

PARENTS FACTSHEET - CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR CHILD

2017/18 REVISED NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Q. What are unit assessments?

A. Units are blocks of work that are taught throughout the year. For each unit your child is assessed on the knowledge they have gained during that block of work and this is marked by the teacher. Previously to gain a National 5 qualification, your child would have needed to pass all of the unit assessments as well as the course assessment. Your child will only need to pass the course assessment now.

Q. Why are unit assessments being removed?

A. Feedback from teachers and young people has indicated that workload has increased and that unit assessments have contributed to this increase. For example, if your child was taking six subjects, he/she would be taking around 18 unit assessments during the year.

The removal of the unit assessments will help reduce the amount of assessment your child currently undertakes.

Q. Why are units still available?

A. The units will remain available as free-standing units. Your child may be presented for the free-standing units as an alternative to a National 5 course. For example, your child may be presented for a National 5 course in Politics and presented for free-standing units in History.

Q. Why is it not possible to present candidates for both units and the full course award?

A. The purpose of removing unit assessments is to reduce the burden of over-assessment for learners and teachers. If learners were still required to undertake both units and the full course award, this would do nothing to address the issue of over-assessment.

The removal of unit assessments means that it has been necessary to expand the final course assessment, to ensure the course is fully covered.

Q. Will my child still be assessed for their exam?

A. Teachers will continue to use their own assessments to review learners' progress and their readiness for exams/relevant qualification. If your child is concerned about how progress will be assessed and supported they should discuss this with their teachers.

Q. Will there be any changes to National 4?

A. The structure of National 4 is currently being considered. No changes will be made to National 4 during 2017/18.



Q. What will happen if my child fails a National 5?

A. If your child has completed the course assessment and has sat the exam/end of year assignment at National 5 but achieved less than 40% overall, they may be eligible for a National 4 qualification if they complete:

- a National 4 Added Value Unit and
- the National 5 stand-alone units for that subject

This option is available for an interim period only and should only be used in exceptional circumstances. The decision on whether to apply this measure will be reached via a discussion between parents, the learner, teachers and head teachers.

Q. Will my child still be able to study the same number of subjects?

A. Yes. The number of subject's learners' take is a decision for the school to take in discussion with the learner and their parents. This will not change.

Q. What if I have any further questions?

A. Contact your headteacher who will be able to answer any further questions you may have.



TIMELINE OF REVISIONS TO NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

