

CHANGES TO THE ASSESSMENT OF SQA NATIONAL 5 COURSES 2017- 2018

What It Means for Your Child

What are the main changes?

In September 2016, Scotland's Deputy First Minister announced that units and unit assessments would be removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses – to reduce the volume of assessment for candidates and to ease the workload of teachers and lecturers.

Units are being removed from these courses on a phased basis, over three years:

National 5 from session 2017-18

Higher from session 2018-19

Advanced Higher from session 2019-20

What does the removal of National 5 Units mean for my child?

Units are SQA pass/fail internal assessments that are assessed by the subject teacher, and moderated.

In each subject, these units are still available as free standing units at SCQF level 5. However, they will no longer contribute to the achievement of most National 5 courses

Schools have to decide which qualifications each student is entered for and they must ensure they are entered at the most appropriate level.

How do I know if my child is making enough progress to be entered for the National 5 exam?

Teachers make a professional judgement using a range of data including class work, homework and ongoing assessment evidence. At the beginning of the school year each child discusses their Target Grade with each teacher; this gives an indication of the level of attainment they should aim for.

The three tracking reports you receive during the school year should indicate if your child is on target to achieve this grade.

What happens if my child is not making enough progress to achieve a National 5?

If, for any reason we believe that your child is not making the required progress to be successful at National 5 we may advise that it may not be best for your child to attempt the National 5 exam in the current session. Other options could then be:

- A change of level to National 4 in the subject (only possible if the student has not already achieved a National 4). This means the student will still need to pass three National 4 Units in the subject, as well as an Added Value unit.
- Stand-alone units at National 5 level (Internally assessed pass/fail units)

Both of these options mean that your child may be able to take the National 5 course in the subject the following year.

Has there been a change to the external assessments at National 5?

Yes. These external assessments, however, vary from subject to subject. See the SQA website for more details, or, alternatively, please ask your child's Guidance teacher if you require more information.

Has there been a change to the grading system at National 5?

Yes. A grade D has now been extended from a notional 45-49% to a notional 40 – 49%, giving students a better opportunity to achieve a grade D at National 5 level.

If you have any other queries about your child's progress at National 5 level, please contact their Guidance teacher.