

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
**Sent:** 25 May 2021 16:38  
**Subject:** Communication to Learners

Hello all,

Many thanks for the opportunity to raise this at NQ21 Working Group this afternoon and thank you in advance to anyone who is able to find time to offer feedback.

A reminder that a request came from NQ21 to write a letter to learners detailing the support available to them in the coming weeks.

Initial drafts of this letter have been commented upon (with improvements suggested) by Education Scotland ([REDACTED]), SQA (Alasdair Macrae), SDS ([REDACTED]) and SYP ([REDACTED]).

I would be grateful for **comments by 1pm on Thursday** to allow the letter to be made available to the NQ21 Group ahead of full meeting on Friday. I am trying to keep this letter fairly punchy at around two pages (excluding the page of QR codes) in length – I am aware it is slightly over at present - so please be mindful if suggesting additional content. To save all our inboxes, there is no need to “reply to all”!

Thank you, have a lovely evening.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Joint Head of Qualifications Unit & Professional Insight Advisor

**From:** DirectorofLearning@gov.scot <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 25 May 2021 13:00  
**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot  
**Cc:** Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk  
**Subject:** RE: Appeals Process Timeline

Thanks Jean.

With regard to the following entry, would it be possible to say a bit more about the ‘how’ in plain English. Eg, can we say: At the appeals stage, teachers appointed by the SQA will not have details of the individual learner or whether they live in poverty or not. They will offer a ‘second opinion’ without fear or favour by judging the learner’s assessment evidence against the national standards and determining if they agree with the original grade, or whether the evidence suggests a higher or lower grade. If a learner is at risk of a lower grade, this will be carefully reviewed on an individual basis by an SQA Head of Service, and by the Chief Examiner if

necessary, before the decision is finalised. In previous years the numbers of downgrades at appeals stage is exceptionally low.

SQA Appointees review Learner evidence of assessment for each qualification	SQA appointees (practising teachers and lecturers) are trained to review learner assessment evidence and how to avoid bias. Their focus is on the knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated in the evidence relative to the national standard for that qualification. Quality assurance procedures are applied to ensure consistency across the teams. These are overseen by senior appointees. Any downgrades are escalated to senior staff in Qualifications Directorate for review and confirmation of result.	From 16/08 – end of Appeals Service
---	--	-------------------------------------

Fiona has also agreed to urgently send us the numbers of 'downgrades' through appeals in the last few years. We are aiming to get a note to FM and Cab Sec urgently so if you could respond as quickly as possible I would be grateful.

Thanks  
Graeme.

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** 25 May 2021 12:28

**To:** Director of Learning <[DirectorofLearning@gov.scot](mailto:DirectorofLearning@gov.scot)>; Pentland MK (Malcolm) <[Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot](mailto:Malcolm.Pentland@gov.scot)>

**Cc:** Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** Appeals Process Timeline

Graeme/Malcolm,

As requested, the appeals process timeline.

Regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

**t:** [REDACTED] | **e:** [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

Scottish Qualifications Authority

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot > **On Behalf Of** CabSecES@gov.scot  
**Sent:** 24 May 2021 07:37  
**To:** Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)>; CabSecES@gov.scot  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Mtg to Discuss Assessment Appeals

Hi Fiona

Have now done.

[REDACTED]  
Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills  
**T:** [REDACTED] | **M:** [REDACTED] | **E:** [cabsecES@gov.scot](mailto:cabsecES@gov.scot)  
The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

**From:** Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 24 May 2021 07:19  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <[CabSecES@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecES@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Mtg to Discuss Assessment Appeals

Hi [REDACTED]  
Hope you are well.  
Could you also invite Jean Blair, Director of Operations at SQA, to the meeting at 0930 this morning?  
Thanks.

Fiona

Fiona Robertson  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Qualifications Authority

**w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ | 24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden,  
Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** Sue Pope <[Sue.Pope@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Sue.Pope@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** 25 May 2021 15:34

**To:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; Gill Stewart <[Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; Margot McKerrell <[Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; Robert Quinn <[Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk)>; John Meehan <[John.Meehan@sqa.org.uk](mailto:John.Meehan@sqa.org.uk)>; Steve Borley <[Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@ayrshire.ac.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@ayrshire.ac.uk)>; Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@dundeeschools.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@dundeeschools.scot)>; Sewell J (Jonathan) (ECON) <[Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot](mailto:Jonathan.Sewell@gov.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@eis.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@eis.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@dundeeandangus.ac.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@dundeeandangus.ac.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@scis.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@scis.org.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@hsog.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@hsog.co.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@educationscotland.gov.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>; Stuart McLaren <[Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk)>

**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@sqa.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: NQ21 QA ACM WG meeting 25 May - incomplete evidence contingency amended paper

Hello

Thank you so much for the discussion today.

I attach an annotated version of the paper for your consideration. I would be most grateful for your feedback by 1300 tomorrow.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you want to speak.

Thanks in anticipation

Best wishes

Sue

**Sue Pope** (she/her)

Head of Service: Science, Mathematics and Core Skills

**Qualifications Development, SQA**

**m:** [REDACTED]

The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ