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Enclosure 01 – Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister's office

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm)
Sent: 18 March 2020 12:52
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Call with Fiona Robertson

Hi [Redact s38(1)(b)]

I've spoken to Fiona and she is expecting to be asked to have a call with DFM around 2pm. I said she should expect to hear from PO, can you set that up please?

Thanks
Malcolm

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 18 March 2020 12:47
To: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>
Subject: Call with Fiona Robertson

Hi Malcolm

Hope you're well. Is somebody at your end teeing up the phone call with Fiona Robertson for 14:00?

Many thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG |Tel: 0131 244
[Redact s38(1)(b)] | E: DFMCSE@gov.scot

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

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Enclosure 02 – Email from Scottish Government officials to Deputy First Minister

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm)

Sent: 18 March 2020 16:23

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science
<MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications DFM & Education <CommunicationsDFM&Education@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: SQA statement

PS/DFM

As requested by DFM, please find attached a draft letter to the Chief Examiner for his consideration and, if content, immediate issue.

Thanks
Malcolm

Malcolm Pentland | Deputy Director

Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131 244 0047

Learning Directorate | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

Buidheann-Stiùiridh an Ionnsachaidh | Raon 2B Tuath | Cidhe Bhictòria | Dùn Èideann | EH6 6QQ

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm)

Sent: 18 March 2020 13:36

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications DFM & Education <CommunicationsDFM&Education@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: SQA statement

DFM

I have spoken to the Chief Examiner in advance of your call with her which is being set up for 14:00 and have been clear that you will wish to hear more detail on SQA's planning for a technical solution for certification, the minimum viable product (based on coursework, prior attainment and estimates). As mentioned on the conference call, this is more developed and robust than the equivalent measures being developed for England although still with risks. I

understand SQA are testing the approach today based on information held on last year's Higher English.

Given the position being moved to on school closures, you may wish to be definitive in your call with Fiona about there being no exam diet. With that decision made by SG, and an emphasis on the efforts being made to support the completion of coursework for senior phase pupils, the SQA can channel energies into the further development of the minimum viable product. Until there is a definitive position on schools being open or not as exam centres or the holding of the diet, SQA will continue, as they are, to work towards delivering the diet and treating everything else as contingency planning.

Malcolm

From: Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning
Sent: 18 March 2020 12:54
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications DFM & Education <CommunicationsDFM&Education@gov.scot>
Subject: SQA statement

DFM and Colin

I want to draw your attention to the highlighted line in the statement that has been cleared (and issued) following the NQ Contingency Group meeting on Monday. Clearly events are moving at pace – it is important to emphasise that this was the view of the NQ contingency group at the meeting hence why it is reflected in the statement. Depending on the final model that the Chief Examiner settles on and shares with us by COP (and for inclusion in the statement tomorrow) this position of the group will be overtaken by events.

Just wanted to flag this in case there are any questions from the media on this for FM or over the course of the afternoon.

Scottish Government and SQA joint statement on the Coronavirus, and impact on August 2020 certification

Wednesday 18 March

The Qualifications Contingency Group, met yesterday to consider the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on the 2020 examination timetable, and wider qualifications certification. The Group, chaired by the Scottish Government, and with membership drawn from across the education system, agreed that it was dealing with a very serious and evolving situation.

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) fully appreciates the concerns of learners, parents and carers, schools and colleges. In the event of school closures, the Qualifications Contingency Group agreed that every effort should be made to ensure schools remain

partially open to allow Senior Phase pupils to complete learning and be able to submit coursework, in addition to being able to open as examination centres during the diet, should medical and scientific advice allow.

As you would expect, the SQA is working through a range of scenarios, including in the event that there is significant disruption to the diet. In the meantime, we strongly suggest that schools and colleges continue to prioritise the completion of coursework, including for those subjects with later deadlines.

Our exceptional circumstances service, which allows a school or college who believe that a candidate has suffered, for example bereavement or illness during exams, or has been self-isolating, to inform us of the circumstances and submit alternative evidence of attainment demonstrated by the candidate, will be available. Schools and colleges should be gathering any alternative evidence on candidate performance as they would do in the normal way, and as per our guidance every year, to support any consideration of exceptional circumstances. There is a range of alternative assessment evidence that we can take into account, which can include coursework, class or other assessments. This evidence should inform estimated grades, again as it should every year.

Markers and invigilators play a critical role in the delivery of Scottish qualifications and their continued support, together with the support of schools and colleges, will be particularly important this year. Currently, marker recruitment is on track and we have additional reserves, if needed. We are reviewing all procedural meetings with a view to using remote methods of delivery wherever possible, and will be communicating directly with individual subject teams to provide further details.

We recognise that some of our invigilators may not be able to work with us this year, and we will be working with schools and colleges to put in place alternative arrangements for invigilation where needed, in line with our current contingency arrangements for invigilation.

We are also strongly encouraging all candidates to sign up to MySQA, our online and text service, as a direct way to receive their results.

The Scottish Government and SQA will continue to review the latest evidence, in consultation with members of the Qualifications Contingency Group, and will communicate further updates as necessary.

Background information

The Qualifications Contingency Group is invoked in circumstances where there is a system wide risk to the delivery of the exam diet and awarding of qualifications.

The group seeks to ensure the sharing of information and intelligence between partners; promote collective leadership to help ensure the safe and secure delivery of the exam diet and awarding of qualifications and agree a joint approach to communications to allow learners, parents and carers, schools and colleges and wider stakeholders to receive clear and accurate messages in a timely manner.

The meeting was chaired by the Scottish Government, with senior representation from the Scottish Qualifications Authority; School Leaders Scotland; Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS); the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES); College Development Network (CDN); Colleges Scotland (CS); Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS); Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS); and Universities Scotland.

Enclosure 02.1 – Draft letter from Deputy First Minister to SQA CEO

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

Fiona Robertson
Chief Examiner
Scottish Qualifications Agency
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

18 March 2020

Dear Fiona

I am writing following our discussion of this afternoon. In the incredibly challenging circumstances we are facing as a nation in responding to Coronavirus outbreak, we are having to ask people to take actions that are unprecedented in order to protect lives.

You will be aware of the measures that the First Minister announced today in her statement regarding the imminent closure of our schools. Whilst we have been clear that this should be done in a manner that protects continuity of education, and particularly those students in the Senior Phase, it is clear to me that we must all now work on the assumption that it will no longer be possible to deliver the exam diet in 2020.

I am aware of how significant a step it is to cancel the exam diet. In doing so, we must do our utmost to ensure is that the interests of our young people are protected and that their hard work is rightly and fairly recognised. I am, therefore, commissioning you to develop an alternative certification model that will be able to be deployed for the pupils who would otherwise have participated in this years exam diet.

I am grateful for the work that you and your team at SQA have already done in considering alternative options and appreciate the very significant ask I am making of you and your colleagues. I want you to know that I am very grateful for your efforts and the professionalism that you are bringing to this task.

Yours Sincerely

JOHN SWINNEY

Enclosure 03 – Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 18 March 2020 17:46
To: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Cc: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications DFM & Education <CommunicationsDFM&Education@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) <Sam.Anson@gov.scot>; Drought A (Andrew) <Andrew.Drought@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SQA statement

Hi Malcolm

Thanks for this. The letter has now issued – attached for your records.

Thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]
X [Redact s38(1)(b)]

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
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Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131 244 0047

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(Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications
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Enclosure 03.1 – Email from Deputy First Minister’s office to SQA CEO

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 18 March 2020 17:45
To: fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Subject: Letter from the Deputy First Minister

Good afternoon Fiona

Please find attached a letter from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.

Kind regards

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew’s House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG |Tel: 0131 244 [Redact s38(1)(b)] | E: DFMCSE@gov.scot

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Enclosure 03.1.1 – Letter from Deputy First Minister to SQA CEO

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Skills
John Swinney MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

Fiona Robertson
Chief Examiner
Scottish Qualifications Agency
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

By email: fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk

18 March 2020

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JOHN SWINNEY

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



Accredited
Until 2020



Enclosure 04 – Email from SQA to Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk > **On Behalf Of** Fiona Robertson
Sent: 19 March 2020 13:23
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)
<Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; David Middleton <David.Middleton@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Letter from SQA Chief Executive

Good afternoon

Please find attached a letter from Fiona Robertson, Chief Executive SQA and Chief Examining Officer for Scotland, in response to your correspondence of yesterday evening.

Kind regards

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

t: 0345 [Redact s38(1)(b)] | m: 07[Redact s38(1)(b)] | e: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ
Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1FD

Enclosure 04.1 – Letter from SQA CEO to Deputy First Minister



19 March 2020

John Swinney
Deputy First Minister
T4.23
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email: dfmsc@gov.scot

Contact: Fiona Robertson
Email: Fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk

Dear Deputy First Minister

Many thanks for your letter following our discussion yesterday.

I fully accept your decision that it is no longer possible to deliver the exam diet in 2020, given the imminent closure of schools. I accept your commission to develop an alternative certification model for this year.

As you know, the Scottish Qualifications Authority has recently been working through a range of scenarios in relation to the exam diet, including disruption and postponement. Work on an alternative certification model is progressing at pace and I will provide further and full details as soon as I can. The support of the wider education system will be important – and the Scottish Government may wish therefore to continue the meetings of the National Qualifications Contingency Group – but I fully acknowledge that the final decision on certification is mine as Chief Examining Officer.

To allow me to certificate, I will need to ensure that we have as much information on the achievements of learners as possible. It is therefore important that schools and colleges work with young people to ensure that any units and coursework are completed, as part of the established assessment process, and estimated grades are provided by teachers drawing on the available evidence gathered throughout the year, to existing SQA deadlines, or earlier if that is possible. For many learners, we will also have prior attainment information which will be helpful to us.

We will work to ensure that learners receive their results no later than 4 August, as planned. We are considering more fully the impact this decision will have on our exceptional circumstances and post-results services because these will need to change in the absence of a diet. However, I would like to confirm this afternoon that we will offer a free post-results service to ensure that schools and colleges continue to have a mechanism to question any result. I appreciate that there may be some operational and financial implications to

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An Tògalach Optim, 58 Sràid MhìeDionnaibhills, Glaschu, G2 8DQ

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, EH22 1FD
Lowden, 24 Shawfair an Iar, Dal Ché, EH22 1FD


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Chair: David Middleton CBE
Chief Executive: Fiona Robertson

consider here, which we have not yet fully worked through, and I have raised this with your officials.

I fully appreciate that this will be an uncertain time for learners who have worked hard throughout the year and will now, with their families, be worried about what this means for them. Everyone here at SQA will do their utmost to ensure that their hard work is fully and fairly recognised, and allows them to proceed to further learning or work.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Robertson', written in a cursive style.

Fiona Robertson

Chief Executive and Chief Examining Officer for Scotland

Enclosure 05 – Email from Scottish Government officials to Deputy First Minister

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm)

Sent: 20 March 2020 14:38

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: SQA Letter to exam centres

PS/DFM

Please see attached the draft letter Fiona Robertson plans to issue to exam centres. This follows on from her call with DFM this morning and covers the key points DFM raised with her in terms of SQAs liaison team reaching out to, and being contactable by, centres. Very grateful if you check whether DFM has any comments on this. SQA will want to issue ASAP.

Thanks
Malcolm

Malcolm Pentland | Deputy Director

Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131
244 0047

Learning Directorate | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

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Enclosure 05.1 – Draft SQA Communication to Schools and Colleges on 2020 Exams

Communication to Heads of Centre and Co-ordinators in schools and colleges, and local authority contacts, including Directors of Education – DRAFT v2

NQ 2020 update

Friday 20 March 2020

Dear colleagues

I wanted to contact you personally following yesterday's announcement by the Deputy First Minister that the 2020 exam diet cannot now go ahead. I have now been asked, as Chief Examining Officer, to develop an alternative certification model. I have committed to doing that and in [my statement](#) yesterday, I said that I wanted to ensure that we have as much information on the achievements of your learners as possible to inform that.

I would therefore be very grateful if coursework can be completed and you provide estimated grades, as you would normally, drawing on the available evidence throughout the year. For many learners, we will also have prior attainment information, which will be very helpful to us.

I appreciate that this will be challenging. I fully acknowledge the difficulties you are facing and the concerns you will have in delivering for young people. You may also have many questions on a day in which you are juggling competing demands in your school or college. Please be assured that everyone here at SQA is fully committed to supporting and helping you through these challenges. Our dedicated team of [Liaison](#) and [Regional](#) Managers will continue to get in touch with you and are on hand to answer any of your questions. Please do get in touch to ensure we can respond to any specific concerns. Where necessary, we are working our way through some detailed subject -specific advice and will continue to use our newsletters as the principal way to update you. This will include Frequently Asked Questions.

We are also working on making the necessary arrangements to uplift completed coursework materials from every school and college across Scotland in accordance with the existing deadlines, as we do every year.

As I said yesterday, we will work to ensure that learners receive their results no later than 4 August, as planned. We are considering more fully the impact this decision will have on our exceptional circumstances and post-results services. I will confirm that we will offer a free post-results service to ensure that schools and colleges continue to have a mechanism to question any result.

I would ask you to strongly encourage all your learners to [sign up to MySQA](#), our online and text service, as a direct way to receive results.

Everyone at SQA is fully committed to delivering for Scotland's young people at this exceptionally difficult time. Thank you for your patience and continued co-operation during this time.

Fiona Robertson

SQA Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer

Enclosure 06 – Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]g@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 20 March 2020 15:40
To: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SQA Letter to exam centres

Hi Malcolm

DFM is content for this to issue.

Thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]
X [Redact s38(1)(b)]

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Sent: 20 March 2020 14:38
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: SQA Letter to exam centres

PS/DFM

Please see attached the draft letter Fiona Robertson plans to issue to exam centres. This follows on from her call with DFM this morning and covers the key points DFM raised with her in terms of SQAs liaison team reaching out to, and being contactable by, centres. Very grateful if you check whether DFM has any comments on this. SQA will want to issue ASAP.

Thanks
Malcolm

Malcolm Pentland | Deputy Director
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131 244 0047

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Enclosure 07 – Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 02 April 2020 14:11
To: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: SQA update on qualification arrangements

Malcolm

Thanks for this – DFM thinks this is in the correct place. He also wonders if the Nat 5 coursework point needs a reference to the current public health issues explicitly.

Otherwise DFM thinks this is a sensible and measured proposal from SQA.

Kind Regards

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)], Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot |

☎ 0300 24 [Redact s38(1)(b)] | Mobile: 0044 (0)7[Redact s38(1)(b)] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot | [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

5N.07 St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

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From: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Sent: 02 April 2020 13:47
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>
Subject: IMMEDIATE: SQA update on qualification arrangements
Importance: High

Immediate

DFM/Colin

Further to yesterday evening's call, please find attached a news release that we have just received from the SQA.

The release provides quite a reasonable level detail on the approach SQA is taking in relation to teacher judgements and estimates. It is clear that bands will be subdivided that teachers and lecturers will be asked to place learners into those extended bands **and** to rank within each grade.

The release also confirms the position on not marking National 5 coursework and provides details on the approach to other courses and awards.

This communication is being considered by the SQA Board now, with a view to it issuing soon thereafter. If you have any comments, could you please provide them as soon as possible and ideally **within the next hour**. Apologies for the short timeframe.

Thank you
Malcolm

Malcolm Pentland | Deputy Director

Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: malcolm.pentland@gov.scot | tel:+44(0) 131 244 0047 | 07766 246 897

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Enclosure 08 – Email from Scottish Government officials to Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 April 2020 17:38

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning
<DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>;
McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Subject: Submission - release of pupil grade estimates

PS/DFM

To see the attached submission offering advice on the issue of the release of pupil grade estimates in advance of results day. This is an issue which has been brought up by local authorities, and has featured in discussions at the Qualifications Contingency Group.

The note concludes that a call between the DFM, officials and the Chief Examining Officer to formulate a position would be welcome. It would be useful to be able to have done so and be in a position to communicate it by the start of the next school term (Monday 20 April) if possible.

Thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Senior Phase Unit - Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

(0131 24) x. [Redact s38(1)(b)]

email: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Enclosure 08.1 – Submission on release of pupil grade estimates

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]
Curriculum, Qualifications & Gaelic Division
8 April 2020

Deputy First Minister

PUBLICATION OF PUPILS' ESTIMATED GRADES

Purpose

1. To seek your view on the release of pupils' estimated grades in advance of final results being awarded.

Priority

2. Urgent – Local Authorities have already requested a steer on this matter. Reaching a decision and communicating this at the new school term (Monday 20 April) would be helpful.

Background

3. As part of a qualifications certification model the Chief Examining Officer has set out that teachers will be asked to use their professional judgement in making pupils' grade estimates. These estimates are due to be submitted by May 29. The estimates will then go through a quality assurance process, which the SQA are currently developing. Final results will be made available to pupils by 4 August. As part of this process a pupil's grade may change from the estimate to the final award.
4. We have received questions from Local Authorities, and representations at meetings of the Qualifications Contingency Group as to whether these teacher estimates would or should be released in advance of final results being awarded.

Discussion

5. Previous practice – There has been no consensus approach to previous practice, some teachers have shared estimates with pupils and some haven't. Where estimates have previously been provided by teachers it has been seen as important to do so for reasons of transparency and teachers wanting to explain the reasoning behind their decisions.
6. CfE assessment policy - This supports the sharing of information of a pupil's performance, strengths and development. Exam estimates are not explicitly noted in the guidance, but clearly could be taken as a key piece of information about pupil progress and so there is an argument to share the estimates. It has however been noted that exam expectations would usually be included in normal performance discussions and so specifically releasing estimates may not be necessary.
7. Legal position - Advice from SG Data Protection colleagues, and our understanding of the OFQUAL guidance, recognises pupil estimates as personal data that is covered by GDPR and the Data Protection Act. A specific exemption exists which can be used to prohibit the release of pupil estimates in advance of an award being made. Consent plays no role in this process, if a data controller applies the exemption the individual can't waive it.
8. The decision over whether to apply the exemption is made by the individual data controller on a case by case basis. In this case the data controller will either be an individual school or a Local Authority. A steer can be given by the SG/SQA, but it would not be enforceable.

9. OFQUAL position - As above OFQUAL have identified the Data Protection Act exemption to withhold pupil estimates in advance of awards being made, and have given an instruction to exam centres and schools that pupil estimates should not be released.
10. OFQUAL set out that they have taken this position to ensure the integrity of teachers' judgements; to avoid pressure being applied to teachers; and to manage pupils' expectations as final results may change from the estimate.
11. View of the pupil - Pupils will have a strong interest in seeing their grade estimates given how qualifications will be awarded this year. There is an argument that current uncertain circumstances may have a larger impact on young people's mental health and releasing estimates may help to combat this. However, any estimate may not reflect the final awarded grade and so uncertainty would still exist. Even if estimates are released there aren't any practical actions that can take place until the final results are awarded e.g. accepting a university place, lodging an appeal, etc.
12. SQA position - SQA have not publically stated their position on this matter. [Redact s30(b)(ii)].
13. [Redact s30(b)(ii)].

Views of stakeholders

14. ADES and EIS have been approached for their views on this issue. [Redact s30(b)(ii)].
15. [Redact s30(b)(ii)].

Handling

16. If a decision is made for the Scottish Government to give a steer on this issue, then there could be an option for such a steer to be included in the SQA guidance to be issued before 20 April, or for other standalone SG channels to be considered.

Conclusion

17. There is a balanced argument with regards to whether estimates should be released or not. To allow the release may be seen as aiding transparency, however, doing so may lead to increased pressure on teachers and potentially impact on the integrity of the estimates, in addition to potentially providing no certainty to pupils. Furthermore it ultimately remains a decision for the local data controller to make, and so any steer given by the SG (or SQA) would not be enforceable and would rely on each data controller coming to the same conclusion. To support the effectiveness of a steer either way, officials would work to build a consensus amongst stakeholders and look to agree joint communications on the matter.

Recommendation

18. That a call is arranged between yourself, officials and the Chief Examining Officer to discuss this issue further.
19. To also note that further advice will be provided soon on the wider steps that SQA are currently taking in developing guidance on the provision of teacher estimates, the overall workings of the certification model, and an appropriate appeals process.
20. Additional advice will also follow on other steps to support the delivery of robust teacher estimates, including what actions may need to be taken regarding the publication of exams attainment data.

[Redact s38(1)(b)]
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division
X[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Enclosure 09 – Calendar request for meeting on 11/06/2020

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk> **On Behalf Of** Fiona Robertson

Sent: 10 June 2020 08:55

To: 'Fiona Robertson'; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; Gill Stewart; Jean Blair

Subject: 2020 Awarding: Meeting with SQA and the Deputy First Minister

When: 11 June 2020 12:30-13:30 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Dear all

Please see confirmed slot for the meeting with DFM and SQA colleagues. An agenda will be circulated shortly. Joining link below.

Kind regards

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Join Microsoft Teams Meeting [Redact s30(c)]

Learn more about Teams | Meeting options

Enclosure 10 – Email from SQA to Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk > **On Behalf Of** Fiona Robertson

Sent: 10 June 2020 15:14

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

<DFMCSE@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>;

[Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redact

s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redact

[Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair

<Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Dawnne Mahmoud <Dawnne.Mahmoud@sqa.org.uk>; John

McMorris <John.McMorris@sqa.org.uk>; Lee Downie <Lee.Downie@sqa.org.uk>; Michael

Baxter <Michael.Baxter@sqa.org.uk>; David Middleton <David.Middleton@sqa.org.uk>;

David Middleton [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gmail.com>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Agenda - SQA 2020 Awarding presentation - Thursday 11 June, 1230-1330

Please find attached agenda for SQA's 2020 Awarding presentation, taking place on Thursday 11 June from 1230-1330 via Microsoft Teams.

Kind regards,

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Scottish Qualifications Authority

m: 07[Redact s38(1)(b)] **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Please note [Redact s38(1)(b)]

Enclosure 10.1 – Agenda for meeting on 11/06/2020

1. SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
- 2.
3. 2020 AWARDING PRESENTATION TO THE DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

4. AGENDA

Time: 12.30pm – 1.30 pm

Location: MS Teams

In attendance:

John Swinney MSP - Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Supporting officials tbc

SQA

David Middleton – Chair
Fiona Robertson – Chief Executive and Scotland’s Chief Examining Officer
Jean Blair – Director of Operations
Gill Stewart – Director of Qualifications
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[Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official]
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[Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official]
[Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official]

Time	Item	Topic	
12.30	1/1	Welcome and introductions	Fiona Robertson
12.35	1/2	Introduction to 2020 Awarding	Jean Blair
12.40	1/3	2020 Awarding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher National and Vocational Qualifications• Estimates• Awarding• Resulting & Certification• Post Certification Review• Communications• Business Systems	[Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official] [Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official] [Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official][Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official][Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official][Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official]
13.05	1/4	Q&A	All
13.25	1/5	Wrap up and closing remarks	Fiona Robertson Deputy First Minister

Enclosure 11 – Email from Scottish Government officials to Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Sent: 10 June 2020 17:10

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Subject: Briefing - DFM discussion with SQA staff regarding work to deliver the certification model

Hi [Redact s38(1)(b)]

As discussed, to see the briefing for DFM's call tomorrow with SQA staff regarding the work to deliver the alternative certification model.

Thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Senior Phase Unit - Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

(0131 24) [Redact s38(1)(b)]

email: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Enclosure 11.1 – Briefing for meeting on 11/06/2020

MEETING WITH EMPLOYEES OF SQA

<i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>	Thursday 12 June 2020, 12:30 - 13:30
<i>Where</i>	Via MS Teams – invite is attached to calendar request
<i>Who</i>	Included in agenda at annex A
<i>Key Purpose / Message</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fact-finding on the progress being made to deliver this year’s awards approach• To engage with SQA employees during a period of high pressure and profile
<i>Media Handling</i>	Non-media event
<i>Official Support</i>	[Redact s38(1)(b)]
<i>Annexes</i>	Annex A – Agenda Annex B - Top Lines/Discussion Points Annex C – Latest SQA Coronavirus statement – 3 June

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

2020 AWARDING PRESENTATION TO THE DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

AGENDA

Time: 12.30pm – 1.30 pm

Location: MS Teams

In attendance:

John Swinney MSP - Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Supporting officials tbc

SQA

David Middleton – Chair

Fiona Robertson – Chief Executive and Scotland’s Chief Examining Officer

Jean Blair – Director of Operations

Gill Stewart – Director of Qualifications

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[Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official]

Time	Item	Topic	
12.30	1/1	Welcome and introductions	Fiona Robertson
12.35	1/2	Introduction to 2020 Awarding	Jean Blair
12.40	1/3	2020 Awarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher National and Vocational Qualifications • Estimates • Awarding • Resulting & Certification • Post Certification Review • Communications • Business Systems 	[Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official] [Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official] [Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official][Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official][Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official][Redact s38(1)(b) – SQA official]
13.05	1/4	Q&A	All
13.25	1/5	Wrap up and closing remarks	Fiona Robertson Deputy First Minister

TOP LINES/DISCUSSION POINTS

Alternative certification model

- More than half a million grade estimates from teachers and lecturers were submitted by the deadline of 29 May.
- Focus is now on obtaining all unit results (including free-standing units at SCQF 5 & 6) by the preferred deadline of 12 June, postponed due to the estimating process.
- The main focus of SQA's efforts now moves onto Pre Diet Assurance between 6-28 June, which will assess the need for any moderation of estimates. There has been discussion about the degree to which SQA will engage with schools/colleges where there may be significant divergence between estimates and SQA data. SQA have indicated they are unlikely to engage in such discussion because of resource cost and the difficulty in ensuring fairness for all schools and colleges.
- Any significant divergence between estimates and final awards will likely receive political and media focus. SQA are committed to providing an explanation for any such difference on Results Day.
- Implementing the alternative certification model is a considerable undertaking and is on track. Risks are being actively managed, especially for the data/software preparation for the awarding strand, reflecting the complexity and scale of the challenge.
- As several local authorities have indicated that not all centres can digitise evidence, the working assumption is that evidence required for the post certification review will be digitised at SQA Lowden and the practical requirements are being investigated.
- Following a proposal by DfE Ministers to introduce legislation to change an exemption in the Data Protection Act (DPA) to ensure that pupil grade estimates would never be released, Officials continue to consider the issue of release of grade estimates, and how it may be best handled post-results day by the wider education system.
- Significant effort has been undertaken to ensure that paper certificates of awards can be issued to coincide with Results Day, although all candidates are being encouraged to sign up to MySQA to also receive results electronically.
- Guidance has been issued setting out a Post-certification appeals process. This is likely to see a raised level of demand compared previous years and SQA are taking steps to support this, although there is some concern about the call on teacher resource to assemble evidence for appeals as schools are returning on 11 August.
- SQA have committed to completing and publishing an EQIA to support the certification model, but have not given an indication of a likely date yet.

Communications

- There has been some criticism of the SQA from politicians and unions about its communications with teachers and stakeholders.
- In developing its guidance the SQA engaged with teachers and a range of other stakeholders.
- It has worked with Young Scot to share recorded questions and answers through the appropriate social media channels. Engagement continues with Carers Trust Scotland, Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland to ensure the voice of young people is heard and responded to using learner-friendly language.
- SQA also continues to engage with the National Parent Forum Scotland, Connect and the Scottish Government's parental engagement network to make sure information reaches parents and carers.

Annex B – Latest SQA statement to schools and colleges – Wednesday 3 June 2020

National Qualifications 2020 Awarding - an update for schools and colleges

In response to the cancellation of this year's exams, we have been working on developing an alternative certification model, to ensure the hard work of Scotland's learners is fully recognised through our qualifications system. Following the receipt of refined estimates for learners from schools and colleges across Scotland, I would like to further update you on our work this year, including details of our free appeals service.

As you know, three guiding principles have underpinned our work:

- fairness to all learners
- safe and secure certification of our qualifications, while following the latest public health advice; and
- maintaining the integrity and credibility of our qualifications system, ensuring that standards are maintained over time, in the interests of learners

I am committed to ensuring we meet our obligations to the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, through an equality impact assessment of our approach to certification this year. We take this commitment very seriously. It is also, of course, our intention to publish the assessment.

[As I set out on 20 April](#), our approach is made up of four steps. Here is an update on each of these steps.

Step 1 – Estimates

Estimates are the core element of the certification process this year, in the absence of national performance data such as exams and coursework. These estimates have now been submitted to us by schools and colleges across Scotland.

To support schools and colleges with the estimation process, [we provided detailed information](#) and [an online SQA Academy course](#). Teachers, lecturers and partners from across education helped inform the approach and the guidance, which included advice on ensuring consideration of equalities issues and the impact of potential bias.

I am very grateful to all teachers and lecturers, SQA co-ordinators, school and college staff, local authorities, professional associations and national organisations, who have worked together, in difficult circumstances, to successfully deliver refined estimates and rankings for all learners entered for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

Now that all the information has been received, we are progressing with the awarding process.

Step 2 – Awarding

The alternative certification model will allow us to award grades for all learners entered for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses as fairly and reliably as possible, across subjects and levels. It is based on teacher and lecturer estimates, with associated moderation by schools, colleges and SQA.

The data we will be working with includes school and college estimates, rank orders, historical results and estimates for all National Courses as well as learners' prior attainment data for many Highers and Advanced Highers. This will allow us to explore the reasons for any apparent changes in the pattern of attainment (compared with previous years) that are reflected in the estimates submitted by schools and colleges.

To be as fair as possible such an approach needs to incorporate multiple checks and decision rules to identify where adjustment may be necessary. But it is important to highlight that, in Scotland, there are some qualifications that have low uptake either at a school and college level or at a national level.

Prior attainment data is also not available for National 5 and some Higher learners. This means that we will not use a purely statistical approach to moderation. Final grade distributions will be signed-off through national awarding meetings. Each meeting will involve input from senior qualifications staff in SQA and principal assessors for each subject and level.

It is important for us now to concentrate on the significant task of considering these estimates so that we can meet the timescales to deliver results to learners on 4 August. In line with our approach every year, we will be clear about the awarding process on Results Day.

This year, this will of course include the detail underpinning our approach and the impact of any moderation that we have had to make to estimates.

Step 3 - Results and Certification

I can confirm that results will be issued to learners on Tuesday 4 August, by post and via [MySQA](#), our online and text service.

Learners are strongly encouraged to sign-up to MySQA, as a direct way to receive their results.

Step 4 - Appeals

After 4 August, a free appeals or post-certification review process will be available to schools and colleges to allow them to request a review of the grade awarded for a learner or a group of learners. It is important that such a service is in place in this exceptional year.

If a learner has a concern about their results, they should discuss it with their school or college as soon as possible after 4 August. As we do every year, we will give priority to requests for those learners requiring a result to secure a conditional place at college or university.

For schools and colleges to request a review, the following criteria must be met:

- a learner or group of learners must have been awarded a lower grade than the estimated grade their school or college submitted; and
- assessment evidence must be available to support the estimated grade — this can be wide ranging and include:
 - prelim or mock papers
 - additional tasks or assignments
 - performance or practical evidence

In some cases, SQA may already hold evidence that has previously been submitted but not marked, for example some National 5 coursework.

Schools and colleges may want to submit a rationale for their decision-making for each learner or group of learners, which highlights the key areas of evidence that they believe validates their estimated grade.

Requests must be signed-off by the head of centre, or their representative, before being submitted to SQA.

Once a request and all the associated assessment evidence is received, it will be reviewed by our senior subject specialist examiners and they will either accept or reject the request, based on the evidence submitted.

If a request is accepted, the learner will be upgraded. If the learner requires the result for a conditional college or university place, we will advise the school or college, the higher education institute and UCAS, as appropriate. Learners will be sent an updated Scottish Qualifications Certificate after all review requests for 2020 have been completed.

If a request is rejected, we will confirm the original grade certificated, or an alternative lower grade, with the school or college.

It is possible that a lower grade may be awarded following a review because the alternative evidence supplied is judged to be so far from standard that it cannot support either the original school or college estimate or the certificated grade awarded.

We expect this to be very rare and if it does occur, we would have further dialogue with the school or college. The inclusion of this option within the review process supports fairness and equity to all learners, while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the qualifications.

We will also put in place a process to consider review requests from schools and colleges based on an administrative or academic error in the original estimate process. This will only be by exception and will require support from a head teacher or college principal, and agreement from an SQA director.

More detailed guidance on the review process, evidence required and planned dates for the service including uplift dates for the collection of evidence from centres, will be sent to schools and colleges on 19 June.

A system user guide providing information on how to make review requests, detailed instructions on how to package the evidence and what support is available, will follow before 4 August, when the service opens.

Everyone at SQA remains committed to delivering results to learners, in as fair a way as possible, allowing them to progress to further learning or work. We all want to ensure the class of 2020 can hold their heads high, now and in the future, with their qualifications fully recognised as they would be in any year.

We continue to provide support and resources on our dedicated [teacher and lecturer](#), [learner](#) and [parent and carer](#) web pages. We are also working with national bodies, such as the National Parent Forum of Scotland, Connect, Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament to share information on what is happening and when.

I am very grateful for your continued support. By working in partnership, we can achieve our common goal, of ensuring that learners' hard work is rightly and fairly recognised.

Fiona Robertson

SQA Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer

Enclosure 12 – Emails between Fiona Robertson, Larry Flanagan and the NQCG

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 30 June 2020 14:23
To: Larry Flanagan <lflanagan@eis.org.uk>; Jim Thewliss <Jim.Thewliss@sls-Scotland.org.uk>; John Edward <John.Edward@scis.org.uk>; Jim Metcalfe <jim.metcalfe@cdn.ac.uk>; alastair@universities-scotland.ac.uk; 'rebecca.gaukroger@ed.ac.uk'; Shona Struthers <shona.struthers@collegesscotland.ac.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@ucas.ac.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk; Steven Quinn <steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk>; Armstrong A (Alan) <Alan.Armstrong@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; 'Grant Ritchie' <g.ritchie@dundeeandangus.ac.uk>; Gorman G (Gayle) <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; 'Imcleod@sfc.ac.uk' <Imcleod@sfc.ac.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sfc.ac.uk; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot
Cc: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk
Subject: RE: Message to NQCG from Fiona Robertson, SQA - 2020 Certification

Larry,

We have discussed previously, and I think I have been consistent in my view, including at the last meeting of this Group. But we took some time to consider more fully, including with our Board – and we did that in good faith. Our principal concern here is actually about fairness and the basis on which we would enter into a dialogue and subsequently accept or reject an explanation. The timeline is also very challenging.

I offered to discuss with you further and am very happy to do so.

Many thanks.

Fiona

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

t: 0345 213 5000 | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ | 24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: Larry Flanagan <lflanagan@eis.org.uk>
Sent: 30 June 2020 13:40
To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Jim Thewliss <Jim.Thewliss@sls-Scotland.org.uk>; John Edward <John.Edward@scis.org.uk>; Jim Metcalfe <jim.metcalfe@cdn.ac.uk>; alastair@universities-scotland.ac.uk; 'rebecca.gaukroger@ed.ac.uk'; Shona Struthers <shona.struthers@collegesscotland.ac.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@ucas.ac.uk; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk; Steven Quinn <steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk>; 'Armstrong A (Alan)' <Alan.Armstrong@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; 'Grant Ritchie' <g.ritchie@dundeeandangus.ac.uk>; 'Gorman G (Gayle)' <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; 'Pooley L (Linda) Dr' <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; 'Imcleod@sfc.ac.uk' <Imcleod@sfc.ac.uk>; [Redact

s38(1)(b)]@sfc.ac.uk>; 'Director of Learning' <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; 'Pentland MK (Malcolm' <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; 'Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON' <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot>
Cc: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Message to NQCG from Fiona Robertson, SQA - 2020 Certification

For the record, may I make clear that the EIS will not be providing any public support for this position, which I suspect our members will view with anger, suspicion and a degree of disdain, especially as it is being announced immediately after schools have broken up for the summer.

Larry

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk> **On Behalf Of** Fiona Robertson
Sent: 30 June 2020 09:48
To: Jim Thewliss <Jim.Thewliss@sls-Scotland.org.uk>; John Edward <John.Edward@scis.org.uk>; Jim Metcalfe <jim.metcalfe@cdn.ac.uk>; alastair@universities-scotland.ac.uk; 'rebecca.gaukroger@ed.ac.uk'; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Shona Struthers <shona.struthers@collegesscotland.ac.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@ucas.ac.uk>; Larry Flanagan <lflanagan@eis.org.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk>; Steven Quinn <steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk>; 'Armstrong A (Alan' <Alan.Armstrong@educationscotland.gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; 'Grant Ritchie' <g.ritchie@dundeeandangus.ac.uk>; 'Gorman G (Gayle' <Gayle.Gorman@educationscotland.gov.scot>; 'Pooley L (Linda) Dr' <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; 'Imcleod@sfc.ac.uk' <Imcleod@sfc.ac.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sfc.ac.uk>; 'Director of Learning' <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; 'Pentland MK (Malcolm' <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; 'Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON' <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot>
Cc: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Message to NQCG from Fiona Robertson, SQA - 2020 Certification

Dear members of the National Qualifications Contingency Group

I am writing to clarify one issue that was raised by some colleagues in the last call of this Group, which was the matter of professional dialogue between SQA and individual schools and colleges during the awarding process, where there is a difference between this year's estimates and historical data.

At the Education and Skills Committee on 1 May, I said we were looking at the feasibility of further dialogue. We have considered the matter very carefully, including further discussions with our Board of Management and we have concluded that it will not be possible to include engagement with schools and colleges within the moderation process.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the difficulty of operating a dialogue which is fair and consistent in its treatment of all centres and candidates – you may recall that I talked this through. Secondly, it is just not possible to enter into a dialogue in the very tight timescales we are working to – reviewing 22,000 datasets across 142 subjects from almost 500 centres – between the receipt of estimates on 29 May and finalisation of grades which, for awarding purposes, are required by 10 July.

Principal Assessors are closely involved in our Awarding process and our appeals (post-certification review) process will provide for further, evidence-based consideration of grades if schools and colleges do not think awarded grades fairly reflect learner performance. [Further information](#) was provided to schools and colleges on Friday 19 June.

I am also providing an update to the Education & Skills Committee, as part of my response to their letter of 15 June and following evidence from SLS and EIS.

I remain very grateful for your continued support and I hope you understand the reasons for this decision.

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

t: [0345 213 5000](tel:03452135000) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ | 24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith,
Midlothian EH22 1FD

Join Microsoft Teams Meeting

SQA

Fiona Robertson

Jean Blair

Gill Stewart

John McMorris

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

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The Scottish Government

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[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Jonathan Sewell

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Graeme Logan

Malcolm Pentland

Education Scotland

Alan Armstrong

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Elizabeth Morrison



NQ 2020 Results Day Meeting

Thursday 30 July 2020, 09.00 – 11.00 (MS Teams)

SQA	Scottish Government	Education Scotland
Fiona Robertson Gill Stewart Jean Blair John McMorris [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)]	Graeme Logan [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] Jonathan Sewell [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)]	Alan Armstrong Elizabeth Morrison [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)] [Redact s38(1)(b)]

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Welcome & Introductions | Fiona Robertson |
| 2. | Overview of SQA approach and methodology | Gill Stewart |
| 3. | Overview of statistics and related documentation | [Redact s38(1)(b)] |
| 4. | Discussion | All |
| 5. | Agreed Actions & Next Steps | Fiona Robertson |

Enclosure 14 – Emails between SQA and Deputy First Minister's private office

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 30 July 2020 09:54
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Diary query - Teams meeting with Fiona Robertson 1045 today

Many thanks [Redact s38(1)(b)], confirming receipt.

I understand our Chair David Middleton will join Fiona, and that Graeme Logan is supporting DFM, I will share the Zoom invite with David.

Best wishes
[Redact s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** DFMCSE@gov.scot
Sent: 30 July 2020 09:46
To: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; DFMCSE@gov.scot
Subject: RE: Diary query - Teams meeting with Fiona Robertson 1045 today

Hi [Redact s38(1)(b)],

As discussed please see zoom details for the meeting in an hour or so.

DFM Private Office is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: meeting with Fiona Robertson
Time: Jul 30, 2020 10:45 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting
[https://\[Redact s30\(c\)\]](https://[Redact s30(c)])

Meeting ID: [Redact s30(c)]
Passcode: [Redact s30(c)]

Thanks
[Redact s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 30 July 2020 09:28
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>
Subject: Diary query - Teams meeting with Fiona Robertson 1045 today

Good morning

I sent over a MStTeams meeting invitation for the meeting with Fiona Robertson at 10:45 this morning. I haven't received an 'accept' notification. Please can you confirm it has safely reached you?

Kind regards

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Scottish Qualifications Authority

m: [0\[Redact s38\(1\)\(b\)\]](tel:0[Redact s38(1)(b)]) w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Please note [Redact s38(1)(b)]

Enclosure 15 – Emails between Scottish Government officials and Deputy First Minister's office

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning
Sent: 30 July 2020 10:02
To: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Discussion with Fiona Robertson

Hi [Redact s38(1)(b)],

Thanks for your email. I'd be grateful if you can invite Jonathan and Malcolm too, please. There will be no papers for this meeting.

Let me know if you need anything else.

Regards, [Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Tel: 0131 244 [Redact s38(1)(b)]

The Scottish Government:

Area 2B North - Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 30 July 2020 09:36
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Discussion with Fiona Robertson

Hi Graeme,

Can you confirm what officials are dialling in to the meeting with Fiona this morning, and if we can expect any papers for this soon?

Thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | Tel: 07557197360 | E: DFMCSE@gov.scot

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)] **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 24 July 2020 07:55
To: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>;

Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Discussion with Fiona Robertson

Hi Graeme,

This meeting has been confirmed for 10:45 on 30/7. I will send out a diary invite in due course. Can any papers be with us by Wednesday night.

Fiona has asked if this meeting can be held on MS Teams, her office will send out log in details, once we receive them we can send onto you and relevant officials.

Thanks

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)] | Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills | Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG |Tel: 07557197360 | E: DFMCSSE@gov.scot

From: Logan G (Graeme) <Graeme.Logan@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning

Sent: 23 July 2020 10:18

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Wilson M (Mick) <Mick.Wilson@gov.scot>

Subject: Discussion with Fiona Robertson

Morning [Redact s38(1)(b)]

I've had a brief discussion with Fiona Robertson at SQA today and agreed that it would be helpful for DFM to speak to Fiona on Thursday 30 July (ahead of our handling meeting with DFM at 1500 that day) regarding preparations for results day on 4 August. We will provide official support on the call. Can you set this up with Fiona's office please?

Thanks

Graeme.

Enclosure 16 – Email from SQA providing presentation for meeting with Deputy First Minister

From: [Redact s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 30 July 2020 10:17

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Subject: Presentation for 10:45 meeting with Fiona Robertson - 30 July 2020

Dear DFMPPO and Graeme

In confidence, please find attached presentation for today's meeting at 1045.

Best wishes

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

[Redact s38(1)(b)]

Scottish Qualifications Authority

m: 07[Redact s38(1)(b)] **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>