

5 October 2006

To: Head of Centres offering National Qualifications

Cc: SQA Co-ordinators, Directors of Education/SCIS
Scottish Executive, Advisory Council, Qualifications
Committee and Key stakeholders

Action by Recipient
Response required
✓ Note and pass on
None — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

Review of Estimates, Derived Grades and Appeals

SQA has a commitment to the continuous improvement of its qualifications and systems. As part of our improvement programme we have recently completed research into our procedures for estimates, Derived Grades and appeals for National Qualifications. I am writing to update you on the outcomes of this work.

The key finding is that Course awards made on the basis of candidate evidence (either through Course assessments or appeals evidence) are more reliable and accurate measures of candidate performance than awards made on the basis of the Derived Grades procedure, which are determined using a statistical process.

The report of the *Review of Estimates, Derived Grades and Appeals* can be found on our website (www.sqa.org.uk).

In order to ensure the standards and currency of National Qualifications, from this session 2006/07, the appeals process based on candidate evidence will be retained while the statistical component of the present system (the Derived Grades procedure) will be withdrawn. This will mean that in future all SQA Course awards will be based on evidence of candidates' work generated through either Course assessment or the appeals process.

We will continue to work with teachers, lecturers and partners to enhance the understanding of standards. The revised publication, *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (to be published in November 2006) will assist with this work. We also plan to set up a stakeholder group to advise on the further development of the understanding standards programme.

I have copied this letter to your SQA Co-ordinator for information.

Yours faithfully

Tom Drake
Interim Chief Executive