

Key messages from the 2009 exam diet of appeals

1. The number of appeals

There has been an increase in the number of appeals (from 53,886 to 58,497). This represents 5.4% of 2009 entries and a change of 0.6% from the year before. The number of appeals for 2008 and 2009 is detailed in Table 1:

Table 1: Number of appeals for each National Qualification 2008/2009

	2008			2009			% Change
	Entries	Appeals	%	Entries	Appeals	%	
Standard Grade	805,094	27,569	3.4%	743,244	28,755	3.9%	0.4%
Intermediate 1	50,922	2,868	5.6%	52,765	3,028	5.7%	0.1%
Intermediate 2	103,532	5,623	5.4%	110,970	7,385	6.7%	1.2%
Higher	162,069	15,661	9.7%	166,714	17,174	10.3%	0.6%
Advanced Higher	18,854	2,165	11.5%	19,644	2,155	11.0%	-0.5%
Total	1,140,471	53,886	4.7%	1,093,337	58,497	5.4%	0.6%

In response to the small increase in the overall number of appeals, it is worth noting that the appeals system is intended as a safety net for use in exceptional cases. That is, where a candidate has failed to perform, on the day, to the standard expected and for whom the centre has convincing alternative evidence.

2. The success rate of appeals

Overall, under half of all submitted appeals are successful. Higher and Advanced Higher success rates are lower than those for Standard Grade and the Intermediate subjects. The success rates per qualification level are outlined in table 2, below.

Table 2: Success rate of appeals for each National Qualification 2008/9

	2008	2009	% Change
Standard Grade	51.1%	52.5%	1.4%
Intermediate 1	47.7%	49.2%	1.5%
Intermediate 2	43.9%	48.9%	5.0%
Higher	38.1%	40.6%	2.5%
Advanced Higher	39.2%	43.2%	4.0%
Total	45.9%	48.0%	2.1%

Centres use estimates for reasons other than appeals, such as motivating candidates. They should not submit appeals for candidates when they do not have convincing alternative evidence to support the estimate. Centres should always refer to the guide *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals* (which can be found on SQA's website) before deciding whether to appeal for a candidate.

When a large number of appeals is unsuccessful, it highlights opportunities lost for centres and SQA in relation to other uses for the resources currently being channelled into the appeals process.

3. The cost of the appeals process

The total direct costs to SQA of appeals in the last three years is outlined in table 3, below.

Table 3: Cost to SQA of appeals 2007-2009

Year	2007	2008	2009
Cost	£830,836	£697,689	£737,284

This cost does not include centre and SQA staff time in processing appeals and dealing with queries.

4. Late/incomplete appeals

A significant number of centres are still submitting appeals where the evidence is incomplete or missing. In addition, a significant number of centres are still making late appeals submissions. Table 4 below shows the breakdown of late appeals by year.

Table 4: No of late/incomplete appeals by stage 2007-2009

Year	2007	2008	2009
Late Stage 1	949	963	1,479
Late Stage 2	1,016	1,034	2,596
Total	1,965	1,997	4,075

Additional events continued to be required to process late and incomplete appeals in 2009. In order to avoid incurring additional appeals charges and disadvantaging candidates through the delayed issue of appeals results, we would encourage centres to scrutinise their appeals carefully before submitting them, ensuring that submission deadlines are met and that complete evidence (including sources of questions, marking instructions and cut off scores) is provided.