

TEACHER PANEL

SQA RESULTS 2019

Purpose

1. This paper provides an overview of the SQA Results 2019. The Teacher Panel is invited to consider and to offer their reflections of the 2019 results, either from a local or national perspective.

Background

Higher and Advanced Higher

2. This year's results again show that Scotland's schools and colleges are generally high performing with a robust qualifications system that sees three-quarters of candidates at Higher getting a pass at A to C.
3. Over a quarter of candidates achieved a grade A at Higher – consistent with last year (28.3% in 2019 compared to 28.4% in 2018).
4. We have also seen a rise in the number of Higher passes in the Sciences overall.
5. However, this year there has been an overall fall in pass rates at Higher – from 76.8% in 2018 to 74.8% (down 2 percentage points). There has also been a fall in the total number of passes at Higher (down 5.7%) and in the total number of entries (down 3.1%).
6. The pass rate for Advanced Higher was 79.4%, compared with 80.5% in 2018 (down 1.1 percentage points).

National 4 and 5

7. There has been an increase in entries, passes and pass rates in National 5, including a rise in passes for English (up 4.4%) and Maths (up 1.3%). Pass rates for both have also increased.
8. The pass rate for National 4 was 88.5% compared to 91.1% in 2018. The number of entries and passes is also down.

Broader range of qualifications

9. Over 54,000 skills-based qualifications have also been achieved, providing learners with the skills to help their routes into employment, further or higher education – this figure is more than double than in 2012 (from 24,849 to 54,406).

Conclusion

10. Since publication of the results on 6 August, the main commentary has focused on attainment at Higher and National 5, with some observers noting the fall in the pass rate at National 4 and Advanced Higher. There has also been some very positive coverage on the considerable increase in other awards of equal value to traditional qualifications, which help young people to thrive in the world of work or further and higher education.
11. We would always expect to see some variation in performance from year-to-year, in a robust, credible assessment system. There is also a collective responsibility across the education system each year to reflect on the results and what they are telling us. We need to continue to ensure teachers have the right support in place to help them provide the best learning and teaching experiences for our young people.

Discussion points

12. Teacher Panel members are invited to consider the content of this paper and offer their views on:
 - a. The results, and the successes and challenges, in academic year 2018/19
 - b. Any factors relevant to this year's results
 - c. Approaches that might further enhance the outcomes for learners
 - d. Additional support for learning and teaching that might be helpful

**Learning Directorate
August 2019**