

External Assessment Appeals for National Qualifications

Guidance on providing a written explanation when submitting Appeals for groups of candidates

Background

For the vast majority of National Qualifications, grading is based on candidate performance in an external assessment event, usually an examination, which assesses candidate abilities against the grade descriptions for the Course concerned. An important aspect of external assessments is that they require candidates to demonstrate an ability to integrate and retain knowledge and skills relevant to the course concerned. The grading of candidate performance using agreed criteria for the same external assessment under the same conditions for all candidates sets a national standard which maintains the reliability, validity and credibility of National Qualifications in Scotland.

Notwithstanding the above, we are aware that incidents which can have a detrimental effect on candidate performance in an external assessment do occur and we have processes in place to ensure that all candidates are treated in a fair and consistent manner. These include our Absentee Process and Invigilator Report System. These processes enable us to take action prior to certification to award appropriate grades to candidates whose performance has been affected by circumstances which prevented them from demonstrating their true abilities in an external assessment.

Appeals process

The Appeals process is the final stage of awarding grades to candidates. It is designed to provide an opportunity for individual candidates who, for exceptional reasons, performed significantly below the expected level of performance on the day of an external assessment and whose circumstance was not addressed via the processes which took place prior to certification.

In recent years Examiners have expressed concern when evidence to support Appeals has been submitted for significant proportions of cohorts. Reliability is a fundamental requirement of evidence submitted to support an Appeal and this could be in question where, for example, a large proportion of one cohort achieved significantly different results for centre-based assessments compared with results achieved under externally assessed conditions. Examiners are at liberty to refuse an upgrade where they have doubts over the reliability of the evidence submitted for Appeals so they need to be aware of the exceptional circumstances which affected candidate performance in order to make an informed decision.

Providing an explanation when submitting Appeals for groups of candidates

Given the concerns detailed above, it is considered best practice for centres to provide an explanation for significant differences in candidate performance, between centre-based assessment and external assessment, when you are submitting Appeals for groups of candidates in a single cohort. It is strongly recommended that centres take this opportunity to provide details about the circumstances which affected candidate performance to assure Examiners that the evidence submitted is a reliable indication of candidate ability. A valid explanation provided by the centre will assist Examiners with their decision making and potentially avoid unnecessary delays as any doubts regarding the reliability of evidence can be addressed at an early stage.

Further information

Comprehensive information about all aspects of Appeals is available in the publication *Estimates, Absentees and External Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* which can be accessed on the SQA website on www.sqa.org.uk.



NQ APPEALS 2008

«Centre_No_» «Centre_Name_»

Assessment Instrument

Including details of the source of the prelim questions



NQ APPEALS 2008

«Centre_No_» «Centre_Name_»

Marking Instructions



NQ APPEALS 2008

«Centre_No_» «Centre_Name_»

Cut off scores

SAMPLE