Kyle Academy

Quality Assurance Policy for SQA Estimates May 2020

Context

John Swinney, Scotland's DFM, announced on 19th March, that the SQA exams for 2020 could not go ahead. To support a credible alternative certification model, teachers were asked to make evidence-based judgements to help inform certification for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

The following policy outlines the processes undertaken by staff at Kyle Academy (teaching staff, subject Principal Teachers and the Senior Leadership Team) to ensure that pupils' hard work is rightly and fairly recognised.

The steps taken were broken down into different stages to ensure consistency and support staff.

Policy Aims

- To provide clarity to pupils and parents on how the estimates were produced this session

- To ensure robust and consistent quality assurance procedures support the accuracy of the estimates

Stage 1: Review of Initial Estimates

Teaching staff work with subject Principal Teachers (PTs) to produce pupils' initial estimate grade and band using evidence of demonstrated and inferred attainment.

Examples of evidence used during this process:

- Pupil performance in class tests / assignments

- Quality of homework returns

- Breakdown and analysis of component scores in prelims

- Comparisons of performance between pupils this year and in previous years

- Day-to-day teaching and learning; quality of work carried out independently or with support

- Comparisons of working grades for different tracking periods looking for improvements / declines or consistencies with progress

- Reviewing cause for concerns letters and change of level requests

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) review all initial estimate bands for each pupil at N5, Higher and Advanced Higher and generate trend data.

Stage 1 Quality Assurance Check: PTs and SLT

PTs and SLT work together to scrutinise the following data.

- Accuracy of estimate grades and bands

- Accuracy of tracking information for subjects over the session

- Comparison of prelim results v actual performance over past 3 years

- Comparison of estimate grades with previous performance at national measures over last 3 years

Thereafter, SLT identify possible pupil discrepancies from the data and ask PTs to work with their teaching staff to review the initial estimates for March.

Stage 2: Data Analysis

PTs analyse data for the subjects they lead. This stage offers a further opportunity to scrutinise and revise pupil estimates.

Working with subject teaching staff PTs scrutinise the following evidence.

- Spread of grades and bands for each course for last 3 years to ensure accuracy and consistency
- Progression rates from N5 to Higher and Higher to Advanced Higher

Stage 2 Quality Assurance Check: PTs and SLT

PTs review data and submit any revised estimates following discussion with dept staff.

SLT review the updated information and work with PTs to finalise pupils' estimates using old format.

SLT compare revised data with key measures.

Stage 3: Refining Estimates and Ranking pupils

Teaching staff work with PTs using the school's guidance on refining estimates and ranking pupils (Appendix 1). PTs create criteria for each NQ subject they lead to support their discussions with teaching staff when placing pupils in the new refined bands and ranking them in order. Proforma below (Appendix 2).

PTs record refined bands and rankings in the new format issued by SQA.

Stage 3 Quality Assurance

PTs and SLT work together to scrutinise the accuracy of the refined bandings and pupil rankings.

Stage 4: Estimates Confirmed

PTs check, confirm and sign off the estimates.

SLT check, confirm and sign off estimates.

SQA Coordinator transmits estimates through SQA Connect for deadline of 29 May 2020.

Stage 3: Refining Estimates and Ranking candidates – Guidance for Staff

It is important that a range of subject evidence gathered across the year is used to accurately place and rank pupils in refined bands. All subject staff should have a clear understanding of National Standards across the various course components for their subject(s)and levels. The SQA statement issued on Monday, 20th April, offered website links to specific subject information on standards and course specifications to further support teaching staff.

Within the statement released SQA suggest that:

'Centres are strongly advised to focus on making holistic professional judgements when determining the refined band for each candidate and to not over-focus on the notional percentage range.'

The statement then goes on to offer centres guidance on selecting evidence advising that;

'... a selection of important and representative questions and tasks evidenced under the appropriate conditions can give a good indication of likely performance in the final course assessment.'

Inferred Attainment

In some cases, it might be that you do not have completed evidence for pupils across the course components. It is important to consider how secure the learning had been or the progress that was demonstrated leading up to the school closing. Additionally, your knowledge of previous learners may also be useful when making inferred judgments on progress in the lead up to the exams.

What could this look like in practice?

In making decisions about refined bands and rankings it will be important to establish and agree criteria across the different grades A-D, this will inform your decisions about who is placed where in the most reliable way. The focus on demonstrated learning across grades A to D will support you in making decisions that look beyond notional percentage bands.

Having agreed what an A candidate should have demonstrated you will then be able to select evidence that best represents this standard- again the focus here is on the demonstrated learning. This will offer you the chance to conclude which learners are most secure at this level allowing you to select upper, middle or lower bands in relation to the new system. Additionally, when ranking pupils, a fair system is established based on who has demonstrated learning most effectively.

A further consideration will be your course weightings, this will be true of practical based subjects. In reaching conclusions on demonstrated learning across your course components you will be able to factor in how significant the evidence is, in relation to specific course weightings, bringing together the revised band and ranking.

Creating Criteria

Establish criteria on the attached proforma that links clearly to demonstrated learning. The criteria should be consistent with National standards and take in to account the subject skills, applied knowledge, critical thinking... for pupils in bands A to D. The criteria should cover both N5, Higher and Adv Higher courses.

Identify on the proforma the samples of evidence used to establish how secure learners were in meeting the National standard across bands A to D. This evidence will offer opportunities for you to accurately rank pupils based on comparisons of demonstrated learning.

Please see the example below.

Higher Physical Education

Criteria for A candidates	Evidence used that predicts value
Course Component: Practical Performance • In all cases a high level of consistency in challenging contexts should be demonstrated; • Application of a range of skills • Control and fluency of movement • Effective decision making	One off performance assessment(s) Day to day T & L: Coping with challenge of drills and other practical contexts Extra-curricular activities if available
Course Component: Question Paper • In all cases examples that higher order questions (evaluate, analyse and scenario questions) have been consistently answered demonstrating; • Depth to response • Effective Critical thinking • Clear and detailed Applied knowledge and understanding	January's assessment information Starter activities focusing on HO questions Homework returns focusing on HO Day to day responses to classwork- quality of response without support

The discussions with staff would be around all your A candidates taking in to account the evidence that will allow you to judge how secure they are compared against the National standard, allowing you to select the most appropriate area of the band- (lower, middle or upper), as well as ranking them in the most accurate order.

B, C and D candidates

The same process for B, C and D candidates would be undertaken, the criteria for candidates would be consistent with the National standard for pupils performing at grades B, C and D

• What is it that a B candidate should demonstrate; skills, applied knowledge…?

• What sample of evidence can you select that demonstrates how secure each pupil is across grade B?

Refining Bands

In most cases you will have two options when placing pupils in their refined bands (upper and lower). At this stage it is important to use your criteria and base your decisions on demonstrated learning, comparing what the pupil has achieved against the national standards and not comparing pupil with pupil.

The only alternative to this arrangement is where pupils have an estimate of a 2 or 7. In these cases there will be three options for placing pupils within these two bands (upper, middle and lower).

SQA guidance on refined bands can be found at the end of the document.

Using an average of raw marks in isolation will not offer you the chance to discuss, in more detail, the quality of learning demonstrated by each pupil.

It is important to establish how effective your assessment methods have been and use the relevant methods, pieces of work to clearly highlight how well pupils have met the national standard for their respective grade.

I have noted below how the information will be recorded for SQA when refining bands. It might be that as PTs you go through refining bands first with your teams (placing pupils in upper, middle or lower) before ranking takes place. This should make it clearer for you when ranking pupils within their new refined band.

Candidate	SCN	Grade	Band	Refined band	
M McElroy	256789123	B	4	4 Lower	9
H McTavish	257891234	B	4	4 Lower	9
C Billings	259505823	B	4	4 Lower	9
G Price	255037825	B	4	4 Lower	9
G Cline	259432525	C	5	5 Upper	10
M Martin	257623443	C	5	5 Upper	10
S Perez	256392758	C	5	5 Upper	10

Ranking Pupils

Your discussions on how to rank pupils accurately, in the correct order, will again be based on your conversations around teaching and learning. It is important that pupils are judged on how secure they have been across course components compared with national standards for their relevant grade.

Using an average of raw component marks may support your judgements with this process but, in isolation, will not offer you an accurate account of who is most / least secure within the refined band. It is important these decisions are made with an informed view of how effective each pupil has been across the pieces of work selected for their refined band which will help inform their ranking order.

SQA note that in some cases where there are larger cohorts that there may be ties in the ranking system. However, where possible they advise that ties are limited where it can be managed.

I have noted below two examples of pupil rankings. The format will mirror the one used by SQA for recording the data.

Example 1: Rank order no ties

Candidate	SCN	Grade	Band	Refined band		Rank order
M McElroy	256789123	B	4	4 Lower	9	1
H McTavish	257891234	B	4	4 Lower	9	2
C Billings	259505823	B	4	4 Lower	9	3
G Price	255037825	B	4	4 Lower	9	4
G Cline	259432525	C	5	5 Upper	10	1
M Martin	257623443	C	5	5 Upper	10	2
S Perez	256392758	C	5	5 Upper	10	3

Example 2: With ties in the rank order

Candidate	SCN	Grade	Band	Refined band		Rank order
P Nilsen	255676424	B	4	4 Lower	9	1
L Wolfe	255769899	B	4	4 Lower	9	1
D McDougall	259483929	B	4	4 Lower	9	2
A Philp	253659213	B	4	4 Lower	9	3
B Cooper	252345678	C	5	5 Upper	10	1
R Kaur	251234567	C	5	5 Upper	10	2
G McGregor	257219543	C	5	5 Upper	10	2
T Helgadottir	253562842	C	5	5 Upper	10	3

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher refined bands

This session, a key aspect of producing accurate and fair results will be your support in converting your estimates into new refined bands as indicated in the table below. Once you have identified a candidate's estimated grade and band, you should revisit all candidates in line with the refined bands, with the exception of band 9.

For larger cohorts, we would expect candidates estimated to achieve a particular band to be distributed across the refined bands.

Centres are strongly advised to focus on making holistic professional judgements when determining the refined band for each candidate and to not over-focus on the notional percentage range. Producing Estimates (Session 2019−20)

Grade	Band	Refined band		Notional % range
A	1	1 Upper	1	93–100
A	1	1 Lower	2	85 – 92
A	2	2 Upper	3	80–84
A	2	2 Middle	4	75–79
A	2	2 Lower	5	70–74
B	3	3 Upper	6	67–69
B	3	3 Lower	7	65–66
B	4	4 Upper	8	62–64
B	4	4 Lower	9	60–61
C	5	5 Upper	10	57–59
C	5	5 Lower	11	55–56
C	6	6 Upper	12	52–54
C	6	6 Lower	13	50–51
D	7	7 Upper	14	47–49
D	7	7 Middle	15	44–46
D	7	7 Lower	16	40–43
No Award	8	8 Upper	17	35–39
No Award	8	8 Lower	18	30–34
No Award	9	9	19	0–29

Where a candidate is currently estimated to be in band 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 8

If the overall estimate suggests that the candidate is closer to the band above, they should be placed in the upper refined band and **this should be converted into the appropriate refined band.**

If the evidence suggests that the candidate just meets the required standard, they should be placed in the lower refined band and **this should be converted into the appropriate refined band.**

Example
If a candidate is estimated to achieve a grade C, band 5 and the evidence suggests that performance is closer to band 4, then place them in band 5 upper and convert to refined band 10. If the evidence just meets the original band 5, you should place the candidate in band 5 lower and convert to refined band 11.

Where a candidate is currently estimated to be in band 2 or band 7

The corresponding refined bands are now divided into three categories (upper, middle and lower): if the overall estimate suggests the candidate performance is closer to the band above, the candidate should be placed in the upper refined band and **this should be converted to the appropriate refined band**
.
If the overall estimate suggests that the candidate just meets the required standard, the candidate should be placed in the lower refined band and **this should be converted to the appropriate refined band**
.
The middle refined band should be used where the overall estimate solidly conforms to the required standard and **this should be converted to the appropriate refined band**.

Example
If a candidate is estimated to achieve a grade A, band 2 and the evidence suggests performance is closer to band 1 you should place them in band 2 upper and convert to refined band 3. If the evidence just meets the original band 2 you should place them in band 2 lower and convert to refined band 5. If they are solidly within the original band 2, you should then place them in band 2 middle and convert to refined band 4.

Appendix 2: Estimate Criteria Proforma

Estimates: Refined Bands and Ranking Pupils

Subject and Level:

Criteria for A candidates	Evidence used that supports value

Criteria for B candidates	Evidence used that supports value

Criteria for C candidates	Evidence used that supports value

Criteria for D candidates	Evidence used that supports value

| | |
| | |