

Please share the following information with teaching staff in your centre who deliver the PDA in Scottish Football Association: Refereeing.

Information for teachers and lecturers delivering the PDA in Scottish Football Association: Refereeing (GA51 47)

Thank you to everyone who joined us at this year's Qualifications Scotland and Scottish Football Association (SFA) annual event on Tuesday 1 September at Hampden Park.

We'd like to reiterate some of the key messages shared at the event, particularly for anyone who was unable to attend, and to provide answers to some of the questions we received afterwards. We've provided information below on the support available from the SFA and Qualifications Scotland.

You can find the presentations delivered on the day on the [PDA in SFA Refereeing](#) web page (under the 'Qualifications Scotland and Scottish FA annual events' tab). They have been split into two categories — the SFA presentations and the Qualifications Scotland presentations.

Update from SFA — William Collum (SFA Head of Refereeing)

William Collum provided an update on 'The Refereeing DNA', highlighting the SFA's focus on the demands of modern refereeing, including tactical knowledge, self-reflection and high physical standards monitored through GPS and heart-rate technology.

He also outlined ongoing engagement with Premiership club captains and supporters to strengthen relationships and ensure their views are heard. Other initiatives included waived local association membership fees for a year for referees passing the Laws of the Game assessment and SFA's progress towards establishing full-time professional referees in Scotland.

Update from Qualifications Scotland — Alastair Brown (Qualifications Manager)

Alastair Brown explained that the Group Award and Unit Specification documentation had been updated to ensure that they complied with our accessibility guidelines. There had been no changes to the evidence requirements within the units. He also highlighted that the information relating to the referee pathway within the Group Award Specification had been updated. The 'History of Changes' section at the end of each document provides details of the changes.

Alastair also shared an opportunity for teachers and lecturers to access the Qualifications Scotland Academy course for assessment writers: [Developing Multiple Choice Assessments for](#)

[HN/VQ](#)'. To access the course, teachers and lecturers will need to log in using an existing account or select 'Create new account'.

He also mentioned the '[Guide to Assessment](#)' document which contains important information relating to remediation and re-assessment. In particular, it states that candidates should normally be provided with one re-assessment opportunity, or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities.

An 'exceptional circumstance' should be determined through the professional judgement of the teacher or lecturer. Examples may include bereavement, illness, a fire alarm or technical issues occurring during the assessment.

Changes in the Laws of the Game

Michael McCart (SFA Referee) and Brian Christie (SFA Referee) covered changes in:

- Law 3 – The Players > 3. Substitution procedure > 'Time-limited substitutions'
- Law 3 – The Players > 5. Offences and sanctions > 'Time-limited substitutions'
- Law 5 – The Referee > 3. Powers and duties > Advantage at restarts
- Law 5 – The Referee > 3. Powers and duties > Injuries – 'off-field treatment and assessment' (OFTA)
- Law 5 – The Referee > 3. Powers and duties > Injuries caused by yellow card/red card offence
- Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play > 2. Dropped Ball
- Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct > 4. Disciplinary action > Advantage and DOGSO
- Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct > 4. Disciplinary Action > DOGSO
- Law 14 – The Penalty Kick > 2. Offences and sanctions > 'Accidental' double touch
- Law 15 – The Throw-in > Five second countdown and restart reversal
- Law 16 – The Goal Kick > Five second countdown and restart reversal

The SFA has issued these updates through HALO. If you have any queries about these changes, please email referee.qualificationsscotland@scottishfa.co.uk.

You can access these changes on the International Football Association Board (IFAB) app under the 'Law Changes' tab.

Sharing of good practice

Qualifications Scotland organised for the following four teachers to deliver presentations sharing good practice:

- Paul McAvinue (Oldmachar Academy)
- Daniel McRorie (Coltness High School)

- Ross Donaldson (Linlithgow Academy)
- Ruairi Mulholland (St Columba's RC High School, Dunfermline)

Course resources — HALO

Scott Campbell (SFA) shared that new resources will be available on HALO on 11 September 2026. You can access HALO through the [Referee Support Portal](#).

Sign in with your initials in the top corner to access the Qualification Scotland award material.

SFA will provide some additional support information about how to access and navigate the HALO platform.

COMET

Scott Campbell (SFA) explained that this year centres would not need to use this platform to upload candidate details. The process of accessing course passed certificates will be confirmed in due course. SFA local association representatives will be informed of centres delivering the award and will get in touch with delivering staff.

Removing barriers for learners to become a referee

Increased involvement from local refereeing association contacts in supporting delivering centres was identified as a key strategy to increase recruitment and encourage more learners to pursue refereeing careers.

Additionally, learners who pass the Laws of the Game assessment will be offered free membership to their local refereeing association for a minimum of one year.

Recruitment and retention — Lewis Hogarth (SFA)

Lewis Hogarth (SFA) shared pathways within refereeing. He encouraged centres to make use of SFA local association representatives for support where necessary and especially with recruiting learners from the course into local refereeing associations in the first instance.

Laws of the Game assessment — SOLAR

Alastair Black (Qualifications Scotland) delivered a presentation on the SOLAR assessment platform. The 2026–27 assessment will be available from Monday 26 October 2026.

The [SOLAR website](#) contains all the information you need to access and use SOLAR. If you need support using SOLAR, you can contact the Digital Assessment Services Helpdesk at das.helpdesk@qualifications.gov.scot.

A specific information page about the [Laws of the Game SOLAR assessment](#) is also available.

Quality assurance update

Graeme Rae (Qualifications Scotland External Verifier) delivered a presentation on quality assurance to support centres in the processes they must complete before, during, and after delivery of the course.

Questions and answers

1. Can candidates see a review of the questions they got wrong in their assessments to complete a 'self-review'?

Candidate Review functionality is available in SOLAR. This allows teachers to schedule a review of the assessment for their candidates. Information on how to schedule and complete a candidate review is available on the [guidance page of the SOLAR website](#) under 'Mark and View Test Results'.

2. Can centres use the questions from SOLAR assessment to create a formative assessment to use with their learners?

No, centres cannot use the materials in the SOLAR assessment as this would compromise the 'live assessment'.

3. Can the 'formative assessment' title be changed to ensure centres do not assume that this assessment mirrors the demand of the live assessment?

Yes, we will change the title.