

FOI Request

- Any internal Scottish Government communications (including letters, emails, text messages, typed or hand written notes, phone calls) regarding the alternative 2020 awards model for the college awards (including HN Qualifications, NC, NPA, and NQ freestanding units).
- Any communications between the Scottish Government and Colleges Scotland regarding this alternative awards model.
- 1st April – 10th August

FOI Document 1

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 05 May 2020 11:08J

To: Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic)

<Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)

<Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>;

[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>;

[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeships - accreditation

Oonagh

Thank you for your email – DFM has noted that we need to get to a pragmatic outcome that recognises the achievements of the FA candidates.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

[redacted] | Deputy Private Secretary to John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot |

📞 [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot | [\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)

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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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From: [redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills
Sent: 28 April 2020 10:54
To: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeships - accreditation

Thanks Oonagh,

Mr Hepburn has noted and has commented that it is imperative that a solution is found that allows the young people who undertook Foundation Apprenticeships to be able to achieve that qualification just as much as it is for those undertaking other qualifications in school. They cannot be allowed to be disadvantaged.

Thanks

[redacted]
Private Secretary
Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills
The Scottish Government
Edinburgh
Email: MinisterBFWS@gov.scot
Tel: [redacted]
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Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>
Sent: 27 April 2020 17:20
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm)

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[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]
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[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Foundation Apprenticeships - accreditation

PO/ Deputy First Minister
PO/ Minister for Business Fair Work and Skills

For awareness and information

SDS have highlighted a concern about the impact of Covid 19 on students who are undertaking a foundation apprenticeship. This note sets out the background, current position and next steps.

Background

1757 learners are due to complete their FA in June this academic year and many are seeking to use their FA qualification to support their next step into work or further/ higher education.

Current position

SDS and SQA have been discussing a contingency solution for certification of Foundation Apprenticeship pupils due to complete their FA Group Award in June this year. The goal is to ensure that FA pupils have their qualifications awarded and the admissions currency of the FA is recognised.

SDS have identified three possible options:

A - FA Group Award Certification based on estimation / holistic assessment process for outstanding units within FA Frameworks, that cannot be completed due to disruption.

B - Alternative FA Certificate for completers and achievers for this year only.

C - If no FA Certification can be achieved at A or B, then agreement from Universities and Colleges for pathway progression

SQA have advised that they are engaging with awarding bodies as to whether the SVQ element of the Foundation Apprenticeship can be adapted to allow for completion of the various outstanding modules. Letters were issued on Friday and responses are being received. This continues to be progressed as agreed with SDS in their regular meetings with SQA.

SDS have asked whether estimated grades would be appropriate. SQA are of the view this is not appropriate for units which measure competence/proficiency in specific disciplines. Looking at section 4 and the makeup of each FA, it may be possible to estimate grades for some subjects, but these would need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

In terms of alternative certification and the impact on admissions (options B and C), agreement would need to be sought from FE and HE providers, however this raises the issue of inequity with those studying similar modules in college, who have

equally been unable to participate due to Covid-19, where no such agreement would exist, but continue to impact on these learners' progression. This would likely need to extend to MAs, GAs and similar qualifications.

Option C seems a particularly complicated workaround, and perhaps instead it might be worth reviewing how many young people's transitions the FA plays an integral part (i.e a conditional offer to university based on achieving this), to prioritise these cases and seek solutions to these, on a subject by subject and case by case basis.

Next steps

SQA will review evidence from accreditation bodies, discuss this with SDS and identify options for concluding FAs. This is expected to take some time to work through and further information will be provided in due course.

**Oonagh Gil | Deputy Director for Skills | Directorate for Fair Work,
Employability and Skills | Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow | G2 8LU
oonagh.gil@gov.scot | [redacted] | [redacted]. Personal Assistant: [redacted]
[redacted]@gov.scot | [redacted]**



[Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment strategy.](#)

[redacted]

FOI Document 2

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 19 August 2020 16:11
To: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 28 August

Hi [redacted] – as [redacted] said I might be able to offer more once we have the FACT papers. Meantime -

1. Foundation Apprenticeships:

SDS and SQA worked tirelessly with both the college and university sectors to ensure Foundation Apprentices had their awards appropriately recognised this year. Details below. I'm sure it would be appreciated if [redacted] could pass on his thanks.

The following 2 categories of learners will be recognised for admission to colleges and universities in line with the college/uni's own admission arrangements.

- **FA Learners that have achieved the full FA Award (as per current arrangements/agreements):**
 - *Learners who have achieved all units of their Foundation Apprenticeship will receive the existing FA full award*

- **FA Learners that were on track to achieve the full FA Award:**
 - *Learners that were on track to achieve are identified as follows:*
 - o *Learners who have passed the NPA/Nc element of the programme*
 - o *Learner that had no fails recorded with SQA against any of the respective vocational units*
 - *Learners will receive certification for the units/NPA/NC Group Award already achieved*
 - *In addition, learners will receive a 'Letter of Recognition' from SQA attesting that had it not been for the disruption and interruption of Covid-19, the learner was on track to achieve the Full FA award.*
 - **The 'Letter of Recognition' is recognised as evidence of FA achievement and meets the requirements for eligibility for colleges and Scottish universities.**

- *A third category of learners who remained on the Foundation Apprenticeship but were not on track to complete due to having 'Fails' resulted on SQA, will receive SQA Certification for the elements passed which is standard procedure.*

Given the employer based nature of FAs there are obvious concerns in terms of employer commitment post covid. SDS are working with SQA and providers to try to

ensure a viable delivery model this academic year. There should be an update at the FACT meeting on Friday 28 Aug but we would be **interested in [redacted] perspective on this.**

2. Foundation Apprenticeship Evaluation:

Although the introduction of FAs should be seen as a 'success' there remain a number of issues to be resolved, not least an element of conflict between SDS and some colleges and LAs and high attrition rates.

SDS reticence in acknowledging that there are issues to be resolved and lack of transparency in data sharing and wider info sharing has been a barrier to resolving issues. However agreement finally reached to undertake a full evaluation. ToR attached.

We are hopeful that the progression of any recommendations on the back of the ES led evaluation (supported by SDS) will ensure the success of FAs as an integral part of the SP curriculum.

3. SCQF level 4 and 5 Foundation Apprenticeships

One of the arguments 'against' the structure of FAs as they stand is that they are a SCQF level 6 award and as such the key cohort of YP who might benefit most might struggle to access.

Over the last two years, SDS have been designing level 4 and 5 pilots that will support access to FAs.

Last year's programme (AY 19/20) extended the pilots to around 500 starts at Level 4 or 5 in Construction, Hospitality and Automotive frameworks.

Schools, colleges and employers across the Highlands and Islands, Glasgow, Dundee, North Lanarkshire and Western Isles led the delivery of these work-based pilot learning opportunities.

It has been difficult to ascertain the position going forward although we are aware that the intention is now to move away from sector based opportunities and focus on meta-skills based group sectors. Eg STEM

It would be helpful if the **importance of transparency in the development and sharing the detail on the proposals for the next pilots could be highlighted**, especially given current uncertainty in schools.

There should be an update at the FACT meeting on 28th August.

4. P-Tech

This was a programme being designed for introduction in the SP that was driven by SDS (in partnership with IBM) without consultation with government or Ministers.

[redacted] was particularly keen to progress and Oonagh Gil had to step in to pause progress in light of Covid. Her point set out directly to [redacted], below. There was no response to this so in essence it has 'gone quiet'. [redacted] **might raise this** although given it was to be an employer led work based programme this may now be too much of a challenge. I can offer more info if required.

· **P-Tech: As our immediate and longer term response to the COVID pandemic is our priority this programme should be formally paused. I have asked my team to work closely with yours on how and when this programme can be introduced at a suitable time for schools, post COVID-19.**

Hope this is helpful

Cheers [redacted]

[redacted] | DYW/Senior Phase policy | Learning Directorate | DG Learning and Justice | Scottish Government | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ |
email: [redacted]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk | telephone: [redacted] | bb: [redacted]

My usual working pattern is Monday to Wednesday

From: [redacted]
Sent: 19 August 2020 10:54
To: Director of Learning ; [redacted]; [redacted]
Subject: RE: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 28 August

Hi [redacted],

Yes, it is a bit behind the times. There's a Foundation Apprenticeship Collaboration Team (FACT) meeting at the end of next week. While we won't have the outcome of that to inform Graeme's briefing, we could hold out until Wednesday to see whether we get papers through that can inform it.

If that's ok, [redacted] will provide you with updated briefing by close on Wednesday?

[redacted]

[redacted] | Head of Developing the Young Workforce in the Senior Phase | Senior Phase Unit | Scottish Government
2B North, Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ
Tel: [redacted]

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning
Sent: 19 August 2020 10:07
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Subject: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 28 August

Hi [redacted] and [redacted],

Apologies for being a pain again. This meeting will finally be going ahead next Friday (28th) at 11:00. I just wanted to double-check if the lines/information below would need to be updated given that it might be out of date now?

I'd be grateful if you could let me know before I put this to Graeme.

Regards, [redacted]

[redacted]

Executive Assistant to Director of Learning | Learning Directorate, Business Support Unit

Tel: [redacted]

The Scottish Government:

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

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot >

Sent: 29 May 2020 09:41

To: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 1st of June

Hi [redacted],

I think the most likely thing to come up from a DYW perspective would be recent activity around FA. This is being led by Oonagh Gil's division, which holds policy responsibility for apprenticeships, but we have had some involvement as the FA is delivered to Senior Phase pupils and we are also SQA's sponsor. As you will see, things are still moving on this one and I'm on leave next week, so copying to [redacted] and [redacted] in case there are any significant developments on Monday that Graeme should be made aware of.

Certification of Foundation Apprenticeships (FA)

- SDS has been engaging with SQA on how to certificate FA this year. Although SDS has been keen to find a simple solution (e.g. using estimates in a similar way to National Qualifications), FA being a group award of vocational qualifications has not made finding a solution straightforward. In particular, SVQ units are tied to National Occupational Standards and demonstrate a person's competence to work in a professional sector. SQA (in its regulatory capacity) therefore does not deem estimation appropriate for these units.
- SQA and SDS released a joint statement on 22 May about how learners' achievements would be recognised in respect of FA this year:
 - Learners who have completed all group awards and units of their FA and have been resulted on SQA systems will, as normal, receive FA certification along with the Scottish Qualification Certificate that records all their achievement.

- Where achievement of the full FA was not possible due to the impact of the coronavirus, we will issue learners a letter of recognition. These learners will also receive a Scottish Qualification Certificate listing their achievements.
- The letter will formally recognise the achievements of learners who have completed the National Certificate Award or National Progression Award part of their FA and have no unit 'Fails' resulted on SQA systems.
- All other learners who have completed and passed other units of their FA will be certified via existing SQA processes but will not receive the letter of recognition.
- The statement also says that SDS and SQA are working with colleges and universities to discuss their acceptance of the letter of recognition for course admissions and progression to Further Education and Higher Education in 2020.
- College principals raised concerns about the approach with Mr Lochhead at a meeting of the Further and Higher Education Ministerial Leadership Group on 26 May, including that the proposals would devalue the FA and create a two-tier system of qualifications; and that local authorities were also unhappy, and had suggested that they may not be able to support the promotion of FA in schools.
- SDS met Colleges Scotland and college principals on 27 May and have resolved initial tensions with colleges now supportive of the proposed solution. An SDS paper is going to the 2 June College Principals' Group meeting for approval.
- Two local authorities (Falkirk and North Lanarkshire) have been in touch with SQA to raise concerns but responded positively to an explanation of what was proposed.
- SDS and SQA are seeking the same formal agreement with the university sector and a meeting is scheduled for 29 May.
- Mr Hepburn has, however, commented on 29 May in response to an update from officials that young people being handed "a letter of recognition" is not an entirely satisfactory solution.

[redacted]

[redacted] | Head of Developing the Young Workforce in the Senior Phase | Senior Phase Unit | Scottish Government
2B North, Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ
Tel: [redacted]

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning
Sent: 28 May 2020 10:58
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot >
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot >; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>
Subject: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 1st of June

Hello [redacted],

No worries – I appreciate that it has been really busy. I don't think there is a set agenda for this as it is an introductory meeting, but if you think [redacted] will need to be aware of such things, then I would be grateful for [redacted] to provide some lines on it.

Apologies for the tight deadline. Please let me know if that would be an issue.

Regards, [redacted]

[redacted]

Executive Assistant to Director of Learning | Learning Directorate, Business Support Unit

Tel: [redacted]

The Scottish Government:

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

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 May 2020 10:44

To: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 1st of June

Hi [redacted],

Sorry for the delayed response. There have been no further developments on Learner Journey Programme since I sent this so nothing further for me to add.

Do you have a list of what they are intending to cover in the meeting? I know that colleagues in the DYW Team also have a lot of links with SDS on things like Foundation Apprenticeships, Careers Advice etc. If that is on the agenda it might be good for Catriona's team to be involved.

[redacted]

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Learning

Sent: 27 May 2020 16:02

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Subject: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 1st of June

Hello [redacted],

Apologies for chasing. I have found the bullet points you have provided previously:

15-24 Learner Journey Programme

- Learning Directorate have been leading a number of the LJ recommendations, as part of a programme co-ordinated by a Programme Team in Glasgow.
- The recommendations that we have taken the lead on have been:
 - Rec 2 - The development of on-line senior phase prospectuses (most relevant to SDS and they have been involved in work)

- Rec 4 – Links with PSE & mentoring
- Rec 7 - The offer for statutory leavers
- Recs 9&10 – DYW
- Rec 13 – Alignment at SCQF 7
- Rec 15 The development of vision for post-15 education
- There are another of other recommendations being led by FWES Directorate that are more directly relevant to SDS – for example Recommendation 1 on an on-line learner skills profile and Rec 3 on CIAG.
- Since publication in 2018 we have been taking forward the Senior Phase work in collaboration with a range of stakeholders through the Learner Journey (Senior Phase) Working Group and sub-groups of this. John Murray has been involved from SDS.
- Lately because of the Senior Phase Subject Choices Inquiry much of this work has been on hold
- **At this point, with re-prioritisation of resources in light of COVID 19, we are postponing all future work in relation to the Learner Journey Programme** (position from Programme Office communicated to stakeholders last week)

I'd be grateful if you could let me know whether [redacted] would need an updated version of these bullets? The meeting is scheduled for next Monday, so I would appreciate a response by the end of this week, if possible.

Regards, [redacted]

[redacted]

Executive Assistant to Director of Learning | Learning Directorate, Business Support Unit

Tel: [redacted]

The Scottish Government:

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

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 21 May 2020 15:19

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Subject: Introductory Meeting with SDS - 1st of June

Hello [redacted],

Hope you are doing well. Graeme is scheduled to have an introductory meeting with Damien Yates, Chief Executive in SDS, on the 1st of June. This is the second time it has been re-scheduled and I know that you have already provided me with some lines re the learner journey for the initial meeting. However, I was wondering if you could provide me with a more up-to-date version for [redacted] to look at.

Regards, [redacted]

[redacted]

Executive Assistant to Director of Learning | Learning Directorate, Business Support Unit

Tel: [redacted]

The Scottish Government:

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

FOI Document 3 – Attachment from document 2

FA REVIEW: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This document sets out the principles of the Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) Review that Education Scotland (ES) will undertake in 2020 to inform future FA delivery.

The 2019/20 Letter of Guidance issued to SDS from the DFM, included a direction that SDS collaborate with SG officials and other stakeholders to: *review the design and delivery models for Foundation Apprenticeships to ensure that these maximise learner success and minimise the proportion of early leavers*. The Letter also stated that SDS should work with ES to agree how the effectiveness of FAs could be evaluated.

The FA Review will be concentrated on two key principles: *ensuring that support is appropriately targeted and efficient; and that opportunities are aimed at the right level and add value to the wider senior phase offer*.

2. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The aim is to capture evidence on early implementation and impact, and provide a shared evidence base to inform future policy decisions on FAs.

The outputs of the evaluation will provide evidence on how the FA programme has worked to date and make recommendations on how to address barriers to implementation as well as what enhancements can be made for the future.

3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will focus on commissioning, recruitment, retention, and attainment and research will take place throughout 2020/21 in three phases. Final outputs are expected in March 2021 and will help us understand any barriers that may continue to limit further embedding of FAs across all schools.

NOTE: Due to the impact from COVID-19, Education Scotland will only take forward Phase 1 at present. We will work with all stakeholders to revise the delivery of further phases when appropriate.

Phase 1 of the Review will **evaluate the existing relevant data sets** pertaining to recruitment, retention, attainment and progression of FA learners over cohorts 1-4. Data sets will be accessed from SG Analytical Services and SDS for analysis. Findings will be used to identify key messages and themes for investigation in Phases 2 and 3.

Phase 2 will focus on Fieldwork including the **planning and promotion of FAs** as a subject choice. Evaluations will be formed through field visits to all local authorities, and will include discussions with: Local authority staff, SDS staff including careers

advisers, Secondary school staff, Learners, parents/care-givers, FA delivery partners, employers.

Phase 3 will be focused on the **quality of the learning experience** for young people undertaking FA programmes. Evaluations will be formed through field visits to a range of delivery centres in a sample of local authorities and will include meetings with employers, delivery staff and learners, and observations of the learning experience.

The final Report, which is due March 2021 will provide an evidence base to inform future decision-making on the number of FA opportunities offered, future sustainability of FAs and the associated budgetary requirements.

4. GOVERNANCE

Education Scotland will retain overall control for the commissioning, management and delivery of the FA Review. This includes approving the final version of all research tools, outputs and reports. This will be led by Gillian Ritchie who will also be responsible for the day-to-day liaison. SG officials will be responsible for oversight of the project in partnership with Education Scotland.

The review will be governed by a Research Advisory Group (RAG) which will oversee the evaluation process and will be comprised of the existing FA Collaboration Team (SG officials from Apprenticeship Policy, Senior Phase Policy, DYW Programme Board, Education Scotland, SDS and SFC). The RAG will include analytical support including from Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis and will include representation from COSLA.

5. RESEARCH ADVISORY GROUP PURPOSE & TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of the Research Advisory Group (RAG) is to support the review and provide advice, contacts and access to data. The group will act as a forum to discuss early findings and feedback on interim and final reports from ES. Specific objectives of the RAG are:

- Participate in a virtual inception meeting with ES
- Support the communication of the research
- Comment on the scope / content of ES proposed survey for upcoming phases 2 & 3
- Participate in progress meetings every two months
- Review and comment on a draft Final Report
- Participate in a final project meeting

6. REPORTING

ES will produce interim reports for the first two phases and a final summative report which will include examples of highly effective practice along with professional advice regarding areas of strength and aspects for improvement. The estimated completion date for the full Review is February 2021, with a report to be published in March 2021.

Phase 1 is expected to complete by August 2020.

Summary progress reports will be provided at the RAG meetings and will form the basis for discussion topics at the meetings.

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission on Foundation Apprenticeship Certification

[redacted]

Thank you for your helpful email – DFM has noted that this appears to put matters into the best place.

I'd be grateful if you could keep us up to date.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

[redacted] | Deputy Private Secretary to John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot |

📞 [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted] | Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot | [redacted]@gov.scot

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Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 June 2020 14:48

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>

Cc: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission on Foundation Apprenticeship Certification

Dear [redacted],

SDS and SQA have assured us that their primary concern was to support learners at this exceptionally difficult time and ensure they are not disadvantaged as a result of COVID 19 disruption. Both organisations had fully exhausted all other options prior to deciding that a Letter of Recognition was the only workable solution.

SDS has confirmed that all FA learners will be given the option to complete their FA post school with full support from SDS and learning providers.

SDS and SQA have worked closely with Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland and Principals to gain full recognition of the letter and parity with the full FA Award.

Universities Scotland confirmed today that all universities will accept the letter as equal to the full FA for university entrance; Colleges Scotland have committed to respond to SDS and SQA by close of play today.

Other actions that SDS and SQA have taken/ are undertaking are:

- Confirmation that the Letter will carry the same Insight Tariff as the full FA award, so that schools will not be disadvantaged.
- Ongoing work with UCAS to ensure that the Letter will have the same UCAS Tariff points as the full FA Award.
- Finalising a joint statement from SDS, SQA, Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland for learners, teachers and parents.
- Setting up sector based webinars to gather feedback from practitioners, to support FA delivery in the new academic year.

I hope this is helpful and I will keep DFM and Ministers updated on the decision from Colleges Scotland/ College Principals.

Kind Regards, [redacted]

[redacted] | Apprenticeship Policy Team Leader | Skilled Working Population Unit | Skills Division | Directorate for Fair Work, Employability & Skills | Scottish Government | 6th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw Glasgow, G2 8LU
Mobile: [redacted] | Email: [redacted]@gov.scot

[Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland’s Youth Employment strategy.](#)



From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 07 June 2020 15:18

To: Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@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>; Munro D (Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission on Foundation Apprenticeship Certification

[redacted]

DFM has asked for an update on this issue as soon as is possible. What is the current position?

Once DFM has seen this, he may require further dialogue.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

[redacted] Deputy Private Secretary to John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills | The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot |

📞 [redacted] Mobile: [redacted] Email: DFMCSE@gov.scot | [redacted]@gov.scot

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

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Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

Sent: 05 June 2020 09:15

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>

Cc: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission on Foundation Apprenticeship Certification

Thanks [redacted],

Mr Hepburn has noted, and is of the view that a letter of recognition is far from ideal but there seems to be little in way of traction in getting an alternative resolution between SDS and SQA.

We will certainly need to press tertiary education institutions to accept such a letter for admission purposes.

Mr Hepburn also believes it is essential that we give FA candidates the option to complete their FA post-school. Not sure what take up might be - indeed it is probable that it will be low - but it strikes me as a matter of fairness that they are given the opportunity.

[redacted]

Private Secretary

Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

The Scottish Government
Edinburgh
Email: MinisterBFWS@gov.scot
Tel: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

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From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 03 June 2020 16:37
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>
Cc: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science <MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: Submission on Foundation Apprenticeship Certification

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

Please find attached a submission on the current situation with Foundation Apprenticeship certification and the approach that SDS and SQA have agreed on.

Kind Regards, [redacted]

[redacted] | Apprenticeship Policy Team Leader | Skilled Working Population Unit | Skills Division | Directorate for Fair Work, Employability & Skills | Scottish Government | 6th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw Glasgow, G2 8LU
Mobile: [redacted] | Email: [redacted]@gov.scot

[Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment strategy.](#)

FOI Document 5 – Attachment from document 4

From: [Redacted]
Fair Work, Employability and Skills Directorate
03 June 2020

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

Foundation Apprenticeship Certification Due to Covid-19 Disruption

Purpose

1. To provide an update on the recognition of achievement for Foundation Apprenticeship learners who have been impacted by disruption due to Covid-19.

Priority

2. Immediate, as SDS are keen to issue a communication to learners and stakeholders in the coming days to maintain confidence in FAs.

Background

1. The disruption caused by Covid-19 to learning and the completion of senior phase qualifications required significant innovation and adaption to support certification for learners. For Highers and Nationals, providers are applying 'professional judgement' backed by evidence to estimate the learner's most likely outcome. This approach has enabled certification for most senior phase qualifications.

2. The certification of Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) is more complex to resolve. FA Awards are a mix of National Certificates (NC), National Progression Awards (NPA) and Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units. Although estimation can and will be applied to the NC and NPA elements, the Covid-19 restrictions on work places have impacted on providers/learner's capacity to complete elements of the SVQ units. This is the same situation for learners undertaking SVQs in the workplace, college and as part of a Modern Apprenticeship.

Current Position

3. Following the Scottish Government commitment that no learner's achievement and progression should be disadvantaged due to the impact of Covid-19, SDS and SQA have worked on options to recognise the achievement of FAs. There are 1,760 FA learners due to complete in June 2020 in three broad groups:

- FA Learners who have achieved the full FA Award and will receive an FA certificate
- FA Learners not on track to achieve the full FA Award, who will not receive the FA certificate, but will gain certification for elements achieved
- FA Learners on track to achieve the full FA Award, but **cannot** gain the full FA Award as they are unable to complete some units (and will gain certification for elements achieved)

Most FA learners fall into the third category and it is these learners that SDS and SQA have been urgently seeking solutions to support. They have set up working groups to ensure that all flexibilities and adaptations within existing assessment strategies are implemented, to maximise the number of learners able to achieve the full FA award. SDS and SQA recognise that this will not be possible for all learners.

4. SDS and SQA explored an option to estimate SVQ unit achievement in line with the approach for National Qualifications. This option was reviewed by SQA through their robust internal governance procedures, but was deemed not possible due to the competency-based assessment requirements for SVQs.

5. An alternative proposal was suggested to issue an interim/ revised certificate to learners on track to achieve. This was declined as SQA did not wish to issue an interim / revised certification approach due Covid-19 disruption, citing concerns around challenges to the integrity of the FA certification process and a requirement for fairness and an equitable approach for all learners.

FA Certification & Progression Proposal

6. SDS and SQA have reached agreement on an option to issue a Letter of Recognition to all FA learners on track to achieve an FA Award. This will be in addition to their SQA certificate which will set out the elements already achieved. SDS are also exploring how to support FAs to complete their FA post-schools, to enable them to gain the full FA certificate. SDS has highlighted that this would bring additional, currently unfunded costs, so we will explore how to manage that through existing Grant in Aid in the first instance.

7. SDS and SQA are working with colleges and universities to ensure the 'Letter of Recognition' is accepted for College and University admissions. This will ensure no detriment to the progression of learners into further and higher education. These discussions are in their final stages and have been productive. SDS and SQA are keen to ensure candidates and their carers are informed about the way this qualification will be managed. They propose that a joint statement is agreed by SDS/ SQA/ Universities Scotland/ Colleges Scotland and published to SQA and SDS websites in the week commencing 08 June.

8. SDS and SQA have explored a number of options to resolve this matter. They believe that, given the SVQ element of the qualifications this approach delivers the best outcome. It will ensure that learners are not disadvantaged and that it will retain confidence for Year 2 returners and new starts in August 2020. They have highlighted concerns that the time required to develop an alternative solution will impact on confidence in the FA systems from learners, parents and school. They have noted that some Local Authorities have indicated they may steer pupils toward alternative senior phase qualifications if a solution is not agreed soon.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that Ministers:

- Note the work of SDS and SQA on developing a solution for recognition of FA learners.
- Encourage colleges and universities to accept the Letter of Recognition as parity with the full FA Award

FOI Document 6

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 May 2020 15:25

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Colleges reaction to SDS/ SQA proposal re: Accreditation of FAs during Covid-19

Afternoon [redacted],

I will be online until closer to 4 today if you want to pick up the phone on this later this afternoon. Please see attached SDS/SQA most recent update received earlier today.

- The update refers to a Joint statement from SQA and SDS on Foundation Apprenticeships that was issued on SQA Website [here](#). Policy officials were not informed of this comms/ joint statement prior to issue however I believe this may be the comms that College Principals were referring to during Mr Lochhead meeting.
- SDS most recent update indicates that the proposal has been discussed with Colleges Scotland and three College Principals who were present at the weekly meetings over the last 6 weeks . SDS/SQA have also met with representatives from Colleges Scotland on Wednesday 20th May and confirmed that the proposal was discussed and members invited to provide feedback prior to submission to the College Principals group for formal agreement on the aspect of the solution for recognition for admissions for FA to FE pathway? I'm not sure from the below if concerns are about the proposed solution or the lack of engagement, or potentially both?
- SDS have indicated that there are further joint SDS/ SQA meetings with Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland arranged over the next week to discuss further and finalise recognition arrangements, I appreciate that this timing is not ideal following the update however as these discussions are key to shaping the direction and pathway of our FA Learners I would welcome thoughts on how we encourage and shape these future discussion and narrative to both FE/HE and Ministers - as Mr Hepburn also remains unconvinced of the proposed solution - Would be grateful for sight of your draft letter to the Minister?

SQA have been clear they do not wish to create covid19 certifications for any learners as would prefer to encourage young people to complete whenever time and circumstances would allow, helping to protect the integrity of the qualification. SQA

and SDS have reached this solution by keeping the integrity of the FA and the integrity of the component parts at the centre of any decision making. By reaching this solution it means that both young people in college, or in a school setting that are doing the units separately are being treated fairly and equally to those completing as part of the FA Award. SDS and SQA are both content that this new approach will support young people into their future pathways if FE/HE would accept these as letters of endorsements.

Hope the above makes sense and provides a background but it may be good to loop in [redacted] and [redacted] on these discussions as well? Would you like me to set up something for tomorrow?

Kind Regards

[redacted]

[redacted] | Senior Policy Manager | Apprenticeship Policy | Skilled Working Population | Skills Division | Directorate for Fair Work, Employability & Skills | Scottish Government | 6th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw Glasgow, G2 8LU
| Tel: [redacted] | Mob: [redacted] | Email: [redacted]@gov.scot
[Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment strategy.](#)

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 May 2020 11:02

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Colleges reaction to SDS/ SQA proposal re: Accreditation of FAs during Covid-19

Importance: High

All,

Mr Lochhead yesterday was on a call with all college principals, who fed back significant concerns about the proposal that issued from SDS and SQA on Friday (22 May) in relation to FA accreditation.

The principals were keen to stress their support for FAs, but raised the following concerns:

- What is being proposed will devalue the FA and create a two-tier system of qualifications
- Colleges were not asked to feed into the proposal

- Local authorities (West Lothian in particular was mentioned) are also unhappy, and suggest they may not be able to support the promotion of FAs in schools.

The Minister undertook to write to SQA and SDS asking them to work closely with colleges – I'll draft something today – and is also keen that the chief execs engage with college principals as well as his high-level group. I'll pick this up with Colleges Scotland and SQA.

[redacted] – when we spoke yesterday, we thought this letter might have been the start of engagement with colleges, but hadn't yet seen – I'm trying to source, but have you heard/ seen any more?

I know your team are in ongoing discussions with SDS, would it be helpful to chat through how to proceed with the Minister's asks?

[redacted]

[redacted] | College Policy | Scottish Government | M: [redacted]

Please note my working pattern is Mon - Thurs. Friday is my non-working day.

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 May 2020 14:35
To: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: 14/05 - SG/SDS Skype Call ref: Accreditation of FAs during Covid-19 - VR Notes

Hi Oonagh,

Following on from [redacted] earlier email I had a follow up call today with [redacted], who echoed the positive meeting with SQA. I have included a recap of the meeting below which sets out the discussion and next steps.

14/05 - SG/SDS Skype Call ref: Accreditation of FAs during Covid-19

Attendee's:

- [redacted] – [redacted] - SDS

Meeting Note

High-level reasons to find solution and why it remains a critical **policy position**;

1. Supporting young people doing quals and future pathways
2. Reputation of Work Based Learning and its recent introduction to the senior phase curriculum

SDS: Rejected Options and Feedback

Earlier this week SDS and SQA met to discuss the proposal papers, feedback was shared as to why Options A & B were not supported by SQA these included;

- Adapted certificate options were rejected by SQAs Product and Services Group as they did not wish to create covid19 certifications for any learners as would prefer to encourage young people to complete whenever time and circumstances would allow, helping to protect the integrity of the qualification.
- It was also advised that any adapted certification would be lengthy to arrange as agreement and consultation would be required from all of the Sector Skills Councils to approve an approach which would likely be time consuming with both parties acknowledging that timelines were already tight.

SDS and SQA Accreditation: Agreed Approach

After further joint discussion both SDS and SQA arrived at a third option which would see a joint letter of endorsement from SQA/SDS and Learning Providers be issued to FA learners that acknowledges that the learner was on track to complete the FA Award but due to the pandemic and exceptional circumstance was unable to conclude.

It was highlighted that this approach would only be acceptable if FE/HE would accept these as letters of endorsements. Both SDS and SQA believe that this is the next best approach and have put in place a series of actions and steps to make this work, one of which is engaging with HE/FE to see if this letter would enable these young people to progress and SQA have offered to lead on these conversations due to an already established rapport with key stakeholders.

One of the benefits of this approach is that it would be a quick turn around and the letter would/could arrive at the same time as certification for all the work that has been completed to date. SDS and SQA believe that if communicated appropriately this offer will bring comfort to learners and guardians. SDS believes this process allows clarity to be given to learners and will be based on professional judgement and evidence similar to what is happening with the higher.

Next Steps:

- Further activity required with HE/FE to provide assurances that this approach will be endorsed and enable these young people to progress. SQA and SDS are preparing a joint letter to write to colleges and universities.
- SDS to explore with schools and LA on the types of comms that will be required to promote and retain the confidence in the FA Award for learners who have still to complete and/or are due to start?
- SDS to explore how many individuals are moving to a Modern Apprenticeship and look at how outstanding units can be followed up in the next steps of the individuals career journey.
- For this to be credible and evidenced part of the solution will require SDS to formalise a process which sees providers upload outstanding assessments that has been undertaken to date so that it can be officially recorded on the

SQA system. This will allow the work to be verified and will help identify how far each learners is along their learning path.

- SDS/SQA to continue to provide a weekly update to SG officials, due Friday 15/05 to allow regular updates to be shared with Ministers.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

[redacted] | Senior Policy Manager | Apprenticeship Policy | Skilled Working Population | Skills Division | Directorate for Fair Work, Employability & Skills | Scottish Government | 6th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw Glasgow, G2 8LU

| Tel: [redacted] | Mob: [redacted] | Email: [redacted]@gov.scot

[Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment strategy.](#)

FOI Document 7

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2020 17:08

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>;

Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>;

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot>;

[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Adding colleagues in SQA sponsorship for awareness.

Thanks

Malcolm

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2020 16:46

To: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr

<Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Thanks Oonagh

Sorry its highlighted the nuances more than the work ongoing. You've captured it perfectly.

One small tweak highlighted below. SQA are adopting the line of appropriate recognition and awarding of learner's achievements, rather than no learner being disadvantaged.

I hope this is ok, to keep this consistent with other messaging on alternative certification.

Happy to work with you all on next steps.

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

Team Leader – Developing the Young Workforce and 15-24 Learner Journey Review Implementation

Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

7th Floor | Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow | G2 8LU

Ext – [redacted]
Tel – [redacted]
Mob – [redacted]

From: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>
Sent: 27 April 2020 16:27
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Thanks [redacted]. I *think* it helps although it doesn't give me a huge amount of confidence that there will be a positive solution.

Given this I plan on sending the following to JH & DFM – please comment if you think its incorrect or needs to be amended.

SDS have highlighted a concern about the impact of Covid 19 on students who are undertaking a foundation apprenticeships.

Background

1757 learners are due to complete their FA in June this academic year and many will have been seeking to use their FA qualification to support their next step into work or further/ higher educations.

Current position

SDS and SQA have been discussing a contingency solution for certification of Foundation Apprenticeship pupils due to complete their FA Group Award in June this year. The goal is to ensure that no FA pupil is disadvantaged as result of FA pupils have their qualifications awarded during COVID-19 disruption and the admissions currency of the FA for all available progression pathways – FE, HE, MA and GA is recognised.

SDS have identified three possible options:

A - FA Group Award Certification based on estimation / holistic assessment process for outstanding units within FA Frameworks, that cannot be completed due to disruption.

B - Alternative FA Certificate for completers and achievers for this year only.

C - If no FA Certification can be achieved at A or B, then agreement from Universities and Colleges for pathway progressio

SQA have advised that they are engaging with awarding bodies as to whether the SVQ element of the Foundation Apprenticeship can be adapted to allow for completion of the various outstanding modules. Letters were issued on Friday and

they were beginning to received responses to this as of this morning. This continues to be progressed as agreed with SDS in their regular meetings with SQA.

SDS have asked whether estimated grades would be appropriate. SQA are of the view this is not appropriate for units which measure competence/proficiency in specific disciplines. Looking at section 4 and the makeup of each FA, it may be possible to estimate grades for some subjects, but these would need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

In terms of alternative certification and the impact on admissions (options B and C), agreement would need to be sought from FE and HE providers, however this raises the issue of inequity with those studying similar modules in college, who have equally been unable to participate due to Covid-19, where no such agreement would exist, but continue to impact on these learners' progression. This would likely need to extend to MAs, GAs and similar qualifications.

Option C seems a particularly complicated workaround, and perhaps instead it might be worth reviewing how many young people's transitions the FA plays an integral part (ie a conditional offer to university based on achieving this), to prioritise these cases and seek solutions to these, on a subject by subject and case by case basis.

Next steps

SQA will review evidence from accreditation bodies, discuss this with SDS and identify options for concluding FAs. This is expected to take some time to work through and further information will be provided in due course.

From: [redacted]

Sent: 27 April 2020 15:16

To: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Hi Linda, Oonagh

We have approached SQA for their views, and they have offered the following advice:

SQA are engaging with awarding bodies as to whether the SVQ element of the Foundation Apprenticeship can be adapted to allow for completion of the various outstanding modules. Letters were issued on Friday and they were beginning to received responses to this as of this morning. This continues to be progressed as agreed with SDS in their regular meetings with SQA.

SDS have asked whether estimated grades would be appropriate. SQA are of the view this is not appropriate for units which measure competence/proficiency in specific disciplines.

Looking at section 4 and the makeup of each FA, it may be possible to estimate grades for some subjects, but these would need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

In terms of alternative certification and the impact on admissions (options B and C), agreement would need to be sought from FE and HE providers, however this raises the issue of inequity with those studying similar modules in college, who have equally been unable to participate due to Covid-19, where no such agreement would exist, but continue to impact on these learners' progression. This would likely need to extend to MAs, GAs and similar qualifications.

Option C seems a particularly complicated workaround, and perhaps instead it might be worth reviewing how many young people's transitions the FA plays an integral part (ie a conditional offer to university based on achieving this), to prioritise these cases and seek solutions to these, on a subject by subject and case by case basis.

Is that helpful?

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

Team Leader – Developing the Young Workforce and 15-24 Learner Journey
Review Implementation

Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

7th Floor | Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow | G2 8LU

Ext – [redacted]

Tel – [redacted]

Mob – [redacted]

From: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2020 13:59

To: Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>; [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>; [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>

Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@gov.scot](mailto:[redacted]@gov.scot)>

Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Importance: High

Hi all,

Mr Hepburn has asked for an update on the position with accreditation of this year's FAs to be sent to him and DFM by close today. Can you advise on the current position asap?

With thanks

Oonagh

From: Gil O (Oonagh)
Sent: 26 April 2020 21:33
To: Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Thanks Linda.
SDS paper attached.

Oonagh

From: Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>
Sent: 26 April 2020 18:09
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

[redacted], [redacted], [redacted],

To see exchanges below. Could one of you speak with [redacted] please and see where this is at from an SQA perspective on accrediting this year's FA cohort?

Good if you can have that conversation tomorrow Monday ahead of the SG/SQA call on Tuesday where we might need to escalate/discuss further

Oonagh – could you send on the paper that [redacted] email refers to please? From what I do know, I don't think that it will be possible to have a one size fits all approach to FAs due to the different nature of assessment required for some FAs but lets see where SQA have got to – I agree we should be able to sort this without involving DFM

Linda

Dr Linda Pooley, Deputy Director, Colleges, Young Workforce and Scottish Funding Council Sponsorship : TEL: [redacted] MOB: [redacted]

PA [redacted] I T [redacted] I E [redacted]@gov.scot (Monday to Wednesday)

Check out the new Scottish Government resource <https://www.studentinformation.gov.scot/>. Everything you need to know about student finance, including help for parents, carers and education professionals.

From: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>
Sent: 24 April 2020 16:39
To: Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Hi Linda,

Malcolm P suggested that you might have thoughts about how best to resolve an issue about accreditation of this years FAs, and already have engaged with Fiona at SQA on similar matters.

SDS are anxious about this years cohort of FA student who are expecting their FA to contribute to their college/uni entry. There seems to be some challenges around securing accreditation in the current circumstances, and SDS are seeking DFM engagement. My preference would be to resolve without including DFM if possible.

Views most welcome.

O

From: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Sent: 24 April 2020 16:21
To: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Oonagh

Thank you for sharing the information from SDS on the current difficulties in agreeing a position with SQA Accreditation around awarding of FAs this year.

And thanks to [redacted] and [redacted] (copied) for looking at this too.

The main obstruction to be the SVQ component. We understand that SVQ, like NVQ, is based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS). Though we cannot advise you on accreditation policy, it may be the case that SQA Accreditation has less room to be flexible than with other qualifications because of the requirements of the NOS. [redacted], Head of Accreditation at SQA, should be able to provide you with more information about why they do not think that they will be able to use estimates in these circumstances. His email address is [redacted]@sqa.org.uk and his number is [redacted]. He will also be able to bring you up to speed on what, if any, involvement the Accreditation Committee, which has responsibility for SQA's accreditation functions rather than the Board, has had on this particular issue so far.

As you are reaching a view on whether and how the Deputy First Minister should intervene, from a sponsorship perspective we would stress the need to be mindful of preserving the independence of the regulatory body. While Scottish Ministers have various powers to requirement information from or direct SQA, these have not previously been exercised and could be viewed negatively as undue political interference in the regulation of qualifications.

This would not, however, preclude a letter that does not make use of those powers from the Deputy First Minister to the Chair of the Accreditation Committee seeking clarity on what SQA Accreditation is doing to maximise the possibility for young people in school to gain their vocational qualifications, particularly FAs, during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Alternatively, or possibly following communication with the Accreditation Committee, you could suggest that the Deputy First Minister makes use of the Advisory Council. This sits independently of SQA, though SQA provides the secretariat. It was established by the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002 to give Ministers and SQA advice on SQA's functions. Members are appointed by Scottish Ministers from a range of stakeholders, and either SQA or Ministers can seek specific advice from the council at any time. Where the Advisory Council provides advice to SQA, SQA is under no obligation to follow that advice but if it does not must explain in writing why. Again, Scottish Ministers have not previously taken this kind of action but it would be one step removed from issuing a direction and therefore perhaps less likely to be construed as inappropriate interference.

I hope that is helpful

.

Malcolm

From: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>

Sent: 24 April 2020 11:30

To: Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution
Importance: High

Malcolm,

Skills Development Scotland have flagged an issue with their Foundation Apprenticeship programme. This relates to accreditation for those learners due to complete in June, and the potential impact on admission to FE/ HE. ('risk' copied below)

I understand, from a discussion with [redacted] at SDS yesterday, that discussions with SQA about accreditation are not moving towards a clear resolution. SDS have asked that this be escalated to DFM.

SDS have sent in the attached paper setting out what they see as appropriate options. I have had no contact with SQA about this and do not have detailed info about their perspective.

This will be a very live issues for those pupils who are completing an FA and using it to support their applications for further or higher education. We do need to find a resolution.

Can I get your thoughts on how best to move forward?

Oonagh

2. The Risk

Currently across Scotland, we have **circa 4250 students** who have chosen a FA as one of their senior phase qualifications. Of this, **1757 learners are due to complete in June this academic year**. Whilst clarity and contingency solutions have been agreed and communicated for other qualifications no solution has yet been agreed and communicated for the FA Group Award at SCQF L6. With FA recognised by Universities and Colleges for admission alongside pupil's other qualifications, failure to offer full FA award certification will significantly impact learner progression. Further anything less than full FA certification will impact schools' performance and attainment indicators due to insight tariff alignment. Significant pressure is mounting from learners, parents, schools and learning providers, seeking assurance that FA learner achievement will not be negatively impacted due to Covid-19.

From: Diane Greenlees <Diane.Greenlees@sds.co.uk>
Sent: 24 April 2020 11:00

To: Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@sds.co.uk>; [redacted] <[redacted]@sds.co.uk>; [redacted] <[redacted]@sds.co.uk>; [redacted] <[redacted]@sds.co.uk>

Subject: Foundation Apprenticeship Achievement and Certification - COVID-19 Contingency Solution

Importance: High

Dear Oonagh

I am writing further to your discussion with [Redact] yesterday, to provide an update on progress to date on work with SQA Awarding Body and SQA Accreditation to develop a contingency solution for certification of Foundation Apprenticeship pupils due to complete their FA Group Award in June this year, and specifically to request Scottish Government ministerial support in reaching a solution.

The goal is to ensure that no FA pupil is disadvantaged as result of COVID-19 disruption and the admissions currency of the FA for all available progression pathways – FE, HE, MA and GA is recognised. This is in line with recent Scottish Government communications and SQAs commitment to delivering results to learners, in as fair a way as possible, at this exceptionally difficult time, and the overall aim to ensure that young people across Scotland get the results they deserve, so they can progress to further learning or work.

The attached paper summarises where we have reached with discussions to date and contingency solutions discussed. It summarises three proposals / options for a contingency solution:

A - FA Group Award Certification based on estimation / holistic assessment process for outstanding units within FA Frameworks, that cannot be completed due to disruption.

B - Alternative FA Certificate for completers and achievers for this year only.

C - If no FA Certification can be achieved at A or B, then agreement from Universities and Colleges for pathway progression.

It also sets out the request that [Redact] has discussed with you for Scottish Government support for contingency solution A or B above, and Deputy First Minister request that SDS and SQA continue to work together to develop and agree an alternative certification model for FA completers in 2020 urgently.

Beyond the imperative for the current cohort of learners, failure to identify a solution for FA certification this year, will significantly impact planned recruitment and the progress achieved over the past four years in gaining parity for FA and embedding it within the senior phase of education. In-keeping with the views expressed recently by Scottish Government we must ensure that all FA learners that were on track to achieve, are not negatively impacted by the restrictions of COVID-19.

I am happy to provide further detail and / or to discuss and clarify any questions.

Best regards

Diane

Diane Greenlees

Director of Critical Skills and Occupations

Tel: [redacted] or Mobile: [redacted]

Skills Development Scotland - Leasachadh Sgilean na h-Alba


Lomond House, 9 George Square, Glasgow, G2 1DY

myworldofwork.co.uk – The help you need for the career you want.

ourskillsforce.co.uk – Making skills work for employers.

apprenticeships.scot – Find an apprenticeship. Recruit an apprentice.

sds.co.uk – Making skills work for Scotland.

Find us on    



FOI Document 8



FOI 202000095872
Document 8 - Attach

FOI Document 9

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 28 May 2020 14:45
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: SQA/ SDS and FAs

Hi everyone,

Following our calls today, please see the attached update from SQA which mirrors the updates we've been receiving from SDS.

I understand from the SDS call that the meeting with Universities Scotland is happening tomorrow and the proposal will go to the College Principals' Group next Tuesday.

[redacted] | College Policy | Scottish Government | M: [redacted]

Please note my working pattern is Mon - Thurs. Friday is my non-working day.

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 28 May 2020 14:20
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; CEO Office <ceooffice@sqa.org.uk>; [redacted] <[redacted]@sqa.org.uk>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: SQA/ SDS and FAs

Dear [redacted],

Please find attached a paper outlining the status of work on Foundation Apprenticeships.

The paper highlights some challenges to reaching a resolution for these qualifications, not least that they contain regulated units which means there is less flexibility in what can be adapted.

There is also timeline showing the level of engagement and agreement on the approach to these awards.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Regards

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: [redacted] | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 27 May 2020 11:13
To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot; [redacted]@gov.scot; Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot; CEO Office <ceooffice@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Linda.Pooley@gov.scot
Subject: SQA/ SDS and FAs
Importance: High

Hi Jean,

On Mr Lochhead's call with college principals yesterday afternoon, he received some strong feedback about the communication that issued from SQA and SDS on FAs on Friday.

The principals were keen to stress their support for FAs, but raised the following concerns:

- What is being proposed will devalue the FA and create a two-tier system of qualifications
- Colleges were not asked to feed into the proposal
- Local authorities (West Lothian in particular was mentioned) are also unhappy, and suggest they may not be able to support the promotion of FAs in schools.

The Minister has made some asks to resolve this, and it would be helpful to understand a bit more about what issued (as we've not seen) so we can take forward.

Thanks,

[redacted]

FOI Document 10

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 01 June 2020 10:06

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: For action - FA actions following Richard Lochhead teleconference with college principals

[redacted]

Following up on the Minister's request, we are going to advise that he has a stand alone session with the agencies (likely SFC, SDS, SQA, SAAS and Education Scotland), so I don't think there would be a need for a separate letter.

[Reda has also emailed [Redacte and [Reda directly to ask them to join the Ministerial Group when they are able to – Fiona has replied and will now join us at Thursday's meeting. I don't think we have heard back from SDS.

[redacted]

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 May 2020 18:46

To: Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh) <Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; [Redacted]) [Redacted]

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: For action - FA actions following Richard Lochhead teleconference with college principals

Dear all,

I'm intending to update the Minister on the actions, below, early next week.

I've drafted a note for Mr Lochhead to send to his Ministerial colleagues, for which I'd be grateful for comments and feedback on Monday.

Here are the eRDM links:

<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk:8443/documents/A28531775/details>

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]
<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]
<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot <[redacted]@gov.scot>;
[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]
<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh)
<Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]
<[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Briefing - Richard Lochhead teleconference with college principals on
new academic year - 26 May 2020

[redacted]

Mr Lochhead has noted your email below with thanks.

[redacted]

[redacted] | Private Secretary | Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

☎: [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted] St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

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From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 May 2020 17:40

To: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

<MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>; SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science

<SGCoronaVirusALS@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning

<DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy)

<Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>;

[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; CPS Group Hub <CPSGroupHubCovid@gov.scot>; Rogers

D (David) (Constitution and Cabinet Director) <David.Rogers@gov.scot>; Munro D

(Dominic) <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Thomson KAL (Ken) (Director-General)

<Ken.Thomson@gov.scot>; Communications DFM & Education

<CommunicationsDFM&Education@gov.scot>; [redacted]<[redacted]@gov.scot>;

Communications Covid-19 <CommunicationsCovid-19@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot <[redacted]@gov.scot>;

[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; Gil O (Oonagh)

<Oonagh.Gil@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Briefing - Richard Lochhead teleconference with college principals on new academic year - 26 May 2020

Hi [redacted], thanks for this.

In relation to the Minister's points below, please see the following advice and actions – as well as other action points noted during the call. I've also expanded the copy list to include colleagues who are leading on, or have an interest in, these points.

Following from the College Principals meeting which has just finished and following up on some of the key points, Mr Lochhead would like to ask that we arrange for the chief execs of SDS and SQA to have similar meetings with the college principals, preferably before the end of this week if they can find 45 mins in their diaries.

This relates to how SDS and SQA have engaged with colleges, prompted by a particular the issue with Foundation Apprenticeships. [Apprenticeship policy colleagues, I will pick up with you separately.]

Mr Lochhead also undertook to emphasise the importance of engaging with colleges, given their pivotal role in economic recovery, to Ministerial colleagues and to these agencies.

I will draft a note for Mr Lochhead to send to Ministerial colleagues, and also letters to send to SQA and SDS.

I will also pick up with Colleges Scotland about SQA and SDS chief executives meeting principals.

The Minister further commented that we need to persuade the chief execs to participate in the high level groups if it is the case that they have not done so far.

Copied to [redacted] to note for the purposes of Ministerial Leadership Group planning.

Finally, Mr Lochhead has queries if he should write at an appropriate point including the unions as requested urging that they work closely on prep for reopening as discussed?

I will speak to Colleges Scotland to better understand the ask they made on this and provide further advice to the Minister.

It would of course be good if we could get a resolution to the SDS issue prior to the education committee meeting on Friday where the colleges are giving evidence.

I have copied to apprenticeship policy and SDS sponsorship leads to note and take forward.

Finally, Mr Lochhead has queries if he should write at an appropriate point including the unions as requested urging that they work closely on prep for reopening as discussed?

It would of course be good if we could get a resolution to the SDS issue prior to the education committee meeting on Friday where the colleges are giving evidence.

[Redacted] | Private Secretary | Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

☎: [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted] St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

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From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 May 2020 17:05

To: Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science
<MinisterFEHES@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; DG Education, Communities & Justice <DGECJ@gov.scot>; Director of Learning

<DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy)

<Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Pooley L (Linda) Dr <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>;

[redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science

<SGCoronaVirusALS@gov.scot>; CPS Group Hub

<CPSGroupHubCovid@gov.scot>; Rogers D (David) (Constitution and Cabinet Director) <David.Rogers@gov.scot>; Munro D (Dominic)

<Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Thomson KAL (Ken) (Director-General)

<Ken.Thomson@gov.scot>; Communications DFM & Education

<CommunicationsDFM&Education@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>;

Communications Covid-19 <CommunicationsCovid-19@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Briefing - Richard Lochhead teleconference with college principals on new academic year - 26 May 2020

Dear [redacted],

Please find attached briefing for Mr Lochhead's call with college principals tomorrow afternoon (Tuesday 26 May 14:00 – 15:00).

The call will take place via Microsoft Teams and the link for the meeting is in the briefing cover page.

I have been given to understand Colleges Scotland are preparing a further briefing note for this meeting, which will I will forward on with any necessary supplementary briefing in the morning.

Thanks,

[redacted]

[redacted] | College Policy | Scottish Government | M: [redacted]

Please note my working pattern is Mon - Thurs. Friday is my non-working day.

FOI Document 11

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 03 July 2020 14:20
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot >; SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science <SGCoronaVirusALS@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SQA Chief mate Exam Cancellation

Thanks, [redacted].

[redacted] can fill you in on the background to this.

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Date: Friday, 03 Jul 2020, 2:14 pm
To: SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science <SGCoronaVirusALS@gov.scot>, [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: SQA Chief mate Exam Cancellation

I'll do this.

[redacted]
Team Leader – Developing the Young Workforce and 15-24 Learner Journey Review Implementation
Advanced Learning and Science Directorate
7th Floor | Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow | G2 8LU
Ext – [redacted]
Tel – [redacted]
Mob – [redacted]

From: [redacted] **On Behalf Of** SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science
Sent: 03 July 2020 14:04
To: [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: FW: SQA Chief mate Exam Cancellation

Hi

Please arrange for this correspondence to be placed on Micase and offer an official response. ALS Hub will presume this is an issue for your area and for you to action unless you respond otherwise – we will not track.

Please note I am emailing as you are named as the relevant contact on the [briefing/action officer document](#). Please update eRDM if this no longer the case.

Thanks

[redacted]

From: Central Enquiry Unit <CEU@gov.scot>

Sent: 03 July 2020 13:27

To: SG CoronaVirus Advanced Learning & Science

<SGCoronaVirusALS@gov.scot>

Subject: SQA Chief mate Exam Cancellation

Good Afternoon,

The email enquiry below was received at the Central Enquiry Unit today.

I would be grateful if you would deal with this or forward it to the appropriate person / area of business.

You may wish to acknowledge receipt of this email to the enquirer.

Thank you

[redacted]

Enquiry Officer

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All FOI responses where information is released must be emailed to the [FOI Unit](#) immediately after issue, with 'FOI/EIRs TO PUBLISH' in the subject line

If the request is sensitive, it will require Ministerial clearance. Guidance on this is available at Steps 33 and 34 of the [Step-by-Step Guide to Handling FOI/EIRs Requests](#).

 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@hotmail.co.uk >

Sent: 03 July 2020 11:17

To: Central Enquiry Unit <CEU@gov.scot>

Subject: SQA Chief mate Exam Cancellation

Good day,

I am a student at the [redacted] Campus doing [redacted] to achieve my next Certificate.

I have taken 6 months out of work, unpaid, for these exams that were cancelled in March and now again are Cancelled in July 8th and 10th. These exams are the Chief Mate SQA written examinations.

I understand the current situation globally at the moment and the safety precautions the government has to take to keep people within the country safe.

I was informed from my college that these exams were going ahead and the safety precautions they had put in place was beyond sufficient. I don't understand why the Scottish government would cancel the exams again, so close to the date when many people are counting on these exams so they can go back to work and earn money as key workers, especially that the government is allowing unnecessary clothes shops and pubs opening soon. The decision to cancel these exams not taking into account all the safety and security measures the college is putting in place to protect the students is proving to be a bigger impact on those people's lives that are counting on the exams than the COVID-19 virus itself.

What I am asking is for the 1st Minister to reconsider her decision to cancel these exams and allow them as Its a National exam and the colleges in England are going ahead with it still.

I believe that opening pubs and clothes shops is a huge risk of a second wave of COVID-19 rather than 1 exam with all the social distancing measures and face masks in place. Then the key workers that are waiting for their opportunity to complete these exams can get on with there lives.

I hope this email finds the right person who can help.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

