

## Alternative Certification Model for National Qualifications 2021 Guidance for assessment and moderation



### Background

The cancellation of the 2021 exam diet has required an alternative certification model for this session based solely upon teacher judgement of assessment evidence. In order that we can provide the best and most robust assessment judgements possible it is important that approaches to moderation are consistently applied across our schools. The following guidance is intended to provide shared clarity around roles and responsibilities to support and strengthen the process in every school.

### Internal moderation

Schools should refer to the 'Moderation Step by Step Guide' (S Brown, AHS) appended to support staff through the assessment and moderation process.

All teachers involved in the assessment process should complete the relevant SQA Academy course on assessment and moderation.

<https://www.sqaacademy.org.uk/course/view.php?id=882#section-1>

Staff should work collaboratively to ensure that assessment materials meet the standard and are internally verified before use. This should include standardisation of marking instructions, marking allocations and cut offs.

It is accepted that the SQA materials made available from the 2020 exam diet have been previously moderated. The arrangements for the use of these assessments should be consistent across all schools.

The Principal Teacher (or allocated members of staff) must ensure that all markers are applying the standards consistently by sampling assessments and following procedures in line with the school's verification policy.

### Local Authority moderation

Curriculum Advisory Groups (CAGs) are responsible for the co-ordination of Subject Network Groups (SNGs) to moderate assessment materials that can be used across schools, where appropriate.

CAGs should verify the assessments that are being used in each school to ensure they meet the standard.

Curriculum groups led by Principal Teachers should sample a selection of scripts, from a range of grades and at grade boundaries, once they have been marked and discussed at school level. The scripts should be shared with the CAG for verification.

The CAG should co-ordinate the moderation of school scripts with feedback provided to schools as required.

### **Tay Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) moderation**

CAGs should identify one specialist per subject to represent Angus on TRIC panels. These panels will convene only as required.

The support of the TRIC groups can be used to verify assessments and candidate evidence for single teacher subjects and where moderation opportunities across authority are limited.

The support of the TRIC panels can also be accessed where there are difficulties in reaching consensus about grades or where there are anomalies in subject data.

### **SQA engagement**

SQA will sample candidate evidence for one subject/ level for each school prior to the finalisation of provisional grades.

Schools develop provisional results based on the available evidence and taking account of SQA feedback, once available.

### **Internal quality assurance**

Principal Teachers should analyse their subject performance compared to their estimates for the three years prior to 2020. At this stage, SQA appointees can provide another level of moderation where there are anomalies in the data.

Head Teachers and SQA co-ordinators should meet with each Principal Teacher to review and endorse the provisional awards.

### **Local Authority quality assurance**

The central team will meet with each SLT to engage in support/challenge discussions; analysis vs prior attainment and trend data by subject and as a year group; utilisation of existing subject expertise including SQA appointees.

This will include endorsing each school/centre's results, considering:

- The processes implemented by the school/centre
- The outcome of the checking exercise
- The rationale for any significant variances

In the event of exceptional circumstances where agreement cannot be reached at school/LA level, SQA will be notified by the Local Authority prior to the submission of provisional results.

### **Final submission**

Finalisation of provisional results taking into consideration SQA feedback and any actions arising from school and Local Authority checks. Final submission Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

# Alternative Certification Model for National Qualifications 2021

## Assessment and Moderation Process



## **Indicative timeline**

### **October – December**

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Begin to gather assessment evidence and support learners, providing feedback.
- Internal and Local Authority moderation takes place.
- SQA provide ongoing support to centres re understanding assessment standards.

### **January – February**

- Remote learning and teaching ongoing.
- Internal moderation continues.
- SQA provide assessment materials from exam diet 2020.
- In-service day – Internal and Local Authority moderation and CAGs/SNGs propose use of SQA assessment materials.

### **March**

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Continue to gather evidence and support learners, providing feedback on grades as supported by existing evidence.
- Internal and Local Authority moderation continues.

### **April – May**

- Learning and teaching ongoing.
- Undertake final assessments using SQA materials/ arrangements agreed by CAGs and Head Teachers.
- Schools take actions in relation to SQA feedback.
- Internal and Local Authority moderation continues.
- Provisional grades submitted and analysed by Principal Teachers against previous data trends
- In-service day & additional days – internal and local authority QA.
- Head Teachers endorse the process and outcomes for each subject.

### **June**

- Final quality assurance checks.
- Timetable move – date tbc.
- Finalisation of provisional results based on candidate evidence and taking into consideration SQA feedback and any actions arising from centre and LA checks.
- Final submission Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## Moderation – A step by step guide

*“Moderation develops a shared understanding of standards and expectations. It is a collaborative activity, best done within a department or faculty where teachers and lecturers are familiar with course specifications and approaches to assessment.”*  
SQA, Oct 2020

### **Step 1 – Moderating the Assessment**

Is your assessment fit for purpose? This is an important first step. Answer the following questions using this checklist produced by the SQA in 2019.

Is the assessment appropriate for its purpose?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it allow candidates to produce sufficient evidence that they have the knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the national standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an appropriate assessment scheme/marking instructions/recording mechanism to check that the candidate's evidence meets the requirements of the national standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can the assessment be carried out effectively and efficiently within the resources of your centre or assessment site?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the assessment accessible to all candidates?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the assessment meet any specific requirements of the unit/award? For example, does the assessment strategy stipulate a time frame or permitted resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Step 2 – Understanding standards – during the assessment process**

Standardisation and sampling during the assessment process are essential to ensure the reliability of assessment judgements.

- Marking Instructions – Discuss the marking instructions in detail. Annotate the instructions with any amendments or important points that are agreed.
- Standardisation of marking – Mark a range of candidates' assessment evidence together as a department. Discuss any anomalies and agree the standard. Annotate the marking instructions with any changes. Repeat this step if there are still discrepancies between markers.
- Marking allocation - Discuss and agree a fair division of marking allocation across the department. There is no one set way to do this.

### **Step 3 – Checking standards – after the assessment process**

To ensure that all markers are able to apply the national standards consistently, it is important to carry out further sampling.

- Prior marking - the Principal Teacher (or other allocated member of the department) selects and copies a few scripts prior to them being marked. The scripts are then marked, and the marking is discussed.
- Sample marking - the Principal Teacher (or other allocated member of the department) selects a few scripts after they have been marked. These scripts are marked by the Principal Teacher, and the marking is discussed.
- Verification – the Principal Teacher (or other allocated member of the department) selects a few scripts after they have been marked and discussed at school level. These scripts are shared by the Principal Teacher with the CAG, and the marking is verified.

#### **Understanding Standards**

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/72990.5926.html>

#### **Internal verification**

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74671.html>