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To Parents/Carers of S4/S5/S6

Assessment and Reporting

In this year's 'Senior Handbook', issued during the Course Choice process, we gave information on National Qualification, Skills for Work and National Progression Awards courses. In order for senior students to effectively plan study time we detail below the assessment and reporting arrangements for session 2018/19.

Assessment arrangements – how our pupils are assessed by the SQA and how we ensure consistency of practice

- a mix of internal and external assessment with satisfactory performance in both required for Advanced Higher to achieve a course award.
- external course assessment (exam) at N5 and Higher (which may also include folio work)
- units internally assessed for N4, Skills for Work or National Progression Awards.
- regular monitoring of student progress via our tracking and monitoring system
- verification of internal assessment by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and internal verification within the Faculty and across schools.
- a grading system for courses – A,B,C,D
- a single certificate updated annually which records all unit, course, and core skills achievements.

All **SQA unit internal assessment** is subject to verification by the SQA.

As well as providing assessment evidence required by the SQA, internal assessment of units will provide valuable feedback to students and teachers on students' progress.

Assessment can take a variety of forms depending on the unit. This might involve, for example, assignments, performing, producing a report, an end-of-unit test or making a product. Units are awarded on a **pass or fail basis**.

It should also be noted that a pass in unit assessments does not guarantee a pass in the course assessment; nor is it a guarantee of a certain level of pass.

Course assessment (external assessment)

External assessment tests learning across the course syllabus. For Advanced Higher, the external assessment tests learning across the units. For students to achieve a course at these levels they will be expected to pass the units and succeed in the external course assessment which will be set nationally by the SQA. Assessment takes place in controlled conditions and students' work will be assessed by external assessors from the SQA.

As with unit assessment, the nature of the external course assessment will vary according to the subject. Overall course performance will be graded, **A, B, C or D**.

Beeslack programme of assessment/reports to parents

- By the end of October, parents will have received a tracking report from each subject.
- In some cases subjects at N4, Advanced Higher, Skills for Work or National Progressions Awards will report whether the student has passed/failed units; these will be listed.
- The level of pass/fail for internal assessments is set at different levels in different subjects. (Sometimes referred to as level of mastery, or cut-off scores, this will be explained to students at the start of the course/unit).
- Information will also be given about progress; about re-assessment of failed assessments; and, in some cases, parents may be asked to come into school to discuss progress with the Principal Teacher Curriculum, Pupil Support staff, Head of House or be contacted by telephone.
- The policy for re-assessment of units, as advised by the SQA, is that there should normally be one, or in exceptional circumstances, two opportunities to be re-assessed in a failed learning outcome/unit. The nature and timing of re-assessment will vary across subjects and this will also be explained to students at the start of course/unit. The Midlothian policy on unit re-assessment states the following:

“Students will be offered an opportunity for reassessment in respect of any internal assessment they have failed. As soon as possible after the original assessments, teachers will discuss the reasons for non-attainment with students, and advise them on the work to be undertaken before assessment”.

Exceptional circumstances where a second re-assessment might be appropriate would be the following:

- Illness, including an accident, which prevents the candidate taking the assessment or achieving the expected level. A medical certificate would be required in all cases.
- Family bereavement which causes deterioration in pupil performance near the completion of a unit.
- Family, or other, circumstances affecting the candidate’s performance close to the time of an assessment. Outside agencies will be involved or Guidance staff will have evidence of such an effect.
- Unavoidable incidents or interruptions such as fire or flood.

Students and parents should be aware that disputes arising from a failure to pass re-assessment of a unit will be dealt with by the Principal Teacher Curriculum in the first instance and then senior management.

The programme for reporting to parents is as follows:

Week beginning 5 November 2018 – Tracking Report giving details of progress across subjects.

Wednesday 28 November – S4 Parents’ Evening

Thursday 6 December – S5/S6 Parents’ Evening

Week beginning 14 January to 25 January 2019 – PRELIM Weeks

Week beginning 18 February – Full Reports to parents

Week beginning 08 April – Tracking report will be emailed or posted to parents/carers

Discussion and decisions about SQA presentations will take place February – March and will relate to performance in units and course assessments eg prelims.

It is our clear intention that, from coursing through to presentation for external (course) assessment, students should be presented for courses best suited to their ability and application.

SQA Result Services

1 Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service:

This service will run prior to results being published. If a parent/carer or the school believes that a candidate has suffered as a result of exceptional circumstances (for example bereavement or illness during an exam) staff can inform SQA of the circumstances and submit alternative evidence of attainment demonstrated by the candidate, which they will consider. This 'alternative evidence' will be coursework, class assessments or prelim exams. To take a holistic view on the appropriate result, the Examiners will also take account of how the other candidates at the school/college performed in the exam. **You must let us know before or on the day of the exam if one of these circumstances applies to your child so that we can gather evidence to send to SQA within the deadline (7 days after the exam).**

2 Post Results Service:

This service will run after candidates have received their certificates. If parents/carers are concerned by their child's result, they can request a clerical check and/or a marking review of the script. The 'script' is the name SQA give to the candidate's exam answer paper. If this check/review of the marking of the script, leads to a change of grade (either up or down), this will be amended on our system and a new certificate will be issued to the candidate. There will be no consideration of 'alternative evidence' with this service ie we cannot send in a candidates work as evidence. If the original grade remains unchanged after the check/review of the marking of the script, the school will be charged for this service. **Parents/carers need to supply a letter to the school indicating they would like a marking review to take place.**

Further information can be found at www.sqa.org.uk:

Should you wish clarification on any of the above matters please make initial contact with me at school.

Yours sincerely

C Anderson (Mrs)
Depute Headteacher