

TEACHER PANEL

GRADE 'D' AWARDS AND THEIR EFFECT ON SCHOOL STATISTICS

Purpose

1. This paper provides background information on the latest SQA results including details of grade D presentations and awards. Panel members are invited to consider the content of this paper and offer their views.

Background

2. SQA results were published on 7 August 2018.
3. This year we have seen a large growth in the number of D grades at National 5 due to the increase to the range of Grade D that was introduced this year. This decision was taken as part of the changes to the National Qualifications to ensure that those young people who missed out on achieving a pass (A-C) receive appropriate recognition of their achievement at SCQF level 5.
4. The extension of Grade D to a notional 40-49% was agreed in March 2017 by the Assessment and National Qualifications Group, which included teachers, head teachers, and other education experts.
5. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of entries achieving a National 4 as a result of fall-back from National 5 (RPA). This is not a surprise and is in part explained by the increase in the grade range of grade D at National 5; in previous years entries achieving less than 45% would be eligible for a National 4 by fall-back (if they had completed the necessary range of units), whereas this year only entries achieving less than 40% are eligible for this route.
6. The number of 'true' presentations for National 4 has increased by over 3,000. This, combined with the reduced use of RPA, means that proportionately more young people are being proactively presented for National 4 rather than receiving it as a result of not having achieved an award at National 5. This is a positive step forward.
7. These issues highlight the importance of sound presentation policies. As with all aspects of Senior Phase curriculum design, presentation policies have to be local decisions taken by those best-placed to advise learners.
8. However, it is crucial that pupils are presented at the correct level of qualification to meet their educational needs. This also avoids assessment becoming over-bureaucratic for teachers.

Conclusion

9. This illustrates **some** evidence of the system change we were anticipating as a result of the removal of National 5 unit assessments and adherence to the ANQ

guidance around the use of 'exceptional circumstances', but not to the extent we were anticipating. It might be helpful to remind Panel members of the request from Education Scotland to review presentation decisions at a local level.

10. There is continued evidence of inappropriate presentation at National 5, signalled by the number of Grade D awards, and dual presentation at National 4 and 5. Many of these candidates who sat a National 5 did not have a 'near miss' and are unlikely to have had a good learning experience as a consequence of being entered for the wrong level of qualification. Panel members are asked to offer their thoughts.

Learning Directorate
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