

A copy of all internal communication regarding the recent review into Higher History marking

- The time frame for this request is 1 Nov 2024 - present.
- This request includes files attached to emails, which should be included in the release
- This request also includes records of any non-written communication such as phone calls, video calls, face to face meetings etc
- This request includes communication discussing or referencing media coverage and/or public response to the review

START

From: Martyn Ware

Sent: 01 November 2024 09:39

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: Report

John, Richard, [REDACTED]

As requested. Please let me know if you have any problems accessing the file.

Martyn

 [Higher_History_Review_2024_for_SQA_Chair_20241030.docx](#)

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

END

START

From: Martyn Ware

Sent: 01 November 2024 09:49

To: Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa-ext.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Higher History Report

Donna, Iain, [REDACTED]

Just a line to let you know that the Higher History report will not be published today. I will update you as soon as I can next week.

Regards

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 09:55

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: HH media release - for initial comment

Sensitivity: Confidential

Thanks Martyn. Changes noted.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications, SQA

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 09:47

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Re: HH media release - for initial comment

Sensitivity: Confidential

Thanks for this John, I am happy with it too with two comments:

In answer to your question on p2 the additional detail was provided in response to marker feedback in previous years so your point is correct.

For the first line of my quote could we say 'Our review of Higher History has been rigorous and robust with a wide range of evidence....'? This - I think - aligns with our latest press statement and denies the opportunity for anyone to claim they have found a stone that we didn't turn over.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2024 17:44

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: HH media release - for initial comment

Hi

Attached is the draft media release to go alongside the report publication. This includes the WJEC statement. As we discussed on the call just then with SG, it would be helpful for Cab Sec to see this so she knows both what we and WJEC are going to be saying.

I suggest we include this alongside the shorter version of the report that Martyn and I will work on tomorrow, and aim to get this draft over to SG colleagues by close tomorrow to enable a follow-up conversation with Cab Sec early next week.

To that end, can I ask for any initial comments of changes on the attached. It's longer than I would normally like for a media release but think it's important we have quotes from you all plus WJEC and also go into some detail on the report.

We can do further work to finalise the release before publication so will ensure this is marked as draft when we send.

Thanks

John



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20(3).docx

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 14:25

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Fiona/ John/ Martyn Catch up

Summary version of the report which we can discuss when we meet

John Booth

Director of Communications, SQA

-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk> **On Behalf Of** Fiona Robertson

Sent: 01 November 2024 14:19

To: John Booth; Martyn Ware

Subject: Fiona/ John/ Martyn Catch up

When: 08 November 2024 14:30-14:50 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: [REDACTED]

Passcode: [REDACTED]

For organizers: [Meeting options](#)



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20(3).docx

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 14:55

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Board follow-up - for issue this pm

No problem John – Fiona and I just spoke about this.

I'll pick up/issue now.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], Chief Executive's Office
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 14:53

: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Board follow-up - for issue this pm

Importance: High

Hi

Martyn and I have just spoken with Fiona and agreed the attached can go to the Board this afternoon as a follow-up to yesterday's discussion and with a 12 noon Monday deadline for approval to publish the full and summary reports.

Can you issue to Board with following text – feel free to tweak as appropriate.

John

+++

Board members

Further to yesterday's extraordinary Board meeting, please find attached a summary version of the Higher History review report which seeks to address many of the points raised yesterday about presentation during discussion of the full report.

In order to enable us to move to publication of the review findings, could Board members indicate by midday on Monday 4th November whether they are content to approve publication of the full and summary versions of the report.

Thanks etc



HH Review summary
version (4).pdf

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 15:47

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>;
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: HH media release

Hi

I've tweaked this slightly since the last version you saw, including some editing of your quote. Martyn and Shirley are content with their parts.

Would be good to get any final comments when you get a chance. If we can nail this down we can build out the other assets required for publication.

John



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20(5).docx

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 18:18

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Agreed SG lines on HH report

As an aside to the Board discussions, SG have now shared the lines that have been signed off by the Cab Sec. I've pasted below.

John

SG spokesperson:

"The SQA has published its review into the marking of Higher History in 2024.

"It is welcome that SQA has identified areas for improvement from having undertaken this review, including improving how feedback received from markers is considered."

DETAILED LINES TO TAKE IF ASKED

On Findings:

- The Scottish Government accepts the report's conclusions.

On peer review:

- We note that the report has been independently scrutinised and endorsed by the Executive Director of Qualifications and Assessment at WJEC, Wales' largest awarding body.

On time delay:

- While it was important that there was sufficient time to allow the report to be thorough and for independent scrutiny to take place, we recognise that this work has taken SQA longer than anticipated. There are lessons to be learned going forward in that regard as we move to establish Qualifications Scotland.

On improvements SQA will take forward:

- It is welcome that SQA has identified areas for improvement from having undertaken this review, including ensuring a better understanding of the end-to end process of marking and grading processes among teachers, and improving how feedback received from markers is considered so they are assured their concerns are being listened to and, if necessary, dealt with

John Booth

Director of Communications, SQA

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 10:10

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Re: Board approvals status report

All,

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Please let me know if I and the team can support further.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 04 November 2024 09:31

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Board approvals status report

Good morning all,

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

e: [REDACTED] | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority | Ughdarras Theisteanais na h-Alba

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

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1FD

END

START

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 04 November 2024 16:05
To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: cover note.

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 1F

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 04 November 2024 16:01
To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: cover note.

Thanks. Some changes in red below. We sent the summary version on Friday so not sure if you want to send again? Have removed that reference for now.

News release attached for inclusion.

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 04 November 2024 15:55
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: cover note.

Suggested note. Hope this fits the bill.

Board members

First of all, sincere thanks for your very considered comments on the Higher History report, following our meeting on Thursday afternoon.

The attached document, prepared by Martyn Ware, provides a detailed response on how we propose that these are handled before publication. In considering these, I think it is important that that we make the distinction between matters of presentation and the content of the report. Ultimately, while I accept that this will be seen as a SQA report and the Board has an important role to play, this was commissioned from the Head of Standards, with external oversight provided by WJEC. As John Morton has said, too much revisiting at this stage could be

viewed critically. Colleagues would also need to revisit the external and internal assurance processes to date.

Michelle has raised important matters of governance, and I think we acknowledged at the Board on Thursday that, given the unprecedented nature of this work, there are some process and governance issues to consider in slower time with the Qualifications Committee. Fiona has kept me fully informed from the inception of this review.

I am not, at this stage, proposing another round of approvals. Further delay of this report brings further risk and I am keen that, subject to the views of Scottish Ministers, that we publish **this week**. However, if individual board members wish to discuss further, please do let me know.

For completeness, the press release is also attached to this email **which includes the quote from the external reviewer**.

Many thanks

Shirley

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 1F

END

START

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 13:43

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>;
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: RE: HH media release

Some thoughts attached. Thanks John.

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 1F

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 01 November 2024 15:47

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>;
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: HH media release

Hi

I've tweaked this slightly since the last version you saw, including some editing of your quote.
Martyn and Shirley are content with their parts.

Would be good to get any final comments when you get a chance. If we can nail this down we
can build out the other assets required for publication.

John



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20(6).docx

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 18:07

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Higher History - Clarification question

Hi Martyn, please see below for a summary of our discussion this afternoon in relation to your questions. Thanks, [REDACTED]

Higher Scottish history specimen question paper

The Higher Scottish history specimen question paper and marking instructions were updated:

- September 2023 to reflect the changes to the Higher History course specification which focused on standardising the number of bullet points in the description of content across each historical context, Parts A – E, helping Item Writers create questions of equal demand across each of the options (course specification published May 2023 for implementation in session 2023-24)
- May 2024 to reflect the changes to the Higher History course specification which focused on updating the language as a first step towards a decolonisation of the curriculum. (for implementation in session 2024-25)

Detail

- The level of detail in the marking instructions for the specimen paper published in September 2023 was not part of this change request. The marking instructions were amended only to reflect any changes to the wording of the questions (based on the revised bullet points).
- The specimen materials were published prior to the Review Meeting for the 2024 question paper.
- The detail in marking instructions is to guide and support markers not for candidates to replicate word for word, a reason why updating the specimen question paper to reflect more recent question paper marking instructions is not an immediate priority at a time of limited resource.
- It is worth noting that the detail for Q15 (Issue 3) in the Migration and empire section, quoted in the press, was not innovative. The marking instructions were based on the 2023 marking instructions for Q15 (Issue 3)

Feedback

- Each year Writers/Checkers/Reviewers aim to refine question papers and marking instructions in light of previous years' performance and feedback. A lot of feedback from practitioners is informal and is gathered during the marking period, post exam procedures and at Understanding Standards events.

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 14:42

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Higher History - Clarification question

Importance: High

[REDACTED]

I'd be grateful for help in responding to the question below that has been raised on our Higher History review. Could you please let me know the answer this afternoon if at all possible? I am taking the references to 2014 as meaning 2024 so grateful if you could do the same.

*'The report indicates that after changes for session 2023/24, a specimen paper and marking instructions were released. **Were these instructions detailed like the 2014 paper and if not, why was this? Was there specific feedback at this time to support the assertion that the more detailed instructions in the 2014 paper was at the request of practitioners?***

Regards

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 18:14

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Higher History Review report - Response to Board members' comments

I'm also content and have attached an updated version of the media release, bringing the summary of findings into notes for editors. I'm happy to review the length of the quotes tomorrow to see if we can shorten the main text further – I agree it is a longer release than we would normally issue but think it is a consequence of the report and the various comments required.

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 18:10

To: Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Higher History Review report - Response to Board members' comments

Thanks Shirley

Just to confirm, I am content. I think you can also ask me, as Chief Examiner, to consider future approaches and advise QC and the Board.

Martyn/Steve, grateful if this could issue tonight.

Thanks again.

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 1F

From: Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 18:05

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Higher History Review report - Response to Board members' comments

Martyn

Thank you. A few thoughts. I just shared them in a conversation with Fiona and she was content – I say that because I think she was rightly logging off for the evening.

I think the media release is too long. I would prefer a shorter version maybe using some of the detail in an “notes to the Editor” format, but I’ll go with John’s advice.

I like the matrix of how each of the Board members points have been dealt with. I think that strikes the right balance between showing that each has been properly considered and accepted where appropriate.

I have amended the cover sheet to the Board as set out below in red: Can this one be used please

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Shirley

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Thanks again for all your hard work Martyn, come back to me if there's anything else you need.

Thanks

S

Shirley Rogers CBE

Chair, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

e: shirley.rogers@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1FD

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

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 November 2024 16:54

To: Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Higher History Review report - Response to Board members' comments

Importance: High

Shirley

In the first attached document we have provided responses to the key points made by Board members on the Higher History Review by email following the meeting last Thursday. We have set out proposals for how these points are handled before publication.

We have also prepared a draft note (below) for you to consider sharing with the Board together with this document and the draft press release that is also attached.

Please let me know if you have any questions on either document.

Thanks and regards

Martyn

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Many thanks

Shirley

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [Redacted] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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



HH%20media%20rel ease%20(7).docx



HH%20media%20rel ease%20(7.1).docx

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 05 November 2024 20:14
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Almost final version of report

Thanks Martyn. Will check first thing and get Asta to do final formatting.

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 05 November 2024 20:11
To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Almost final version of report

 [SQA_Higher_History_Review_2024_FINAL_FOR_PUBLICATION_20241106.1.docx](#)

John

Link above to what I think is the almost final version of the report for publication.

Working from the version we shared with the BoM I have:
incorporated some small edits suggested by your team
likewise some factual corrections requested by the QM
amended the term Recommendations to Wider Reflections and included the new short
introductory para under this heading on p. 47
Searched for and replaced any other uses of the words 'Recommendation/s'


Grateful if you could:
confirm that the wording is the most up to date where I have asked on p 6 and 47
Double check that the line I have highlighted on p 12 is consistent with the new summary doc

I take it we'll then ask an Editor to have a final look at formatting (as the title of Appendix 1
needs added in the contents page (and I mess the whole list up if I try to do it) and the number of
the Wider Reflections section is missing from p 47) and then to pdf for publication?

Hope that is clear and makes sense. Let me know if not.

Martyn

Martyn Ware
Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m:  | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ

END

START

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 November 2024 20:40

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Re: Almost final version of report

Great thanks John.

[REDACTED] happy for you to share the link below with [REDACTED] or the attached copy of the same version.

Please let me know if you need anything further from me.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 20:33

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: RE: Almost final version of report

Martyn

Have checked and all looks good from my perspective. Have removed the confidential marking from the front cover.

If you could make sure [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (and Richard) have access then [REDACTED] will ask [REDACTED] to do a final edit/format ready for publication.

Many thanks

John

John Booth

Director of Communications, SQA

START

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 05 November 2024 21:06
To: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Re: For Review: Key messaging and Q&A re. Higher History review

Thanks for this Richard. Overall looks good and v helpful prep for tomorrow.

I have made just a few minor comments on most pages but a few more on the last couple of questions. I hope my comments are clear: let me know if not.

Thanks again for your insights and guidance in our rehearsal earlier.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards
m: [REDACTED] | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ

From: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 10:36
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: For Review: Key messaging and Q&A re. Higher History review
Hi Martyn,

Hope you are well and bearing up during this challenging time.

Would either yourself or an appropriate colleague be able to review this Key Messaging and Q&A document we have developed to support comms re. the HH review?

 [HH key messages.docx](#)

We have done the best we can and aligned with the report text. John B is content with this draft but it obviously needs to be reviewed by someone with the necessary technical understanding.

Kind regards,

Richard Pidgeon

Head of Communications and Engagement
Ceannard Conaltraidh agus Com-pàrtachaidh
m: [REDACTED] | **e:** richard.pidgeon@sqa.org.uk | **w:** www.sqa.org.uk
Scottish Qualifications Authority | Ùghdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 November 2024 10:37

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Higher History Review Slides

Thanks, John

Have made a few minor proofing tweaks – and have added an example of the qualitative and quantitative evidence used in grade boundary meetings – *such as the estimates received from schools and colleges* – just in case there is a question around what this evidence is.

[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 November 2024 08:12

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Higher History Review Slides

Morning

Updated slide pack for use in internal and external briefings on outcome of HH review.

Grateful for any comments/improvements.

Thanks

John



Higher%20History%20Review%20Slides%200Review%20Slides%200

END

START

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 November 2024 11:38

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: Re: QC

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for this. We (Fiona, Donna and I) will discuss immediately after EMT and get back to you.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: 07725 757089 | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 10:44

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: Fw: QC

Hi all,

I think there's a bit of confusion around tomorrow's QC and the Higher History report. I didn't translate from Shirley's message to the Board that it would be coming to QC for discussion tomorrow and it isn't on the agenda - should it be? Or will there just be an update provided under matters arising with further discussion pieces to come to the Committee at a future meeting? Grateful for a steer so I can advise [REDACTED] accordingly.

Much appreciated,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] >

Sent: 05 November 2024 10:41

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: RE: QC

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the update and happy to welcome Shirley to QC. I don't have Higher History on my agenda and I thought we had agreed to leave it with the Board and perhaps do a further analytical report for QC's information for the next meeting. It's a hefty report to circulate just now and to what end?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 November 2024 09:03

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: QC

Morning [REDACTED]

Just to let you know that Shirley will be joining you at QC tomorrow given the ask around H History.

Best wishes, Karen.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chief Executive's Office | Oifis an Àrd-oifigeir

e: [REDACTED] | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority | Ùghdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1FD

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 November 2024 07:41

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Shortened news release

Hi

Have attempted to shorten the release further – including your quote Fiona – (see tracked changes) and moved the summary of findings to the notes section.

Can you let me know if you're content with this version, thanks.

Martyn –

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

John



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20-%20shorten

END

START

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 10:11

To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Re: For approval: awarding process

Looks good me too, thanks [REDACTED]

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 10:06

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: awarding process

Thanks [REDACTED], I think this will work for the moment.

Jean

Jean Blair

Director of Operations

t: [REDACTED] | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 10:00

To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: awarding process

Thanks, all – will get the changes made.

- Stage 2 - Markers are practising teachers and lecturers and SQA is dependent on them to mark over 1.3 million graded National Course exam scripts, assignments and coursework every year.

- Stage 4 - Standardisation is led by the Principal Assessor and supported by their senior team leaders and team leaders. Its main purpose is to finalise the detailed marking instructions based on a review of a sample of responses from learners who have sat the question papers **and completed coursework**.
- Stage 8 - **Grade boundary meetings determine the minimum marks** needed to get an A, B, C, or D grade or a 'No Award' result. Grade boundaries help ensure assessments have worked as planned and that standards are consistent from one year to the next. Every year we review how each course assessment has performed in order to set grade boundaries fairly.

With regards to the mention of 'for subjects that are marked from paper' at the marker check and finalisation stages – Richard has suggested that for the purposes of this publication, we say:

- Marker check (for example for Higher History)
- Finalisation (for example for Higher History)

We can then sort this infographic out for more generic use, later?

Would that work?

Thanks

██████████

From: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 09:21

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; ██████████@sqa.org.uk; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: awarding process

Hi

I discussed this with ██████████ last night.

The infographic is generic but as History is marked from paper the stages of marker check and finalisation apply. As most of our subjects are now MFI, these two stages do not apply and whilst I agree about the lay audience, it won't be accurate and means it won't be aligned to the report.

██████████, I think we need to address the reference to exam papers and assignments in stage 2 and to QPs in stage 4 eg marker meetings apply to coursework marking too.

Hope this is helpful.

Jean

Jean Blair

Director of Operations

t: ██████████ | **e:** jean.blair@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 06 November 2024 09:15
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk;
Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: For approval: awarding process

Agree looks good. Do we need to include (...marked from paper) under 7 and 9? Appreciate it is technically accurate but think will confuse most people and don't think it makes a material difference for a lay audience.

John
John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 06 November 2024 08:58
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>;
Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Re: For approval: awarding process

Looks good, thanks [REDACTED]

With apologies I've one small additional point on #8: technically GB meetings only set the GB for A band 1, A and C - the others are determined statistically from this.
Could we revise the wording to say: 'Grade boundary meetings determine the minimum marks.....'.

Apologies for another change.

Martyn
Martyn Ware
Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards
m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk
Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 08:49
To: Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: For approval: awarding process

Morning

Here is updated infographic with your changes made.

Please let me know if this is good to go or if any final tweaks are required.

Many thanks

████████

From: ██████████
Sent: 05 November 2024 20:11
To: Donna Stewart <donna.stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <john.booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <richard.pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: For approval: awarding process

Many thanks to you all for your comments.

We'll get another version of this round to you in the morning.

Donna – will get you text for appointees in the morning too.

Thanks

████████

From: Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 05 November 2024 15:59
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; ██████████@sqa.org.uk; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Re: For approval: awarding process

Thanks ██████████ - I like the look of this.

Agree with Martyn that something in the heading is not reading well. Adding the word 'awarding' makes me sense.

████████ is there text that I can use in an email to appointees? Apologies if there is something in my inbox that I haven't got to yet.

Many thanks,
Donna

Donna Stewart

Interim Director of Qualifications Development

Stiùiriche Eadar-amail Leasachaidh Ceistean

e: donna.stewart@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 05 November 2024 15:28
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Re: For approval: awarding process

Thanks for this, [REDACTED] - it looks a useful resource.

I've just a couple of comments:

It feels to me as though there is a word missing in 'SQA's process for graded national....'. and wondered if 'SQA's process **for awarding** graded national....'. would be better. Technically some may say awarding happens at grade boundary meetings but each of the stages in the chart is a part of awarding - as I think we have said in the report.

For clarity could we also add 'Exam/assessment' takes place between stages 2 and 3?

Hope that's clear: please let me know if not.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk
Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 12:14
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: For approval: awarding process

Hello

To support the publication of the history report, we've had the attached infographic created – to help explain the different stages in our awarding process.

The text has been taken from the description of each stage within the history report.

Can you please review to ensure its accuracy and let me have any comments you may have on it.

This will be published along with the report and the summary version. In time, we will also develop a video animation clip of the overall process to share across social media channels and as a resource on the website.

Thanks

[REDACTED]



SQA-awarding-proce
ss-infographic (12).pd

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 10:33

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>;
Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Final HH comms assets

Hi

Final news release, key messages/Q&A and slide deck. Thought it might be useful for you to have these all in the one place.

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA



HH%20media%20rel Higher%20History%2 HH%20key%20mess
ease%20(13).docx 0Review%20Slides%2 ages%20(13).docx

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 06 November 2024 10:38
To: ExecutiveTeam <ExecutiveTeam@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Higher History announcement at 2pm

Exec colleagues

Thought you would appreciate seeing the final text of the media release issuing at 2pm alongside the reports (full and summary versions) that will be published online.

I'll share this with SLT before it goes live.

[@Dawnne](#) – can you share with the TU reps at 1.30pm please.

There will be a staff message issuing shortly after 2pm too, which will link to the release and reports.

Thanks

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20(13).docx

END

START

From: Internal Communications <internalcomms@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 14:10

To: Internal Communications <internalcomms@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Higher History review — an update for all SQA colleagues



Colleagues,

A review of this year's Higher History assessments is now complete and we are today publishing the review report, which concludes that the standard in 2024 was the same as that set in previous years.

I hope the outcome of the review, which has been independently scrutinised and endorsed by an external awarding body, will reassure learners, parents, carers, teachers, lecturers and the wider public that they can have full confidence in our assessment and awarding processes.

I would like to thank colleagues involved in this work, which has been taking place since September. This has been a challenging time for them. The report confirms that the Higher History exam team acted with integrity throughout the awarding process.

More information, including the full report and our media release, is [available to view on our intranet](#).

Thanks,

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive

END

START

From: Internal Communications <internalcomms@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 13:31

Subject: Higher History review — update for SLT message

SLT colleagues,

You will be aware of the Higher History review that has been taking place over the past two months. The review has now concluded and the review report is being published at 2pm today. I have attached a copy of the media release which will issue at the same time, and which I thought you would appreciate advance sight of.

The review findings have been independently scrutinised and endorsed by an external awarding body (WJEC).

This has been a challenging time for those colleagues involved in the review process. The report confirms that the Higher History exam team acted with integrity throughout the awarding process.

An all-staff message will issue shortly after 2pm.

Thanks,

John Booth
Director of Communications



HH%20media%20rel
ease%20(13).docx

END

START

From: Martyn Ware

Sent: 06 November 2024 09:13

To: Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@sqa-ext.org.uk>

Cc: Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Publication of Higher History Review Report Today

Iain, [REDACTED]

Just a note to confirm that we will be publishing the Higher History Review report at 1400 today.

Regards

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 15:08

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Coverage so far

Hi

Will update you through the afternoon, here is initial round of coverage:

Scotsman online – “Poor’ pupil performance blamed for drop in Higher History pass rate as review comments on ‘integrity’ of exam’

<https://x.com/CalumRoss23/status/1854164524729028930>

Herald online – ‘SQA says that Higher History marking standard did not change’

<https://x.com/MrMcEnaney/status/1854167028216524821>

Thanks



The Scotsman
(14).pdf



The%20Herald%20O
nline%20(14).docx

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 17:30

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Coverage so far

Here is an article from TESS and updated Herald copy.

TESS online – ‘Higher history review finds marking standard did not change’

Herald online – ‘SQA says that Higher History marking standards did not change – updated’

And then some comments on social media, for info:

<https://x.com/MrMcEnaney/status/1854172425769881711>

<https://x.com/MrMcEnaney/status/1854188562515702192>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7259937652064317440/?commentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Acomment%3A%28activity%3A7259937652064317440%2C7259957805569220611%29>

https://x.com/Henry_Hepburn/status/1854194019963703697

<https://x.com/GlasgowPam/status/1854194558206161390>

<https://x.com/MrMcEnaney/status/1854194745708355817>

Thanks



The%20Herald%20Online%20(15).docx



TESS%20(15).docx

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 17:00

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: media enquiry

Thanks, Martyn – updated response:

“Markers are all teachers and are asked to provide feedback after marking is complete. Over 150 Higher History markers submitted feedback and all of this feedback was considered by the review. In addition, when concerns were first raised about the marking standard, we wrote to every Higher History marker and gave them a further opportunity to provide feedback. While only four took up this further opportunity, this feedback was also considered by the review.

“As the concerns raised were focused on the setting of the standard, follow-up interviews were conducted with those responsible for setting this standard, namely the senior appointees - also teachers - and SQA staff.

“The review provides a balanced summary of the feedback provided by markers, who are all teachers.

“Independent, external scrutiny of the review by an expert in standard-setting and exams has endorsed the findings and confirmed the evidence supports the report’s conclusions.”

Background note

Feedback from markers did not raise concerns about the exam team.

-ends-

[REDACTED]

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 November 2024 16:46

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

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Re: For approval: media enquiry

Thanks for this, [REDACTED] Overall it looks good to me with a couple of comments:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Hope that helps.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 16:27

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: For approval: media enquiry

Hi

We've had a number of questions in from the Herald:

"The review considered a wide range of evidence, including the course specification, question papers and learners' answers, marking instructions, marker reports and feedback, and interviews with both SQA staff and senior appointees, who are all practicing teachers and lecturers, including the Principal Assessor for Higher History."

This seems to suggest that the review depended upon existing materials (MIs, marker reports etc) and that interviews only took place with people who work for the SQA or who are "senior appointees" such as the PA. Can you confirm whether or not other teachers/markers were interviewed at all? This seems particularly important given that teachers have repeatedly raised concerns about the PA and other SQA staff. If teachers were interviewed, can you please confirm how many?

The SQA release admits that "some markers provided feedback on the marking standard". Although very few comments are included in the report, one said "goalposts seemed to have been moved." Will the SQA, in the interests of transparency, release the anonymised marker reports in full?

Draft response

Here is our suggested response – for your comment and approval. We also need to add the number of markers who responded to our call for additional feedback – as per the highlighted sentence.

‘Markers are all teachers and are asked to provide feedback after marking is complete. Over 150 Higher History markers submitted feedback and all of this feedback was considered by the review. In addition, when concerns were first raised about the marking standard, we wrote to every Higher History marker and gave them a further opportunity to provide feedback. While only X took up this further opportunity, this feedback was also considered by the review.’

‘As the concerns raised were focused on the setting of the standard, follow-up interviews were conducted with those responsible for setting this standard, namely the senior appointees - also teachers - and SQA staff.

‘The review provides a balanced summary of the feedback provided by markers, who are all teachers.

‘Independent, external scrutiny of the review by an expert in standard-setting and exams has endorsed the findings and confirmed the evidence supports the report’s conclusions.’

-ends-

Thanks

■

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2024 09:15

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Re: Coverage so far

Thanks [REDACTED]. And for all the work you, Richard and the team have put in.

John

From: [Helen Campbell](mailto:Helen.Campbell@sqa.org.uk) <Helen.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 9:06:15 AM

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Coverage so far

Morning

Scotsman and Herald have the story in today's print editions.

Scotsman, page 12 – 'SQA backs the integrity of its History exam and denies paper was too difficult'

Herald, page 1 and 2 – page 1 headline - 'Higher History marking 'worked as intended''; page 2 headline – 'SQA is accused of 'whitewash''

Herald's online story has changed its headline to – 'SQA accused of 'whitewash' in Higher History marking review' – Fergus Ewing, Pam Duncan-Glancy and Miles Briggs have comment. It still has 'more to follow' and our response, sent last evening, hasn't been added yet – so we'll keep an eye on this one.

BBC News online – ['Poor pupil answers blamed for exam slump – review'](#)

Thanks

[REDACTED]



Herald page 1 and 2
(16).pdf



Scotsman page 12
(16).pdf

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2024 13:38

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Coverage so far

Hi

Higher History was mentioned during today's FMQs – a transcript is attached.

Also attached is the updated Herald online article that now includes our full quote that we provided last evening – 'SQA accused of 'whitewash' in Higher History marking review'.

And here are some further social media posts, for info:

<https://x.com/MrMcEnaney/status/1854258871742697844>
https://x.com/Emma_Seith/status/1854408944828956957
<https://x.com/joecar/status/1854204312718627259>
<https://x.com/opininalways1/status/1854251643942138034>
<https://x.com/MrMcEnaney/status/1854459765188870639>
<https://x.com/JackAndersonSYP/status/1854497251789345129>

Thanks

[REDACTED]



First%20Minister's%20Herald%20online%20Questions%20on%20further%20updated%

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2024 17:38

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: media enquiry

Many thanks, Fiona

[REDACTED]

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2024 17:35

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: media enquiry

I'm coming to this late – apologies. Also content.

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 1F

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2024 17:01

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: For approval: media enquiry

Agree – think we are being clear that senior appointees are “are practising teachers and not

SQA employees.”

And have made change to second point – will get this away now. Thanks all

A spokesperson for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) said: "As part of the wide-ranging and rigorous review, interviews were conducted with senior appointees responsible for setting the standard. All of them are practising teachers and not SQA employees.

"Everyone who marks for SQA is a teacher. 150 of those teachers provided feedback after marking the Higher History papers and every piece of that extensive feedback was considered by the review.

"The findings and conclusions have been endorsed by an independent expert on exams and standard-setting."

-ends-

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 07 November 2024 16:54
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk;
Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: For approval: media enquiry

Hi

Is the first point not covered in the line already?

Happy with the change to the second point.

Think we need to get this away asap, so if Martyn is happy then suggest we do that.

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 07 November 2024 16:28
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Re: For approval: media enquiry

Thanks [REDACTED] looks good to me with two comments:

I don't think we would describe senior appointees as being '...in senior positions in SQA' implying that they are full time members of staff. Can we say something along the lines that they are all still primarily employed as teachers and undertake their appointee roles for SQA over and above this.

In the second point could we say '....every piece....' rather than '.....every single piece...'.

Regards

Martyn

Martyn Ware
Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: [REDACTED] | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 14:56
To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: For approval: media enquiry

Hi

We've had another enquiry from the Herald on the Higher History report:

I'm getting in touch to clarify a point from the information received yesterday.

My understanding is that, as part of the review, the only teachers who were interviewed were those 'responsible for setting the standard' - the senior appointees.

This means that no other teachers were interviewed as part of the process, despite the scale and scope of concerns that were raised, and also means that the only people interviewed were people who, as well as being teachers, are in senior positions at the SQA.

Is this correct?

Draft response

Here is our suggested response, for your comment and approval:

A spokesperson for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) said: "As part of the wide-ranging and rigorous review, interviews were conducted with senior appointees responsible for setting the standard. All of them are practising teachers and not SQA employees.

"Everyone who marks for SQA is a teacher. 150 of those teachers provided feedback after marking the Higher History papers and every single piece of that extensive feedback was considered by the review.

"The findings and conclusions have been endorsed by an independent expert on exams and standard-setting."

-ends-

Thanks

[REDACTED]

END

START

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 07 November 2024 10:34
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk
Subject: Re: Higher History review publication

Thanks for this, [REDACTED] I've suggested a few more edits in the attached. If you are OK with them please go ahead and send.

Martyn

Martyn Ware

Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards
m: [REDACTED] | **e:** martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 10:15
To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Higher History review publication

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Many thanks,
Martyn Ware
Director of Policy, Analysis & Standards

END

START

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2024 12:37

To: Margot McKerrell <Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: thank you

Colleagues

I just wanted to thank you all for all the work that has gone into the production and presentation of the Higher History report. It's been a very challenging time, and we will want to reflect on that in slower time, but I have been incredibly grateful for the way in which this work has been conducted and the professionalism and integrity you have brought to the task. Thank you again.

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 1F

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 08 November 2024 09:45

To: Denise Monteith <Denise.Monteith@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Mann <Gill.Mann@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Graeme Clark <Graeme.Clark@sqa.org.uk>; Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>; Jacqui Faulds <Jacqui.Faulds@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Liz McGrath <Liz.McGrath@sqa.org.uk>; Mags Paterson <Mags.Paterson@sqa.org.uk>; Margot McKerrell <Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; Mhairi Shillinglaw <Mhairi.Shillinglaw@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; Robert Quinn <Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk>; Stuart McLaren <Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Georgina Holmes <Georgina.Holmes@sqa.org.uk>; Dawnne Mahmoud <Dawnne.Mahmoud@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; John McMorris <John.McMorris@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Campbell <Martin.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Michael Baxter <Michael.Baxter@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Julie [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Raymond Holloway <Raymond.Holloway@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; John Wallace <John.Wallace@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Alasdair MacRae <Alasdair.MacRae@sqa.org.uk>; Gillian Hepburn <Gillian.Hepburn@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED] Catriona Campbell <Catriona.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Christopher Boulter <Christopher.Boulter@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: External Affairs <external.affairs@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Media update: Friday 8 November 2024

Morning

SQA

At yesterday's First Minister's Questions, there was a question about the Higher History review – 'BBC 1 Scotland FMQ's - @1243 Extract from FMQ's on the Review of Higher History Attainment'

Herald, page 16 – reader letter – 'It's good to see schools stand up to the SQA. Now it's time to make exams history'

TESS online – 'Isolation and loneliness akin to pandemic, warns education leader', a report from the ADES Conference, includes mention of qualification and assessment reform.

The Times, page 18 – ‘Bias training ‘could invite pupils to spy on teachers’’, article on Scottish Government plans for bias training for teachers and potentially pupils.

Scottish Business News online – ‘[Education Secretary launches academy.scot to upskill Scotland's workforce](#)’, an article about Advice Direct Scotland and its new academy.scot service. Through the new training academy, Advice Direct Scotland uses its expertise to deliver SQA-approved courses, including the first bespoke money and debt training to receive SQA recognition.

Glasgow World online – ‘[Young baristas brew up new skills at Glasgow Skills Academy](#)’ about delivery of Barista qualifications in Glasgow and Renfrewshire at the academy, part of Kibble Group.

Scotland

TESS online – “‘Degradation’ of music education ‘sets a dangerous precedent’”

Carol Turnbull, WorldSkills UK ambassador for Scotland, has [written a blog](#) celebrating the achievements of Scotland’s colleges, discussing the vital role colleges play in driving investment, jobs and economic growth.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has [announced its partnership](#) with Scottish Asian Business Chambers to ensure minority ethnic businesses are accessing the full range of business support SDS offer. Craig Peoples-Simpson, SDS equality, diversity and inclusion executive, said: “This partnership has been a rich source of information for SDS, helping us to ensure we are working to serve all the people and businesses of Scotland.”

The Scottish Funding Council’s latest survey of college student satisfaction and engagement has [shown high rates of satisfaction](#), with over 94% of full-time college students saying they were satisfied with their college experience. Martin Boyle, Scottish Funding Council’s interim chief executive, said: “Today’s results show high levels of overall satisfaction and reflect the continuing commitment of Scotland’s colleges to the quality of the student experience.” [Dr Graeme Jackson, Colleges Scotland interim chief executive](#), said: “This data is a real testament to the hard work of staff and leaders who work tirelessly to ensure students have a great learning experience while at college.”

Rest of UK

Press Association – ‘Nearly one in three pupils in England given extra time in exams, says regulator’

Ofqual has [launched a consultation](#) which proposes to introduce a new Condition (the Principles Condition) in the General Conditions of Recognition. The consultation, which closes on 12 February 2025, sets out the six overarching principles awarding organisations must comply with. Sir Ian Bauckham, Ofqual chief regulator, said: “These principles will play an important role in helping Ofqual secure standards and public confidence in qualifications.”

Schools Week online – ‘[Ofqual demands ‘honesty’ in new rules for exam boards](#)’

Richard Lochhead has [updated](#) the Economy and Fair Work Committee on regulations being made by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade under the Professional Qualification Act

2022 (PQ Act) to implement the UK-Swiss Recognition of Professional Qualifications (RPQ) Agreement.

SedEd online – ‘[SecEd to address the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence in schools](#)’

Thanks



					
Herald letters page 16 (18).pdf	First%20Minister's% 20Questions%20on%	Press Association (18).msg	TESS%20online%20(18).docx	The Times page 18 (18).pdf	TESS%20online%20(18.1).docx

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk
Sent: 12 November 2024 17:24
To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: For approval: media enquiry

Thanks, [REDACTED] and Fiona – we'll get this away and shared with Scot Govt and WJEC.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk On Behalf Of Fiona Robertson
Sent: 12 November 2024 16:48
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: FW: For approval: media enquiry

Hi,

Please see Fiona's response below.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: Fiona Robertson <fmgrobertson@me.com>
Sent: 12 November 2024 16:42
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk
Subject: Fwd: For approval: media enquiry

[REDACTED]

I think we should lose the background note, could be misinterpreted. Unless I am mistaken, we invited Richard to challenge us on anything. Worth checking with Martyn.

Can you forward to [REDACTED] and John.

Thanks
Fiona

Begin forwarded message:

From: Paula Petersen <Paula.Petersen@sqa.org.uk>

Date: 12 November 2024 at 16:33:50 GMT

To: fmgrobertson@me.com
Subject: FW: For approval: media enquiry

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 12 November 2024 16:10

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: For approval: media enquiry

Importance: High

Hi Fiona

We've had another enquiry from the herald on Higher History. Scot Govt has also been approached as has WJEC (details given below).

Here is our suggested response, for your comment and approval.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

-ends-

Enquiry to SQA

Having reported on the methodology of the recent report, confirming that the only people interviewed by the SQA official carrying it out were those with close links to the SQA, I have been in touch with the WJEC to ask about their endorsement of the report.

They have declined to endorse the methodology behind the report, and we will be reporting that development.

Given that the WJEC are telling us they cannot speak to the methodology behind the report, it now seems that that aspect of the review was not, in fact, independently assessed or endorsed.

Can the SQA explain why it did not have the WJEC analyse and approve the methodology behind the recent report.

Could you also provide us with the scope / terms of reference under which the WJEC were operating? Were they, for example, given specific instructions not to investigate the methodology? Will you confirm exactly what information was provided to the WJEC as part of their independent review of the SQA review?

WJEC response

We can confirm that following Richard's review, the analysis supports the report's conclusions. Any further questions relating to methodology or scope should be referred to SQA.

Scot Govt enquiry

Last week we reported on the methodology. The SQA admits that the only people interviewed were senior appointees - which means they only spoke to the people whose work was supposed to be investigated, and then gave themselves a clean bill of health.

John Swinney claimed that the report was "peer reviewed" by the WJEC.

I have spoken to the WJEC, who have declined to back the methodology. We are, of course, going to report that fact, and I'd like to know if the government still backs the SQA given the increasing questions about how they carried out their investigation. If the WJEC won't back the methodology, then it hasn't been independently assessed / endorsed. Should it have been?

However, given that John Swinney made a specific claim - that the report had been peer reviewed - there are also questions about that. Does the government believe that 'peer review' is the right term to describe a review that ignores methodology?

We're working on this today to run this evening / tomorrow so we'd need a response by 4pm today.

-ends-

Thanks



END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 12 November 2024 13:28

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>;

Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Review of Higher History

Thanks [REDACTED]

Some tweaks below.

We'll need to engage with SG comms (who have received a similar query, according to [REDACTED] and WJEC. [REDACTED]@wjec.co.uk and [REDACTED]@wjec.co.uk

The last I heard from WJEC their line was 'Richard's role was to ensure that the evidence presented in the report supported the conclusions. However, we cannot comment on the methodology'.

I think that's very different from 'WJEC declining to endorse the report' so unless WJEC have issued a new line then I think they and we need to challenge the premise of the query.

Fiona will need to clear final line.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications, SQA

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 12 November 2024 13:11

To: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Review of Higher History

Thanks, both – so response would be:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Redacted under section 30(b)(ii)

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 12 November 2024 12:48
To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Re: Review of Higher History

Thanks John.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Martyn

Martyn Ware
Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

m: 07725 757089 | e: martyn.ware@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, GLASGOW G2 8DQ

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 12:39
To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Review of Higher History

Hi

Starter for ten, drawing on the report text (new bits in yellow):

‘The Executive Director of Qualifications and Assessment at WJEC, an expert in standard setting in the context of national examinations, provided independent, external scrutiny and challenge of the review, including the evidence, conclusions and wider reflections.’

In interests of speed, as Martyn and I are interviewing all afternoon, I’m copying in Martyn now.

John

John Booth
Director of Communications, SQA

From: Helen Campbell <Helen.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: 12 November 2024 12:32
To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: FW: Review of Higher History

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: 12 November 2024 12:24
To: Media Enquiries <media.enquiries@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Review of Higher History

Good afternoon.

Having reported on the methodology of the recent report, confirming that the only people interviewed by the SQA official carrying it out were those with close links to the SQA, I have been in touch with the WJEC to ask about their endorsement of the report.

They have declined to endorse the methodology behind the report, and we will be reporting that development.

Given that the WJEC are telling us they cannot speak to the methodology behind the report, it now seems that that aspect of the review was not, in fact, independently assessed or endorsed.

Can the SQA explain why it did not have the WJEC analyse and approve the methodology behind the recent report.

Could you also provide us with the scope / terms of reference under which the WJEC were operating? Were they, for example, given specific instructions not to investigate the methodology? Will you confirm exactly what information was provided to the WJEC as part of their independent review of the SQA review?

We are looking to run this later this evening so would need any responses by 4pm.

If anyone needs to speak to me about any of this I should be available all day on [REDACTED]

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 13 November 2024 09:45

To: Denise Monteith <Denise.Monteith@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Mann <Gill.Mann@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Graeme Clark <Graeme.Clark@sqa.org.uk>; Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>; Jacqui Faulds <Jacqui.Faulds@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Liz McGrath <Liz.McGrath@sqa.org.uk>; Mags Paterson <Mags.Paterson@sqa.org.uk>; Margot McKerrell <Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; Mhairi Shillinglaw <Mhairi.Shillinglaw@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; Robert Quinn <Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk>; Stuart McLaren <Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk>; Valerie Innes <Valerie.Innes@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Georgina Holmes <Georgina.Holmes@sqa.org.uk>; Dawnne Mahmoud <Dawnne.Mahmoud@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; John McMorris <John.McMorris@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Campbell <Martin.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Michael Baxter <Michael.Baxter@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Raymond Holloway <Raymond.Holloway@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; John Wallace <John.Wallace@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Alasdair MacRae <Alasdair.MacRae@sqa.org.uk>; Gillian Hepburn <Gillian.Hepburn@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]]; Catriona Campbell <Catriona.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Christopher Boulter <Christopher.Boulter@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: External Affairs <external.affairs@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Media Update - Wednesday 13 Nov

Good morning,

SQA

Herald, pages 1 and 4 – **‘Swinney may have misled Holyrood on Higher exam controversy’** – the quote we provided has been used in full in both versions of the article.

Herald online – **‘John Swinney may have misled parliament over SQA review of Higher History marking’**

[REDACTED] has lodged the following written questions, that are due to be answered by 25 November:

- whether the executive director of qualifications and assessment at the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) was involved in the review of Higher History in 2024.
- When the Scottish Government received the report on the review of Higher History from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

Sandesh Gulhane has asked the Scottish Government what consideration it has given to introducing Hindi as a national qualification modern language, in light of Scotland's Census 2022 reportedly showing that Indians are the second largest immigrant population in Scotland. The written question is due to be answered by 25 November.

Scotland

Scotsman online – **‘What is the Scottish Government's "gold standard"? How high and secondary school performance is ranked’**

TESS online – **‘Timeline for new Centre of Teaching Excellence revealed’**

Skills Development Scotland has published its Pupil Voice [research](#) to support the launch of Scottish Careers Week. The research, which surveyed almost 11,000 S4 to S6 pupils, [found](#) nearly one-in-five 16-to-18-year-olds want jobs in the medicine and health sector when they finish their studies. Jobs in the creative industries including photographer, musician, and designer came second in the research, while roles in engineering, including mechanical and electrical, complete the top three most sought-after sectors.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

e: [REDACTED] w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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



Scotsman online
(19).pdf



TESS online (19).pdf



Herald%20online%20
(19).docx



Herald pages 1 and 4
(19).pdf

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 14 November 2024 10:18

To: Denise Monteith <Denise.Monteith@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Mann <Gill.Mann@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Graeme Clark <Graeme.Clark@sqa.org.uk>; Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>; Jacqui Faulds <Jacqui.Faulds@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Liz McGrath <Liz.McGrath@sqa.org.uk>; Mags Paterson <Mags.Paterson@sqa.org.uk>; Margot McKerrell <Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; Mhairi Shillinglaw <Mhairi.Shillinglaw@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; Robert Quinn <Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk>; Stuart McLaren <Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk>; Valerie Innes <Valerie.Innes@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Georgina Holmes <Georgina.Holmes@sqa.org.uk>; Dawnne Mahmoud <Dawnne.Mahmoud@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; John McMorris <John.McMorris@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Campbell <Martin.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Michael Baxter <Michael.Baxter@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Raymond Holloway <Raymond.Holloway@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; John Wallace <John.Wallace@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Alasdair MacRae <Alasdair.MacRae@sqa.org.uk>; Gillian Hepburn <Gillian.Hepburn@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]]; Catriona Campbell <Catriona.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Christopher Boulter <Christopher.Boulter@sqa.org.uk>**Cc:** External Affairs <external.affairs@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Media Update Thursday 14 Nov

Good morning,

SQA

Herald, page 4 – ‘**Labour demands statement from Gilruth over SQA Higher History 'saga'**’
Herald online – ‘**Labour demands statement from Gilruth over SQA marking 'saga'**’
TESS online – ‘**Ministerial statement demanded over handling of Higher history review**’
Yahoo News online (replication of Herald online article) – ‘[Labour demands parliamentary statement from Gilruth over SQA Higher History 'saga'](#)’
Daily Express online – ‘[John Swinney faces misleading parliament claim as he becomes embroiled in another exams fiasco](#)’

Scotland

The Scottish Government has [published](#) 'Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People'. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills said:

“I am pleased to build on this work with the launch of Respect for All, which focuses on prevention, response and inclusivity. It reflects the pressures facing young people, including the increase in social media use, and we expect all stakeholders in Scotland delivering services for children and young people to develop and implement an anti-bullying policy in line with the new guidance.”

Coverage includes:

- PA Media - **Room for improvement in tackling school bullies, says Gilruth as guidance issued**
- TESS online – **‘Treat online and offline bullying with ‘same seriousness’**
- Daily Record, page 12 – **‘must do better’**
- EIS online – **‘Anti-Bullying Guidance is a Positive Step, But Schools Need Resources to Deliver It’**

TESS online – **‘CfE review ‘must make clear what pupils need to know at each stage’**

The Cabinet Secretary has [responded to a series](#) of written questions from Pam Gosal asking the government whether it will provide an updates on implementation of anti-racist education; including the development of age and stage appropriate lesson plans that enable the delivery of anti-racist education and racist bullying education and learning, drawing on Scottish and UK examples of good practice.

Consideration of the Scottish Languages Bill at Stage 2 is [expected](#) to be completed by Friday 20 December.

There are a couple of Scottish Government FOI releases - [Scottish Government expense on translating publications into Scots](#) and [Scots language speaking employees at Scottish Government](#).

Rest of UK

There is an article from PA Media - **Why England’s new curriculum should involve as much hands-on learning as possible**

Qualifications Wales has [confirmed](#) its decision on the proposed approach to designating 14-16 qualifications to sit alongside the National 14-16 Qualifications Suite, following a three month consultation.

Thanks

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

e: [Redacted] [@sga.org.uk](mailto:[Redacted]@sga.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sga.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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



Herald%20online%20(20).docx



Daily Record, page 12 (20).pdf



Herald page 4 (20).pdf



PA%20Media%20(20 PA%20Media%20(20).docx



1).docx



TESS%20online%20(20).docx



TESS online (20).pdf



TESS%20online%20(20.1).docx

END

START

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 14 November 2024 16:27

To: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>;
Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: PQs - Higher History Review

Thanks Steve. Look fine to me though have made a few suggested tweaks. I don't think these are essential changes but would be helpful (though the last one is a typo).

John

John Booth

Director of Communications, SQA

From: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 14 November 2024 15:33

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Fw: PQs - Higher History Review

Hi all - sight of SG's draft responses.

These look fine to me. FWIW

Please let me know if there's anything here to amend.

Steve

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

Sent: 14 November 2024 14:10

To: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

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

Subject: RE: PQs - Higher History Review

Hi Steve,

Please find the draft answers to the PQs on Higher History below.

S6W-31160 Pam Duncan-Glancy: To ask the Scottish Government whether the executive director of qualifications and assessment at the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) was involved in the review of Higher History in 2024.

Draft Answer:

The 2024 Higher History ~~marking~~ review is an operational matter for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in its independent role as an

examination body. The Scottish Government accepts the findings of the review.

Richard Harry, Executive Director of Qualifications and Assessment at Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC), Wales' largest awarding body, independently peer reviewed the report and agreed that its conclusions and recommendations are supported by evidence.

S6W-31161 Pam Duncan-Glancy: To ask the Scottish Government when it received the report on the review of Higher History from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

Draft Answer:

I received the draft of the review of Higher History 2024 on 31 October, the same day as the Board of the Scottish Qualifications Authority met to consider and agreed the findings. Scottish Government Officials received the draft on 30 October.

To flag these have still to be cleared so may be tweaked – let me know if you have any comments.

These will be finalised by Monday morning so any comments before then would be much appreciated.

Best wishes,

114

 | National Qualifications Team | Curriculum and Qualifications
 Division | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

From: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 11:47 AM
To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: PQs - Higher History Review

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for sight, both seem quite straightforward.

Steve

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Sent: 12 November 2024 09:59
To: Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Subject: PQs - Higher History Review

Hi Steve,

I hope you're well.

Just to make you aware we have received the following PQs this morning –

S6W-31160 Pam Duncan-Glancy: To ask the Scottish Government whether the executive director of qualifications and assessment at the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) was involved in the review of Higher History in 2024.

S6W-31161 Pam Duncan-Glancy: To ask the Scottish Government when it received the report on the review of Higher History from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

We will share our draft responses with you to sense check as soon as we have them.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | National Qualifications Team | Curriculum and Qualifications
Division | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

END

START

From: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 15 November 2024 09:57

To: Denise Monteith <Denise.Monteith@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Mann <Gill.Mann@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Graeme Clark <Graeme.Clark@sqa.org.uk>; Iain Morrison <Iain.Morrison@sqa.org.uk>; Jacqui Faulds <Jacqui.Faulds@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Liz McGrath <Liz.McGrath@sqa.org.uk>; Mags Paterson <Mags.Paterson@sqa.org.uk>; Margot McKerrell <Margot.McKerrell@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; Mhairi Shillinglaw <Mhairi.Shillinglaw@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; Robert Quinn <Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk>; Stuart McLaren <Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk>; Valerie Innes <Valerie.Innes@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Donna Stewart <Donna.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Georgina Holmes <Georgina.Holmes@sqa.org.uk>; Dawnne Mahmoud <Dawnne.Mahmoud@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; John McMorris <John.McMorris@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Campbell <Martin.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Martyn Ware <Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk>; Michael Baxter <Michael.Baxter@sqa.org.uk>; Steve Borley <Steve.Borley@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Raymond Holloway <Raymond.Holloway@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; John Wallace <John.Wallace@sqa.org.uk>; Shirley Rogers <Shirley.Rogers@sqa.org.uk>; Brynley [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Alasdair MacRae <Alasdair.MacRae@sqa.org.uk>; Gillian Hepburn <Gillian.Hepburn@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED] Catriona Campbell <Catriona.Campbell@sqa.org.uk>; Christopher Boulter <Christopher.Boulter@sqa.org.uk>
Cc: External Affairs <external.affairs@sqa.org.uk>
Subject: Media Update - Friday 15 Nov

Good morning,

SQA

Herald online – Lessons to Learn newsletter – ‘**The questions over Higher History marking saga just won't stop coming**’

Paisley Daily Express, page 3 – ‘**Coffee is toffee for Skills kids**’

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills has [responded](#) to a written question from Foyso Choudhury asking whether the government has considered extending modern language provision in primary and secondary schools to include the languages spoken by News Scots pupils and their families.

The Scottish Government has published an [FOI Release](#) on pass rates for National 5 and Higher courses. National 5 and Higher results from 2023 and 2024 are listed in the [Information released - Annex A](#).

The Scottish Government has published an [FOI Release](#) on Community Languages Policy in Scotland, with mention of National Qualifications.

Scotland

The Times online – **‘Scottish school league table 2024: the best secondary schools revealed’**

TESS online – **‘Reform delays hamper schools, but SLS sees some positive signs’**

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills has [responded](#) to a written question from Miles Briggs on what assessment has been made of the reported decline in the reading age of pupils in schools. The Cabinet Secretary has also [responded](#) to a written question from Mr Briggs on what specific actions have been taken in the current parliamentary session to improve the average reading age in schools and [one](#) on what digital solutions are being explored to improve the reading age in schools.

The Scottish Government has published an [FOI Release](#) on Funding provided to Council Authorities for music tuition.

Connect has [responded](#) to the General Teaching Council for Scotland’s review of the Fitness to Teach rules.

Rest of UK

Ofqual has [published](#) the outcome and the feedback it received following the consultation on proposed changes to the assessment of mathematics, physics and combined science GCSEs in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

Thanks





[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

			
Herald online – Lessons to Learn new	Paisley Daily Express, page 3 (21).pdf	The Times online (21).pdf	TESS%20online%20- %20(21).docx

END