



An update about qualifications from 2017

2017 is the fourth year of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) qualifications called Nationals, the third year of new CfE Highers and the second year of new CfE Advanced Highers. All pupils in fourth year (S4) are being presented for Nationals. Pupils in fifth (S5) and sixth (S6) year will be studying a mixture of qualifications, mainly Highers, Advanced Highers and Nationals.

Nationals can be roughly equated to the former Standard Grade and Intermediate examinations according to the table below.

| National | Equivalent previous qualification | SCQF levels |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|
| National 1 | Access 1 | 1 |
| National 2 | Access 2 | 2 |
| National 3 | Access 3 / Foundation | 3 |
| National 4 | Intermediate 1 / General | 4 |
| National 5 | Intermediate 2/ Credit | 5 |

Nationals are assessed throughout the year in a variety of ways by using coursework, end of unit tests, folio work and assignments. These assessments are rigorously verified by SQA throughout the year. The only pupils who are required to sit an external examination in S4-6 are those working towards National 5 qualifications or above.

How are the qualifications graded?

Nationals 1 to 4 are graded as a pass or fail. National 5 is graded A, B, C or D and 'No Award': grades A to C indicate a pass and grade D indicates an achievement at SCQF Level 5. Highers and Advanced Highers are graded A-D and No Award, with A-C indicating a pass.



Will my child get Study Leave?

Examination leave will remain universal for all S5 and S6 pupils, as they will be sitting external examinations for most of the qualifications they are studying.

Due to the changes in the examination processes outlined above, exam leave will not be automatic for pupils in S4. S4 pupils who are studying **at least three** National 5 qualifications **will have full exam leave** regardless of when their examinations take place. Those pupils staying on for an S5 will return to school on Monday 5th June for the new S5 Conference.

Parents/Carers of S4 pupils who are studying **one or two** and those who **are not studying any** National 5 qualifications should have received separate documentation relating to arrangements for their son/daughter. In St Modan's pupils who are studying one or two National 5 courses will be entitled to **four working days of study leave** before each individual exam (where possible) if requested by parent/carer.

Study leave for all S5/6 pupils and for eligible S4 pupils (see above) begins on Tuesday 2nd May and continues until Friday 2nd June (inclusive).

Pupils who are eligible to leave school at the end of S4 will remain on the school register until 31st May 2017.

Study Leave Arrangements for St Modan's

- Pupils sitting an exam **should sign in/out at the office** and aim to arrive in school at **least 20 minutes** prior to an exam starting.
- Pupils should sign in and out of school at the school office when in school to study.
- Pupils should **not come back into the school building once they have signed out for the day**. The school canteen will be opened as normal for pupils requiring lunch or a snack.
- Pupils should know the **location of the exam** and their **seat number** before study leave begins (these are displayed in teaching areas for each subject).
- Pupils with additional assessment arrangements (AAA) should pay particular note to the start time and location of their exams as these often differ from the main exams.
- **Full school uniform must be worn at all times** whether in school for an exam or to study.
- Some of the exams finish beyond the end of the school day - where a pupil is entitled to school transport they should request a travel pass from the school office before the start of their exam.
- Pupils are able to travel to on from school using the normal school transport (pass or fee required as usual).
- All S4/5/6 pupils have been issued with the SQA guidance document Your Exams http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQA_Your_Exams_2017.pdf



SQA exams - Dealing with the Unexpected

What if my child is ill in the lead up to the exam or on the day of the exam?

- Contact the school office Tel: 01786 470962. Mr McGurk (DHT) as SQA Coordinator is responsible for all SQA exams in St Modan's.
- If possible, the pupil should present on the day of the exam and make an attempt to sit the paper.
- Ideally a medical certificate from the GP or hospital should be provided.
- If the school holds strong evidence of assessment performance for that pupil then an "exceptional circumstances" request can be made by St Modan's to the SQA. The pupil will be asked to sign a consent form to say that they agree that they want consideration of "exceptional circumstances" to be applied to their exam paper.
- The exam paper will be marked as normal. If the pupil achieves their estimated grade or better, the grade achieved will be awarded.
- If the mark attained falls below the anticipated grade then a senior SQA marker will review the exam paper along with evidence submitted from the school. A grade will then be awarded. This grade cannot be reviewed.
- This procedure would also be followed in cases of bereavement or of other exceptional circumstances which may impact on a pupil's performance.
- Please see below for further details on "exceptional circumstances" under Results Services.

(NB: The "estimated grade" is submitted by the school to the SQA prior to the exams. It reflects what the school anticipates the pupil will achieve based on the totality of the evidence they hold.)



Suggestions on How to Support your Child during Study Leave

- Ensure a school day routine is kept to. Your child should be up, dressed, fed and ready to study by the time you leave the house in the morning.
- In addition to 9am - 4pm with the planned breaks as per the school day, your son/daughter must do extra revision in the evenings.
- Agree a study plan for the day with timescales in advance with your son/daughter and check up/phone in at regular intervals to check on progress.
- Help break revision time into small chunks - hour-long sessions with short breaks at the end of each session often work well.
- Make sure your son/daughter has all the essential books and materials.
- Check the plan and resources required with your son/daughter *every day* so you both understand what must be achieved.
- Have a place where your son/daughter can study - table, chair, quiet and tidy location.
- Feed the brain - ensure that they have water, healthy snacks and foods to hand.
- Be prepared to be a proof reader or quizmaster. Ask your son/daughter to condense notes onto postcards to act as revision prompts. Keep a tab on recall/progress.
- Challenge your son/daughter's understanding/reasons for answers as this will help with retention and recall.
- **Listen, talk and encourage** - this can have a big influence on your teenager's learning and attitude to learning.
- Avoid upset - arguments are counter-productive and will only add unnecessary stress and distract from revision. Encourage your son/daughter to do well for his or her own sake.
- Encourage your teenager to take regular exercise. A brisk walk around the block can help clear the mind before the next revision session. Walking the dog or taking out the rubbish will suddenly become fun!
- Support the use of resources wisely - Visit www.sqa.org.uk/examtools and www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers
- Print off and display the Student Study Checklist at key places around the house.
- Remove all mobile devices - or take the charger/batteries/sim card with you to work.
- You may become very unpopular at home *but* frequent checking of your teenager's progress and discussion of this with him/her will reinforce the work ethic. Highlight the importance of independent, productive study as this builds ownership and resilience. That's what we parents do!



Student Study Checklist

- ✓ Start early in the day, when your mind is most alert.
- ✓ GET PREPARED! Have a study plan, study packs, books, revision notes, past papers, school website, Glow etc...
- ✓ Revise the topics that your teacher has told you are key parts of the syllabus.
- ✓ Take it seriously and cut contact: no phone calls, no texts, no Instagram, no Facebook etc.
- ✓ Unless you're ACTUALLY using the computer for revision, turn it off.
- ✓ Start with the most challenging subjects or the ones you like least.
- ✓ Give yourself occasional treats: a favourite snack, a short relax, your favourite TV show.
- ✓ Work through past exam questions and time yourself for a real exam practice.
- ✓ Be active and creative: Use A3 & A4 paper, Post-it notes, Highlighters, Flash Cards, Diagrams, Mindmaps, departmental resources such as exam packs and CDs etc.
- ✓ Look after yourself. Eat well, drink plenty of water and get plenty of rest.
- ✓ Success comes from sticking at it even when the subject is difficult. You are studying this area because you will be assessed on it. There are plenty of resources (paper based and on line) which will help you problem solve.
- ✓ Use your time wisely - write down what you are finding hard in your Easter Study Booklet and take it to your next lesson for discussion with your teacher.
- ✓ In preparation for your exam, try to have revision notes with the KEY points or phrases on it.
- ✓ Do something relaxing between revising and bedtime.
- ✓ Focus on what you have done not all the things that you haven't – every little bit helps.
- ✓ Don't leave all the difficult bits to the end!

SQA Exams 2017 – Information for Parents



- ✓ Believe in yourself - your parents, family and teachers do! You have spent years preparing for this moment so make every moment count!

After the Exams

SQA results day is Tuesday 8th August 2017

Pupils can register to receive their results electronically via MySQA

(http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/MySQA_2017_learner_information_leaflet.pdf)

Will we be able to appeal an examination result?

No, there are **no** appeals for **any** examinations.

Results Service

An updated service called the results service has been put in place. The results service has two main purposes, namely “exceptional circumstance consideration” and “post results service”.

Exceptional Circumstance Consideration.

An **exceptional circumstance** return can be made for pupils too ill to attend their external examination (a doctor’s note to support this submission would be useful) or those who have an exceptional reason for being unable to sit the examination (eg. representing the country in a sporting event, an official letter detailing the event should be provided to support this submission). SQA advice is that where possible a candidate experiencing exceptional circumstances should strive to sit the final exam.

Where a school makes an exceptional circumstance submission they will collate evidence from that pupil for **the whole course**, pre and post prelim examination. The SQA will consider the quality of the pupil work and will compare it to the estimates from the school in that subject at that level. A decision will be made and the pupil result will appear on the pupil’s SQA certificate in August.

If your child is too ill to attend an exam we would ask that you:

- Contact the school on the morning of the exam or prior to the exam if the illness is evident then. The school will then collate your child’s work for the submission.
- Any doctor’s letter should be submitted to the school at the latest **5 working days** after the date of the exam.



In any other exceptional circumstance please inform the school with the supporting documentation as soon as you can, this will allow the school to make the submission swiftly.

Post Results Service

The **post results service** has been introduced as a way for schools to ask for pupil scripts to be remarked.

The SQA have rigorous quality assurance procedures in place to ensure that all scripts are consistently marked to the highest standard and that the final mark is correct.

Schools can, if they believe there to be an anomaly in marking, ask the SQA to review the marking of a group of or an individual pupil's script(s). This will entail the script having its marking checked and the overall marks re-totaled.

There is no supporting evidence of the pupil's attainment submitted to support this marking review.

Only in extremely unusual circumstances will a school request a marking review, an example of which may be a whole subject area receiving grades the school does not agree with. Requesting a marking review **does not involve submitting supporting evidence that the pupil could have done better, it only reviews the script from the day.**

It is important to acknowledge that as a result of a marking review, if grades are changed, they can be changed **down** as well as **up**. As this has the potential to adversely affect your child's grade, you will be asked for your permission prior to a marking review being requested, without this permission the school will not proceed with the request. It should also be noted that **parental request does not guarantee a marking review.** The subject Faculty Manager will be consulted before a review is considered.

All Results Services enquiries should be directed to Mr McGurk (DHT) in the first instance - he can be contacted via the school office on 01786 470962.

St Modan's Full Results Services Policy can be found on the school website.