Scottish Qualifications Authority

Code of Practice Governance Group

07 April 2020

Refreshed guidance on generating Estimates - for examination diet 2020

1 Context

On Thursday 2 April 2020, SQA issued an update to schools and colleges around the evidence-based judgements we need teachers and lecturers to make about their learners' predicted grades to help inform certification at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

For this session, teachers and lecturers should continue to exercise their professional judgement and estimate a learner's grade and band based on their demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for each National Course.

However, to assist SQA in the awarding and certification process for 2020, we are taking steps to refine the existing system and ensure it is as fair and robust as possible. Firstly, we will be subdividing each existing band and asking teachers and lecturers to place their learners within these band categories. Secondly, we will be asking teachers and lecturers to rank order their learners within each estimated band.

This paper outlines SQA's proposed approach to development of revised guidance on generating estimates. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that Heads of Centres, SQA coordinators, curriculum leaders, and teachers and lecturers are aware of the enhanced requirements for 2020 and can generate and submit the required information to SQA.

2 Status

SQA's existing Guidance to Producing Estimates document was published in January 2020. It is a generic document and consists of the following headings:

- Estimates – what they are and their uses for SQA
- Guidance on producing estimates
- Reviewing accuracy
- Band descriptions for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

There is a requirement to refresh this guidance to cover the requirement for teachers and lecturers in 2020 to use an extended band scale, linked to the existing scale and to rank order their learners within each band. The refreshed guidance will retain a similar format to the existing and the following headings are planned.

- Estimates – what they are and their revised uses for SQA in 2020
- Guidance on producing estimates – with an enhanced focus on the predictive value of evidence
- Existing band descriptions for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher
- Extended band descriptions for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher
- Guidance on using the extended bands
- Guidance on creating a rank order
- Reviewing accuracy and quality assurance
- Internal verification and Head of Centre sign off

Ofqual have published a guidance document for determining grades for this summer's examination series – that document includes information around estimates and rank order – see appendix one.

The development timeline for the SQA refreshed guidance are as follows:

QDMT sign off – 8 April 2020
Informal consultation with stakeholders – 9-14 April 2020
CoPGG sign off - ???
Publication – 20 April 2020

In parallel with this work, an operational process following the same timeline, is being developed for the submission by centres of extended bands and rankings.

Assumptions and points for consideration

The above work has a dependency on agreement being reached on the extended band scale to be used for 2020, as well as the approach to rank order. A further point for consideration, is whether this guidance should sit separately as a focus for centre to submit estimates and rankings, or whether consideration should be given to incorporating this guide with our agreed approach to determining grades for National Courses. Currently the guidance on producing estimates and our approach to awarding are separate publications.

3 Recommendation

The CoPGG is asked to note and approve the proposed approach to the development of refreshed guidance for producing estimates for examination diet 2020. The CoPGG is also asked to discuss the above point for consideration.

Appendix one

The Ofqual guidance for centres is headed “Summer 2020 grades for GSCE, AS and A level…..” - This guidance is not limited to estimates and rank order, it also includes a broad description of the awarding function. The guidance has the following headings:

- Information you need to provide
- Centre Assessment grade - estimate
- Rank order – and how to ensure it is as accurate as possible
- Statistical standardisation
- Included students
- How and when to submit
- Arrangements for appeals
- Internal sign off within schools and colleges
- Next steps