

Key messages from the 2008 exam diet of appeals

1. The number of appeals

There has been a decrease in the number of appeals (from 60,233 to 53,886). This represents 4.7% of 2008 entries. The number of appeals in 2007 and 2008 is detailed below:

| National Qualifications | Number of appeals | | | | Percentage difference |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | 2007 | | 2008 | | |
| | No of appeals | % of entries | No of appeals | % of entries | |
| Standard Grade | 33,622 | 4.0% | 27,569 | 3.4% | -18.0% |
| Intermediate 1 | 2,590 | 5.6% | 2,868 | 5.6% | 10.7% |
| Intermediate 2 | 5,596 | 5.7% | 5,623 | 5.4% | 0.5% |
| Higher | 16,224 | 10.1% | 15,661 | 9.7% | -3.5% |
| Advanced Higher | 2,201 | 12.3% | 2,165 | 11.5% | 1.6% |
| Total | 60,233 | 5.2% | 53,886 | 4.7% | -10.5% |

While the reduction in the overall number of appeals is welcome, it is worth noting that the appeals system is intended as a safety net for use in 'exceptional' cases, 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

Less than half of all submitted appeals are successful (less than 40% for Higher and Advanced Higher). The success rates per qualification level are outlined in the table below:

| National Qualifications | Appeals success rates | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | Percentage point difference |
| Standard Grade | 51.4% | 51.1% | -0.3 |
| Intermediate 1 | 41.9% | 47.7% | 5.8 |
| Intermediate 2 | 41.6% | 43.9% | 2.3 |
| Higher | 37.3% | 38.1% | 0.8 |
| Advanced Higher | 40.4% | 39.2% | -1.2 |
| Total | 45.9% | 45.9% | 0.0 |

Centres use estimates for reasons other than appeals, such as motivating candidates. However 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 (www.sqa.org.uk) before deciding whether to appeal for a candidate.

If the majority of appeals are unsuccessful then this highlights again a lost opportunity for both centres and SQA in relation to possible alternative uses of the resources currently channelled into this process.

3. The cost of the appeals process

The total direct costs to SQA of appeals in 2008 were £697,689 (2007-£830,836). This cost does not include centre and SQA staff time in processing appeals and dealing with queries.

4. Missing evidence/late 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.

963 late stage 1 appeals received (949 in 2007)

1,034 late stage 2 appeals received (1,016 in 2007)

In 2008, late appeals were processed separately from the main appeals event. This was necessary to ensure appeals results were issued to candidates within published timescales and to minimise the impact on other examination procedures such as question paper development. Late appeals incurred a charge that was necessary to cover the additional costs but is another example of lost opportunities for all involved. **We would encourage all centres to adhere to published timescales.**