

2016 National Qualifications – Results Services Report

On Friday 09 December, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) publishes its Post Results Services Report and Statistical Tables; covering the third year that SQA's Post Results Services has been available to schools and colleges.

Post Results Services allow schools and colleges to query candidates' results if they are deemed to be unexpected, given their professional knowledge of a pupil's performance throughout the year.

The Post Results Services Report and Statistical Tables provide information on the number of requests made – including Clerical Checks, Marking Reviews, and Priority Marking Reviews – following the 2016 National Qualifications examination diet.

The report contains information on the National Courses which are available for Results Services at National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher levels.

It provides data on the number of grade changes that resulted from such requests.

Ungraded, internally assessed National Courses at SCQF levels 1 – 4 are not eligible for Results Services and therefore not included in this report.

The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service operates prior to results being published in August. If a school or college believes that a candidate has suffered as the result of exceptional circumstances such as bereavement or illness, staff can inform SQA. If a request is accepted, centres can submit a wide range of evidence of the candidate's attainment from throughout the year which will be considered.

During the 2016 diet, a total of 3,616 Exceptional Circumstance requests were resulted in August.

Opportunity to access Results Service

Post Results Services, and the Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service, were designed to provide better support and ensure fairness for all candidates and reduce the burden on teachers and lecturers, enabling them to focus more on teaching and learning.

The services, which first operated in 2014, were developed in consultation with all parties with an interest in the Scottish education system - including teachers, parents, local authorities, colleges, and the independent sector.

Results Services Charges

There is no charge for schools or colleges who submit an Exceptional Circumstances Consideration application on behalf of candidates.

If a candidate's grade increase or decreases, through a Priority Marking Review, a Marking Review and/or a Clerical Check, there is no charge. A cost is only incurred when there is no change to the candidate's final grade.

SQA only accepts results services requests from a head of centre. Likewise, SQA only accepts payments for Post Results Service charges from schools, colleges and local authorities.

SQA has provided schools with full guidance on the process of submitting reviews, while the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) published its own guidance in June 2015, echoing the messages from SQA, advising schools that no pupil should be denied access to this service on the grounds of cost.

Qualification entries

The Post Results Services Report and Statistical Tables report against entries in all subjects.

In 2016, the number of subjects available for Post Results Services has increased and the entries used in the statistics tables are as reported in the Attainment Statistics (August) 2016 publication.

This change means that care needs to be taken when comparing measures across previous years that are expressed as a percentage of entries. Reports published on the services in 2013/14 and 2014/15 using 'eligible entries' are still available, unchanged, on our website.

Trend Tables

This year we have also published a set of trend tables, showing a summary of the number of requests and changes made through the Post Results Services process for each qualification level.

As the definition of entries has changed through this period, and to allow trends to be considered, the tables have been compiled using the same criteria for entries as used in the 2016 tables (using the number of entries as reported in the Attainment Statistics (August) for each respective year). The percentages for 2013/14 and 2014/15 may therefore differ from those in the original statistical reports, which are still available on our website.

Post Results Services - Observations

In this third year operating the Post Results Service, we have seen that centres are becoming familiar with the process and following the advice provided by SQA and ADES.

The majority of Post Results Services requests received sought marking reviews and over the past year, we have seen the overall percentage of Marking Review requests resulting in a change of grade decrease from 26.0% in 2014 to 19.5% in 2015, and then remain broadly similar in 2016 at 19.3% (these include both upgrades and downgrades), representing 0.5% of all entries at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

Throughout the 2015/16 examination and external assessment diet, SQA increased the volume of quality checks that markers' work was subject to, prior to certification, including the increasing use of e-marking.

Schools and colleges will always want to query those results that they deem to be unexpected, and SQA will continue to strive to look to further improve the quality assurance of marking, using the Post Results Services data, and will share and review best practice with other UK Awarding Bodies.

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