

All internal and external correspondence within and sent or received by the Scottish Government including attached documents, meeting handouts, memos, briefings to ministers, attendee lists, location of meeting, notes, minutes, or OneNote memos, linked to the following meetings:

1a) Shirley-Anne Somerville's meeting with Fergus Ewing on July 5, 2022.

Email 1

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 23 January 2022 13:16

To: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP Fergus.Ewing.msp[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Subject: Touch typing - interesting research

Hi Fergus,

We have doing a lot of research into Touch Typing and have come up with some very useful information which we thought you'd like to read too.

There have been several studies done on Touch Typing with the (obvious) conclusions of the benefits it brings. Attached is an abbreviated report from The Netherlands which is most interesting. Note in particular one of their conclusions:

“Primary school pupils increasingly make their learning and testing assignments on the computer. When children are not able to touch type while carrying out those tasks the computer might become more of a hindrance than an effective tool” (!)

This led us to the discovery of a paper published in 2010 by the British Journal of Education Psychology which is also attached.

“Writing by keyboard does not necessarily lead to improvements in script quality, compared with handwritten scripts. Explicit keyboarding instruction (touch-typing) is needed to develop keyboarding fluency and unlock the full potential of the word processor for children's writing”.

These would seem to imply that **NOT teaching Touch Typing is detrimental to children's education!**

We'll forward any further relevant info as we research further. Hope this adds grist to the mill

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 2

From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP

Sent: 29 April 2022 12:54

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Subject: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Dear Shirley-Anne,

I am very grateful for your agreement to meet with myself and two experts in touch typing tuition who have been working with me over the past year in order to try to promote tuition in touch typing to all young people in Scotland.

My belief is that there are few if any things which we could do which would be more valuable than extend to all young people proper monitored tuition in touch typing because the use of this skill has so many benefits.

The ability to type without looking at the keyboard, and searching for the right key means that typically one can type at up to three times the speed of someone who lacks the skill, and with greater accuracy.

Those who cannot touch type often believe that they can nonetheless type quickly. They use what one calls the "hunt and peck" approach often deploying two or three fingers only - not eight - and always having to look down at their fingers. Evidence shows that they cannot begin to match the typing speeds of those who can type without looking at the keys.

In the last century few people possessed this skill, mostly shorthand typists. However, now, in this century, written communication often by email is an essential skill which is necessary for the conduct of most jobs. I need not list them but it is certainly a transformation in that the majority of people are now expected to be able to write, by email usually, in the course of their employment. And of course for those who wish to pursue a career in IT or digital media this skill is invaluable. Learning digital technology without this skill is harder, slower and less accurate.

Those who can touch type are by definition capable of performing work three times more swiftly than those who cannot, and with greater accuracy. I mention this for two reasons. First of all those young people who develop this skill are able to access many more occupations professions and jobs, and may do so with far greater confidence than those who cannot communicate swiftly in writing.

Second, the increased productivity derived from the more widespread possession amongst young people of touch typing skills means that overall, the Nation's productivity is bound to increase.

When I raised the oral Question in Parliament on Thursday 28th April, I made a comparison with providing musical instruments to children. I said that no one would dream of giving a child a violin or trombone without also arranging for music lessons.

Computers word processing devices such as tablets keyboards all require the proper and correct usage.

The course or programme required can be described at our meeting by Mr and Mrs [redacted under s38(1)(b)]. However it is not an expensive or long course. I am advised by them that in total it takes around between 15 and 20 hours.

So the overall cost of the programme would be very modest.

The suggested approach is to "Teach the teachers." In other words that schools around the country can nominate one or more teachers , who will themselves possess touch typing skills, and those nominated can be taught by people like the [redacted under s38(1)(b)] and others, how to teach touch typing to pupils.

I have with the [redacted under s38(1)(b)] asked The Highland Council to pilot a scheme and, after a conference call, they have responded positively. They are giving consideration to such a scheme now.

The [redacted under s38(1)(b)] will also wish to describe at our meeting the other benefits which flow from the imparting of this skill to a young person. They argue that these are particularly beneficial for some children with special needs such as autism. The teaching of any skill does in itself make young people more confident and build self-esteem. Equally if children are given a device such as a computer but cannot use it properly, it must be for some children a confidence sapping, dispiriting experience.

I attach a note from the [redacted under s38(1)(b)] where they describe evidence which comes from the Netherlands which actually suggests that failing to teach touch typing is actually detrimental to education. This is a very serious finding and of itself should be a warning to education experts in Scotland (and the rest of the UK I believe) that we may be letting our children down.

I attach their evidence so that you and your officials are furnished with it before our meeting and no doubt we can discuss it there.

In conclusion, my profound belief, as someone who benefitted from learning touch typing as a teenager, and has found it the most useful skill I possess, is that the provision of training and tuition in the correct way to use the QWERTY keyboard should be extended to all young people in Scotland.

I find it difficult to think of any other single measure which could bring such transformational benefits to young people and enhance their skills, improve their confidence, and let them be able to pursue far more occupations professions and jobs with more chance of success.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Fergus Ewing MSP

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 3

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 27 May 2022 11:57

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Subject: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Good Morning,

Further to my letter of the 29th April, can we look at possible dates for the meeting between Fergus and the Cabinet Secretary regarding touch typing please?

Many thanks.

Kind regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 4

From: Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus. Ewing. [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 06 June 2022 11:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Subject: Re: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Thanks. The early part of July would be good- first couple of weeks if that is possible. I will check with the [redacted under s38(1)(b)] too.

Fergus

Email 5

Sent from my iPad

On 6 Jun 2022, at 11:44[redacted under s38(1)(b)] @gov.scot wrote:

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Apologise for the late response, at the moment we are still confirming date options however this meeting will most likely take place in July. I will be in touch by end of this week with some options.

Many thanks,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

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Email 6

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Date: 7 June 2022 at 09:25:15 BST

To: "Ewing F (Fergus), MSP" Fergus.Ewing.msp[redacted under s38(1)(b)], Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Good morning,

Thank you for your patience. I have managed to find a couple of options that may work ahead of the meeting with Ms Somerville.

- Wednesday 6th July 10:30-11:15
- Thursday 7th July 11:00-11:45

Please let me know if these do not work and I will find some alternative dates.

Many thanks,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

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Email 7

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] **On Behalf Of** Ewing F (Fergus), MSP
Sent: 07 June 2022 10:06
To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Subject: RE: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Good Morning,

Thank you for this, can we go for Wednesday 6th July at 10.30 till 11.15 please.

It is in my diary now.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Fergus Ewing MSP
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 8

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Sent: 07 June 2022 10:31
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: FW: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Good morning [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Following MiCase: 202200297972 Mr Ewing office have gotten in touch regarding a meeting. I would be grateful if you could follow up with them ahead of the meeting to get briefing for Ms Somerville. I will add you to the diary invite. Let me know if there are any issues at all.

Many thanks,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
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Email 9

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Sent: 07 June 2022 15:07
To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Many thanks for the notification of meeting on 6 July between Cabinet Secretary and Mr Ewing. Can you please send diary invites to the following colleagues who will provide additional support for the meeting:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

Many Thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)].

Email 10

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 07 June 2022 15:15

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

That's great, ive added them now.

Many thanks,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

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3DG

Email 11

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

Sent: 07 June 2022 15:07

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Many thanks for the notification of meeting on 6 July between Cabinet Secretary and Mr Ewing. Can you please send diary invites to the following colleagues who will provide additional support for the meeting:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

Many Thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 12

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 08 June 2022 11:16

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Meeting with Fergus Ewing MSP - Touch Typing 6th July

Thanks [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thanks for letting me know and yes I will be making a start on the briefing plan next week we will be in touch again.

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 13

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

Sent: 07 June 2022 18:16

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: FW: Meeting with Fergus Ewing MSP - Touch Typing 6th July

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Just so you are aware.

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 07 June 2022 18:15

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

Subject: Meeting with Fergus Ewing MSP - Touch Typing 6th July

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Hope you are well. I noticed [redacted under s38(1)(b)] and I got an invite to the meeting on the 6 July. Unfortunately we are both on annual leave but happy to help with briefing if there is anything else you need from the previous communication.

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Education Scotland | Foghlam Alba

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 14

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 01 July 2022 09:40

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Fergus Ewing MSP Meeting - Touch Typing

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Can you arrange to send out Teams diary invites to the following for the meeting next week. Mr Fergus office have advised there will another guest in attendance I will forward to you when I get the details.

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@educationscotland.gov.scot

Mr Fergus Ewing - Fergus.Ewing.msp[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Many thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 15

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 01 July 2022 11:36

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@transport.gov.scot>;[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Meeting with Mr Ewing - touch typing

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

I hope you are feeling better and good to hear you can support our side on WednesdayJ. I will forward the teams link to you, [redacted under s38(1)(b)] and I are currently drafting the briefing and we will share with you soon.

Thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 16

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@transport.gov.scot
Sent: 01 July 2022 11:29
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: Meeting with Mr Ewing - touch typing

Hi both

Just also to say that I will hopefully be back to work next week as normal and I do not go on leave until the end of August. I am aware that [redacted under s38(1)(b)] are now on leave so please just shout if you need anything from me at all. [redacted under s38(1)(b)] also mentioned grants that will require to be paid so again just shout if I can help.

Thanks [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email 17

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Sent: 01 July 2022 11:25
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: Meeting with Mr Ewing - touch typing

Hi both

I have been off sick over the past few weeks with Covid and back today to pick up on e-mails and catch up with colleagues before they go off on leave [redacted under s38(1)(b)] sent on a handover and mentioned that you have a meeting on Wednesday at 10.30 with Mr Ewing in relation to touch typing (for info I am a trained touch typists!!! – random info)

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] asked if I could also come along to provide some additional support could you possibly send on any relevant briefing for this meeting and the invitation and teams link itself.

Happy to also have a catch up if need be beforehand.

Thanks [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Handover from [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Firstly on Wednesday at 1030 [redacted under s38(1)(b)] and [redacted under s38(1)(b)] will be supporting Cab Sec in a meeting with Mr Ewing about touch typing, they will be supported by ES as well, but not by the usual leads for the area (also on leave). Given my experiences with Mr Ewing I would not ideally delegate cover for a meeting with him, but our attempts to get the meeting moved have not been successful. If you are at all able I would be grateful if you could attend to provide

additional support. In the main we will be trying to emphasise that we are not in the business of dictating in detail what schools should cover, and [redacted under s38(1)(b)] and/or ES will be primed to talk about what approach is generally taken to digital skills and how that is supported.

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

1c) Shirley-Anne Somerville's meeting with Fiona Robertson on July 26, 2022

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE - CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS MEETING WITH FIONA ROBERTSON CEO, SQA

What	Regular catch-up meeting with Fiona Robertson, SQA
When	Wednesday 27 July, 11:30-12:30
Where	Microsoft Teams meeting
Who	Fiona Robertson, SQA
Why	Cabinet Secretary agreed to regular policy catch-up meetings with Ms Robertson and this is one of that series.
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exam diet went well and SQA has played a key role in making that happen. • On education reform, SQA is an important stakeholder in the work to establish the new qualifications body, with SG leading and taking decisions. • Prof Hayward has now started engaging on underpinning vision and principles including with the SQA
Official support	Clare Hicks, Director for Education Reform Laura Murdoch, Deputy Director, Curriculum and Qualifications [Redacted s38(1)(b)], National Qualifications Team
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NQ Delivery update 2. SQA Pay and Industrial Action 3. Delivery Board for the new Qualifications Body 4. Hayward Review <p>Annex A contains a note of the last meeting Cabinet Secretary had with Fiona Robertson on 26 May.</p>
Main objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on results day preparations • To reiterate our support for SQA CEO, Board and staff through the transitional phase and first exam diet since 2019. • Discuss any concerns relevant to the agenda items.
Purpose of meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain live to SQA issues in the run up to results day and as they relate to the education reform agenda.

ITEM 1	National Qualifications delivery update
Issue/ background	<p>Background: Feedback from SQA is that preparations for Results Day are going well with no major issues to report.</p> <p>4 Aug: Officials and SQA meeting on pre-release results</p> <p>5 Aug: Cab Sec Meeting with officials (SQA present for first half)</p> <p>8 Aug: Cab Sec visit to Skills Development Scotland results helpline (helpline opens at 0800 on 9 August). The helpline provides vital support for young people, their parents and carers and is supported by a team of expert careers advisors.</p> <p>9 Aug: Results Day and Cab Sec visit to Stirling High school.</p> <p>Appeals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SQA released further information on appeals to centres on 31 May and to learners on 16 June. • We understand that the pattern of teacher estimates submitted is more in line with 2019. SQA at this stage are likely to have a good idea about the number of potential appeals (where an estimate is higher than an exam result). • The symmetry approach to appeals (the ability for grades to go down as well as up or stay the same) is consistent with SQA's approach in previous years and comparable with other appeals services in the rest of the UK and internationally. • Downgrades have been low in previous years. <p>Grading Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with the rest of the UK, a more generous grading approach will be adopted this year, with SQA aiming to reach an intermediary position between results in 2019 and 2021. • This means that at a <i>national</i> level, we expect results for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher to be higher than 2019 but lower than in 2021. This does not necessarily mean results will be higher than those in 2019 for each and every individual subject however. • Key to achieving this intermediary position is where grade boundaries are set this year for individual subjects and grades. Grade boundaries have always been used (when exams have taken place) using rigorous and well-established procedures. • SQA has developed a core narrative on the grading approach for this year and is testing this with the NQ22 comms group later this (Wednesday) afternoon. It will be a resource for all partners. • The narrative will be used by SQA to brief stakeholders on 3 August and the media on 5 August. [Redacted s30(b)(ii)] • Similar comms have already been issued by Ofqual (England) and Qualifications Wales. DfE and Welsh officials have confirmed there was no real pick up or reaction, but we cannot assume the same will be true here.
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge that the exam diet went well and the key role that SQA has played in making that happen.

Suggested question(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a clearer idea of the number of appeals there are likely to be? • Can you tell me more about your plans to brief stakeholders, the media [Redacted s30(b)(ii)] about the grading approach for 2022 ahead of Results Day? • Are there any issues you think I need to be aware of as we approach Results Day?
Contact point	[Redacted s38(1)(b)], National Qualifications Team

ITEM 2	SQA Pay and Industrial Action
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unite Scotland issued a news release on Friday (22 July) on the outcome of its consultative ballot on the SQA's pay offer. As expected, the offer was rejected and Unite will now hold a ballot on industrial action. • The pay offer would have a differential effect across pay grades. Unite claim that it is worth between 1.7% and 4% to its members. • Statutory notification requirements mean that any industrial action is unlikely until late August at the earliest (after Results Day on 9 August). Given that timescale, priority appeal decisions due to be communicated on Monday 5 September are also unlikely to be affected but officials are seeking clarification of that point with SQA. However, subsequent work on non-priority 2022 appeals, and on wider SQA activity not related to results, could be disrupted. • SQA's response to media queries emphasises that its offer was within Public Pay Policy limits and that responsibility for this lies with the Scottish Government. • Officials are awaiting information from SQA that would, subject to Accountable Officer and Ministerial agreement, enable an enhanced (by a further 2.8 percentage points) pay offer to be made. It was requested in late May and is expected this week (w/c 25 July).
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive industrial relations are important, especially during work to progress the Education Reform programme. We are committed to close involvement of SQA staff, and their union representatives, in that process. • We have committed to protect jobs and to ensure unions are represented on the Delivery Board overseeing the establishment of the new qualifications body. • While Public Sector Pay Policy is a matter for Scottish Ministers, pay negotiations are essentially a matter for SQA as the employer.
Suggested question(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What more can the Scottish Government do to support the maintenance of good relationships between SQA and its trade unions? • Is there any possibility that strike action will impact on the processing of priority appeals, which need to be communicated on 5 September?
Contact point	<p>[Redacted s38(1)(b)]Education Reform Division [Redacted s38(1)(b)]</p>

ITEM 3	Delivery Board for the new Qualifications Body
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Delivery Boards are intended to lead design and delivery of the three new national education bodies. • SQA and Education Scotland staff, including their trade unions, will continue to play a key role in this work as it progresses. • SQA has not yet nominated a senior manager to take the role of Programme Director. This is holding up progress on a key element of Education reform. Work is well under way on the Delivery Board for the new national Agency. • SQA want concerns about the deliverability of a Target Operating Model (TOM) for the new Qualifications Body by the end of December to be resolved before having a first meeting of the Delivery Board. We have agreed that only a strategic level TOM need be provided by then.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a significant programme of change and it has been designed to meet standards and expectations around good governance that will stand up to audit and scrutiny in terms of accountabilities, management of risk and use of public funds. • We now have an agreed governance structure in place that will draw on vast amount of experience within the current organisations and throughout the Scottish education system. • The Education Reform Programme Strategic Board will be supported by 4 Delivery Boards, one for each of the three new national education bodies and one for the underpinning policy and legislation that will be required. • These arrangements are based on advice from Professor Muir that the transition should be taken forward in partnership with the bodies subject to reform and all those that are impacted by its outcomes and based on learning from other change programmes such as Public Health Reform.
Delivery Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Delivery Boards are there to ensure that the programme is on track to deliver on time and in line with Ministerial aims. • Delivery Boards will manage delivery of a specific aspect of our reform programme. There will be a Delivery Board each for the new qualifications body, the new education agency, the new inspectorate and for policy and legislation. • As well as staff from the Scottish Government and the predecessor bodies, each Delivery Board will also include external stakeholders. This is integral to ensuring the successful delivery of the programme and providing internal and external scrutiny and challenge. • Whilst SQA and Education Scotland staff have key roles in those Boards, they are deployed to the programme and accountable to Scottish Government and me as Cabinet

	<p>Secretary, not their employer organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Delivery Board will set out its approach to stakeholder and user engagement, and I will ensure that this is regular, meaningful and impactful.
<p>Key message(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to delivering real change but recognise this is not something Government can or should deliver alone. • As the Parliamentary Statement on Education Reform on 14 June set out, we are committed to hearing the voices and views of children, young people, learners and teachers and everyone at national, regional and local level who has a stake in the continued success of Scottish Education. • We will actively seek out and invite external voices into the work to design the new national education bodies. • We are mindful of the concerns that SQA staff and unions will have but we have committed that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the establishment of the new body. • The Delivery Board for the establishment of the new Qualifications Body has a key role in stakeholder engagement and SQA trade unions are members of the Board. • We agreed with SQA on 25 May that funding for backfill of SQA resources to support the discovery phase of work on the new qualifications body was a priority. We received only an abbreviated summary of costs on 20 July. • We need to avoid further delay and establish the Delivery Board – a first meeting of the Board should take place before the next meeting of the Education Reform Strategic Programme Board on 16 August. • We need to appoint a Programme Director for the new Qualifications Body. If that is not an SQA nominee we will need to explore other options.
<p>Suggested question(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What more can the Scottish Government do to support the establishment of the Delivery Board? • Will the Chief Executive commit to ensuring that a meeting of the Delivery Board will take place before the next Education Reform Strategic Programme Board on 16 August? • Can the Chief Executive confirm a nomination for Programme Director?
<p>Contact point</p>	<p>[Redacted s38(1)(b)]Education Reform Division [Redacted s38(1)(b)]</p>

ITEM 4	INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF QUALIFICATIONS AND ASSESSMENT
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not aware of any pressing issues with SQA and the Review. SQA are now involved in the work and are establishing a Community Collaborative Groups (CCG) with other national bodies including Education Scotland and GTCS while they also intend to engage their own governance groups in the work. Professor Hayward has also offered to meet SQA staff, Board and CEO at key stages in the process and we understand this offer is being considered. • The Review is currently seeking views on overarching Vision and Principles before turning to options for change and finally testing possible recommendations in the interim report. CCGs, schools and colleges will be engaged at all stages in the process and it is anticipated a public consultation will be issued by the Review in October.
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in October 2021 the intention to reform qualifications and assessments, to ensure learners' achievements are fairly recognised to afford each of them an enhanced and fair opportunity to demonstrate the width, depth and relevance of their learning. • The Cabinet Secretary has also confirmed that externally assessed examinations will remain part of any new system of assessment and qualifications post-Review. Professor Hayward understands this and is also of the view that a revised system in Scotland will continue to require some form of external assessment. • Professor Louise Hayward is leading the Independent Review of and is now undertaking an inclusive and participatory programme of stakeholder engagement with the aim of ensuring that those with a stake in the future of qualifications and assessments, including individual learners have the opportunity to participate. • Each Independent Review Group member is bringing together representatives from across their communities to form a CCG ensuring voices from a diverse background are heard – this includes the SQA. • Professor Hayward will provide an Interim Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills by the end of 2022 and a final report in March 2023.
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite recent media coverage I can confirm that externally assessed examinations will remain part of any new system of assessment and qualifications post-Review. • Important that SQA plays an important role in the Review given the significant expertise within the organisation.

Suggested question(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Professor Hayward is seeking the views of Community Collaborative Groups on Visions and Principles and also intends seeking views of schools and colleges after the summer break before moving onto a discussion in respect of options for change. Keen to get the view of SQA on the Review so far and receive an update on how you are interacting with Professor Hayward.
Contact point	[Redacted s38(1)(b)]: Secretariat, Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment - [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

NOTE OF MEETING BETWEEN THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS AND FIONA ROBERTSON CEO, SQA ON 26 MAY 2022

In attendance: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Fiona Robertson, Laura Murdoch (SG), [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (SG), [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (SG).

1. National Qualifications delivery

Ms Robertson reported that the exam diet had gone very smoothly to date with good feedback from centres and a clear direction on the part of the system as a whole to support learners. SQA had provided more support and engagement compared with a pre-pandemic exam diet to mitigate the risk of unfamiliarity caused by the disruption over the past two years. Feedback suggested that stakeholders considered the exams to be fair.

Ms Robertson noted the contingencies and scenario planning that SQA had undertaken to prepare for the risk of increased volumes of Exceptional Circumstances requests and appeals, and the additional resource associated with that preparation. To date, the number of exceptional circumstance requests have been within normal planning assumptions.

Operational guidance on appeals will be distributed to centres in the first half of next week. Communication with learners on appeals will follow in June. Grade boundary meetings commence on 6 June and end on 8 July.

Cabinet Secretary asked whether there was any early indication of how many appeals would be received. Ms Robertson indicated it was too early to tell – the earliest indication would be in late July.

Action 1: SQA to keep SG officials sighted on communications relevant to the exam diet in the run-up to Results Day.

2. Education Reform – next steps

Cabinet Secretary asked about progress in discussions about governance for the reform programme. Ms Robertson affirmed SQA's commitment to education reform and acknowledged that responsibility for leading the work rests with SG. She noted the importance of being clear about what can be achieved in the timeframe set out, given SQA's responsibility to continue delivering business as normal, and that there were some genuine delivery challenges to work through. However, she welcomed SG acknowledgement of SQA skills and advice as important contributions to the process.

Cabinet Secretary noted that given the timeframes involved, it was important to progress onto the programme itself and engage the governance arrangements which were now in place.

3. The Hayward Review

Cabinet Secretary noted that she was pleased to see SQA are closely involved in the work of Professor Hayward. Ms Robertson noted that Professor Hayward should be commended for the new approach she was taking but that some areas still needed clearer articulation.

Cabinet Secretary said she was also interested to see how the approach would work and that she was impressed by Professor Hayward's ambition to have a genuine debate about qualifications and her intention to seek consensus.

ENCLOSURE

NOTE OF MEETING BETWEEN THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS AND FIONA ROBERTSON CEO, SQA ON 27 JULY 2022

In attendance: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Fiona Robertson, Clare Hicks (SG), [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (SG).

1. NQ Delivery update

The Cabinet Secretary opened the meeting seeking a general update on the SQA's preparations for Results Day on 9 August. Ms Robertson reported that the delivery programme is progressing smoothly, with results processing being finalised, and with the final testing around the appeals process for 2022 completed. SQA is well prepared for the delivery of results and ready to carry out appeals. Learners will receive appeals process information leaflets shortly.

The SQA were preparing for the potential volume of appeals noting the short window for priority appeals to meet UCAS deadlines. The overall volume of appeals would not become clear until after results were published.

The SQA, were preparing communications material for partners and the media to explain the approach to grading being taking in 2022, including pre-briefing with stakeholders and the media.

It was agreed that technical information in advance of results which can help prepare the ground for the different approach in 2022 in comparison with 2021 and 2020 would be helpful.

Action 1: SQA and Scottish Government officials will continue to engage on arrangements for Results Day including on the Cabinet Secretary's visit. Results meetings will take place next week.

2. SQA Pay and Industrial Action

The Cabinet Secretary noted the recent TU rejection of the SQA's pay offer. Ms Robertson updated that there is currently an internal dispute process ongoing. Having provided a pay offer which maximised the pay flexibility available under Public Sector Pay policy, the SQA would now provide an additional business case to the SG sponsor team in order to seek approval to make an enhanced offer to resolve the dispute.

Cabinet Secretary asked if the appeals process could be affected by any possible industrial action. Ms Robertson indicated that due to timelines and formal notice required for industrial action, priority appeals were not likely to be affected however other appeals and 2023 could be affected.

Action 2: Ms Robertson confirmed that a business case will be sent to Scottish Government regarding the pay dispute.

3. Delivery Board for the new Qualifications Body

Cabinet Secretary asked for an update on appointment of Programme Director and the Delivery Board. Ms Roberson updated that invites to the Delivery Board have been issued and the first meeting should take place after Results day in week commencing 15 or 22

August. In seeking confirmation of progress in appointing the Programme Director, Ms Robertson noted progress had been made and she expected to confirm Programme Director nomination with SG officials very shortly.

Cabinet Secretary asked if there is any further assistance Scottish Government can provide at this time. Ms Robertson confirmed that a business case on resourcing still progressing. Additional resources were required to progress reform work alongside ongoing delivery. Scottish Government officials are working through the business case on resourcing to support reform.

Action 3: Ms Robertson will update Cabinet Secretary on the nomination for Programme Director.

4. Hayward Review

Cabinet Secretary noted that Professor Louise Hayward's Independent Review is making progress and that she is grateful for the SQA's engagement with this work. Ms Robertson confirmed SQA has established one of the Collaborative Community Groups. Ms Robertson would also be meeting Prof Hayward later in the week. She stressed the importance of learning from the development and implementation of CfE. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed she continues to stress this in her engagements with Prof Hayward.

5. AOB

Ms Robertson noted the continuing uncertainty for the future location of the SQA accreditation team as a final policy decision has not yet been taken following Prof Muir's report. Ms Somerville acknowledged this decision is outstanding and that she has asked for advice to inform her decision by the end of August and recognises the importance of this to SQA staff.

ENCLOSURE

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 06 September 2022 16:48

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
<CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Note of Meeting between Cabinet Secretary and Fiona Robertson 27 July 2022

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team [in line with SG records management policy.](#)

Many thanks Claire, Ms Somerville is content with the note of this meeting.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

T: 0131 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | M: [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | E: cabsecES@gov.scot

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

Sent: 05 September 2022 10:23

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <[Redacted s38(1)(b)]>

Cc: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: Note of Meeting between Cabinet Secretary and Fiona Robertson 27 July 2022

Good morning,

Attached is a note of the meeting between Cabinet Secretary and Fiona Robertson on 27 July.

Please let me know if you have any comments and I'll send the final version to Fiona.

Best wishes,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] Senior Policy Manager | National Qualifications Team | Curriculum and Qualifications Division | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

Email: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot.