

## **New National Courses: planning assessment in schools and colleges**



Due to the flexibility that centres now have when developing their curriculum models, planning the assessment of the new National Qualifications may require more strategic management and coordination. A key element of Curriculum for Excellence is flexibility and choice; enabling teachers and lecturers to use their own professional judgement. This gives local authorities, schools and colleges the opportunity to meet local needs, while at the same time ensuring alignment with the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan. Information on the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation plan can be found on [Education Scotland's website](#).

Centre managers may wish to reflect on the following set of questions when planning for the assessment of the new National Qualifications, at both a strategic and operational level.

### **1. What are the main issues that you need to consider when arranging the timetable of assessment for learners in the Senior Phase?**

### **2. How are you managing different patterns of assessment for different learners?**

- Are learners being assessed only when they are ready?
- Is there a need for greater flexibility if young people are sharing their time between school and college?
- Do you need to provide an assessment framework or planner for learners to give an overview of the assessment requirements for each subject? Have you made sure the amount of assessment taking place is not too great at any one point?

### **3. Are there any additional implications related to special circumstances?**

- Are there any additional arrangements you need to make for learners who are absent and therefore miss their assessments?
- Are there any additional arrangements you need to make for learners who require extra time or other additional support?

### **4. Do staff need additional help to manage assessment?**

- Do teaching or lecturing staff need additional support or training?
- Do teaching or lecturing staff fully understand the Assessment Standards for each Unit?
- Are teaching or lecturing staff explaining the Assessment Standards and assessment approach to learners and their parents or carers?
- Are teaching or lecturing staff actively using the Verification Key Messages reports and published Understanding Standards material for their subject?
- Is the school utilising the support of Local Authority SQA Nominees or Team Leaders?
- Do administration staff need additional support or training?

### **5. What are the possible logistical challenges when scheduling accommodation and putting arrangements in place for other conditions for assessment? In particular, when it will not be possible to make these arrangements within the normal period structure.**

- What are the resource issues?

- What are the implications for scheduling re-assessments?
- What administration arrangements do you need to put in place?

**6. How will you consistently and fairly meet the requirements of submission deadlines for coursework?**

- Are learners being given enough time to complete the assessments?
- Are assessments spread evenly across subjects, eg are they taking place at different times?

**7. How will you make sure that all assessments in your centre meet national standards?**

- How will you or how do you plan to do the following?
  - Ensure the security of assessments and candidate evidence
  - Internally verify Unit assessments
  - Internally verify the internally assessed components of Course assessment
- Make sure that conditions of assessment and guidance on judging and marking evidence are followed
- Manage the production of estimates

**8. What are the implications for your internal quality assurance systems?**

- What links are you making with moderation systems for S1 to S3?
- How are you monitoring and evaluating results?

**9. We have developed Unit assessment support for every Course from National 1 to Advanced Higher to help teachers and lecturers deliver and assess the new National Qualifications. Centres are also free to develop their own Unit assessment packages, including the National 4 Added Value Unit.**

**If your centre is developing its own Unit assessments, how are you ensuring that your Unit assessments meet the national standard?**

**10. What steps are you taking to make sure, as far as possible, that assessment is proportionate for learners?**

- Are you discouraging departments or faculties from assessing the National 4 Added Value Unit with all National 5 learners?
- Are you working across subjects and faculties to encourage the reuse of assessment evidence for different Units or Courses?
- Are departments or faculties focused on reducing assessment by assessing, where possible, at the combined, Unit, or Outcome level?
- Are you encouraging subjects and faculties to look for opportunities to use candidate evidence gathered naturally from the teaching process for Unit assessment?
- To what extent are strands of work, which are started in Units, completed in coursework? For example, the Folio of writing in National 5 and Higher English.
- To what extent is prior attainment in the broad general education acknowledged in qualifications during the Senior Phase?
- If you are retaining preliminary examinations, how are you making sure that candidates are not overloaded with assessment? For example, if candidates are completing Unit assessments and preparing for preliminary examinations at the same time?
- How are you making sure that candidates are given every chance to succeed at a level that is appropriate to their ability, avoiding premature decisions about presentation levels?
- How are you generating and retaining evidence for candidates who may be bypassing a qualification or taking it over 2 years?