

19 April 2017

Dear Mr Muirhead

Thank you for your letter of 6 February 2017 on behalf of ACCSSHTA detailing your concerns regarding the 'withdrawal of a fall back facility' for candidates who did not achieve an A – D award at National 5 to receive a National 4 award.

The changes to the National Qualifications, announced in September 2016, will remove mandatory unit assessment, initially from National 5 qualifications and, subsequently, from Highers and Advanced Highers. The decision to remove unit assessments was agreed with the Assessment and National Qualifications Group and the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board.

I am sure you are aware that the Scottish Government has recently issued guidance on this matter
(<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/WorkingGrouponAssessmentandNQs/ANQGDoc>)

In a subsequent news release (<https://news.gov.scot/news/qualification-update>) the Scottish Government indicated that:

"In response to feedback from education leaders and teachers' representatives, The DFM has confirmed:

- The grade required to pass National 5 will not change, and remains at 50%. However, Grade D will be extended to include candidates who achieve between 40 – 49% (from the current 45-49% band).
- Schools will be able, in exceptional circumstances and for an interim period only, to continue presenting candidates for both '*national 5 units*' and the course assessment. This means candidates who have completed the relevant units, would be awarded a National 4 qualification."

SQA was given a very challenging timetable to effect the changes to National 5 course assessment and at the end of January 2017, we published a high level overview of the changes by subject to the course assessments. Further detail will be published shortly.

I hope that this background and the recent announcement by Scottish Government addresses your concerns and allow for a smoother transition into revised qualifications.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Janet Brown', written in a cursive style.

Dr Janet Brown
Chief Executive