

# THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND

## **N5, Higher and Advanced Higher Courses: Externally Assessable Elements**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The following Resolution was passed by the 2015 AGM:

*"That this AGM instructs Council to investigate and report on the degree to which members currently mark externally assessable elements of the N5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses as part of their establishment-based duties."*

For the purposes of this paper 'establishment-based duties' are those included in teachers' contracts as agreed within the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT).

### **2. Background**

2.1 Secondary teachers delivering a range of senior phase courses had highlighted that within the arrangements for the new qualifications, they were assessing and grading items of coursework which contribute to candidates' overall marks but for no remuneration from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), in contrast to past arrangements.

### **3. Action:**

3.1 The Education Committee contacted Subject Specialist Group members, seeking relevant information.

### **4. Findings**

4.1 Responses were received from subject specialists within Technologies and Modern Languages, confirming that responsibility for significant portions of external assessment within some subjects now lies with teachers of those subjects.

4.2 The courses identified as being affected were:

- N5 Practical Metalwork
- N5 Practical Woodwork
- N5 Design and Manufacture
- N5 Engineering Science
- N5 Hospitality
- N5 and Higher Modern Languages

- N5 and Higher Graphic Communication
- N5 and Higher Computing Science
- N5 and Higher Fashion and Textiles.

- 4.3 Within the Technologies subjects in particular, the weighting of external assessment conducted by teachers is very marked, amounting to 50% of the overall course award. None of this assessment work is paid by the SQA.
- 4.4 Respondents highlighted the inequality among subjects with regards to this whereby some subjects such as the Sciences, Business Education and Art have course assessments at least partly if not fully externally assessed by the SQA as had been the case with predecessor qualifications.
- 4.5 Information was supplied detailing the amount of time that teachers spend on each assessment item. This ranged from 15 minutes to 90 minutes per pupil, depending on the subject.

## **5. Further Action**

- 5.1 The matter was raised by the EIS at a meeting with the SQA in November 2015 at which the unfairness of the current arrangements was accepted by the SQA and the intention to address this stated. The EIS will raise the matter again at the May meeting with the SQA.

Should it become clear that the SQA has not, in fact, sought to address this situation in a meaningful way, the EIS will consider appropriate further action.