

PARENTS FACTSHEET - CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2018/19 CHANGES TO ASSESSMENT AT HIGHER– WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR CHILD

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 Higher, your child would have needed to pass all of the unit assessments as well as the course assessment. Units are now being removed from Higher courses so your child will only need to pass the course assessment.

Q. Why are units and 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. 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/coursework. If your child is concerned about how progress will be assessed and supported, they should discuss this with their teachers.

Q. Will this change disadvantage my child if they want to study Advanced Highers?

A. No, unit assessments are also being removed from Advanced Highers in 2019/20.

Q. I have heard that some exams will be longer, is this true?

A. With the removal of units, it has been necessary for some exams to be extended to include the skills, knowledge and understanding that were previously assessed in the units.

For subjects where the total exam time now exceeds 3 hours, the exam will be split into two separate question papers to give your child a break in between each one.

Q. If some exams have been extended, will this not add to exam stress for young people?

A. The wellbeing of school pupils is vitally important, and we recognise the impact that anxiety about school work can have on children. All adults working in schools are responsible for supporting and developing mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing to support successful learning and happy lives.

Opportunities should be available through the school year for every young person to have regular conversations about their learning and progress. This should include discussing any stress a young person may be feeling as they prepare for examinations, and support around how this can best be managed. If you or a member of your family is experiencing issues with exams, confidential help and advice is available through Childline at <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/> or by phone on 0800 1111

Q. Will this affect the entry requirements for University?

A. No, Universities will continue to set their own entry requirements.

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

A. The number of subjects learners take is a decision for the school to take in discussion with the learner and their parents.

Q. What if I have any further questions?

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