

INDUSTRIAL ACTION – MITIGATION AND CONTINGENCY

Schools NOT affected by targeted action

Title: Industrial action - impact on SQA exams

Date to be issued: Wednesday 1 March 2023

Dear colleague

We understand that the current industrial dispute between Scottish Government, COSLA and teacher unions is disrupting learning and teaching and creating a difficult and concerning situation for you, your staff, your learners and their parents/carers. This is also a time of year in which learners are being assessed, completing coursework and preparing for exams.

We are grateful for your ongoing support in delivering Scotland's qualifications and know you will be doing all you can to mitigate any local disruption to learning and teaching in your school, particularly in the senior phase. We are keen to work with you to ensure we are doing all we can to support learners at this time.

As you know, awarding National Qualifications depends on the whole education community working together and playing their part in delivering for learners. We need teachers to carry out visiting assessment, mark coursework and exams.

We are also committed to doing everything we can to mitigate the impact of any industrial action on assessment and exams, as part of the contingency planning being led by the Scottish Government. While we are limited in what additional steps we can take, we have agreed some special arrangements, including extensions to coursework deadlines in three subject areas, with those schools who are impacted by the industrial action targeted at specific parliamentary constituencies.

Please note that all other requests for coursework extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis for individual learners but will not be approved due to industrial action.

We already have a package of support in place this year designed to help learners experiencing disruption to learning and teaching including modifications to course assessments and a sensitive approach to grading. While we will have the Exam Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service available for learners whose performance is affected by personal circumstances beyond their control, it is important to note that this service is not appropriate for addressing widespread disruption to learning and teaching. The Exam Exceptional Circumstances Consideration service is designed to support individual learners who have been unable to attend an exam or learners whose performance on an exam may have been affected by personal circumstances or an unplanned incident on the day of the exam and should only be used for individual learners.

In addition, we are continuing to recruit teachers into appointee roles and will be writing to your local authority to ask that they support you when it comes to releasing staff wishing to carry out their SQA duties – such as visiting assessment and marking. In order for visiting assessments and marking to take place in your area and across Scotland we need every school to play its part in releasing staff.

Once again we thank you for your ongoing support during this very challenging time. We are doing our very best to support you and will continue to work very closely with you in delivering this year's National Qualifications. Please contact your local Liaison Manager should you have questions regarding any of the above information.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gill Stewart
Director of Qualifications Development