

Our ref: FOI 2021-22 018  
18 June 2021

Contact: [Click here to enter text.](#)  
[foi@sqa.org.uk](mailto:foi@sqa.org.uk)

Dear [Click here to enter text.](#)

## Freedom of Information Request for Review

On 02 June 2021, SQA received your request for a review under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA). I can confirm that as the Reviewer I have had no involvement in our original response to you. You requested a review in relation to our reply to your original freedom of information request, as shown below.

### 1 ORIGINAL REQUEST

Any materials held by the SQA discussing, referring to or recording criticism of the SQA and/or the 2021 Alternative Certification Model on social media sites between Jan 1 2021 - present

This may include, but is not necessarily limited to, email exchanges, other communications (such as Slack, Whatsapp, OneNote, Teams), analysis documents, records from meetings etc.

It may include specific references to comments made by individuals or more general discussions of criticism that the SQA has received

### SQA's RESPONSE

As part of ongoing awareness of the environment in which SQA operates as an organisation we monitor where SQA is mentioned in the public domain. This includes but is not limited to social media and is a list of the links to the relevant public sites where SQA has been mentioned. This information is already in the public domain and under section 25(1) of FOISA, SQA is not obliged to provide you with the information which is already reasonably accessible to you and can be accessed from public sites.

SQA has no other written information that meets your request in terms of correspondence, analysis documents, minutes of meetings etc. Section 17 of FOISA provides that where an authority does not hold information requested then it should notify the requester to that effect.

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## **2 REVIEW REQUEST**

Firstly, the SQA claims that material I have requested is in the public domain but has not told me where I can find it, but does not seem to me to be in keeping with the requirement of public bodies to assist requesters in accessing the information they seek.

Secondly, I do not believe that the allegedly online material will in fact cover all of my request. I asked specifically about critical social media comments relating either to the SQA as a whole or to its Alternative Certification Model for 2021, not a list of 'SQA in the news' type links, which seems to be the sort of thing to which the original response refers.

The SQA response admits that the organisation monitors social media, and it is not therefore credible to suggest that no records of that monitoring exist.

I also simply do not believe that no other information exists that would fall within the scope of my request. Given that you have already confirmed that the SQA monitors social media, and given the scale of the criticism to which the organisation has been subjected, the idea that there are no emails or other communications in which the situation is mentioned is simply beyond credibility.

Given all of this, I reiterate my original request for any material referring to or recording criticism social media criticism of the SQA.

## **SQA's RESPONSE**

Firstly my apologies for not providing you with advice and guidance on how to access the information about SQA in the public domain on social media. This can be accessed by entering SQA and other key words in the search bar of the social media. To help you in this process, in the attached file, please find a list of the key words SQA searches on as part of their automated monitoring of social media.

Secondly as we stated in our original response to you SQA does not hold any materials including but not limited to email exchanges, other communications (such as Slack, Whatsapp, OneNote, Teams), analysis documents, records from meetings etc discussing this publicly available information.

Therefore, I uphold the decision under review that SQA monitors the publically available social media and does not hold any information relevant to your request for any discussion or analysis of this publically available mention of SQA.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have a right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision. You must apply to the Commissioner within six months of this response. The Scottish Information Commissioner has launched a new online appeal service. You can now access this online service by using the following web-link:

[www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal)

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Should you wish to appeal against this decision, you have the right to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only. Further details on this process are available on the Commissioner's website [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info), other contact details are as follows:

The Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews  
KY16 9DS  
Tel: 01334 464610  
E-mail: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)

Yours sincerely

Head of Service