

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	17 March 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Additional closure days for secondary schools
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/21/077
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Alex Duncan
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the dates of two 'assessment and moderation support days' for secondary schools to support successful delivery of the Alternative Certification Model in place for session 2020/2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the Alternative Certification Model timeline in place across the city; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to make a formal request to Scottish Government for two 'assessment support days' on 28 May and 4 June 2021.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 16 February, the First Minister announced that an additional two days will be set aside for teachers to engage with the assessment, moderation and quality assurance process required for awarding National Qualifications. These two days are additional in-service days specifically for assessment, moderation and quality assurance purposes, and are therefore termed 'assessment support days'.
- 3.2 The two days can be deployed at the discretion of the Local Authority as they see best, depending on the requirements of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) that is replacing National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams in session 2020-21.
- 3.3 Regulation 5 of the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, as amended, requires schools to be open for a minimum of 190 days in a school year. However, Section 133 (4) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows Scottish Ministers, on application; to modify this regulation providing they are satisfied that it would be unreasonable for Regulation 5 to apply, or to apply without modification.

- 3.4 Education authorities are therefore requested to apply for an exemption in order that relevant schools can close for the two additional in-service days. Applications are invited by 19 March 2021.

Alternative Certification Model

- 3.5 On 16 February, the National Qualifications Group 2021 (NQ21) published [revised arrangements for the Alternative Certification Model and the timeline for delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher results in session 2020-21](#). Secondary colleagues and the central team have agreed a timeline of activity based on this guidance to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Alternative Certification Model.
- 3.6 The following timeline outlines the processes in place to support the moderation of provisional results across Aberdeen City's 11 secondary schools. The key purpose is to provide the SQA with robust, quality assured provisional results which will stand up to external scrutiny by June 25. The moderation approach being used across Aberdeen City is rigorous as it is imperative that staff, parent/carers, and young people have confidence in the provisional results.

Timeline

- 3.7 The Alternative Certification Model timeline satisfies all of the national requirements and makes good use of local expertise. The approach provides opportunities for moderation at class, faculty and school level in addition to moderation between city schools and as a Local Authority. This approach will help ensure a high level of consistency against the SQA Standards.

Date	Process/Event
10 August – 7 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools to focus on learning and teaching to consolidate understanding. • Schools to use formative assessment to help inform teacher judgement and provide pupils with valuable feedback to secure improvement. • Schools to remain agile: approach to capturing assessment evidence will adapt in response to the pandemic and any associated mitigations (e.g. lockdown, L4 restrictions). • Schools to plan for the return of some young people undertaking subject(s) with a high level of practical activity from 22 February and those who are not strongly placed for certification from 15 March. Assessment will only take place when sufficient learning and teaching has taken place. • Data and Insights to develop a Power BI Moderation dashboard to support moderation practices. • Schools to make use of previous trend data held in Insight and data held in Power BI to review previous estimate judgement. Combined, this allows for rigorous data

	<p>analysis to support the submission of fair and accurate provisional results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools to manage the dual process whereby learning and teaching will continue, and assessments will run as and when appropriate to capture demonstrated attainment when young people are ready. • Faculty Principal Teachers to consider the SQA advice to split assessment pieces to allow greater flexibility in capturing assessment evidence to demonstrate attainment when planning opportunities for assessment evidence. • Schools to lead in school moderation including cross marking and sampling of pupil evidence. • Schools to undertake analysis of evidence as it is being gathered at individual pupil, class, faculty and school level and input of data.
<p>February In Service</p> <p>February Senior Leader Peer Moderation</p>	<p>N5/H/AH School and LA Moderation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Team to support the establishment of a series of, 'Understanding the Standard' In Service events for all secondary class teachers to ensure all staff work to a common standard. • Senior Leader Peer Moderation meetings to share best practice in the effective use of data to support moderation of provisional results.
<p>4 May In Service</p>	<p>In school moderation including cross marking and sampling of pupil evidence.</p> <p>Central team to work across sites where there are insufficient numbers of staff at individual school level to support this process.</p>
<p>Assessment Support Days</p> <p>28 May</p> <p>4 June</p>	<p>On 28 May, teaching staff led by the Faculty PT will continue with marking and moderation of pupil work to support consistent decision-making regarding provisional results.</p> <p>On 4 June, Faculty Principal Teachers will undertake final data checks for each individual pupil. Senior Leadership Teams will also check this data in partnership with Principal Teachers. The final provisional results will be submitted to the Data and Insight and central education teams for input into Power BI.</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>Process/Event</p>
<p>7 - 14 June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools review faculty and whole school data and report to central team. This is a live document which will allow schools to continue moderation activities at the same time as Data and Insights/central education teamwork through the data. • The central team will provide schools with individual pupil data on Power BI. Schools will use this to pick up on any individual anomalies. For example, schools may ask

	<p>House Teams to review data for individual pupils and report back any anomalies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools receive feedback on data submitted from the central team. For example, the central team may spot a significant drop in a whole school measure or a significant increase in a subject specific measure. • Following feedback received, the Head Teacher may decide to further check the provisional results. This is the responsibility of the Head Teacher based on their knowledge of subjects and cohorts. Any such decision will be made in partnership with the Faculty Principal Teacher and Senior Leadership Team. • It may also be the case that schools continue to assess and gather demonstrated attainment for pupils where they have missed learning, teaching and assessment opportunities (e.g. self-isolation).
25 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Submission of provisional results to SQA • Individual schools will agree their own internal administration dates to allow for the final deadline to be met.

3.8 The Assessment Support Days would most benefit the certification of young people if taken on 28 May and 4 June as outlined in the timeline above. Trade Union colleagues have been advised of provisional arrangements.

3.9 With Committee approval, application will be made to Scottish Government for the two Assessment Support Days on 28 May and 4 June 2021.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Regulation 5 of the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, as amended, requires schools to be open for a minimum of 190 days in a school year. However, Section 133 (4) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows Scottish Ministers, on application; to modify this regulation providing they are satisfied that it would be unreasonable for Regulation 5 to apply, or to apply without modification. By applying for the Assessment Support Days the service would fully comply with the legislation.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Operational	Risk of not having capacity to undertake moderation activities to ensure consistency with allocation of provisional grades. Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for all young people	M	Mitigated by providing time to allow in school moderation including cross marking and sampling of pupil evidence, both in school and across schools.
Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputational	Risk of not effectively being fair and consistent with the allocation of provisional grades for all learners by not ensuring equity in terms of allocation of provisional grades.	M	Ensuring appropriate collaboration will take place with marking and moderation of pupil work to support consistent decision-making regarding provisional results.
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Ensuring a curriculum that is fit for purpose, by providing flexible pathways and considering the local economy, will contribute towards an increase in employment.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 6 – Improving Pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including Care Experienced young people and those with additional support needs)
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is achieving excellence and equity for all

<p>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</p>	<p>The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duties with regard to meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs. <p>The Equality Act 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to ensure we are not discriminating disabled learners <p>The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000</p> <p>The National Improvement Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Authorities are under a duty to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of education of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them and to carry out the duty with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.
---	---

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

None

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Alex Duncan
Title	Quality Improvement Manager
Email Address	Alexduncan@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	07920595027