the answer does not make specific reference to 'gear changes' (a working title not liked by all stakeholders involved in the development of the approach) or go into detail on what further modifications might look like (these will vary across courses and may not be possible in every course).

Thanks  
Malcolm

### **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 in September.

I can also confirm that careful contingency planning has taken place to ensure there is sufficient flexibility to respond to two key scenarios that might be faced as a result of the pandemic. First, in circumstances where there was further significant disruption to learning and teaching, a further round of modifications would be introduced in order to ease assessment. Second, should public health conditions do not allow for the holding of an examination diet in Spring 2022, awarding would be made on teachers' judgements based on normal in-year assessment.

These contingencies offer stability for teachers and learners in the coming academic session and will allow their focus to be on normal practices in teaching, learning and assessment. More detailed guidance will be issued by the SQA at the earliest opportunity.

**From:** Pentland MK (Malcolm)

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 18:17

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Please hold off giving this to Ms Somerville at this stage will get back to you with an alternative as soon as possible.

Malcolm

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

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 18:06

**To:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

I will send on to Cab Sec, at the moment she is content not to have a call this evening. But I will let you know if that changes once she had sight of below.

Thanks and sorry for any confusion.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 18:03

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

I have this as an initial draft:

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.

The National Qualifications 21 Group have met frequently over the summer to develop plans for this coming session. A 'gear change' model has been developed, describing a set of arrangements that enable the system to respond to different scenarios and which offer, as far as is possible, a pandemic-proof approach.

Their central planning assumption, first 'gear', has been that there will be examinations, with subject specific modifications, for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher in 2022.

In the event that additional disruption is experienced additional adaptations to the exams will be considered. This move into the second 'gear' 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. If this change was invoked, it would happen at end of March to ensure reasonable course coverage for learners.

However, there is always the possibility of more significant disruption, and with it public health advice advising against large gatherings of people at the time of the exams. This would lead to the cancellation of the exams – much as what we have seen in the past two academic sessions.

As such, should a move into the third 'gear' be required, from the start of session 2021-2022 teachers and lecturers will be asked to plan and deliver assessments at appropriate times throughout the year. This will allow the capture of reliable and robust evidence of demonstrated attainment that could be used if required to award grades to learners. I must stress that the volume and gathering of this evidence must be proportionate, quality not quantity is key. The NQ Group

continues to develop the approach at pace and will issue further guidance when available.

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 in September.

This set of contingencies gives sufficient flexibility to respond to the different scenarios that we might encounter. There will need to be a more exact formulation of the trigger point or threshold for the second 'gear' to be invoked; but the third 'gear' should be reserved only for the situation of public examinations not being able to go ahead, rather than for more general disruption to teaching and learning.

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.

I acknowledge that it is significantly longer than previous version – perhaps too long – however it will give Cab Sec something to reference when we speak.

Please note that [Redacted s38(1)(b)] has also emailed asking that I update the tracker but did not reference a call with the Cab Sec to discuss.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 17:31  
**To:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

Thanks [Redacted s38(1)(b)] – will let Ms Somerville know and get back to you asap

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 17:26  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

I am available this evening and have the GIQ attached to me in PM tracker

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 17:24  
**To:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
<CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)  
<Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

Hi Folks,

Ms Somerville needs to speak to someone about the GIQ and press release which she wishes to change - if that's still possible. She basically wants to include the contingency arrangements which are in the SQA letter. She would like to speak to someone tonight if possible.

Can someone give me a call to let me know whether that's possible  
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 16:49  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning  
<DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Proposed letter to Fiona attached.

Thank you

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

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 17 August 2021 15:51  
**To:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
<CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)  
<Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

In terms of the "what", the gear Change Model has been "signed-off" by the NQ21 Group. The "when" of the gear changes, and the "who" of the supporting learners etc, will be developed at pace.

I have drafted a reply to Fiona, edited in light of today's cabinet meeting, and this is with Malcolm for checking. I feel Fiona should receive this reply before any announcement is made and we will work towards this.

Thanks



[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 15:15

**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

Graeme

Cab Sec asked me if we had received a response to her query below yet. Is someone able to offer quick response?

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)] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

**Sent:** 17 August 2021 12:49

**To:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Livey D (David) <David.Livey@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) <Alison.Taylor@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Updated GIQ: NQs in 2022

**Importance:** High

Thanks Graeme

Cab Sec has made a slight change to the GIQ shown on attached. Grateful if [Redacted s38(1)(b)](or whoever is holding the GIQ at present) could amend and resubmit.

Ms Somerville has also asked that in terms of the “gear change model” what needs to be done to get all of that signed off – is it finalised yet? Ms Somerville received a letter from SQA head recently – do we need to issue a reply to that first before anything can be done? What are the next stages on this piece of work?

Grateful if Comms could confirm time of release issuing (10.00am) so we can ensure Parly Clerks answer the GIQ ahead of that.

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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**The rest of this chain is the same as Enclosure 30**

## **Enclosure 31: Email, RE: NQ21 Group - comms strategy for the 2022 model**

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 18 August 2021 12:03

**To:** 'Jim.Thewliss@sls-scotland.org.uk' <Jim.Thewliss@sls-scotland.org.uk>;

'John.Edward@scis.org.uk' <John.Edward@scis.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@got.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Macdonald C (Catherine) <Catherine.Macdonald@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Chair NPFS <chair@npfs.org.uk>; Cheryl Burnett <south.lanarkshire@npfs.org.uk>; Susan Bell <south.ayrshire@npfs.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: NQ21 Group - comms strategy for the 2022 model

Hi there. Looking forward to getting together tomorrow.

As you may have seen/heard this morning, the Scottish Government has now confirmed that exams will be held in 2022 if it is safe to do. The SQA statement providing further details of the contingency arrangements will issue this afternoon.

As we previously discussed this is just an initial communication, and inevitably full details are not yet available. So I think it would be helpful for us to discuss tomorrow what we think we need to do to make sure that the next stage of the comms plan, when further/fuller details are announced, lands successfully – timings, audiences, products, channels etc.

I've attached an updated version of the previous slide pack for info too.

See you tomorrow.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)] On Behalf Of [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**Sent:** 02 August 2021 09:37

**To:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; 'Jim.Thewliss@sls-scotland.org.uk'; 'John.Edward@scis.org.uk'; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot'; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot'; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@got.scot'; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot'; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**Cc:** [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; Catherine.Macdonald@educationscotland.gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Chair NPFS; Cheryl Burnett; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

**Subject:** NQ21 Group - comms strategy for the 2022 model

**When:** 19 August 2021 09:00-09:30 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

**Where:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

Hi there. Looking forward to getting together tomorrow.

The Scottish Government

**Enclosure 31.1: PowerPoint attachment**



**DRAFT v0.3**

## **Awarding 2022 Communications Planning**

Updated 17/08/21

### **Background**

- ◆ Government has announced exams will go ahead in 2022 and that contingency arrangements will be in place should there be further significant disruption to learning and teaching or if the public health situation means exams cannot go ahead
- ◆ We will build on lessons learned from 2021 while shaping the approach to communications and engagement in 2022



## Objectives

- Clearly communicate the planned model for 2022 (exams with already announced modifications) as well as the alternative models that will be used should the public health situation deteriorate
- Agree key messages and plan/implement activity in collaboration with key educational stakeholders (NQ group) inc parents and learners
- Reassure audiences on value and credibility of qualifications esp. in light of the announcement to replace SQA
- Collaborate with Internal Communications team keep colleagues fully informed
- Measure communications impact and adapt



## Audience insight

- Teachers, lecturers and training providers delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher in 2022 need to know as early as possible, what is happening and how this will affect them and their learners
- Learners, parents and carers also need to be made aware of the approach to assessment in 2022 – most S4-S6 pupils will not have any experience of sitting SQA exams
- Use previous feedback from workshops and pulse surveys to inform the best approach for communicating with key audiences



## Strategy

- Communications to be easy to understand, timely, engaging and suitable for social media
- Important to communicate the planned model (and alternatives to be used if required) as soon as possible when schools return (initial outline with more detail in following weeks)
- Messages to be reassuring and supportive
- Involve communications partners in the development and delivery
- Use established digital channels including web, social and email
- Use paid channels such as social and radio



## Implementation

A communications activity plan will be developed with partners

Established channels include:

- Website
- Weekly and monthly newsletters
- Direct emails and updates from Group
- Daily social media

Other options:

- Myth buster, glossary and Infographics
- Live events through MS Teams, Facebook etc.



## Scoring/evaluation

- We will use Google analytics and Marketo reporting to measure the volume of communications and monitor how key stakeholders use the information
- We will liaise with customer facing colleagues to gauge feedback
- We will report feedback through the agreed governance set up
- We will alter our approach based on evaluation if required









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