



## Scottish Qualifications Authority Qualification Support Team (QST): Professional Cookery

Note of Meeting 2 held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 (via Microsoft Teams) - *follow up of meeting on 19 January 2021*

**Members:**

South Lanarkshire College  
West Lothian College  
Ian Gibb – Perth College  
Dumfries and Galloway College  
City of Glasgow College  
Orkney College  
West College Scotland  
New College Lanarkshire  
Fife College  
Forth Valley College

**Officers:**

Christine Keenan  
Carol McEvoy

**Apologies:****By Invitation:**

Senior External Verifier

**Summary of Discussion**

This meeting was a follow up to the first QST meeting on 19 January and had been arranged to specifically discuss feedback from college course teams on suggestions for alternative assessment approaches during the corona virus pandemic.

It was noted that further [guidance](#) has been issued to supplement the guidance issued in August 2020. For frameworks which have been identified as problematic, this includes the use of an alternative assessment template to highlight key critical evidence that internal college quality panels should apply when making assessment decisions. It is intended that templates will detail the specific aims of the Group Award, identify the key critical competences required to meet each aim and the units that provide evidence of this, and any guidance on approaches to alternative assessment.

The intention of this template is to state the key critical evidence required for the achievement of specific Group Awards, but not how the

evidence should be generated as this will vary from college to college. Colleges have been invited to identify frameworks causing concern and any proposed solutions by 29/01/21.

Professional Cookery frameworks have been identified as problematic because of lack of access to physical resources in centres and discussions from this meeting will help to populate the template for the NCs and HNs in Professional Cookery and provide additional guidance where possible.

The team went on to discuss concerns and challenges for the HNC/D qualifications in their colleges and their suggestions on reasonable compromises that could be made in different scenarios:

- With many colleges starting late (with reduced capacity) and now having to close again, limited assessment of practical activities has been completed to date in some colleges and the main concern is that if lockdown continues and colleges do not open to students until after Easter it will be virtually impossible to make up the lost kitchen time, even if the number of assessments is reduced,
- It is difficult to identify the absolute minimum evidence that would be acceptable
- Lecturing staff are concerned that too much scaling back of requirements will invalidate the qualifications
- Most colleges have opted not to complete the Graded Units and will use a combination of approaches to assist with grading, eg:
  - Developing a matrix of requirements and mapping students' achievements against this
  - Using any course units completed
  - Skills tests to give students the opportunity to showcase their skills. The skills test would be similar to the practical in Graded Unit 1, but the menu would not include a dessert
- Those doing the Graded Units are looking at integration opportunities, eg with Hospitality Supervision, and assessing the Evaluation section using professional discussion rather than a paper-based exercise
- Management of Food and Beverage Operations (MFBO) – this unit is particularly difficult to deliver under the current circumstances, especially Outcome 2 (*Manage the implementation of the operational plan*). The following was noted/suggested:
  - For student's completing the unit in a professional cookery context it is not critical that they complete Outcome 2 as a practical assignment and a reasonable adaptation would be to change this to a theory/scenario based assessment. If college restaurants are able to re-open, this would allow the restaurant time to be used for the Hospitality Management students.
  - Assessment of Outcome 3 (*Critically evaluate the effectiveness of the operational plan*) could then be an evaluation of the whole process of generating evidence for the unit rather than an evaluation of the service delivery.
- For Patisserie students who have completed the level 5 and 6 NCs but have not had enough kitchen time to complete the HN practical units, it was suggested that the work from the level 6 NC in particular could be taken into consideration and students given credit for any areas that overlap, therefore, only identified gaps would need to be covered for achievement of the HN unit.
- Hospitality Supervision – most colleges have been able to assess Outcomes 1 and 3 of this unit, however, Outcome 2 (*Plan, deliver and evaluate a training activity within a hospitality environment*) is causing difficulties. While this Outcome could be integrated with some of the practical units, time to do so is the main constraint for some colleges. It was suggested Outcome 2 could be by assessed as a theory

based assignment, such as a student's reflective account of 'real' experience or a scenario based case study.

- Integrated Production Cookery (IPC) – due to the restriction on the number of students allowed in the kitchen at any one time, the main challenge with this unit is working within the partie system, a suggested solution is to create a theory based assessment for this element. The other parts of the unit can be integrated with the Hot and Cold Kitchen units.
- As IPC is in a limited option grouping it could be replaced with another unit or units from the grouping
- Fermented Patisserie Products – could be covered in 2 x 6 hours lessons if the requirements to produce items from bun and savarin doughs was removed. The rationale for this suggestion is that these skills cross over those required to produce other products – the only technique that would not be covered would be soaking.
- Gastronomy – if students have not had a previous 'gastronomic experience' they can draw upon, it was suggested that they are directed to carry out online research (eg YouTube videos for example). Guest speakers, etc could also be arranged.
- For students who have completed the unit Patisserie in year 1 of their HND but still require to complete the unit Sweets and Desserts, it was suggested that evidence generated for Patisserie is mapped to the requirements for Sweets and Desserts and credit given where there is duplication.
- Specialised Patisserie – it was suggested that for Outcome 2 (*Produce simple marzipan figures and marzipan petits fours*) students could be issued with a 'marzipan pack' so that they can practice at home and then be viewed and assessed making the required pieces via Zoom/MT.
- Depending on numbers and when access to kitchens is possible, operating a 'head chef' model could be used – ie: having a rota where 2 chefs will work together with 2 other students assuming the role of assistants. If 6 hot and 6 cold dishes are produced that should produce sufficient evidence for the Hot and Cold Kitchen units. If 80% of the Sweets and Desserts unit is completed this should produce sufficient evidence for the unit to be signed off. Outcome 2 of Hospitality Supervision could also be integrated into this model. The skills and techniques displayed by students in these sessions could also be used to help inform grading decisions.
- Hospitality: Financial and Control Systems – it was requested that the assessment for this unit could be used on college VLE platforms as it is now in a lapsing phase and there is not enough time for colleges to produce alternative assessments.
- It was agreed that it is important that the students leaving college to work in the industry have been able to develop appropriate levels of practical skills otherwise the validity of the qualifications will be questioned.

The following comments and suggestions were discussed in relation to the National Certificate at levels 5 and 6:

- As much as possible is being complete online, with platforms such as MS Teams being used for closed book assessments and Stream being used for students to upload videos of themselves carrying out some practical activities at home, eg for Stocks and Sauces. Although it was acknowledged that cooking at home can be problematic in relation to access to appropriate equipment and ingredients, etc.
- Level 6 students who have progressed from level 5 should not be re-assessed on techniques such as vegetable cuts, segmenting, etc.
- It was noted that while there is a large range of components to be covered in the level 6 Pastry unit, it is the intention to that these are incorporated into a limited number of products (ie: *1 tart, 1 gateau, 1 fermented pastry product, 1 hot plated dessert, 1 cold plated*

*dessert)*

- Assessment of practical elements of the Health and Safety in Hospitality and the level 6 Food Hygiene units may be a problem for some centres.
- If college restaurants do not re-open it will be impossible to deliver the Food and Beverage Service units and alternative optional units will need to be considered. It was noted that the “service” aspect was not as critical for professional cookery students.
- For colleges in tier 3 or below it is hoped that restaurants will be able to re-open after Easter, if so Kitchen Operations could be integrated with Food and Beverage Service.
- Previous work experience undertaken by students could be used to generate evidence for level 6
- May need to think about the number of hours available until the end of the year and then calculate the number of hours required to enable students to cover everything and to find out where the gaps might be.
- Many centres had plans in place for intensive scheduling of practical work after Easter including extended twilight and weekend working.
- The main concern is for level 5 students as they will have no previous experience in practical activities to act as a basis to build on or to reflect on.
- It was noted that in ‘normal’ years, transition from old to new qualifications can be challenging but this is exacerbated this year.
- While it was acknowledged that deferral is inevitable for a small number of students it remains a strong aspiration that the majority of students will be able to complete their awards.

For both the HN and NC programmes, it was noted that colleges will reach a natural stopping point fairly soon when they have completed all theory-based lessons so confirmation of the guidance would be welcomed as soon as possible. It was agreed that the confirmation of relaxation of requirements for the MFBO and Hospitality Supervision HN units would give some immediate relief.

It was agreed that it will be difficult to reflect everyone’s situation in the Alternative Assessment Approaches template, therefore the information included may need to be very broad. Although SQA’s plan is to publish the first tranche of guidance for some frameworks by 1<sup>st</sup> February, after these discussions more time will be needed to translate the discussions into concrete guidance for professional cookery.

**Date of Next Meeting**

TBC