

Our reference: ENQ 33063 and ENQ 33091

Contact: Catriona Campbell

25 February 2025

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

By email only to: alex.cole-hamilton.msp@parliament.scot

Dear Mr Cole-Hamilton

I am writing to you following SQA's meeting with you and your constituent Joanne Smith on 31 January 2025. This meeting was in relation to SQA's guidance on enabling examinations to be sat away from home, known as our Alternative Venues guidance.

Since our meeting, as I am sure you are aware, the National Qualification 2025 examination timetable has changed in response to feedback from learners, parents and carers. We know that the updated timetable has introduced the risk of financial loss for a small number of learners who have booked holidays or overseas travel based on the previous dates but who, following the change to the timetable, now potentially have exams on these dates.

For the **2025 exams only**, learners who have been impacted as described above because of the timetable changes can ask their centre to submit an Examination Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (EECCS) request. Learners will need written proof that their booking was made prior to Monday 3 February 2025 when the exam timetable was changed. As with all other EECCS requests, they will also need to have:

- suitable alternative evidence.
- completed all non-exam components.
- an estimate submitted for them by their centre.

This means that, whilst our updated Alternative Venue criteria remain in place, there is a potential support option for the athletes Ms. Smith represents who have been impacted by the timetable change.

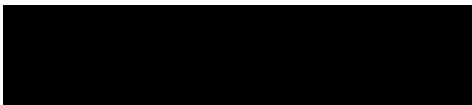
Schools and other SQA centres have been informed of this change and can submit EECCS requests for these learners when the service opens on Friday 25 April.

SQA centres are required to communicate changes and manage requests to access EECCS. We have, however, informed Ms Smith about this change to the EECCS and will also share this update with the Scottish governing body for cheer and performance cheer, SportCheer Scotland.

While this does not provide a solution for all athletes Ms Smith represents, I wanted to inform you of this new information as I am aware it is possible some learners planning to attend cheerleading events may have been impacted by the timetable change. If that is the case, I would advise that they discuss this with their centre.

I hope that this information is useful to you, and I am grateful for your engagement in recent months.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Catriona Campbell.

Catriona Campbell
Head of Quality Assurance – National Qualifications