

Feedback on the Provisional Exam Timetable 2027

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We are committed to using plain language. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve, let us know at editor@qualifications.gov.scot.

Introduction

In March 2026 we published a provisional 2027 exam timetable on our website. Stakeholders, including learners, teachers, lecturers, parents and carers, were encouraged to provide feedback on it by Friday 24 April 2026.

We've summarised the key themes that emerged from the consultation below and noted the actions we've been able to take for the final 2027 exam timetable.

1 Subject clustering and common learner pathways

Respondents, especially teachers and lecturers asked for the timetable to reflect the subject choices that learners most often make. Main concerns were around:

- English, Mathematics and Biology
- Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- Modern Studies, Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS), Geography and History
- Politics and Psychology
- Drama and English
- Physics and Computing Science.

The concern was about exams from these groups happening on the same day, as well as short recovery gaps between exams.

Outcome

The number of subjects, and subject combinations, involved meant that it was a complex task to make major changes to the timetable. We were able to:

- slightly increase the recovery gap across English, Maths and Biology
- extend the total recovery gap across Modern Studies, RMPS, Geography and History
- place Politics and Psychology three days apart rather than on the same day
- slightly increase the recovery gap between Drama and English exams

2 Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics

Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics were viewed as being too late in the provisional timetable. Reasons for the lateness being a problem that were given in

feedback were loss of teaching contact, exam fatigue, attainment concerns, private tutoring advantage, and marking timeline pressure. Many respondents asked for these exams to move to week two or to be closer to other core subjects.

Outcome

We've brought the Applications of Mathematics exams forward from Friday 21 May to Monday 26 April.

3 Late finishes, school transport, rural and island concerns

Late finishes were raised as a concern across all weeks. Respondents highlighted school transport, rural and island journeys, Friday afternoon closures, learners with caring or work responsibilities, and additional time extending the day beyond 17:00. Several comments asked for all exams to finish within the normal school day.

Outcome

We've noted this feedback and will continue to consider these concerns in future exam timetables.

4 Assessment Arrangements

Feedback, particularly from teachers and lecturers, asked for extra time, recovery needs and accommodation pressure (difficulty in allocating exam rooms) to be built more clearly into timetable planning. Thirty-minute breaks between papers were viewed as too short for some learners, especially where additional time reduces the actual break. Schools, colleges and training providers also raised concerns about ICT accommodation and laptop provision.

Outcome

There are 203 exams in the timetable, and the duration of each exam determines the time available between papers and components. The timetable must also ensure that exams fit within each daily session and within centre operating hours.

We don't schedule exams on the early May Bank Holiday, and we avoid afternoon sessions for some subjects with larger numbers of learners, where operational constraints require this.

Timetable planning is based on national entry patterns by subject and level. Because of this, it's not possible to build centre-specific assessment arrangements, such as individual additional time requirements, rooming pressures or ICT and laptop availability, directly into the exam timetable. These requirements therefore need to be managed locally by centres within the published timetable.

5 Humanities and essay-heavy subjects

Modern Studies, RMPS, Geography, History, Politics and Psychology were repeatedly described as being too closely grouped in the provisional timetable. Respondents noted that many learners take a number of social subjects, and that they need more recovery and revision time for essay-heavy exams. The placing of RMPS in the afternoon in the provisional timetable was a specific concern because of concentration and the impact of a late finish.

Outcome

We've extended the total recovery gap across these subjects. This also allows for additional revision time. We've also moved RMPS to the morning of Tuesday 27 April from the afternoon of Wednesday 28 April.

6 Sciences and Advanced Higher combinations

There were repeated concerns about Advanced Higher Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths combinations being too close together. Advanced Higher Biology and Advanced Higher Maths were specifically highlighted because learners applying for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine often take both.

Outcome

We've moved both the Advanced Higher Biology and Advanced Higher Maths exams, which slightly increases the recovery gap.

7 ICT and practical subjects

Administration and IT, Applications of Mathematics, Business Management and ESOL generated operational feedback. Schools, colleges and training providers raised accommodation (exam rooms), laptop, listening paper, invigilation and staffing issues. National 5 Administration and IT was repeatedly requested for week one

because learners may not have access to specialist software at home during study leave.

Outcome

We've moved the National 5 Administration and IT exam from Wednesday 5 May (week two of the timetable) to Tuesday 27 April (week one).

8 Use of later weeks

Many respondents felt that weeks five and six of the provisional timetable were lighter than earlier weeks. Some asked for larger-entry subjects to be spread into these weeks to reduce congestion in weeks two to four. Others valued the quieter end to the diet and noted that it supports recovery for some learners.

Outcome

We recognise your feedback that weeks five and six can appear to be lighter than earlier weeks. We develop the exam timetable across the full six weeks rather than by aiming to have an equal number of exams in each week. The placement of larger-entry subjects takes account of a range of related factors, including subject combinations, exam duration, available sessions, assessment arrangements, marking timescales and the need to support certification deadlines.

Moving larger-entry subjects into the final weeks would therefore not necessarily reduce pressure overall. In some cases, it would create new clashes or reduce the time available for marking and quality assurance. A quieter period towards the end of the diet also provides learners with greater recovery time following periods of concentrated assessment.

We'll continue to consider whether subjects can be distributed more evenly where this improves the overall timetable, while recognising that some variation in the intensity of individual weeks is necessary to maintain a workable timetable for learners, their schools, colleges and training providers, and the wider assessment process.

9 Subject rotation

Several respondents suggested rotating subjects across years so that the same subjects are not consistently placed late in the timetable. Art and Design, Computing

Science, Psychology, Sociology, Accounting and Health and Food Technology were mentioned in this context.

Outcome

We've noted this feedback for future exam timetables.

10 Positive feedback

In general, respondents welcomed the consultation, the later post-Easter start, and some improved spacing between exams compared to 2026. A number of learners, parents, schools, colleges and training providers described the timetable as good, manageable or improved, while still asking for specific refinements.

Outcome

We'll continue to produce a provisional exam timetable and share it with stakeholders for feedback.