

National 5

qual	title	COUNT
C824	English	45593
C847	Mathematics	41523
C807	Biology	21549
C856	Physical Education	16771
C813	Chemistry	16035
C837	History	14705
C857	Physics	13792
C849	Modern Studies	11960
C833	Geography	9755
C804	Art and Design	9322
C830	French	7872
C810	Business Management	7576
C850	Music	7202
C816	Computing Science	6344
C835	Graphic Communication	5406
C862	Practical Woodworking	5298
C869	Spanish	5122
C839	Hospitality: Practical Cookery	4939
C801	Administration and IT	4885
C821	Drama	4866
C819	Design and Manufacture	4481
C844	Applications of Mathematics	4458
C864	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	2419
C834	German	1805
C823	Engineering Science	1646
C836	Health and Food Technology	1461
C838	Hospitality: Practical Cake Craft	1276
C861	Practical Metalworking	1267
C851	Music Technology	1110
C827	English for Speakers of Other Languages	1048
C863	Psychology	992
C848	Media	972
C800	Accounting	898
C818	Dance	693
C812	Care	481
C828	Fashion and Textile Technology	382
C843	Latin	376
C854	Philosophy	272
C822	Economics	268
C868	Sociology	259
C842	Italian	217
C860	Practical Electronics	209
C826	Environmental Science	207
C832	Gaidhlig	195
C845	Mandarin (Simplified)	188
C831	Gaelic (Learners)	135
C815	Classical Studies	108
C870	Urdu	74

C874	Matamataig (Mathematics)	63
C871	Cruinn-eolas (Geography)	38
C872	Eachdraidh (History)	30
C875	Nuadh-Eolas (Modern Studies)	7
C811	Cantonese	2

Higher

C824	English	35461
C847	Mathematics	18593
C813	Chemistry	10047
C837	History	9987
C856	Physical Education	9896
C849	Modern Studies	8653
C857	Physics	8325
C810	Business Management	8322
C807	Biology	7685
C833	Geography	6867
C840	Human Biology	6259
C804	Art and Design	5233
C850	Music	5067
C801	Administration and IT	3770
C864	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	3598
C835	Graphic Communication	3497
C830	French	3417
C863	Psychology	3410
C816	Computing Science	3228
C869	Spanish	3054
C821	Drama	2884
C855	Photography	2473
C819	Design and Manufacture	2248
C800	Accounting	1222
C858	Politics	1213
C836	Health and Food Technology	1191
C823	Engineering Science	1110
C848	Media	999
C868	Sociology	927
C812	Care	838
C834	German	787
C827	English for Speakers of Other Languages	784
C851	Music Technology	772
C854	Philosophy	656
C822	Economics	583
C818	Dance	498
C814	Childcare and Development	393
C815	Classical Studies	392
C826	Environmental Science	392
C843	Latin	253
C842	Italian	221
C828	Fashion and Textile Technology	215
C845	Mandarin (Simplified)	153
C832	Gaidhlig	135

C870 Urdu	92
C831 Gaelic (Learners)	61
C874 Matamataig (Mathematics)	33
C811 Cantonese	11
C846 Mandarin (Traditional)	9

Advanced Higher

77 C747 Mathematics	3696
77 C713 Chemistry	2452
77 C724 English	2347
77 C707 Biology	2314
77 C750 Music	1698
77 C757 Physics	1646
77 C737 History	1273
77 C705 Art and Design (Expressive)	937
77 C749 Modern Studies	803
77 C733 Geography	708
77 C716 Computing Science	614
77 C730 French	603
77 C721 Drama	566
77 C706 Art and Design (Design)	507
77 C735 Graphic Communication	506
77 C756 Physical Education	499
77 C769 Spanish	469
77 C710 Business Management	453
77 C702 Mathematics of Mechanics	294
77 C703 Statistics	212
77 C764 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	175
77 C734 German	127
77 C722 Economics	107
77 C719 Design and Manufacture	79
77 C700 Accounting	64
77 C743 Latin	59
77 C745 Mandarin (Simplified)	52
77 C715 Classical Studies	38
77 C723 Engineering Science	36
77 C732 Gaidhlig	29
77 C742 Italian	27
77 C736 Health and Food Technology	22
77 C731 Gaelic (Learners)	20
77 C774 Matamataig (Mathematics)	10
77 C778 Music: Portfolio	9
77 C746 Mandarin (Traditional)	6
77 C711 Cantonese	3

COVID-19 – Implications for 2020 examinations diet of pre-Easter school closure

Issue

At the request of the Scottish Government, this short paper sets out the SQA's current assessment of the key implications for this year's diet of National Qualifications, and the associated procedural programme, if there are widespread school closures before the Easter holidays, either for a limited or extended period.

Current Status

On 12 March SQA issued the following statement:

We know that learners, parents and carers, schools and colleges will be concerned about the possible impact of the Coronavirus on the National Qualifications 2020 Examinations Timetable. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is continuing to monitor the situation, in close contact with the Scottish Government and other regulators and awarding bodies across the UK.

At present there is no change to the published National Qualifications examination timetable. Our advice therefore is to continue to prepare as normal. All current deadlines for coursework and other assessments remain in place and the exam timetable is currently scheduled to run from 27 April until 4 June 2020.

Schools and colleges should be gathering any alternative evidence on candidate performance as they would do in the normal way, and as per our guidance every year, to support any consideration of exceptional circumstances. This evidence should inform estimated grades, again as it should every year.

We fully recognise that this is an evolving situation and, as you would expect, we are working through a range of scenarios. Our overriding priority, drawing on the latest guidance, is to deliver a safe and secure examination timetable with minimal disruption, which is fair to learners.

Markers and invigilators play a critical role in the delivery of our qualifications. We are reviewing our marking and invigilation processes and will issue further communication to schools and colleges shortly.

We are also strongly encouraging all candidates to sign up to [MySQA](#), our online and text service, as a direct way to receive their results.

We will continue to review the latest evidence and will communicate further updates as necessary.

We are currently working firmly on the basis of this communication, with detailed contingency plans being developed around:

- Limited or widespread disruption during the exam diet, necessitating reserve papers for key subjects and contingency days being required beyond 4 June;
- Significantly higher levels of exceptional circumstances, stemming from pupil absences during the diet due to illness/social distancing or some school closures. This may require some policy changes due to scale;
- Significant expansion of our post results services;

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- Considering whether we can reduce timescales, for example by not issuing paper certificates and reducing our requirements on quality assurance proportionately, whilst still maintaining integrity of results;
- Later certification, beyond 4 August, requiring agreement from UCAS, universities and the college sector;
- As highlighted above, changes to marker and invigilation processes. This may include developing further reserve lists and more webinars and technology to limit need for large scale face to face events and digital marking; and
- Significant changes to our pre and post-diet procedures, crucial to our quality assurance and standardisation processes, overcoming logistical complexity in a tight timescale.

Any departure from the scheduled diet, and procedures to support it, introduces risk. These contingencies are therefore not without significant risk. Timing and associated volume issues are crucial here, both in terms of the progress of the diet and the extent of reduced capacity in the education system, including the SQA. To illustrate:

- by the end of week 3 of the diet – 15 May - over 70% of exams, by volume entry will have been completed;
- around 4,000 exceptional circumstances were considered and certificated before results day in 2019, in the context of nearly 500,000 entries.

Further scenarios we now must consider in the event of widespread school closures

At the request of the Scottish Government, SQA has been asked to consider the implications of earlier and widespread school closure before Easter. College closures could also impact materially on the diet and university entry.

The period between now and the Easter holidays, which begin for the majority of local authority schools on 3 April until 20 April, is critical for learners and for SQA procedures in advance of the National Qualifications Examination diet. Crucially, it includes the completion of coursework, which for most courses across National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher accounts for between 20-30% of marks. For those qualifications which are internally assessed, for example National 4, it will include the completion of units which allow certification. It is also a period in which schools and colleges make informed estimates about learner performance, drawing on a range of assessment and other data about performance gathered during the course of the year. Key dates include:

- Entries and level submissions - 31 March
- Estimates – by 24 April but on a staggered basis
- Final coursework uplift – 28 May
- Period for submission of Exceptional Circumstances – 9 April – 18 June

Full details of all the current key dates for the 2020 diet are contained in Appendix 1.

SQA is currently not in receipt of coursework or grade estimates. Bringing forward completion dates may not be possible, particularly at Higher and Advanced Higher. Early intelligence suggests that the next two weeks (to 27 March) is crucial for most schools to complete coursework, other internal assessments and submit data.

Closing schools before Easter could have a number of very serious implications for the education system and SQA's ability to deliver qualifications. However, we need to test what the precise impact of closures might be. This depends on a number of factors, including:

- The timing, duration and extent of closures;
- Any medical or scientific evidence to support limited opening of schools and colleges, including as examination centres;
- Our ability to get credible information from schools, including the completion of remaining coursework and informed estimated grades from schools very quickly. There may be significant variations across the country;
- The availability of teachers during closure, online learning and teaching, coursework marking and any related procedures.

If impact is significant and likely to span most or all of the exam timetable, there are two more significant options to consider:

- 1. The postponement of the full diet of examinations**
- 2. A technical solution using estimated grades**

Option One – Postponement of full diet of examinations

Any postponement presents serious logistical, operational and technical challenges to SQA and the wider system including schools, universities, colleges and learners. Examination processes run throughout the year and delay could therefore have serious implications for SQA – and for wider learning and teaching – beyond this year. Timing is crucial, not just in terms of the length of postponement, but also at what point such a postponement is signalled given the uncertainty of the spread of COVID-19. A premature decision to delay could prove to be a serious error of judgement and lead to the exam diet coinciding with, rather than avoiding, the peak COVID-19 impact, invoking Option 2. Option 2 could only be invoked if we have credible data.

More specifically on the implications and associated dependencies specifically for SQA:

Task	Dependencies
Centres to submit to SQA outstanding coursework and estimates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres and SQA have accurate and agreed information on what material is outstanding • Centres submitting all outstanding data on time • Centres advising SQA of candidates whose coursework and estimates were submitted but who have not returned after the holiday • Agreed dates for uplift
Completion of visiting examining and verification to contribute to course awards for 2020 diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools open to receive visiting verifiers and/or examiners
Reschedule exam timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on whether just a 'lift and shift' to a later date or incorporates a reorganisation of the current timetable • Ability to identify a suitable time to reschedule that can be accommodated by all centres
Recruit sufficient appointees e.g. markers for the rescheduled diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness and availability of appointees, mainly teachers, to mark at a different time. Most marking is

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	<p>normally undertaken at a time when teachers are either less heavily committed or on holiday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' willingness and ability to mark at a later date when schools are likely to be in full operation, is untested • Rescheduling may require us to mark coursework and exams at the same time rather than sequentially, increasing the number of markers required
Secure SQA staff time to reschedule entire procedural programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of sufficient experienced staff to undertake this work in a way that does not impact on preparations for 2021 diet
Continue preparations for 2021 diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff availability and capacity to prepare both for a rescheduled 2020 diet and a summer 2021 diet • Some appointees who are marking for the postponed diet will also normally perform other roles for SQA at this time of year, e.g. preparing question papers for next year's diet
Continue to manage the data associated with the postponed 2020 diet whilst also starting to gather data for 2021 diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SQA's business systems being sufficiently flexible to support data for both diets without risking– and associated systems failure.
Renegotiate contractual agreements with key suppliers for e.g. distribution of question papers, uplift and scanning of scripts, access to e-marking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers being willing and able to support our rescheduled timetable at a time when other awarding organisations may also be making similar requests
Replan timescales for publication of results including release to UCAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCAS, university and college willingness to accept later results and to revisit timescales for confirming offers and start of 2020/21 session. • Universities and colleges prepared to start 20/21 academic year later
Communicate revised arrangements in a way that allows centres and other stakeholders to prepare to support delivery of rescheduled diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of all stakeholders, including e.g. centres, invigilators and school MIS suppliers to work to new timeframes
Respond to the expected greater level of challenge to individual results in a way that protects the integrity of and confidence in the examination system and in particular the results of the 2020 examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient SQA staff and appointees to undertake review work on individual challenges • Our collective ability to manage such challenges and the related communication and likely media interest in a way that maintains confidence.

Option Two - Minimum Viable Product

We are currently scoping out the feasibility of a Minimum Viable Product (MPV) Model in which the Chief Examiner would be prepared to certificate in the absence of a 2020 exam diet. This is an *in extremis*, option, which could be open to challenge, but could rely on coursework, grade estimates and any prior attainment data. Information received over the next few weeks is therefore critical to any MVP model of certification. The model will be developed and tested further in the coming days but could not be operationalised unless the data for each of these variables was available and credible.

Conclusion

Any widespread school closures present risk of disruption to the exam diet. The timing and duration of closures is critical to our assessment of risk, as are a number of related assumptions. It also requires a system-wide response.

At the present time, SQA's strong preference remains to continue to prepare for the scheduled diet, with our focus on developing contingencies, for as long as possible.

In our view, a premature move to school closures, which necessitates postponement or cancellation of the diet, presents significant risk to the safe and secure delivery of the exam diet and could have very serious consequences for learners and the wider education system.

Further detailed contingency planning, drawing on the latest available evidence, will continue urgently.

Scottish Qualifications Authority

16 March 2020

Appendix 1 – Key dates for 2020 diet

Task Name	Dates
Data and Entries	
Entries	
Closing Date for Entries and changes to Level submission (some exceptions) before late charge applies	31/03/20
Closing date for Scottish Baccalaureate Interdisciplinary Project results	31/03/20
Estimates	
Closing date for submission of Estimates for all National Courses	24/04/20
Assessment arrangements, alternative QPs, venues, centres.	
Receive Assessment Arrangement Requests	21/10/19 - 18/04/20
Closing date for Alternative Centres Requests	31/03/20
Assessment Materials	
Deliver Question Papers to Centres [External Company]	15/04/20-24/04/20
External Assessment	
Stationary Distribution.	
Deliver Main Diet Stationary (Brown envelopes, clear bags etc.)	02/03/20- 22/05/20
Verification	
Visiting Verification	03/02/20 - 25/05/20
Coursework	
March Coursework	
Uplift Nat 5 coursework - with the exception of Art and Design	18/03/20
April Coursework	
Coursework [H]	
Uplift Date	23/04/20
Coursework [AH]	
Uplift externally assessed coursework for H (Exceptions) and AH	23/04/20
Uplift Nat 5 (with no exam) coursework (exceptions)	23/04/20

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Task Name	Dates
Uplift Art and Design Nat 5 and Higher coursework	23/04/20
Uplift externally assessed coursework submissions for Nat 5 Care	23/04/20
Uplift externally assessed coursework for New Higher in Care, Childcare and Development	23/04/20
Uplift AH Drama Project, Geography Folio, Music Portfolio	07/05/20
Uplift Art and Design Advanced Higher Coursework	28/05/20
Visiting Assessment	
Undertake visiting Assessment	17/2/20-29/05/20
Main Diet	
Examination Timetable	27/04/20 - 04/06/20
Uplift main diet scripts and return to SQA/ scanning	28/04/20 -05/06/20
Exceptional Circumstances	
Start to receive Exceptional Circumstances requests	09/04/20
Closing date for Exceptional Circumstances requests pre cert EC	18/06/20
Certification	
MySQA closing date	15/07/20
Certification Start	16/07/20
Results file issued to UCAS	28/07/20
Certification Date	04/08/20

Examination Timetable		Entries by Level (Data Cut Taken 5th March 2020)									Overall Cumulative Entries
		Subject By Level			Cumulative Totals			Cumulative Percentages			
Date	Subject	75	76	77	75	76	77	75	76	77	
04 27	German	1,853	818	108	1,853	818	108	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
04 27	Physical Education	-	11,255	-	1,853	12,073	108	0.6%	6.1%	0.5%	2.7%
04 28	Cruinn-eolas (Geography)	38	-	-	1,891	12,073	108	0.6%	6.1%	0.5%	2.7%
04 28	Geography	10,562	6,738	771	12,453	18,811	879	4.0%	9.6%	4.1%	6.1%
04 29	Gaidhlig	188	139	44	12,641	18,950	923	4.1%	9.6%	4.3%	6.2%
04 29	Practical Electronics	468	-	-	13,109	18,950	923	4.3%	9.6%	4.3%	6.3%
04 29	Spanish	6,337	3,033	500	19,446	21,983	1,423	6.3%	11.2%	6.6%	8.1%
04 30	Physics	14,636	8,699	1,739	34,082	30,682	3,162	11.1%	15.6%	14.6%	12.9%
05 01	Eachdraidh (History)	35	-	-	34,117	30,682	3,162	11.1%	15.6%	14.6%	12.9%
05 01	History	16,661	10,501	1,303	50,778	41,183	4,465	16.5%	20.9%	20.6%	18.3%
05 04	English	-	38,181	2,352	50,778	79,364	6,817	16.5%	40.3%	31.4%	26.0%
05 05	English	50,124	-	-	100,902	79,364	6,817	32.8%	40.3%	31.4%	35.6%
05 05	Mathematics of Mechanics	-	-	325	100,902	79,364	7,142	32.8%	40.3%	32.9%	35.6%
05 05	Practical Metalworking	1,501	-	-	102,403	79,364	7,142	33.3%	40.3%	32.9%	35.9%
05 06	French	8,331	3,277	603	110,734	82,641	7,745	36.0%	42.0%	35.7%	38.2%
05 06	Photography	-	2,561	-	110,734	85,202	7,745	36.0%	43.3%	35.7%	38.7%
05 06	Statistics	-	-	189	110,734	85,202	7,934	36.0%	43.3%	36.6%	38.8%
05 07	Administration and IT	5,711	4,202	-	116,445	89,404	7,934	37.9%	45.4%	36.6%	40.6%
05 07	Environmental Science	284	378	-	116,729	89,782	7,934	37.9%	45.6%	36.6%	40.8%
05 11	Applications of Mathematics	10,166	-	-	126,895	89,782	7,934	41.2%	45.6%	36.6%	42.7%
05 11	Gnìomhachas Matamataigs (Applications of Mathematics)	-	-	-	126,895	89,782	7,934	41.2%	45.6%	36.6%	42.7%
05 11	Matamataig (Mathematics)	-	40	10	126,895	89,822	7,944	41.2%	45.7%	36.6%	42.7%
05 11	Mathematics	-	20,433	3,682	126,895	110,255	11,626	41.2%	56.0%	53.6%	47.3%
05 11	Music Technology	1,338	879	-	128,233	111,134	11,626	41.7%	56.5%	53.6%	47.7%
05 12	Engineering Science	1,752	1,112	50	129,985	112,246	11,676	42.3%	57.1%	53.8%	48.3%
05 12	Matamataig (Mathematics)	64	-	-	130,049	112,246	11,676	42.3%	57.1%	53.8%	48.3%
05 12	Mathematics	45,655	-	-	175,704	112,246	11,676	57.1%	57.1%	53.8%	57.0%
05 13	Biology	23,568	7,702	2,622	199,272	119,948	14,298	64.8%	61.0%	65.9%	63.4%
05 13	Human Biology	-	7,363	-	199,272	127,311	14,298	64.8%	64.7%	65.9%	64.8%
05 14	Design and Manufacture	5,146	2,075	50	204,418	129,386	14,348	66.4%	65.8%	66.2%	66.2%
05 14	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	2,604	3,796	198	207,022	133,182	14,546	67.3%	67.7%	67.1%	67.4%
05 15	Modern Studies	13,516	9,052	948	220,538	142,234	15,494	71.7%	72.3%	71.4%	71.9%
05 15	Nuadh-Eolas (Modern Studies)	8	-	-	220,546	142,234	15,494	71.7%	72.3%	71.4%	71.9%
05 18	Business Management	8,632	8,700	573	229,178	150,934	16,067	74.5%	76.7%	74.1%	75.3%
05 18	Gaelic (Learners)	124	67	11	229,302	151,001	16,078	74.5%	76.8%	74.1%	75.3%
05 18	Sociology	339	866	-	229,641	151,867	16,078	74.6%	77.2%	74.1%	75.6%
05 19	Chemistry	17,170	10,428	2,617	246,811	162,295	18,695	80.2%	82.5%	86.2%	81.3%
05 20	Classical Studies	137	488	33	246,948	162,783	18,728	80.3%	82.7%	86.3%	81.4%
05 20	Dance	960	535	-	247,908	163,318	18,728	80.6%	83.0%	86.3%	81.7%
05 21	Latin	388	272	35	248,296	163,590	18,763	80.7%	83.1%	86.5%	81.9%
05 21	Politics	-	1,439	-	248,296	165,029	18,763	80.7%	83.9%	86.5%	82.1%
05 22	Art and Design	10,928	5,635	-	259,224	170,664	18,763	84.3%	86.7%	86.5%	85.3%
05 22	Economics	315	589	105	259,539	171,253	18,868	84.4%	87.0%	87.0%	85.5%
05 22	Practical Cake Craft	1,358	-	-	260,897	171,253	18,868	84.8%	87.0%	87.0%	85.7%
05 25	English for Speakers of Other Languages	-	742	-	260,897	171,995	18,868	84.8%	87.4%	87.0%	85.9%
05 25	Philosophy	311	659	-	261,208	172,654	18,868	84.9%	87.8%	87.0%	86.1%
05 26	English for Speakers of Other Languages	1,149	-	-	262,357	172,654	18,868	85.3%	87.8%	87.0%	86.3%
05 26	Health and Food Technology	1,722	1,169	34	264,079	173,823	18,902	85.8%	88.4%	87.2%	86.8%
05 27	Italian	285	248	28	264,364	174,071	18,930	85.9%	88.5%	87.3%	86.9%
05 27	Music	8,271	5,318	1,695	272,635	179,389	20,625	88.6%	91.2%	95.1%	89.8%
05 27	Music: Portfolio	-	-	24	272,635	179,389	20,649	88.6%	91.2%	95.2%	89.9%
05 28	Drama	5,425	3,290	-	278,060	182,679	20,649	90.4%	92.9%	95.2%	91.5%
05 28	Graphic Communication	5,717	3,391	388	283,777	186,070	21,037	92.2%	94.6%	97.0%	93.3%
05 29	Accounting	958	1,240	70	284,735	187,310	21,107	92.6%	95.2%	97.3%	93.7%
05 29	Fashion and Textile Technology	482	186	-	285,217	187,496	21,107	92.7%	95.3%	97.3%	93.9%
05 29	Practical Woodworking	6,424	-	-	291,641	187,496	21,107	94.8%	95.3%	97.3%	95.1%
06 01	Media	1,168	981	-	292,809	188,477	21,107	95.2%	95.8%	97.3%	95.5%
06 02	Childcare and Development	-	340	-	292,809	188,817	21,107	95.2%	96.0%	97.3%	95.6%
06 02	Computing Science	7,011	3,370	519	299,820	192,187	21,626	97.5%	97.7%	99.7%	97.6%
06 02	Practical Cookery	5,911	-	-	305,731	192,187	21,626	99.4%	97.7%	99.7%	98.8%
06 02	Urdu	83	119	-	305,814	192,306	21,626	99.4%	97.7%	99.7%	98.8%
06 03	Care	576	845	-	306,390	193,151	21,626	99.6%	98.2%	99.7%	99.1%
06 03	Psychology	974	3,437	-	307,364	196,588	21,626	99.9%	99.9%	99.7%	99.9%
06 04	Cantonese	6	10	3	307,370	196,598	21,629	99.9%	99.9%	99.7%	99.9%
06 04	Mandarin (Simplified)	260	133	53	307,630	196,731	21,682	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
06 04	Mandarin (Traditional)	5	10	7	307,635	196,741	21,689	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

307,635 196,741 21,689

(blank)	Art and Design (Design)			660
	Art and Design (Expressive)			969
	Drama			573
	Music Technology			39
	Physical Education	18,020		544
Grand Total		325,655	196,741	24,474