

# SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

## APPEALS REPORT 2021 SUMMARY



### Key points

This release provides information on the number of Appeal requests<sup>1</sup> made following the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) for 2021. There were three grounds upon which an appeal could be submitted: Academic Judgement, Unresolved Administrative Error or Discrimination. This report provides data on the number of appeals in each category and the breakdown of resulting changes<sup>2</sup>. A detailed breakdown of Appeals requests at subject level is provided in 'Appeals Report Tables 2021 Academic Judgement' and 'Appeals Report Tables 2021 Unresolved Administrative Error and Discrimination'.

The key summary points from the release are as follows:

#### Appeal requests submitted

- There was a total of 3,483 appeal requests submitted<sup>3</sup>, as follows:
  - 3,265 Academic Judgement appeal requests
  - 30 under Unresolved Administrative Error appeal requests
  - 188 Discrimination appeal requests

#### Academic Judgement appeals

- 45 of the 3,265 Academic Judgement requests resulted in a grade change, as follows:
  - 32 upgrades
  - 13 downgrades

#### Unresolved Administrative Error and Discrimination appeals

- 31 of the 218 Unresolved Administrative Error and Discrimination appeal requests were upheld. The number requests upheld by grounds for appeal were:
  - Unresolved Administrative Error: 0 upheld.
  - Discrimination: 31 upheld.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Appeals process was only available for subjects at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

<sup>2</sup> The Appeals process was ongoing at the time of data collection (15/11/2021), as such these figures are reflective of the position at that time.

<sup>3</sup> A learner can have multiple requests for a single qualification and each request would be included in this report.

- At the point of data collection for this publication, the status<sup>4</sup> of the 31 upheld Unresolved Administrative Error and Discrimination appeals are:
  - 12 upgrades.
  - 0 downgrades.
  - 4 no grade change.
  - 15 in progress.

**Total grade changes across the three appeal grounds (at point of publication)**

- At the point of data collection for this publication, the total number of grade changes across the three grounds for appeals are:
  - 44 upgrades
  - 13 downgrades

As indicated, 15 appeal requests are still in progress. The outcomes from these, should they result in grade changes, are therefore not reflected in the above numbers.

---

<sup>4</sup> Definitions of the possible outcomes and statuses can be found in the 'Further notes' section.

## Type A - Academic Judgement

Appeals were submitted under grounds 'Academic Judgement' where the learner disagreed with the centre's quality assured academic judgement in its assessment of the learner's evidence.

Figure 1: Academic Judgement summary

Qualification Level	Total Entries	Total Appeals Received	Appeals as a Percentage of Entries	Upgrades	Downgrades	No Grade Change	Changes as a Percentage of Entries	Changes as a Percentage of Appeals
National 5	297,973	974	0.3%	9	5	960	<0.05%	1.4%
Higher	194,661	2,115	1.1%	21	8	2,086	<0.05%	1.4%
Advanced Higher	26,795	176	0.7%	2	0	174	<0.05%	1.1%
Overall	519,429	3,265	0.6%	32	13	3,220	<0.05%	1.4%

## Type B - Unresolved Administrative Error

Appeals were submitted under grounds 'Unresolved Administrative Error' where the learner believed that there was an error in either

- i. transferring the provisional result from the centre to SQA, or
- ii. SQA processing the result.

Figure 2: Unresolved Administrative Error summary

Qualification Level	Total Entries	Total Appeals Received	Appeals as a Percentage of Entries	Appeals Upheld					
				Total Upheld	Percentage of Appeals	Upgrades	Downgrades	No Grade Change	In Progress
National 5	297,973	10	<0.05%	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-
Higher	194,661	19	<0.05%	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-
Advanced Higher	26,795	1	<0.05%	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-
Overall	519,429	30	<0.05%	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-

## Type C - Discrimination

Appeals were submitted under grounds 'Discrimination' by learners in two circumstances:

- i. There has been discrimination or other unlawful conduct contrary to the Equality Act 2010, acknowledged in writing by the centre, or established through court proceedings or by a ruling of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).
- ii. The centre failed to comply with SQA's requirements for providing assessment arrangements in relation to assessment evidence that contributed to a disabled learner's provisional result.

Figure 3: Discrimination summary

Qualification Level	Total Entries	Total Appeals Received	Appeals as a Percentage of Entries	Appeals Upheld					
				Total Upheld	Percentage of Appeals	Upgrades	Downgrades	No Grade Change	In Progress
National 5	297,973	65	<0.05%	9	13.8%	3	0	2	4
Higher	194,661	118	0.1%	22	18.6%	9	0	2	11
Advanced Higher	26,795	5	<0.05%	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-
Overall	519,429	188	<0.05%	31	16.5%	12	0	4	15

## Further notes

### Definition of appeals decisions (not applicable for Academic Judgement)

'Upheld Appeals' were approved for the category under which they were submitted.

'Not Upheld Appeals' were not approved for the category under which they were submitted.

### Definition of outcomes and statuses

For Academic Judgement appeals there were three possible outcomes:

- 'Upgrade' - appeal request submitted that resulted in a candidate receiving a higher grade.
- 'Downgrade' - appeal request submitted that resulted in a candidate receiving a lower grade.
- 'No Grade Change' - appeal request submitted that did not result in a change to the grade awarded to the candidate.

For Unresolved Administrative Errors and Discrimination appeals, once an appeal was upheld, there were four possible statuses:

- 'Upgrade' - appeal request submitted that resulted in a candidate receiving a higher grade.
- 'Downgrade' - appeal request submitted that resulted in a candidate receiving a lower grade.
- 'No Grade Change' - appeal request submitted that did not result in a change to the grade awarded to the candidate.
- 'In Progress' - appeal request submitted was upheld, but a new grade can only be determined following further actions by the centre/SQA.

All changes are defined with respect to the grade awarded to candidates in the August 2021 Attainment published on 10 August 2021.

An escalated appeals process is available for Unresolved Administrative Errors and Discrimination appeals where either the learner or the head of centre has reason to believe that there has been a procedural irregularity and/or an unreasonable decision in SQA's consideration of the initial appeal. Any changes to the outcome of the initial appeal as a result of an escalated appeal will not be reflected in this publication. Further information on escalated appeals can be found here: [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/nq-2021-escalated-appeals.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq-2021-escalated-appeals.pdf)

### Notation

Percentages are rounded to one decimal place. In cases where the rounded percentage would be displayed as 0.0%, to one decimal place, '<0.05%' has been used in the summary tables.

All percentages are rounded separately, and breakdowns may not sum to 100 per cent.

### Contact

The statistical team responsible for this publication can be contacted at [external.statistics@sqa.org.uk](mailto:external.statistics@sqa.org.uk)