

202300343877 - INDEX OF ENCLOSURES

FOI request 1: The total number of students with conditional offers who were not able to secure a place [at university] in the current academic year – the Scottish Government does not hold this information.

FOI request 2: Copies of material regarding the meeting from before it took place (this would include communication about the upcoming meeting as well as documents such as briefings and analysis) – Can be found within enclosures 01, 02, 03, 04 and 04.1.

FOI request 3: Copies of any material (other than that already released to me) from during or after the event (this would include personal/handwritten notes, any other minutes, recordings, subsequent email exchanges etc) – Can be found within enclosures 05, 06, 07, 08 and 09.

No.	Description	Date	Explanation of redactions	Clause
01	Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High	12 August 2022 at 14:45	Personal Information Free and Frank Views	S38(1)(b) S30(b)(ii)
02	Email RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals.	30 August 2022 at 17:31	Personal Information Free and Frank Views	S38(1)(b) S30(b)(ii)
03	HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE	27 October 2022 at 18:38	Personal Information	S38(1)(b)
04	Email RE: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers – Meeting Invite and Paper.	1 November 2022 at 15:14	Personal Information Free and Frank Views	S38(1)(b) S30(b)(ii)
04.1	Attachment: Word Document - Priority Appeals and Conditional HE Places for Students.			
05	Attachment: Word Document - Priority Appeals Mtg with SQA – 3/11/22 – Handwritten notes typed.	3 November 2022 at (time of meeting)	Personal Information Free and Frank Views	S38(1)(b) S30(b)(ii)

06	Email RE: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers – Actions.	4 November 2022 at 16:16	Personal Information	S38(1)(b)
07	FW: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers – Actions response	7 November 2022 at 13:08	Personal Information	S38(1)(b)
08	Priority Appeals – Meeting between SQA, US, SG on 3 November 2022 – Brief note of meeting.	22 November 2022 at 13:12	Personal Information Free and Frank Views	S38(1)(b) S30(b)(ii)
09	ADES Curriculum, Assessment & Qualifications Network – Scottish Government Update	2 December 2022	Personal Information Information out of scope	S38(1)(b) -

Enclosure 01 – Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

From: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Sent: 12 August 2022 14:45

To: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Hi Roddy

Makes sense for you guys to update off the back of the letter and the reply.

I think key points from the SQA side to reflect (as per [Redacted s38(1)(b)]'s email below) are:

- SQA's standard approach is to release all the priority appeal outcomes to centres at the same time (on 5 September), [Redacted S30(b)(ii)].
- [Redacted S30(b)(ii)]

But if you need anything else for the update, please just shout.

Thanks

Laura

From: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>

Sent: 12 August 2022 14:38

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

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Laura/[Redacted s38(1)(b)] will you update Ministers or do you want us to do it on back of the letter and reply from St Andrews, SFC have now been in touch with the 3 institutions for further info and we have some info back but we will need to digest what they are saying in terms of next steps

Roddy

Dr Roddy Macdonald
Head of Higher Education and Science Division
Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate
5 Atlantic Quay
Glasgow G2 8LU

0300 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]0300 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)]



From: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>
Sent: 12 August 2022 13:49
To: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Yes I think worth updating the Cab Sec and Mr Hepburn [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Clare

From: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Sent: 12 August 2022 13:31

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Roddy/Clare – do we need to send a short note to Cab Sec and Minister for HE/FE to make them aware?

Laura

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

Sent: 12 August 2022 13:22

To: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Hi Roddy/Clare

To confirm that I have spoken with Jean Blair in SQA this morning. She indicated that she has raised with Fiona Robertson [Redacted S30(b)(ii)].

I confirmed that a letter had been issued on Tuesday, and that we'd had one reply setting out the 31 August rationale. I advised that we were in discussion, and were exploring whether we could approach the relevant institutions informally to discuss the position.

Key points from SQA perspective:

- [Redacted S30(b)(ii)]
- [Redacted S30(b)(ii)]
- [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

- [Redacted S30(b)(ii)]

A couple of queries were raised during the call:

- [Redacted S30(b)(ii)]
- [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

We agreed to keep in touch on the matter and I suggested that, in the meantime, SQA advise any learners that approach them that the position is being explored but that they should discuss their options with the relevant university and/or UCAS.

Best regards

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)], [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Education Reform Directorate, Scottish Government, [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

✉ email: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot 📱 mobile: 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)] 🌐 url: www.gov.scot

Please note my working pattern is 9.30am to 4.45pm Mon to Thursday and 9.30am to 3.30pm Friday.

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 11 August 2022 14:21

To: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

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

Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Hi all

[Redacted s38(1)(b)], and I had a call earlier on the NQ priority appeals and HE entry concerns raised by SQA, and a summary of the discussion and the latest position is outlined below.

- The letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to University Principals asking for assistance in holding places for students who are appealing their exam results was issued on 9 August.
- There has been one formal response from Prof Dame Sally Mapstone on behalf of St Andrews to state that they can hold places to 31 August but not beyond that time. Please note that Prof Mapstone is also the convenor for Universities Scotland.
- We are aware from SQA reports that Glasgow and Edinburgh universities are taking a similar approach.

Conversations with SQA have confirmed that:

- Their priority appeals deadlines are 16 August and 19 August for individual students and learning centres respectively. This means that their timeframe is very tight already in terms of making decisions.
- Their deadline for providing priority appeals outcomes to centres by 5 September was arrived at in line with the UCAS clearing deadlines.
- They are receiving communications from students raising concerns around universities setting an earlier deadline of 31 August for confirming offers.

Next steps:

- Number of priority appeals is not yet known, and unclear whether SQA will have information on which universities learners are applying to – NQ policy officials to investigate what information will be available and when.
- HE policy officials to consider whether the university funding model would allow for flex in their number of acceptances to allow students who successfully appeal to start their studies this year.
- HE policy officials to consider whether individual contact with institutions would be helpful.

Possible lines for students:

- Any concerns regarding entry to your university course should be discussed with your preferred institution or UCAS.
- If your appeal is successful, but your preferred institution has an earlier closing date, then you may have other options such as a deferred placement for study of the subject you have chosen at your preferred institution next year.
- UCAS can assist if you wish to explore your options, including whether to study for a different subject, for a different qualification or at a different institution.

Best regards

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)], [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Education Reform Directorate, Scottish Government, [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ
✉ email: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot 📞 mobile: 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)] 🌐 url: www.gov.scot

Please note my working pattern is 9.30am to 4.45pm Mon to Thursday and 9.30am to 3.30pm Friday.

From: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>

Sent: 11 August 2022 10:58

To: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

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

s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Clare that is what St Andrews for one are suggesting, which is what has happened to some applicants in previous years

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]– do you want to get a half hour this afternoon so we can review where things are?

Roddy

From: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

Sent: 11 August 2022 10:54

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

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

Can they offer deferred places if appeals come after 31 Aug?

Clare

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

Sent: 11 August 2022 10:43

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

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students appealing results - Priority: High

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

<DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ)
<Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of
Advanced Learning and Science
<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>

Subject: Letter for Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to send to all
University Principals encouraging them to hold conditional places for students
appealing results - Priority: High

PS,

**Priority: high. It would be useful if the letter could be sent out today given that
SQA exam results have been issued today.**

Please find attached a draft letter for Ms Somerville to send to all University
Principals and Universities Scotland encouraging them to keep an offer available for
any young person undergoing a priority appeal until the process is complete on the
5th September in line with UCAS deadlines.

The letter has been drafted following a meeting with SQA around issues relating to
today's results. Some students will make appeals if their results are lower than
teacher estimates. Where the results impact on the student taking up a conditional
offer at university these will be dealt with as a priority. SQA have committed to
having these appeals concluded by 5th September so that students whose grades
are adjusted positively can take up their conditional offers.

For this system to work perfectly, this requires the University to keep the conditional
offer open until the student has the result of their appeal. We understand from SQA
that, in previous years, this has not always been the case and young people have
found themselves having the required grades on appeal but no course to go to.

SQA asked if a letter from Scottish Government could go to Universities Scotland to
encourage universities to keep an offer available for any young person undergoing a
priority appeal until the process is complete on the 5th September in line with UCAS
deadlines.

Please let me know if you require any further assistance or email addresses for all
University Principals.

Kind regards

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

I am currently working from home, so please contact my mobile if you need to speak to me

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.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] Equalities and Student Wellbeing | Higher Education and Science Division |
t: 0131 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (ext [Redacted s38(1)(b)]): 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)] | e: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Advanced Learning and Science Directorate, [Redacted s38(1)(b)], 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow G2 8LU
Working days Mon – Wed 7am – 5pm Thurs 7am – 12pm

Enclosure 02 - Email RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

From: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Sent: 30 August 2022 17:31
To: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Thanks for the update Roddy – much appreciated. A ‘wash up’ with key actors sounds like a very sensible idea. Given the deadline SQA is working to for priority appeals is a UK-wide UCAS one, rather than one SQA set, I would personally be interested in better understanding why these issues have arisen (albeit on a small scale).

Best wishes

Laura

From: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>
Sent: 30 August 2022 17:24
To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]/Laura

Have spoken to Universities Scotland, QMU and Edinburgh University today to reinforce Cab Sec letter and get updates

General message is universities are working hard to be as flexible as can on priority appeals. Applicants should be keeping in touch with admissions offices.

QMU term starts next week but they should be able to squeeze in any last people with appeal successes, they noted some of their popular health related/nursing courses are actually in clearing this year which is unusual following real high demand on such courses in previous years.

Edinburgh have said they can wait until after priority appeals decided in the case of most courses

The problem areas in Edinburgh are medicine, law and vet which may need a deferral place into next year as very high demand

Both these institutions said only small numbers relative to the overall number of applicants had contacted them to say they had appeal in with SQA (35 in Edinburgh's case)

Napier to call me back, will feed in any more if relevant from them.

Partners in the sector are doing what they can to manage this situation but we need to have a round-table with key actors (SQA, US, institutions) in the coming weeks to ascertain how this mismatch in dates can be avoided next year if at all possible.

Roddy

Dr Roddy Macdonald
Head of Higher Education and Science Division
Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate
5 Atlantic Quay
Glasgow G2 8LU

0300 244 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

PA/Divisonal Admin: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]0300 244[Redacted s38(1)(b)]



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

Sent: 29 August 2022 11:13

To: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>

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

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Morning Laura

Roddy (copied) will be making the calls today and will be able to revert with an update later today.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Sent: 29 August 2022 09:29

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

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

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Morning [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

I was just wondering if there was any update re: the email below?

Thanks

Laura

From: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ)

Sent: 25 August 2022 17:32

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

To confirm, SQA has advised the Scottish HEIs asking them to turnaround some specific priority appeals ahead of the UCAS deadline are:

- Edinburgh University
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Queen Margaret University

I'd be very grateful if you could confirm when the calls have been made, and advise of any feedback/response.

Best wishes

Laura

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

Sent: 25 August 2022 12:41

To: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Adding [Redacted s38(1)(b)] to copy list – if you could include [Redacted s38(1)(b)] in response please

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 25 August 2022 12:36

To: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>;
Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted
s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura)
(Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Thanks Clare

If you let us know what institutions, we'll take it from there.

Roddy is back on Monday.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 August 2022 12:15

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science
<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted
s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>; Murdoch L (Laura)
(Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Thanks [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

I think we need senior colleagues who regularly interact with these institutions to follow up and again restate the request. We can confirm tomorrow which institutions in particular are causing concern.

Clare

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

Sent: 25 August 2022 12:12

To: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>;
Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; [Redacted
s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Clare

Picking up in Roddy's absence.

Once we became aware of this issue, the Cab Sec wrote to all HEI University Principals on 9 August asking them to keep conditional places open, where possible, until SQA priority appeals process completed by 5 Sept.

We have also engaged closely with SFC and Universities Scotland.

Some institutions, such as Queen Margaret University flagged a difficulty as their term starts on 5 September. St Andrews also said they could only hold until 31 August due to term start date.

While each institution runs their admission process autonomously, they have advised they will be as flexible as possible, holding places until 31 August, and beyond, where possible. Where this isn't possible, and an applicant successfully appeals, they will be offered deferred entry

We also unpicked the reason behind the apparent disconnect between 31st August cut off dates set by institutions and SQA appeals results date of 5 September.

31st August was the normal cut-off date for appeals until an exception was made for the years in which SQA used Centre-Assessed Grades, which were expected to lead to an increased volume of appeals.

In previous exchanges between US and SQA in May this year, US flagged some universities wouldn't be able to hold places for appeal applicants, given the early start of term for some subjects/institutions.

SQA advised, given timing was already tight, that an earlier deadline wouldn't be possible.

Not sure what more we can do to assist in the matter at this time - happy to assist if you think there is? Have copied in [Redacted s38(1)(b)] in my team who leads on this matter for us.

Regards
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Director of Advanced Learning and Science
Sent: 25 August 2022 10:43
To: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Clare,

Copying in [Redacted s38(1)(b)] who should be able to discuss.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Directorate of Advanced Learning and Science

The Scottish Government, [Redacted s38(1)(b)], 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU

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



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: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 August 2022 10:27

To: Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Stephen

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Clare

From: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 August 2022 10:13

To: Director for Education Reform <DirectorforEducationReform@gov.scot>

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

Subject: FW: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Clare

I can pick up later this afternoon with Roddy, but to be aware and in case you want to/have the opportunity to give Stephen a call on this.

Cheers

Laura

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 25 August 2022 10:01

To: Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Laura,

Hope this email finds you well.

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Your help with this would be much appreciated.

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:**
<http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: Jean Blair
Sent: 23 August 2022 20:53
To: 'Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot' <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Laura,

Thanks for your email.

There's some release required for the priority for those limited number of subjects which require face to face to look at physical evidence, such as Art & Design.

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Regards

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:**
<http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Sent: 23 August 2022 17:14
To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Jean,

Thanks for the update – as you say, significantly higher numbers than the planning assumption. Are there particular challenges you can foresee where we (SG) might be able to help? We are keen to do so if we can. For example, if there are any issues in getting sufficient appointees released within the necessary timescales etc

Happy to have a quick chat if helpful

Cheers

Laura

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 23 August 2022 16:41
To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

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

The planned number was 600 and we would normally be sitting around 400. So yes, the number is more than we planned for, but we have been working carefully through the numbers and on paper, have sufficient experienced appointees to turnaround these appeals to meet the UCAS deadline.

However, it probably goes without saying that it will remain challenging.

Regards

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **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 s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 23 August 2022 16:16
To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Jean

Thanks for confirming the numbers. I note that, understandably given the approach this year, they are substantially higher than in 'normal' exam years. Is this within the planned for numbers this year or do they cause any concern in terms of capacity to deliver within the current deadlines?

Best regards
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 22 August 2022 16:49
To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Good afternoon [Redacted s38(1)(b)],

Apologies for the delay getting back to you today. I've been chairing meetings for most of the day.

1374 priority appeals were validated by centres by the deadline. 73 were still to progress and we have been chasing these today and I know making progress.

Please see below the contacts that have been made in relation to centres asking for early release of Priority Results before 5th Sept (6th sept via UCAS)

7 in total

Date of release requested	Requests
31 st August	5 ([Redacted s38(1)(b)])
18 TH August	1 ([Redacted s38(1)(b)])
2 nd September	1 ([Redacted s38(1)(b)])

Kind regards

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **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 s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 22 August 2022 12:05
To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Jean

Further to our recent discussions, and now that the deadline for submitting priority appeals has passed, are you able to confirm what the final priority appeals numbers are, and whether you have managed to capture any intelligence on numbers of learners and their institutions where the timescales for issuing the outcomes may be an issue?

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Best regards

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Education Reform Directorate, Scottish Government, [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Please note my working pattern is 9.30am to 4.45pm Mon to Thursday and 9.30am to 3.30pm Friday.

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 16 August 2022 10:22
To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

That's correct, Fiona.

All awarding bodies negotiated an extra day with UCAS – it's a UCAS deadline.

Regards

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:**
<http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

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

Sent: 16 August 2022 09:57

To: Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot;
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Thanks for this Laura

This is set in the context of an SQA timeline when in fact it's the UCAS deadline that we are all working to. Jean or I would be happy to discuss further with you and ALS colleagues if helpful.

Fiona

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

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

From: Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Sent: 16 August 2022 09:19

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair
<Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot;
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Morning Both,

Thanks for outlining the position. The letter that Cab Sec sent to Scottish universities last Tuesday is attached for info.

Best wishes

Laura

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 16 August 2022 08:56
To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Laura

I agree with Jean. [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]
Happy to be involved in any further conversations, if helpful.

In the meantime, could we see a copy of the letter that the Cab Sec sent on this issue (last week)? Would be helpful to see.

Many thanks.

Fiona

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

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

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 15 August 2022 16:32
To: 'Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot' <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Good afternoon Laura,

Thanks for your email.

I hadn't appreciated that there was any doubt about this query when it was raised by [Redacted s38(1)(b)] during our call. I thought I was clear that we could not process any urgent appeals earlier than the agreed date.

In this exceptional year for the appeals process, we have been clear that the ask of SQA to turnaround alternative evidence presents significant challenge for priority appeals. Under Post Results Service, we are already in receipt of the evidence to review. This is not the case this year.

I should also say that we sought the views of a broad range of stakeholders on the appetite of the system having to handle requests for appeals during their summer holidays. In fact, two local authorities don't return until after the closing date for appeals. The deadline for appeals is the same across the RoUK this year and we managed to negotiate an extra day with UCAS, the only means by which we share results with institutions.

We are dependent on centres to advise on conditional offers. SQA does not have sight of these ahead of the requests which centres have to validate at the same time as they submit their learners' evidence digitally. We don't know the volume of appeals at this stage and of course, release of appointees has still to be granted by centres. It would be foolhardy for SQA to commit to processing appeals from these three institutions with such unknowns. I would also be very concerned about SQA being seen to give priority to learners in those institutions over other institutions when we discussed and agreed the deadlines system-wide. As well as the significant logistical challenge and risk associated with trying to prioritise within priority, I think there would be perceptions of unfairness to other learners who are all anxious to secure their place.

There is already too much risk with this process and I would be very concerned about adding to this in the way suggested here. The turnaround will be more stressful this year because of the nature of the process, the need to assess alternative evidence and our dependency on appointee release – more so than in previous years.

As I said to [Redacted s38(1)(b)], the system agreed to these dates and it needs Scottish Government colleagues to ensure that Scottish learners are not disadvantaged because of timescales outwith our control.

Copying in Fiona whom I know shares my concerns.

Regards

Jean

Jean Blair
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 [Redacted s38(1)(b)] | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 August 2022 15:56
To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: FOR RESPONSE: conditional places for students and priority appeals

Hi Jean

Following your conversation with [Redacted s38(1)(b)] on Friday morning, is there any update on whether or not it would be operationally feasible for SQA to process and release the outcome of priority appeals relevant to conditional offers associated with St Andrew's, Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities earlier than others (i.e. by 31 August rather than 5 September)? Is there a way of SQA even identifying learners whose priority appeals relate to conditional offers at these universities?

ALS colleagues are in contact with Universities Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and the individual institutions to try and ascertain the rationale behind the 31 August cut off. Ministers have been made aware of the issue.

Many thanks

Laura

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Enclosure 03 – HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]
Sent: 27 October 2022 18:38
To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Please see below.

Could you reach out to US tomorrow and check with [Redacted s38(1)(b)] whether there is anyone else in US she'd want to attend this meeting. (I'm not even sure exactly what [Redacted s38(1)(b)] remit is so worth tactfully finding that out too – to ensure she is the right person to attend! – I haven't had any previous dealing with [Redacted s38(1)(b)].)

Senior phase colleagues – [Redacted s38(1)(b)] and [Redacted s38(1)(b)] - are keen to get this meeting set up but important that we have the right people in attendance. Without meaning to sound gradist, they'd need to be senior enough to be able to take forward any changes etc. arising from this work if timetabling re. appeals needs to change in the sector.

I don't have a number for [Redacted s38(1)(b)] but her email will most likely be [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk

If you get names tomorrow of US attendees, along with an indication of availability, grateful if you could send that info. over to [Redacted s38(1)(b)] to set up a meeting. Any meeting would need to suit calendars for [Redacted s38(1)(b)] and I too (so avoiding Wednesdays and Fridays)

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]
Sent: 27 October 2022 18:28
To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE

Apologies [Redacted s38(1)(b)] – this fell off the radar amongst my car crash of an inbox

I wanted to check with US who would be best placed to attend – I'll ask someone in my team to do that tomorrow and we'll get back to you asap after that.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

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

Sent: 27 October 2022 17:43

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

Subject: RE: HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Are you able to come back on my email below so I can pin down this slot with SQA?

Many thanks,

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 24 October 2022 16:47

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

Subject: RE: HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE

Thanks [Redacted s38(1)(b)]. I have added [Redacted s38(1)(b)] to the invite.

I'm just back from leave so checking on a couple of points before finally confirming the slot. [Redacted s38(1)(b)] had flagged that Universities Scotland were to be invited to this meeting as well – [Redacted s38(1)(b)] I think. Is there anyone else that should be included and should the invite come from yourselves or are you content for me to liaise with them to confirm if the 3 November slot is suitable?

Best regards

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

-----Original Appointment-----

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

Sent: 24 October 2022 13:10

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Subject: Accepted: HOLD for meeting with SQA on priority appeals and conditional places for HE

When: 03 November 2022 15:00-16:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where:

Hi [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Could you invite [Redacted s38(1)(b)] (copied) to this meeting too please. [Redacted s38(1)(b)] joined ALS today as University [Redacted s38(1)(b)].
[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – I can fill you in on the background when we chat this afternoon.

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Enclosure 04 - Email RE: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers – Meeting invite and paper

-----Original Appointment-----

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

Sent: 01 November 2022 15:14

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; Jean Blair; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; Macdonald R (Roddy); [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; ([Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk; vpspp@st-andrews.ac.uk

Subject: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers

When: 03 November 2022 15:00-16:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Please accept this diary request for an online meeting between Scottish Government officials, SQA and Universities Scotland to discuss timescales around priority appeals for the National Qualifications and HE deadlines for finalising conditional offers.

Outline agenda below and background paper attached.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Discussion of background (see paper)
3. Identification of potential solutions/mitigations
4. Any Other Business

Kind regards

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)], [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Education Reform Directorate, Scottish Government, [Redacted s38(1)(b)], Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

✉ email: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot 📞 mobile: 07[Redacted s38(1)(b)] 🌐 url: www.gov.scot

Please note my working pattern is 9.30am to 4.45pm Mon to Thursday and 9.30am to 3.30pm Friday.

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Enclosure 04.1 – Attachment: Word Document - Priority Appeals and Conditional HE Places for Students

Priority Appeals and Conditional HE Places for Students

Purpose of meeting

To discuss SQA priority appeals timescales (reached in line with UCAS clearing deadlines) and earlier internal deadlines set by some higher education (HE) institutions for finalising conditional offers, and determine what can be done to minimise the impact on learners awaiting appeals outcomes going forward.

Background

As part of SQA's appeals service, a priority appeals process operates for learners requiring the outcome of an appeal for immediate progression to university, college, training or employment.

The timescales for outcomes of these priority appeals to be finalised is arrived at each year in line with the UCAS clearing deadline. In 2022, this was 6 September. This date is determined by UCAS and is the same date for all UK Awarding Bodies.

However, we are aware that some HE institutions set earlier deadlines to meet their internal processes in line with individual term start dates.

This differential in timescales caused concern for learners and their parents who were awaiting appeals that were required for conditional offers. There was an increase in correspondence on this issue this year, with some applicants indicating that they missed out on preferred courses or had to defer their place until next year.

While many institutions aimed to provide flexibility around entry requirements and/or deadlines where priority appeals were being progressed, it is recognised that there were challenges for some universities, particularly for high demand courses including medicine, law and vet.

Particular challenges around appeals in 2022

In recognition of the disruption last year, SQA's appeals approach went further than in recent pre-pandemic years. It built on the approach undertaken historically in Scotland, taking alternative learner evidence into account in the appeals process. This comprehensive appeals process was agreed by stakeholders across the education sector and was put in place to ensure fairness and equity for learners.

SQA is dependent on centres to advise on conditional offers when it comes to priority appeals. It does not have sight of these ahead of the requests which centres have to validate at the same time as they submit their learners' evidence digitally. Due to the number of priority appeals and the resources required to progress these, SQA did not have flexibility to process appeals any earlier.

Along with all other 2022 arrangements, SQA will carry out an evaluation of how the Appeals 2022 service performed. The results of this evaluation will play an important part in informing the decisions around what type of service will be taken forward for 2023, and there is an ongoing discussion with stakeholders through the National Qualifications 23 Group about the approach.

Enclosure 05 – Attachment: Word Document - Priority Appeals Mtg with SQA – 3/11/22 – Handwritten notes typed

Priority Appeals Mtg with SQA – 3/11/22

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]- [Redacted s38(1)(b)]
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]– [Redacted s38(1)(b)]
[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – VP USA
[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – SQA
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]– Admiss policy group – Ed + Nap.
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]– US
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]– SQA

22 exams appeals process

Difficulties – Challenges
Establishment final date – before

Jean Blair – this year – still disruption

- Alternative appeals process – safety net for learners (priority appeals)
- Eligibility criteria – estimate in system – had to be higher than exam mark
- Prev years – already had evidence. This year evidence provided by centres.
- 9 August – results – appeals

Many schools did not submit appeals for some time (but by 19 August)

1,420 UCAS – 3-4 times higher than normal.
Deadline 6/9

Appeals outcomes issued today
Evaluation of new process needed – impact on SQA | Schools

Regardless of alternative evidence, still very difficult to meet university acceptance deadline.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

19-6 – appointees consider evidence

Dependencies volume

- Available time
- Return date (school / college)
- Evidence required

Unlikely to be able to change timeline

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] UCAS date – advisory date – was moved by a week. Scottish start earlier so now UCAS date impacted Scotland more.

Right to appeal – could have impact.

Controlled subjects

Some institutions have taken more students – confirming so close to term meant missed uni accommodation.

Processes – difficult for all universities. Better if UCAS went back to 31 August.

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

- Need to support students
- Missing out at beginning (supported start)
- UCAS deadline – red herring – need to have everything done by 31st for pre – week 4 September.

2010 – moved start date forward

Not sure if dates are flexible.

Can reporting dates be brought forward – ID students

JB – don't work with predicted grades – only work with

Process

Appeal – estimates – only there for possible / expected – and allowing eligibility for appeal.

Priority appeals 9-19 – schools not back until 19.

Schools knew through UCAS portal who could go for priority appeal.

Prior to covid

- discussion between school / student
- exam looked at again (fee if no change)
- return could create another set of problems

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

– lessons learned – communications with learners
SQA | HEI – data sharing

i.e. confirmed place but appealing – how does that work?

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – messaging to students

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]R

Difficulty – staff in schools etc. – having to go in over summer for dates.

1,400 appeals – how many successful? ? – out today.

- How many got place?
- SQA don't have that information
- Would UCAS know
- Or just university

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] – universities very sympathetic – but rely on being told they are in this process – really important to tell universities.

Priority? – for high demand courses etc. (capped numbers)

Traces

This year being evaluated – UCAS / US / Russel Group

- Done by external consultant.

Finish – comms – joint – very important / what data do we have, what data could be shared.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Enclosure 06 – Email RE: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers – Actions

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

Sent: 04 November 2022 16:16

To: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@sqa.org.uk; Macdonald R (Roddy) <Roddy.Macdonald@transport.gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk; [Redacted s38(1)(b)]@universities-scotland.ac.uk; vpspp@st-andrews.ac.uk; Murdoch L (Laura) (Educ) <Laura.Murdoch2@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers

Dear all

Many thanks for coming along to the discussion yesterday on ensuring the choreography of the appeals process after Results Day works for everyone, particularly the learner, and how we can improve things for next year.

Here are the actions I took from the discussion, please let me know if you disagree with anything:

- [Redacted s38(1)(b)] **team** to set up a follow-up meeting at the start of December, also involving UCAS;
- [Redacted s38(1)(b)]/SQA to unpack the timing issue of the appeals process as part of their evaluation work with HE over the coming months and feedback at the next meeting;
- **Everyone** should work together to ensure clear and consistent communication to learners about the appeals process and their role in keeping universities up-to-date if they have appealed their results;
- **Everyone** to consider what information can be shared at what points in the appeals process to ensure the process is as streamlined as possible for the learner and to be discussed at the next meeting.

If I have missed anyone off this email who was at the meeting, please do forward on.

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

[Redacted s38(1)(b)] [Redacted s38(1)(b)] Curriculum and Qualifications | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

Please note: my working hours are Tuesday – Friday. I am currently working from home but am contactable via email or Microsoft Teams.

Remainder of enclosure removed as duplicated in email chain in Enclosure 04.

Enclosure 07 - FW: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers – Actions response

From: [Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 07 November 2022 13:08

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

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

Subject: FW: Meeting with SQA and Universities Scotland about priority appeals and conditional offers

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Can you have a think about how best we can do the communication piece – e.g. an email to Universities Scotland?

Perhaps a link on some student websites such as SIS to the SQA pages?

Thanks

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

Remainder of email chain removed as duplicate of Enclosure 6

Enclosure 08 – Priority Appeals – Meeting between SQA, US, SG on 3 November 2022 – Brief note of meeting

PRIORITY APPEALS

Meeting between SQA, US, SG, 3 November 2022

Attendees

SG

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

SQA

Jean Blair

[Redacted s38(1)(b)]

US

Nazira Karodia

Ester Ruskuk

Kirsty Conlan

Key Points from Meeting

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss the difficulties and challenges encountered this year in relation to the exam results appeals process. Although there was a priority appeals process in place to prioritise those students who had submitted an appeal, the outcome of which would decide whether the student had achieved the results to attend the university of their choice, the deadlines for the appeals results and the start dates of various universities and courses did not align and this caused issues for some students with conditional offers who were not able to secure a place in the current academic year.

SQA set out the key elements of their priority appeals process for 2022:

- In order to submit an appeal, eligibility criteria had to be met. In particular an estimate of exam result had to be in the system and this had to be higher than the exam mark achieved.
- Schools had to submit the appeal by 19 August (the submission start date was results day – 9 August).
- Schools had to provide digitised evidence, gathered throughout the year, to support the appeal.
- Difficulties with regards to this tight timeline was compounded as many schools were not back by 19 August so meeting this deadline was difficult. SQA had many discussions with teaching unions etc about staff working during the summer holiday in order to ensure the 19 August deadline was achieved.
- By accessing the UCAS portal, schools could establish which students would require a priority appeal which could speed things up a bit but this was not done by all schools.

- In addition, SQA had 1,420 appeals to process, 3-4 times more than the norm or expected. It was not clear why that was the case and whether it would be indicative of appeals volumes in future academic years. [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]
- In previous years, schools did not have to provide the additional evidence. Instead the exam paper was re-examined to check that the correct grade had been given. [Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Colleagues in attendance from HEIs confirmed that many institutions were commencing their academic years from an earlier date than in the past. From around 2010 Scottish courses have started earlier to assist students e.g. to ensure able to finish first semester prior to Christmas so students can timeously travel home, get pre-Christmas holidays. Start date moved from early October to early September. – meaning many institutions required confirmation of student places by 31 August, one week prior to the UCAS clearing deadline.

[Redacted s30(b)(ii)]

Conclusions Reached/Next Steps

- [Redacted s30(b)(ii)] All attendees felt, however, that clear, effective communication with students was essential to mitigating problems in future years and managing expectations. HEIs indicated that, where students with conditional offers who did not obtain their expected grades contacted them proactively to keep HEIs advised of their situation, they would always strive to be flexible and it was important for students to receive that message.
- All agreed that timescales tight all round and that want learner to be there from the start of their HE education experience – for student welfare, getting accommodation, widening access agenda etc.
- Noted SQA & US worked together during covid, so can do so again.
- SQA advised that the appeals process for 2022 was being evaluated in partnership with UCAS, Russell Group and Universities Scotland. This would inform decisions on the appeals process for 2023.
- It was agreed by all that all attendees should reconvene for a further meeting in December, ahead of SQA finalising plans for the appeals process for 2023.
- Also agreed that it would be useful to have UCAS in attendance at the next/future meeting(s).

**ADES CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT & QUALIFICATIONS
NETWORK**

2 December 2022

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATE

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

[Redacted – information not in scope]

Priority Appeals and Conditional University Offers

Officials from the National Qualifications Team and the HE Policy team met with SQA and Universities Scotland (US) on 3 November to discuss challenges that had been reported by some learners in cases where the deadlines for the priority appeals results and the start dates of various universities and courses did not align. This caused issues for some students with conditional offers who were not able to secure a place in the current academic year.

Both SQA and US expressed a commitment to work together with SG to ensure clear and consistent communication to learners about the appeals process in future years, and clarifying the importance of learners keeping universities up-to-date if they have appealed their results. A further meeting will be held with SQA and US in December ahead of details of the appeals process for 2023-24 being finalised, to which UCAS will also be invited.

Contact: [Redacted s38(1)(b)], *HE Policy and Governance*
[Redacted s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

[Redacted – information not in scope]