

From: [Fiona Robertson](#)
To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot
Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [DirectorofLearning@gov.scot](#); [Martyn Ware](#)
Subject: RE: OECD Independent Review of CfE: Preliminary draft for comments [Confidential]
Date: 05 February 2021 11:40:13
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[REDACTED]

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to provide early feedback on the OECD's draft report. We spoke briefly yesterday and I offer here some very initial thoughts from SQA. Further comments will be provided by Martyn and colleagues early next week, as requested.

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 wide-ranging 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 clearer evidence base to support it. 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 we think provides 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.

I am happy to discuss further.

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: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 03 February 2021 11:04

To: [REDACTED]@educationscotland.gov.scot; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; DirectorofLearning@gov.scot; [REDACTED]g@gov.scot;

[REDACTED]@educationscotland.gov.scot; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: OECD Independent Review of CfE: Preliminary draft for comments [Confidential]

[REDACTED] Fiona,

We have just received the preliminary draft of the full OECD report on the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence, for comment by Friday 12th February. Noting the OECD's points below about confidentiality, and about the nature of the feedback we are asked to provide, can I ask that you only share this with staff who have a direct interest?

This is a short turnaround and is particularly challenging given the school holidays next week. I will need to get advice to DFM early next week, so I can reflect his views in the feedback to the OECD. As such, can I ask for:

- **Immediate, high level, thoughts by COP Thursday 4th February**
- **More detail feedback in track changes on the document by 12pm on Tuesday 9th February**

If you have any questions or would like to discuss, please give me a call.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | National Co-ordinator: OECD Review of Curriculum for Excellence | Learning Directorate | Tel: [REDACTED] Mob: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@oecd.org [REDACTED]@oecd.org>

Sent: 02 February 2021 22:54

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED]@oecd.org; [REDACTED]@dcu.ie; [REDACTED]@gmail.com; [REDACTED]@ioe.ac.uk

Subject: Preliminary draft for comments [Confidential]

Dear [REDACTED] and [REDACTED],

We hope you are doing well.

You will find attached the first draft of our report "The Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland: an implementation assessment" (working title). We apologise for the slight delay. Note that this is a preliminary draft for comments and not for public dissemination: we ask that you please keep its

circulation limited to those who should provide comments; and that they themselves preserve the confidentiality of the document.

As agreed, the report assesses the progress made with the implementation of CfE (with a focus on 2015-20); analyses the strengths and challenges this progress reveals; and proposes a coherent set of recommendations for future developments of CfE. The analysis is structured around the OECD's framework, and thus looks at the factors affecting education policy implementation in relation to CfE policy design, stakeholder engagement, policy environment, and the implementation strategy that weaves them together. The issues highlighted by the Scottish Government and Parliament that were confirmed by stakeholders as having an impact on CfE implementation (such as tensions between breadth and depth of learning) are transversal, in that they touch upon several factors within the framework. Some are therefore analysed throughout the chapters.

The report is 110-pages long (including references) and is structured as follows:

1. Chapter 1: Introduction
2. Chapter 2: Curriculum for Excellence design and implementation
3. Chapter 3: Stakeholder engagement at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence
4. Chapter 4: Coherent environment for CfE implementation
5. Chapter 5: Considerations for the next steps of Curriculum for Excellence
6. Annexes: OECD team members' bio and schedules of the missions and additional meetings

A few issues worth noting for this version:

- Chapter 5 proposes coherent recommendations based on the analysis presented in Chapters 1-4, and one overarching recommendation on the general approach that should be undertaken to sustain CfE implementation in the future. These still require further refinement, that we will undertake in the next draft.
- The final version of Chapter 5 will be the basis for the document to be shared with participants to the stakeholder event, following our agreement to develop the recommendations proposed based on stakeholders' feedback;
- The consistency in style, referencing and formatting was not the focus of this draft, however rest assured that the next version will be checked thoroughly with more time.
- An executive summary will be added to the next version; as well as front matter elements such as a foreword, acknowledgements and list of acronyms and abbreviations.

Comments:

- This preliminary draft is aimed at receiving comments about factual elements; the development of analysis; the conclusions;
- Comments should be provided in revision mode or comment mode; or in one separate document compiling the comments by report headings and page number;
- We would be grateful if you could merge the comments from all reviewers into a consolidated document. We understand the reviewers of this confidential draft include yourself, DFM Swinney, a couple of policy colleagues from the Scottish Government, three colleagues from Education Scotland, SQA and ADES;
- Following the updated timeline we agreed on, may you please send us your **consolidated comments by Friday 12 February**?

Upon reception of the consolidated comments, our team will take them into account to develop the next version of the draft. Priority will be given to the comments affecting Chapter 5, since a version should be shared with the Scottish Practitioners Forum by 23 February; and with the participants to the stakeholder event by the end of the same week. Following these two events, our team will use the consolidated comments, SPF feedback and stakeholder feedback to develop the final draft.

We look forward to your comments.

Best wishes,

[Redacted signature]



[Redacted Name]

Policy Analyst
Policy Advice and Implementation Division
Directorate for Education and Skills

2, rue André Pascal - 75775 Paris Cedex 16
Mobile [Redacted]

[Redacted]@oecd.org || <http://www.oecd.org/education/implementing-policies/>

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

This e-mail (and any files or other attachments transmitted with it) is intended solely for the attention of the addressee(s). Unauthorised use, disclosure, storage, copying or distribution of any part of this e-mail is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient please destroy the email, remove any copies from your system and inform the sender immediately by return.

Communications with the Scottish Government may be monitored or recorded in order to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes. The views or opinions contained within this e-mail may not necessarily reflect those of the Scottish Government.

