

SSTA members are continuing to take industrial action to reduce teacher workload and two new initiatives are being introduced into Secondary Schools alongside the SQA changes at National 5. These initiatives have not been included in School Improvement Plans or Working Time Agreements for 2016–2017 sessions.

SSTA is reminding members that new initiatives must have time assigned for the tasks to be undertaken.

SQA changes to National 5 were announced on 31 January following the removal of units. These changes included the extension of the existing question paper, new question paper and a new item of coursework.

The course materials are to be published in April 2017 with specimen papers and coursework in August 2017. The SSTA published a survey of members that highlighted increased workload for pupils and teachers.

SSTA Advice

- **Members need to ensure that time to review the changes and prepare for the new courses is allocated within this year's Working Time Agreement and other duties are set aside**
- **Any teacher asked to prepare materials or consult with staff should decline the request until adequate time is given by the Headteacher**

Benchmarks are being prepared by Education Scotland for publication by the end of March. The Benchmarks will have opening text on their effective use in promoting more holistic assessment (and will set out some do's and don'ts).

Education Scotland are to produce exemplification to support the dissemination and introduction of the Benchmarks. The exemplification will highlight how some teachers have streamlined and simplified planning and assessment through using Es and Os and Benchmarks, and how this has impacted on improving learning and helping to reduce workload.

Education Scotland is looking to the possibility of providing guidance and support to local authorities and schools through 'Understanding Standards' approaches to help local authorities and their schools look at how best to introduce curriculum area Benchmarks.

SSTA Advice

- **No work should be undertaken on Benchmarks until all the materials have been produced by Education Scotland and suitable training events have been arranged.**
- **Any teacher asked to prepare materials or consult with staff should decline the request until adequate time is given by the Headteacher.**

National Standardised Assessments (NSA) are to be statutory in school year 2017-2018 in P1, P4, P7 and S3. The Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) has been awarded the contract for the computerised assessments that are to be available for all pupils.

Scholar and TWIG have been assigned for the training of teachers in the administration of the assessments and making use of the data in supporting teacher's professional judgement. Materials for teachers are to be produced by August 2017, online, webinars, face to face, etc.

SSTA Advice

- **No work should be undertaken on National Standardised Assessments until all the materials have been produced and suitable training events have been arranged**
- **Any teacher asked to prepare materials or consult with staff should decline the request until adequate time is given by the Headteacher.**
- **S3 Teachers given responsibility for the assessments need to ensure that additional time is allocated to carry-out the tasks in the 2017-2018 session**

Guidance to School Representatives

School Improvement Plans and Working Time Agreements

1. Schools must review the existing Working Time Agreement to allocate time to review the changes and prepare for the new National 5 courses. This must be a priority for all Secondary Schools in the short term.
2. Schools are developing their School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2017-2018 at the moment and then will be engaging on the schools Working Time Agreements. It is vitally important that the following are included and sufficient time allocated
 - **SQA National 5 changes**
 - **Bench Marks**
 - **National Standardised Assessments**

It is the SSTA view that these items are more than enough for any SIP and any other items should be deferred to the following year. The SSTA will be engaging with the Education Minister and HMIE to ensure that schools are not penalised for controlling teacher workload.