**Material for FOI 21**

“Any communication discussing / responding to concerns about the quantity of appeals that the SQA may receive in relation to any 2021 appeals processes”

**Table of Material – NB: image from slide deck p9**

All ‘[REDACTED]’ are staff/stakeholder personal details (s.38 exemption). Senior SQA staff names have been left unredacted.

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| **Date** | **Document** | **Text** |
| 03/12/2020 | Workshop Notes | External assessment – PRS -big change here for direct appeals for candidate, should be a free service and should be no detriment (public- feeling at present) = risk of high volumes    volumes and approaches within the process and logistical levels we are anticipating is a key risk. There are restrictions on the system and the manual handling issues due to covid restrictions. |
| 03/12/2020 | Workshop Notes | SB – this is possible however the more difficult aspect is how do we deal with this. The volume is the risk here.    [REDACTED] - PRS is external process – PCR is looking at internal judgement.  The volume is too high. |
| 07/01/2021 | Appeals - Introductory Note | Scale   Given the constraints on subject specialists and time, how might demand for appeals be kept at a deliverable (i.e. practically possible) level?   How might these approaches comply with requirements outlined in the Regulatory and Principle sections above? |
| 16/02/2021 | Meeting Note | Concerns raised regarding the workload implications for teachers, and the capacity of schools to deliver the process. The timing of this announcement needs careful consideration as well as clarity for teachers, learners, carers and parents around the framework and grounds for appeal. SQA acknowledges these workload implications for all concerned, including SQA and appointees.  Although giving the young people more rights in the process is welcomed, it is difficult for the system to accommodate this change very quickly at this particular point in time given the other pressing challenges. |
| 16/02/2021 | Meeting Note | If this is perceived to offer a widely available opportunity for candidates to improve their grade, it could lead to a substantially larger number of appeals and may be seen as an extension to the academic session. |
| 16/02/2021 | Meeting Note | Effective implementation of the model should mitigate against and minimise the number of appeals, with learners confident in the judgements that have been reached. |
| 17/02/2021 | Appeals Process Consultation | These subject specialists also have substantive teaching posts, and they may not be available to consider a large number of appeals. Depending on the volume of appeals received and SQA’s capacity to handle them, SQA may need to apply criteria to prioritise requests. Appeals which will impact directly on young people’s progression into employment, apprenticeships, further or higher education in autumn 2021 will be seen as the highest priority for rapid resolution. |
| 17/02/2021 | Appeals Process Consultation | Our research shows that, in many countries, there is a fee attached to the right to appeal, particularly if that appeal is unsuccessful. However, at this stage, SQA is not proposing to introduce a similar charge for candidates or centres. We consider that a free service is more likely to ensure that all learners are equally able to access the appeals process. This may, however, have a bearing on the volume of appeals requested, and the subject specialist capacity that will be required to support those appeals. |
| 17/02/2021 | Appeals Process Consultation | Question 6: How should the consideration of appeals be prioritised?   Depending on the volume of appeals received and SQA’s capacity to handle them, SQA may need to apply criteria to prioritise requests. The standard approach to prioritisation is based on immediate progression to employment, apprenticeships, college or university entry. Are there other factors to consider? |
| 24/02/2021 | Meeting Note | [REDACTED] noted that the number of appeals was usually very small (in one instance 12), issues were usually sorted at the informal stage, and few went on to Stage 2 (in the same instance six). Four of these were for Graded Units. [REDACTED - stakeholder] noted that they had very similar numbers at [REDACTED} College. |
| 24/02/2021 | Meeting Note | Some members felt the appeals process shouldn’t open until August as opening in June could involve excessive workload for teachers and lecturers, at a time when they are working towards the completion of assessment and quality assurance. |
| 02/03/2021 | Appeals Consultation | These subject specialists also have substantive teaching posts, and they may not be available to consider a large number of appeals. Depending on the **volume of appeals** received and SQA’s capacity to handle them, SQA may need to apply criteria to prioritise requests. Appeals which will impact directly on young people’s progression into employment, apprenticeships, further or higher education in autumn 2021 will be seen as the highest priority for rapid resolution. |
| 02/03/2021 | Appeals Consultation | Our research shows that, in many countries, there is a fee attached to the right to appeal, particularly if that appeal is unsuccessful. However, at this stage, SQA is not proposing to introduce a similar charge for learners or centres. We consider that a free service is more likely to ensure that all learners are equally able to access the appeals process. This may, however, have a bearing on the **volume of appeals** requested, and the subject specialist capacity that will be required to support those appeals. |
| 02/03/2021 | Appeals Consultation | Question 6: How should the consideration of appeals be prioritised? Depending on the volume of appeals received and SQA’s capacity to handle them, SQA may need to apply criteria to prioritise requests. The standard approach to prioritisation is based on immediate progression to employment, apprenticeships, college or university entry. Are there other factors to consider? |
| 16/03/2021 | Appeals Consultation | We consider that a free service is more likely to ensure that all learners are equally able to access the appeals process. This may, however, have a bearing on the **volume of appeals** requested, the subject specialist capacity that will be required to support those appeals and the timeframe. |
| 16/03/2021 | Appeals Consultation | Related Consultation Question   Question 9: How should the consideration of appeals be prioritised?   Depending on the**volume of appeals** received and the education system’s capacity to handle them, SQA may need to apply criteria to prioritise requests. The standard approach to prioritisation is based on immediate progression to employment, apprenticeships, college or university entry. Are there other factors to consider? |
| 24/03/2021 | Meeting Note | If SQA receives appeals in volume, it may lead to an increased workload for centres. For example, packaging up evidence and appointee release, although it was noted that centres have to provide evidence. |
| 13/04/2021 | Appeals - High Level Solution Design | 2. Volumes  Included in the solution are:  470 Centres (All Centres)  500.000 Entries (All Entries)  Assumed Appeal Number: The appeal number isn’t yet known and hard to predict.  We plan for the worst-case scenario – every candidate that has a B or worse will appeal ~ 300.000 entries based on last years.    It is assumed that most appeals will be launched on/ in the few days past results day |
| 21/04/2021 | NQ2021 appeals draft model | Pre-Appeal June - Learners are advised of their results by their centre  Issue: Based on centre data are we able to establish the number of learners/ subjects where provisional results fall short of conditional offers to assess potential volumes of priority cases? |
| 22/04/2021 | Appeals Model | For priority appeals, SQA will endeavour to conclude these prior to 7 September, the UCAS deadline, where all required information is received from the centre by [date].    For all other appeals, SQA will endeavour to conclude these as quickly as possible, however the timing depends on the volume of appeals received. |
| 22/04/2021 | Appeals Discussion Points | Assumed Volumes – this is expected to be much higher than PRS/PCR or ACM QA.  What assumptions are being made regarding volumes?  Can our solutions cope with high volumes? |
| 26/04/2021 | Awarding 2021 Financial Report | There is a £4.4m provision in the budget for appeals. This provision is based on 125,000 appeals, but it is acknowledged that volumes are unknown at this point. |
| 02/05/2021 | Letter from Children & Young People's Commissioner to SQA Chief Executive | No young person should be inhibited from exercising their rights by the fear of possible negative consequences. The fact that an appeal may well result in the lowering of a grade is an effective way to reduce the number of appeals, particularly those that may be more speculative. I appreciate the attractiveness of this approach from an administrative point of view. However, given the significant impact that academic accreditation has on a young person’s right to education, their ability to remain in education or to access further and higher education, and on their reputation, the balance should be set in favour of the young person. |
| 05/05/2021 | Meeting Note | Suggest there may be more appeals due to learners’ direct right of appeal but there is a definition of priority appeals already in place, and such appeals would need to come from centres.  There are usually around 350 priority appeals nationally (fewer than one per centre). However, members advised that this would still involve many staff in most centres.  The numbers may be small but there is still a need to prepare. If centres are unable to access the evidence during the Summer holidays, they will be unable to meet learner expectations.  It was suggested that the learner could lodge a statement of intent to appeal after issue of provisional results. This would allow the learner to feel that they had taken some action and would also give SQA a baseline volume for resourcing appeals e.g. appointee requirements. |
| 14/05/2021 | Letter from SQA Chief Executive to Deputy First Minister | In relation to symmetry, SQA is proposing that the outcome of an appeal can see a grade move up, move down, or stay the same on the basis of the evidence presented. This evidence-based appeals model is generally supported by education system stakeholders; it is consistent with SQA’s approach in previous years, and with comparable appeals services in other parts of the UK and internationally. However, some learners, parents and their representative groups have expressed a very strong preference for asymmetric appeals that can either move grades up or stay the same but not move down – a ‘no detriment’ approach. This is a view also shared by the Children’s Commissioner.  A ‘no detriment’ approach would break the relationship between demonstrated attainment and the awarding of a qualification and may lead to an increase the volume of appeals, which could impact on academic year 2021/22. However, we are very aware that this position may be criticised and perceived as placing the needs of the education system above the interests of learners and is very likely to be unfavourably received by some learners, parents, and their representative organisations. Your consideration of this element of the appeals process in particular is therefore important. |
| 25/05/2021 | Appeals Process Timeline | Dependent on volumes - From mid October but dependent on volumes TBC |
| 25/05/2021 | Appeals Process Timeline | Dependent on any changes to results  - Likely November but dependent on volumes TBC |
| 26/05/2021 | Minutes | It was noted that we will not know volumes until the service opens. We can look at this in terms of scenarios and volume levels, can cross check against the appointees we have, looking at who was involved in ACM QA. Increasing the group of appointees involve will add an extra risk. The three factors that could affect this are time, appointees, and throughput. |
| 27/05/2021 | Minutes | Discussion about the possible need for multiple uplifts, and the potential volumes of evidence being sent to SQA and the impact this would have on the work carried out by script management, as well as number of appointees required.  [REDACTED] noted that 75,000 was noted in Parliamentary questions.  LMcG suggests seeing what various levels of appeals look like to help create a scenario plan.   RW notes that 75,000 was the absolute maximum level for PCR, although this was with fully physical turnaround, rather than digital.  Agreed to look at the issue on a timeframe basis, rather than number of appointees. |



