

## **GIQ – Wednesday**

### **QUESTION**

*“Would the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills be able to provide an update on the assessment plans for National 5/Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021/2022”*

### **ANSWER**

I can confirm that the intention will be to hold an exam diet for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2021/2022.

My decision has been informed by the NQ Group who have met frequently over the summer to develop plans for this coming session. Their central planning assumption has been that there will be examinations, with the modifications mentioned earlier, for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher in 2022.

Work on the assessment plans for session 2021/2022 is ongoing. In June, subject updates were issued by SQA. These modifications reduced subject content and reduced assessment requirements in almost all subjects.

In the event that additional disruption is experienced, in order to insulate exams against further disruption, additional adaptations will be considered. In this scenario, adaptations may include further modifications to subject content, an indication of topics to be covered, or even using multiple classrooms rather than assembly or gym halls, if public health advice advises certain approaches to large gatherings.

However, there is always the possibility of more significant disruption, and with it public health advice advising against large gatherings of people. This scenario could, once again, lead to the cancellation of exams and, in learning lessons from this year, we want to avoid a sudden change of plan that necessitates an intense period of evidence gathering.

As such, from the start of session 2021/2022 teachers and lecturers will be asked to keep a record of normal planned assessments at appropriate times throughout the year. This should provide reliable and robust evidence of demonstrated attainment that can be used, if required, to award grades to learners. I must stress that the volume and gathering of this evidence must be proportionate; quality not quantity is key. The NQ Group, which has learner, parent, teacher, union and local authority representation, continues to develop the approach at pace and will issue further detailed guidance at the earliest opportunity.

I am confident that the plans I have outlined here, and the plans that will be developed to provide the detail beyond what I have outlined today, will allow a positive start to session 2021/2022. Learners, parents and carers, and indeed wider stakeholders, can be reassured that we are putting in a place a set of procedures that will provide an assessment model that appropriately supports and rewards our learners, whether or not further disruption occurs.