

Lasswade High School SQA 2020 Certification

Parent/ Carer FAQs

1. Can some courses and coursework continue online?

We have stated, via our website and year group Google Classrooms, work for some courses may continue online. Award courses, such as Leadership, Personal Development and Volunteering are good examples of this, as they can be finished using the materials staff have provided on the relevant Google Classrooms. In addition, some other National Courses can also continue online, Advanced Higher English and Advanced Higher Drama dissertations, for example, can be completed online and submitted to staff for consideration and, similarly, other practical and performance subjects have coursework components that might be progressed, though not necessarily fully completed, through e-learning. It is important the students check in with each of their teachers to be ascertain what can be completed.

2. Why can't all courses continue online?

The reason that other courses cannot be continued online is that mandatory aspects of some courses must be completed under exam conditions – timed, without notes, and in full view of the teacher. Science and Social Studies assignments are examples of this kind of coursework. These aspects of coursework cannot be facilitated online and therefore teachers accepting any 'evidence' produced in this way are breaching assessment arrangements and committing malpractice by undermining the integrity of the assessment.

3. What about coursework that has already been submitted?

National 5 coursework that has already been submitted and uplifted by the SQA will be marked by the SQA. Subjects that produce an assignment, such as Modern Languages, Computer Science, Science and Social Subjects will all be marked in this way.

Other National 5 subjects, which had a submission date in April, such as PE, Art & Design and Fashion & Textiles, will not be marked by the SQA. In addition, all Higher and Advanced Higher coursework will not be uplifted or marked by the SQA.

The SQA have advised that staff may consider work that will not be uplifted and marked by the SQA as part of the 'body of evidence' they used to devise estimate grades. Currently we are working through this with staff. Many of our staff have SQA marking experience and the nature of the coursework, if it's been subject to drafts and feedback for example, has enabled them to already reach a provisional 'grade' for this work. However, other subjects have coursework that cannot, ordinarily, be marked by our staff so we're working with

teams to consider the best approach here. Approach aside, the assessment and consideration of this work will require teachers' time to complete.

4. What is an estimate grade?

An estimate grade is a number (from 1 – 9) that teachers provide to the SQA, in advance of the final exam each year, to 'estimate' what students are likely to achieve. The number relates to the 'band' expected. This is shown in the table below.

Valid estimate bands are 1-9: Band	Estimated Performance	Notional % Range
1	Band A (upper) range	85 – 100
2	Band A (lower) range	70 – 84
3	Band B (upper)	65 – 69
4	Band B (lower)	60 – 64
5	Band C (upper)	55 – 59
6	Band C (lower)	50 – 54
7	Band D	40 – 49
8	No Award	30 – 39
9	No Award	0 – 29

This grade is used by the SQA to support their creation of 'cut off scores' in different subjects and to quality assure their examination processes. This grade can also be used if a candidate is unable attend an exam, as long as we can provide the evidence used to arrive at our estimate.

5. How do you derive an estimate grade?

Typically an estimate grade is derived using the following evidence:

- A student's performance in prelims/ practice tests
- A student's performance in any coursework, practical or performance elements
- The teacher's professional judgement of how the student is progressing – based on evidence produced throughout the course of the year.

This year we know these estimate grades matter more than ever. For this reason, we're taking more time over this. We are advising staff to engage in more moderation and discussion around evidence (this started prior to the school closures) and we are also requesting that staff analyse their data for the past three years, looking at the typical accuracy of their estimates and how our previous cohorts have performed in the final exam. The SQA have also stated that they will provide more guidance on this, some at subject specific level. Until we have all of the guidance available these grades will not become final.

6. My child did poorly in the prelim – does that automatically mean a poor estimate grade?

No. The prelim is considered to be 'strong' evidence, as it has been conducted in exactly the same conditions as the final exam. However, in many cases does not provide 'full' evidence of a student's likely performance in the final exam often because;

- the prelim has only assessed a portion of the whole course
- it has been superseded by other examination practice
- the 'written' element of the course has to be considered with the practical/performance element of the course

Staff will take a 'body of evidence' into account, this will vary from team to team depending upon the weightings and components of different courses. Evidence may be class work, tests, performances, folios of work, or creative projects.

7. My child has produced work at home – can that contribute to the estimate grade?

As outlined in Q1, it may be possible for some students to continue working on courses at home, producing work that can be considered when deriving their estimate grade. In other courses this is not possible.

Staff have received requests from students to take into account essays and practice exam papers that they've completed at home. **We are asking that this does not continue.** The reason for this is that, whilst this work may have been completed under exam conditions, teachers cannot verify this and therefore it is not strong enough evidence to use in deriving an estimate grade.

As stated at the beginning of the FAQs document, we are aiming to provide a fair service for all students. Not all of our students have equitable access to technology to use at home at the moment and a range of domestic and health circumstances are also preventing other students from continuing with work. By disallowing additional evidence to be submitted we are ensuring a fair system for our students and prioritising a consideration of the 'strong evidence' already available.

This means that all students will be considered using the same estimate 'model' in each course and teams are being asked to consider a broad range of evidence as part of this.

8. When will I know the estimate grade?

It has been our intention to provide you with estimate grades by the 2nd April, as per the communication via our website. This is, however, subject to change.

As we receive more information from the SQA, it may be necessary to revise this date to provide staff with more time to consider evidence, and to ensure that principal teachers and senior leaders have an opportunity to review and analyse this data.

9. What do I do if I don't believe the grade to be fair?

The SQA have announced that their 'post-results' service, whereby students can ask for a marking review of their work, will be available for free this year. What this will involve as yet, we don't know. Currently we are working with our colleagues across the education sector to ascertain what the process will be if parents or carers are concerned about the estimate grade entered for a student. We will update this section of our FAQs where we are clearer on this process.

10. It feels as though staff are giving different advice, why is that?

If you feel that you're getting different advice, we apologise. Our aim throughout this Covid-19 situation has been to communicate clear and frequent messages with all of our community to allay fears and answer questions. This has been challenging – the national situation has changed rapidly and we are reliant on communications from the SQA to respond to many of your queries. All staff have been given the same guidance and they should follow the channels available to them to ensure that students are provided with accurate and fair information.

However, it will be the case that different subjects have different requirements and options for students when progressing coursework. This is, unfortunately, unavoidable as the broad range of qualifications we offer differ in their assessment requirements and arrangements.