

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Martyn Ware](#)
Subject: FW: OECD Independent Review of CfE; Preliminary draft for comment (confidential)
Date: 20 August 2021 09:33:15
Attachments: [SQA fact check of OECD report final 20210209.docx](#)
[OECD DRAFT REPORT SQA FACT CHECK FINAL 20210209.docx](#)

Email from Gill to [REDACTED] as requested.

[REDACTED]

From: Gill Stewart
Sent: 09 February 2021 17:17
To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot
Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; John McMorris <John.McMorris@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: OECD Independent Review of CfE; Preliminary draft for comment (confidential)

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to provide early feedback on the OECD's draft report. Fiona sent you some initial thoughts from SQA, on Friday, and these are outlined below. Further comments from SQA are in the attached two documents from Martyn and colleagues, as requested. The first document expands upon the original feedback from Fiona and the second document is a copy of the report with some comments inserted. We would be happy to discuss further if that would be helpful.

[REDACTED]

Kind regards,

Gill

Initial comments from Fiona

In many respects, the report is a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the implementation of CfE and we will all recognise many of the issues.

We welcome the acknowledgement of the importance of qualifications in the senior phase as outlined in Building the Curriculum 5. The report recognises the need to ensure learners have credible and recognised qualifications that provide suitable progression pathways into Further and Higher education and into employment. It also helpfully highlights the increasingly diverse range of pathways and qualifications available to learners in Scotland.

However, we have very significant concerns about some key elements of the report and the evidence and analysis that underpins it. One of the key themes that emerges is that '...there does not appear to be yet a successful alignment of qualifications and exams in Senior Phase with

the CfE vision:’ (p. 40). This assertion is repeated in slightly different forms a number of times across the report. It is also used as the basis for a number of recommendations including organisational reform.

The development of the new qualifications was closely aligned with the development of CfE - and we can evidence that. However, the policy decision to remove units undoubtedly weakened that alignment. That story needs told and it is not told here.

A further review on assessment and qualifications is coming, which will afford the OECD, with some further specialist assessment input, to consider these issues, and with a stronger evidence base. As the report stands, it is a commentary of views, without sufficient consideration of the evidence or discussion, and this commentary is used to provide wide-ranging recommendations which provide a very unhelpful and pre-emptive context for this further work.

As a key stakeholder in the review, SQA was afforded only a very limited opportunity for engagement with the review team – I met them for 70 minutes for a very general discussion - and none for in depth discussion of the issues relating to qualifications and assessments that are such a prominent part of the report’s findings.

In short, the recommendations on assessment and qualifications are premature, given the upcoming further review. That is the time to consider these issues, including the need for any changes.

Dr Gill Stewart
Director of Qualifications Development

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