

**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 03 May 2024 11:02  
**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** SQA diet start dates

Good morning Jean

I hope all's well with SQA – always a tense time, I'd imagine.

I've been asked to raise the matter of the start dates for the exam diet with SQA. You may already have had this from SLS, but it has come to ADES as well. The gist of the concern is that the start date of the diet doesn't always align well with Spring Break and this can cause an issue if there's little or no time between the end of the holiday and the start of the diet. I've summarised the concerns as:

*For 2025, SQA exams are scheduled to start on Wednesday 23 April 2025. The exam dates have come forward in recent years and the diet has grown in length. Whilst this year's diet commenced on Monday 22 April 2024, most schools had one week back with the senior school.*

*Next session in 2025 the holiday starts on Monday 7 April – and this means a return to school on Monday 21 April in most authorities. However, this being Easter Monday, we return on Tuesday 22 April. SQA exams start the next day on Wednesday 23 April.*

*Concerns for the following year, 2026, are similar. Easter is at the start of the holiday so we will be off school from Good Friday, 3 April, and start back on Monday 20 April.*

The current pattern might suggest a start date of Tuesday 21 April 2026. The impact of an immediate start to the diet was expressed as:

*This earlier starting date is an issue for everyone, as coming straight back into the exams is not conducive to good attainment. We also fear that an extended break away from their teachers will disadvantage the most disadvantaged candidates disproportionately, particularly in schools where there are exceptionally high levels of deprivation and the consequent lack of educational support in many households.*

We'd be keen to avoid this issue for future years and would ask that cognisance be given to school holiday dates when scheduling the diet.

We do acknowledge the pressures and complexity of managing the diet and subsequent processes. As ever, happy to discuss.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

South Lanarkshire Council  
Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton ML3 0AA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Council website: [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 03 June 2024 09:30  
**To:** Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Hi Martin,

Many thanks for your quick response. I take your point and I totally realise there was no "agreement" (I deliberately did not use any version of the word "agree"! ) but only that it was a very promising solution, and we understood clearly that you would need to do further work on it with regard to pupil workload, SQA procedures workload, etc. We do however regard it as a helpful direction of movement, and it would be seen as such by schools/colleges in what is a very difficult situation.

I look forward to hearing from you later this week!

[REDACTED]

**From:** Martin Ingram  
**Sent:** Monday, June 3, 2024 9:19 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Jean Blair ; Fiona Robertson  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Morning [REDACTED]

It was good to meet you both in person too, and I too hope you enjoyed the spell of summer over the weekend.

I just wanted to note that we did not agree this as a way forward, rather that I would need to reflect on this and carry out a further work internally, around workload across the week for example. I will also need to share my reflections with colleagues and ensure that any suggested changes are operationally viable.

As I mentioned when departing, I will hope to do that this week and get back to you and [REDACTED] on our next steps.

Regards

Martin

Martin Ingram  
Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 3, 2024 8:41 AM  
**To:** Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Good morning, Martin!

I hope you (and everyone else) enjoyed the super summer weather over the weekend!

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to you for your kindness and warm welcome on Friday when [REDACTED] and I met with you. Many thanks for your hospitality and for having a couple of possible alternative timetables for the 2025 Diet. [REDACTED] and I both felt we made good progress and were very comfortable with the suggested changes we co-created together. We thought starting the Diet on Monday 28 April and running for 26 days with 24 exam days and a possible number of 296 coincident exams was a definite solution. The idea of having June 3<sup>rd</sup> as the Contingency day and thus allowing June 2<sup>nd</sup> to be an exam day would allow further flexibility and perhaps allow the number of coincident exams to fall further which is a bonus. The realm of Local Authorities regarding Bank Holidays within the Diet Period (e.g. May Day (5<sup>th</sup>) and Victoria Day/Spring Bank Holiday 26<sup>th</sup> May) was also discussed, but that needs to involve ADES.

I hope you feel our meeting helped here, and both [REDACTED] and I feel that there is a way forward here as we discussed which would get the backing of SLS members and in fact the whole school/college community.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

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[REDACTED]

Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2024 9:44 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>

**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Hi [REDACTED]

No worries, I'll keep the coffee hot.

Regards

Martin

Martin Ingram  
Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2024 9:20 AM  
**To:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED]@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Morning, Martin!

I hope this finds you well.

Just to let you know that the earliest train I can get from Dundee arrives at Waverley at 09:13 and so I would hope to be at Lowden by just after 10. I think the 33 bus will whizz me there from Waverley! (If it doesn't turn up, I shall get a taxi!)

See you tomorrow.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] SLS  
[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

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[REDACTED]  
Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 11:17 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Thanks for coming back [REDACTED]

I pop over an invitation and set thing up for us in Lowden.

Look forward to seeing you at around 10am.

Regards

Martin

Martin Ingram  
Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** KAyed (Kings Park) <KAyed@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 11:03 AM  
**To:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; Graham Hutton <graham.hutton@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Friday morning at Dalkeith is good for me. See you all then.

Many thanks.

████████

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 28 May 2024 08:59  
**To:** ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk; ██████████  
████████@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Morning ██████████

Thanks for the quick response, hopefully Friday will work for ██████████ too, and I can make arrangements.

Regards

Martin

Martin Ingram  
Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 8:50 AM  
**To:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; ██████████@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Good Morning, Martin and ██████████ (and Jean)

Yes, I am back at work today. Friday morning would suit me best at Lowden. I have a meeting in Edinburgh at 1, so maybe 10-12 roughly, depending on trains and then bus to Lowden.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> in the morning would also be possible at Lowden, as I have a CASNB meeting at Victoria Quay at 1pm, so again 10-12?

████████

████████████████

████████

████████████████ - SLS

██████████  
Email: ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk

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██████████  
Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 8:43 AM

**To:** KAYed (Kings Park) <KAYed@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>; ██████████

██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

**Importance:** High

Morning ██████████

We have a couple of options, and to give us enough time to dedicate to this work I am suggesting a morning or afternoon. This can be either Friday 31 morning, anytime on Monday 03 or Tuesday 04 next week.

Happy to do our Lowden offices in Edinburgh if this is easier for all.

I will await a response from ██████████, I know he was off yesterday.

Regards

Martin

Martin Ingram

Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** ██████████@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>

**Sent:** Monday, May 27, 2024 8:37 PM

**To:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk

**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing

Good evening Martin

Glasgow is definitely easier for me, but Edinburgh would be central for both ██████████ and I. When are you thinking?

Thanks.

██████████

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** 27 May 2024 12:22

**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk; [REDACTED]@kingspark-sec.glasgow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** NQ Exam Timetable 2025 Timing  
**Importance:** High

You don't often get email from [martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Both,

Hope you had a good weekend.

I wonder if you would like to meet in person (for ease of using our tools) to discuss this further, I understand time is of the essence and was hoping it could be this week or early next week.

Happy to arrange something in either our Lowden or Optima offices, which ever is easier for you both.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Regards

Martin

**Martin Ingram**

*(He, Him, His)*

Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement  
Operations - Logistics and Customer Engagement  
e: [martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, DALKEITH, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 18 June 2024 21:37  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Subject:** Re: Catch up on exam timetable



Thanks [REDACTED]

I'll catch up with you tomorrow.

Jean

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 6:15:36 PM  
**To:** Jean Blair  
**Subject:** Re: Catch up on exam timetable  
Hi Jean,  
No problem! 12:30 it is!  
[REDACTED]  
Sent from my iPhone

On 18 Jun 2024, at 16:20, Jean Blair wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]  
Thanks for getting back to me.  
Don't wish to prolong your morning but might it be possible to catch up at 12.30?  
Regards  
Jean  
**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 6799 | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 4:01 PM  
**To:** Jean Blair  
**Subject:** Re: Catch up on exam timetable  
Hi Jean,  
Thanks for your email. Happy to talk tomorrow on phone or on Teams. The only thing in my diary is a Respect for All meeting 11:00 to 12:30! Any other time is good! Hope we can work a time out. Am available from 7:30!  
[REDACTED]  
Sent from my iPhone

On 18 Jun 2024, at 14:48, Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)> wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]  
I'm conscious of our discussion last week and the work we are doing on the timetable for 2025, for example on learner workload.  
Would you have any time tomorrow for a chat about this, say 11.30?  
Hope this is possible.  
Regards  
Jean  
**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

t: 0345 213 6799 | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 19 June 2024 06:21  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: 2025 Exam Timetable

Morning [REDACTED]  
Happy to take a call this morning. Can I try you around 8? I will be travelling to Glasgow then.  
Thanks and best wishes

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]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 8:41 PM  
**To:** Fiona Robertson  
**Subject:** Re: 2025 Exam Timetable

Hi Fiona,

Thank you for your email. Good to hear from you.  
I have arranged to speak to Jean tomorrow at 12:30 , but would also welcome a chance to speak to you too. I am available tomorrow from 7:30 to 11 and Thursday from 7:30 till 10:30 if that helps so happy to take a call.

We also want to continue to work collaboratively with you as we have done before. I am happy to meet you too for a coffee so we can maybe arrange that when we speak

Stay safe!

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

On 18 Jun 2024, at 14:44, Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)> wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope all is well.

First of all, apologies that I was unable to join you and your Presidential team at the meeting with colleagues last week. As a former Principal Assessor, you will know that Grade Boundaries are underway at this time of year - and I am heavily involved in that process.

I know there have been further discussions about the exam timetable for 2025. As I outlined in my note of 24 May, there are some difficult judgements to be made and I think you and [REDACTED] could see that when you met Martin Ingram. We really appreciated your time with us to consider changes and I have asked Jean to reach out to you to discuss where we are following further modelling work. Please be assured that our common joint interest is in

ensuring that learners are not disadvantaged across the timetable, including start and end dates. As part of that, I also have a responsibility to ensure we can deliver.

I am aware that you have written to the Cabinet Secretary, expressing concerns. Jean will talk through the issues and where we've got to. I do hope we can see a way through. I am also very happy to take a call if that would be helpful – but this is likely to be early morning or evening just now.

SLS and SQA have worked well together over many years, and it's important that we can rely on positive and constructive engagement when difficult decisions have to be made. It would be good to meet you to discuss further, perhaps over a coffee.

In the meantime, please be assured that me and my leadership team are committed to working in the interests of learners.

Kind regards

Fiona

Fiona Robertson  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Qualifications Authority

w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

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Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FL

**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 26 June 2024 12:10  
**To:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Call with Jean Blair - 2025 timetable

Perfect, thanks. I'll send an invite over now.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jean Blair, Director of Operations  
Chief Executive's Office, Corporate Office

[REDACTED] | w: <http://www.sga.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority| Ughdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 26, 2024 12:03 PM  
**To:** Jean Blair  
**Subject:** RE: Call with Jean Blair - 2025 timetable  
Hi [REDACTED]  
Stewart

**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 26, 2024 11:44 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Call with Jean Blair - 2025 timetable

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope that you are well.

Jean has asked to speak with you today about the timetable for 2025. Do you have time for a 15min call between 3-4.30pm?

Kind regards,

Natalie

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jean Blair, Director of Operations  
Chief Executive's Office, Corporate Office

[REDACTED] | w: <http://www.sga.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority| Ughdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 27 June 2024 16:55

**Subject:** NQ Examination Timetable 2025 - Timetable Advisory Group

**Importance:** High

Dear colleagues,

I'd like to thank you once again for your time in participating on the Timetable Advisory Group and your contributions in helping us shape the exam timetable for 2025.

This session, we changed our approach to how we collaborate with stakeholders both in terms of the number of stakeholders involved (now 31) and in how we engage with you by holding in person meetings:

- Optima – 24 January 2024 (subsequently held online due to adverse weather)
- Lowden – 29 January 2024
- Forfar Academy – 30 January 2024

You may recall that our published dates for the optimal timetable were Wednesday 23 April to Friday 30 May – contingency day on Monday 2 June. Through this engagement we discussed what considerations we take into account in designing the timetable and how we must think about the impact of coincident exams and learner workload during the diet.

Following concerns raised by stakeholder representatives on the group, about the diet starting so soon after the return from Easter holidays, we have moved the start of the timetable to Monday 28 April – giving more time for revision support in centres. This delay will result in more coincident exams and learner workload issues. Stakeholder representatives have assured us that these are manageable at centre level and that SQA will be supported in responding to questions which we receive every year from centres, learners, and parents/carers, following publication of the timetable.

We are making the necessary changes and carrying out final stage checks ahead of publishing the timetable in August. We are also considering the implications of this change on other key dates and activities.

In light of this year's experience, we understand that relevant stakeholders intend to have further discussions about the timing of Easter holidays in 2026 in an effort to avoid a repeat of this late change.

I realise the timing of this message is less than ideal and that you may be on annual leave, however I feel it's important to keep you informed in your capacity as member of the Timetable Advisory Group. Please do not share this information any wider than the Advisory Group. This will enable us time to consider the best approach for communicating the change in August, along with the timetable and key dates.

Many thanks again for all your help.

Kind regards

Martin

**Martin Ingram**

**(He, Him, His)**

Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement  
Operations - Logistics and Customer Engagement

e: [martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

24 Wester Shawfair, DALKEITH, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Sent:** 15 August 2024 07:59

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

**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Richard Pidgeon <Richard.Pidgeon@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: SQA exam timetable



SQA 2025 timetable -  
GH member update A

Thanks, [REDACTED]. Much obliged.

On re-reading the text, I just wonder if we could add in the word “positively” to give my members the important perspective that SQA is listening to concerns, which I think is a crucial issue. The use of the word “positively” also indicates a better relationship and mutual respect.

Paragraph 3 would then read:

We are continuing to work positively with SQA ahead of the timetable being published on SQA Connect, alongside the Key Dates document and Co-ordinator Guide, by **Thursday 29 August**.

Happy to discuss further.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2024 12:34 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** Jean Blair ; Richard Pidgeon ; Graeme McDiarmid ; Martin Ingram

**Subject:** SQA exam timetable

Hi [REDACTED]

Many thanks for reviewing the text and agreeing to add it to your members' update this Friday 16 August.

Please note that I had read my calendar wrong and the 2025 timetable publication date (and associated key dates and co-ordinator guide) will be by **Thursday 29 August** (not 30 August as stated in the original text).

I've attached the final version with this amend as well as your edits.

I'll send on the more detailed draft message with suggested quotes and a draft comms plan early next week.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications & Engagement, Communications Directorate



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

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** Jean Blair

**Sent:** 30 September 2024 09:46

**To:** [REDACTED] @sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: 2025 exam Timetable

Morning [REDACTED]

We're catching up shortly and can reflect on Friday's meetings.

The complaints have come from a variety of sources, including HTs. I wanted to ensure you were aware of this, given your position, so that together we can address the concerns being raised. It would be great if you could pick up with those SLS members who have raised concerns, as well as continuing to use SLS channels to make your position clear.

Speak soon.

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, September 27, 2024 10:38 AM

**To:** Jean Blair

**Subject:** 2025 exam Timetable

Jean

I was a wee bit concerned when it was stressed that the complaints were now coming from Head Teachers about the move in the 2025 Diet dates, as if I was "culpable". Sadly, I cannot guarantee that every SLS HT will toe the party line, or even that those HTs are SLS members, as we do not have every HT in our Association.

I would be happy to take the matter up with any HT who is an SLS member who has written in to complain.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 03 October 2024 16:58  
**To:** Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Hi Martin,

Many thanks for your email and for the attached file. It makes for interesting reading! I have only just had a glance at them, as it has been a very busy day and am now printing them out so I can get a good look at them and work out if the correspondent is one of our members – or at least if the Head Teacher is!

I shall get back to you as soon as I can on this, but I am on leave for two days next week, then at a conference in Warwick, and then on leave for the October break, I hope to get back to you late next week.

Many thanks again for meeting with me a few weeks ago. Much obliged.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

[School Leaders Scotland – Take a leap and join the leaders! \(sls-scotland.org.uk\)](https://sls-scotland.org.uk)

[REDACTED]

Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

School Leaders Scotland Conference 24 – *Compassion & Ambition*

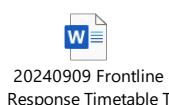
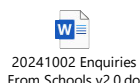
14/15 November — P & J Live Arena, Aberdeen

<https://www.sls-scotland.org.uk/annual-conference/>

**From:** Martin Ingram

**Sent:** Thursday, October 3, 2024 9:47 AM

**To:** Jean Blair ; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints



Hi [REDACTED]

Please see attached the details you discussed with Jean. These enquiries have all been responded to with our frontline response, also attached. The main section all came from Schools, Depute Headteachers predominantly. However, I have also included the queries that have been submitted by Headteachers/Depute Headteachers via LA reps for your information.

We did receive a further piece of feedback on the back of one of our responses that I also thought you would like to see, so have copied it below.

- 'Many thanks for your reply.

I totally understand that the task of creating the timetable is enormous and will incur students with exams on the same day – we have always had that. But 2 long Highers seems avoidable.

The concern with SQA coordinators across my authority is that we assumed that is the exam diet started later it would have finished later.

If given the choice to start on the 22<sup>nd</sup> or the 28<sup>th</sup> and finish at the end of May we would all have gone for a 22<sup>nd</sup> April start.

We did express concerns about that start date due to proximity to coming back after Easter, but candidate exam experience has be the priority and we would all have gone for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Were local authorities consulted on the shortening of the exam diet?

I really don't want to sound like I am complaining. The SQA have always been a great support to me when I have had an queries about anything. I am just so concerned about this one pupil in particular and another few who have H PE and H Drama on the same day. In last year's diet when pupils sat N5 Maths followed by N5 Drama many did not achieve the estimate we predicted in Drama and our departmental results were down. I know the situation with markers and timing of marking has a massive impact on the end date. I would prefer next year if we started around the 22<sup>nd</sup> again.'

If there is anything further I can help with please let me know.

Kind regards

Martin

**Martin Ingram**  
**(He, Him, His)**

Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement  
Operations - Logistics and Customer Engagement  
e: [martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, DALKEITH, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 03 October 2024 17:00  
**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>  
**Cc:** Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Thanks, Jean. As you will see I have replied to Martin and am looking through the enquires from schools.

Very happy to work on the marker recruitment campaign, so please let me know when you're ready to take this forward.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] SLS  
[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

[School Leaders Scotland – Take a leap and join the leaders! \(sls-scotland.org.uk\)](https://sls-scotland.org.uk)

[REDACTED]  
Twitter: @LeadersScotland

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<https://www.sls-scotland.org.uk/annual-conference/>

**From:** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 3:45 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Martin Ingram  
**Subject:** Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Many thanks again for your time on Monday morning.

As discussed, I've followed up with Martin on getting across details of the centres which have been in touch with us raising concerns about next year's timetable. Martin is reviewing the details and will send this across to you shortly.

We'll keep close and as agreed, work with SLS on shaping our marker recruitment campaign.

Kind regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

██████████ | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Sent:** 14 October 2024 10:17

**To:** Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Many thanks, Martin. I knew you were on Annual leave so was not expecting to get this till now. Many thanks. I go on annual leave today. I was off and on annual leave last week due to meetings I could not avoid, so about to go off for 4 days from 3pm, and this will be top of the agenda when I get back. I have already looked a bit more closely at the complaints, and they fall into a number of categories, so will look further at these issues. I think the French on the 23<sup>rd</sup> which is a local holiday seems to be causing problems, but I see there was Mandarin/Cantonese on on that day on the original, so there was always going to be a clash for languages departments. Might be something we need to look at. I'll get back to you early next week.

Hope you had a great time on leave!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

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**From:** Martin Ingram

**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 9:08 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]; Jean Blair

**Subject:** Re: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints



20240611 Draft TT25  
Pre SLS Work v0.3.6 -

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies but I missed your email due to being on AL.

Please see attached in regard to the TT25 and its original form that had the extra 3 days and started 23 April.

Regards

Martin

---

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Sent:** 04 October 2024 15:36

**To:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Hi Martin,

I wonder if would be possible to send me the original 2025 Exam Timetable, starting on the 22/23<sup>rd</sup> April. It would help enormously in trying to respond to the complaints sent in by colleagues in schools.

Many thanks.

I am on leave – on and off – Monday to Wednesday but then at a conference in Warwick, but I hope to get time on the journey and there to look over these complaints in detail

Many thanks.  
Have a great weekend.

[REDACTED]

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 3, 2024 9:47 AM

**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Hi Graham,

Please see attached the details you discussed with Jean. These enquiries have all been responded to with our frontline response, also attached. The main section all came from Schools, Depute Headteachers predominantly. However, I have also included the queries that have been submitted by Headteachers/Depute Headteachers via LA reps for your information.

We did receive a further piece of feedback on the back of one of our responses that I also thought you would like to see, so have copied it below.

- 'Many thanks for your reply.

I totally understand that the task of creating the timetable is enormous and will incur students with exams on the same day – we have always had that. But 2 long Highers seems avoidable.

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I really don't want to sound like I am complaining. The SQA have always been a great support to me when I have had an queries about anything. I am just so concerned about this one pupil in particular and another few who have H PE and H Drama on the same day. In last year's diet when pupils sat N5 Maths followed by N5 Drama many did not achieve the estimate we predicted in Drama and our departmental results were down.

I know the situation with markers and timing of marking has a massive impact on the end date. I would prefer next year if we started around the 22<sup>nd</sup> again.'

If there is anything further I can help with please let me know.

Kind regards

Martin

**Martin Ingram**

**(He, Him, His)**

Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement  
Operations - Logistics and Customer Engagement  
e: [martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
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**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 3:45 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Many thanks again for your time on Monday morning.

As discussed, I've followed up with Martin on getting across details of the centres which have been in touch with us raising concerns about next year's timetable. Martin is reviewing the details and will send this across to you shortly.

We'll keep close and as agreed, work with SLS on shaping our marker recruitment campaign.

Kind regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 04 November 2024 16:17  
**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** FW: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

FYI



Cheers

M

Martin Ingram  
Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 November 2024 16:12  
**To:** Martin Ingram  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Thanks, martin.

I hope it is useful. I would particularly advise some movement regarding the French exams, as the fact that many schools may not be able to have a teacher on stand-by to read French texts is a worry and concern.

I assume that SQA will be replying to all the complaints individually once decisions have been made.

Many thanks.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

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**From:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 1, 2024 3:14 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>; Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your detailed analysis and further feedback on the timetable for 2025. I appreciate the careful attention given to both the anticipated and emerging operational issues related to the later start date and shortened schedule because of the changes.

As you will acknowledge, and have seen in person through our initial discussions, we have a lot of data that sits behind the placement of each of these – including the workload across the entire timetable for all learners, and the coincident tools that show where the impact would be if things were moved around as you suggest.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts and for keeping [REDACTED] informed to ensure alignment on this matter.

We very much appreciate your ongoing support in this work. We will soon be starting engagement on the timetable for 2026 and look forward to working with you moving forward.

Thanks

Martin

Martin Ingram  
Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 01 November 2024 12:20  
**To:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Fiona Robertson <[fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Dera Martin and Jean

Many thanks for your help in this matter.

I have studied at length the complaints that you sent me earlier regrading the later start date of the SA 2025 Exam Diet. We realised that there would be a rise in the number of complaints from normal, as the later start of the diet resulted in a contraction of the length of the diet by three days. This has indeed caused some issues.

I have not had any further issues raised by my members, although one did say they were in favour of the delayed start but had assumed the length of the diet would be the same. I am not averse to lengthening the diet by a day if that help solve some of the issues raised by schools or indeed using the contingency day, but I know that will meet with some resistance due to the length of procedures.

I attach my analysis of the complaints. Many of the major ones were already issues on the original timetable (starting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April) and thus are not caused by the rescheduled timetable. The main issue caused by the rescheduling seems to be the date of the French exams on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, which is a public holiday in most of the west of Scotland and schools cannot get staff to be here in case of a fault with the IT in the listening exams. I have suggested a solution.

In all the cases, some of which are coincident exams, there are solutions.

I hope you will find this helpful.

I am happy to discuss further and contribute to any communication to schools etc., on the matter.

I know the Cabinet Secretary has been aware of these matters and I had a conversation with [REDACTED] this morning regarding my analysis. I have therefore cc'd her into this reply so that she has not just my oral report but the written analysis attached.

Many thanks.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

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**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 9:08 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>; Jean Blair  
<[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

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**Sent:** 04 October 2024 15:36

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Have a great weekend.

██████████

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**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

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Kind regards

Martin

**Martin Ingram**

**(He, Him, His)**

Head of Logistics and Customer Engagement  
Operations - Logistics and Customer Engagement

**e:** [martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:martin.ingram@sqa.org.uk) | **w:** <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 3:45 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

**Cc:** Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** Exam timetable 2025 - queries/complaints

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

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As discussed, I've followed up with Martin on getting across details of the centres which have been in touch with us raising concerns about next year's timetable. Martin is reviewing the details and will send this across to you shortly.

We'll keep close and as agreed, work with SLS on shaping our marker recruitment campaign.

Kind regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

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

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 16 January 2025 17:32  
**To:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Further Timetable discussion

Thanks [REDACTED]  
9:15 will be fine, thanks. Jean won't be in Optima on Tuesday, but I'll arrange a room for you to take the call. Will send the diary invite over shortly.  
Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Jean Blair, Director of Operations  
Chief Executive's Office, Corporate Office

[REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority| Ughdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 January 2025 13:11  
**To:** Jean Blair  
**Subject:** RE: Further Timetable discussion  
I will be in Optima for the event on Tuesday from 10-1. Happy to catch her before it if that helps? Happy to come in for 9 or 9.15?

**From:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk> **On Behalf Of** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 16 January 2025 13:06  
**To:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Subject:** Further Timetable discussion  
Good afternoon,  
Hope you are both well.  
I know that Jean was in touch with you both recently regarding the timetable for 2025.  
Jean would appreciate a further conversation about this. Do you happen to have 30mins on Tuesday between 9 – 10 am or 3 - 5 pm?  
Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Jean Blair, Director of Operations  
Chief Executive's Office, Corporate Office  
[REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority| Ughdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 16 January 2025 17:34  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Further Timetable discussion

Thanks Graham. We'll go for 9:20. I'll send the meeting invite shortly.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jean Blair, Director of Operations  
Chief Executive's Office, Corporate Office  
[REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority| Ughdarras Theisteanas na h-Alba  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 January 2025 14:45  
**To:** Jean Blair  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Further Timetable discussion

Hi [REDACTED]

I could do both times on Tuesday, although from 3:30 to 5, as I have another meeting until after 3.

Graham  
Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Jan 2025, at 13:06, Jean Blair wrote:

Good afternoon,

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Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jean Blair, Director of Operations  
Chief Executive's Office, Corporate Office

[REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
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24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 24 January 2025 16:19  
**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram  
<Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Many thanks Jean. I've briefed the ADES Executive but made it clear that the recommendations are subject to Cab Sec approval. I plan to update Directors on Thursday morning – hopefully we'll have something by then.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

**From:** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 24 January 2025 15:15  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; Martin Ingram  
**Subject:** Exam timetable 2025

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Hope you are well and you are none the worse with the weather.

Just to let you know that we have written to the Cab Sec about the exam timetable changes and are awaiting acknowledgement.

We have advised that we have your support for the additional day at the start of the timetable, along with a number of other changes to address issues like coincident exams and French on the end of May bank holiday.

We discussed the need for a robust communication plan to ensure that learners and centres are aware of these changes and as you can see, I've copied in Kerry who is developing the comms. This is just a wee heads up that she will be in touch seeking your help with the comms.

I'm sure this goes without saying but can you please hold off communicating this through your networks until we've had our letter acknowledged by the Cab Sec and have our plans in place to communicate the changes? I know you agree this needs careful handling.

Thanks very much again for your time on Tuesday and with this week's meetings of the timetable advisory group – much appreciated.

Hope you have a nice weekend.

Regards

Jean  
**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations



██████████ | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 24 January 2025 18:01  
**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; ██████████  
██████████@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** ██████████@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram  
<[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Hi Jean

Many thanks for this. I totally agree with the position and will not issue anything to members until I hear from you and/or ██████████. Like ██████████ I have briefed the SLS Presidential Team on this but they will keep mum until the official line is agreed and published.

By the way, I think Martin did well this morning at the 2026 Timetable group meeting with some of the issues raised as we know they are going to be fixed but could not say!

Have a great weekend, when the storm dies down!

██████████

**From:** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** Friday, January 24, 2025 4:31 PM  
**To:** ██████████  
**Cc:** ██████████; Martin Ingram  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Thanks ██████████

I'll be in touch as soon as I hear back and I've also had confirmation from ██████████ that we'll be in a position to communicate the message in the first instance.

Kind regards

Jean  
**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

██████████ | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** ██████████@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 24 January 2025 16:19  
**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** ██████████@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram  
<[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Many thanks Jean. I've briefed the ADES Executive but made it clear that the recommendations are subject to Cab Sec approval. I plan to update Directors on Thursday morning – hopefully we'll have something by then.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 24 January 2025 15:15  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Martin Ingram  
<[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** Exam timetable 2025

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Hope you are well and you are none the worse with the weather.

Just to let you know that we have written to the Cab Sec about the exam timetable changes and are awaiting acknowledgement.

We have advised that we have your support for the additional day at the start of the timetable, along with a number of other changes to address issues like coincident exams and French on the end of May bank holiday.

We discussed the need for a robust communication plan to ensure that learners and centres are aware of these changes and as you can see, I've copied in Kerry who is developing the comms. This is just a wee heads up that she will be in touch seeking your help with the comms.

I'm sure this goes without saying but can you please hold off communicating this through your networks until we've had our letter acknowledged by the Cab Sec and have our plans in place to communicate the changes? I know you agree this needs careful handling.

Thanks very much again for your time on Tuesday and with this week's meetings of the timetable advisory group – much appreciated.

Hope you have a nice weekend.

Regards

Jean  
**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 27 January 2025 12:57  
**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: exam timetable

Jean

See email from [REDACTED] below and my draft reply, but I'd also like your input. Need to all be singing from the same hymn sheet, whilst we await the Cab Sec's decision.

[REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

Sorry I was in a meeting when you called and had another since, so just catching up.

I cannot access the article from the Scotsman, so can't see what is being said. Could you send me a copy, please, so I can see what is being quoted?

We in SLS have been working with SQA in considering what changes might be required. No decisions, as far as I know, have yet been made, about any changes to the timetable.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 11:19 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** exam timetable

Hello – I hope you are well! I've just been reading [the Scotsman story](#) about the clash between the Higher English exam; psychology; and childcare and development – the Higher exams for all these subjects are taking place on the same day.

The SQA has said it is considering if it can make changes in response to concerns and says "a number of concerns have since been raised". We did a piece about SLS successfully campaigning for the exam start date to be changed but just wondering if:

- SLS shares the concerns about the Higher English exam being timetabled on the same day as Higher psychology and Higher childcare and development? If so, could you set out why this is an issue and what SLS would like SQA to do about it?
- if there are any other issues with the exam timetable we should be highlighting – for instance other clashes that are causing heads concern?

If you could get back to me asap today please I would be grateful

Please do give me a call if it's easier – I tried your mobile but didn't have any luck

Thanks, [REDACTED]

**From:** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 27 January 2025 13:36  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** John Booth <john.booth@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Thanks for keeping me advised, [REDACTED]

Jean

**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 January 2025 13:34  
**To:** Jean Blair  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Thanks, Jean. I have now spoken to John, and we have taken the same line. I have emailed [REDACTED] as in my draft email I sent to you.

■

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 1:10 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** John Booth <[John.Booth@sqa.org.uk](mailto:John.Booth@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for sending this on.

Here's the line we used last week with The Scotsman:

*"The exam timetable is created by SQA in partnership with a number of different stakeholders. We agreed to a delay to the planned start date following a request from School Leaders Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland to allow for more study time after the Easter holidays. Unfortunately, this change increased the number of coincident and consecutive exams. A number of concerns have since been raised and we are in active discussion with stakeholders to consider what steps might be possible to address these concerns."*

I've copied in John who will give you a buzz. Am I right in thinking this is your mobile number: [REDACTED]

Thanks

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Sent:** 27 January 2025 12:56

**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Jean

I'll forward you the email from [REDACTED] plus my draft reply.

■

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 12:55 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for getting in touch.

What's the nature of the enquiry? I'll see if I can get some lines for you.

Regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Sent:** 27 January 2025 12:47

**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Jean

Tried to phone you about a press request from TESS re 2025 Exam Timetable. Wanted to have a wee chat with you on what I say, if anything. Could you give me a call, please?  
Mobile below:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - SLS

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

[School Leaders Scotland – Take a leap and join the leaders! \(sls-scotland.org.uk\)](http://sls-scotland.org.uk)

[REDACTED]

Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 11:25 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Morning [REDACTED]

Thanks for getting in touch.

I'm very conscious of the operational priorities/challenges that changes to the TT will bring for SQA so I'm keen on making sure we have comms issued to the system too as quickly as possible..

I'll keep you advised.

Kind regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>

**Sent:** 27 January 2025 10:09

**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Re: Exam timetable 2025

Jean

I am hoping we shall hear very soon from the Cab Sec. I would say SQA need to let schools know about the changes pronto, once Ms Gilruth pronounces, as schools may need to reschedule possible Award Ceremonies and S6 Graduations in the light of the changes and the timing will be tight!! AS I've already stated, we are ready to help and comment on any comms going out once the Cab Sec makes a decision!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | SLS

[REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

[School Leaders Scotland – Take a leap and join the leaders! \(sls-scotland.org.uk\)](https://sls-scotland.org.uk)

[REDACTED]

Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

On 24 Jan 2025, at 16:31, Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)> wrote:

Thanks [REDACTED]

I'll be in touch as soon as I hear back and I've also had confirmation from [REDACTED] that we'll be in a position to communicate the message in the first instance.

Kind regards

Jean

**Jean Blair**

Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 24 January 2025 16:19

**To:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram

<[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Exam timetable 2025

Many thanks Jean. I've briefed the ADES Executive but made it clear that the recommendations are subject to Cab Sec approval. I plan to update Directors on Thursday morning – hopefully we'll have something by then.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

**From:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 24 January 2025 15:15  
**To:** graham.hutton@sls-scotland.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Martin Ingram  
<[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** Exam timetable 2025

Good afternoon [REDACTED],

Hope you are well and you are none the worse with the weather.

Just to let you know that we have written to the Cab Sec about the exam timetable changes and are awaiting acknowledgement.

We have advised that we have your support for the additional day at the start of the timetable, along with a number of other changes to address issues like coincident exams and French on the end of May bank holiday.

We discussed the need for a robust communication plan to ensure that learners and centres are aware of these changes and as you can see, I've copied in Kerry who is developing the comms. This is just a wee heads up that she will be in touch seeking your help with the comms.

I'm sure this goes without saying but can you please hold off communicating this through your networks until we've had our letter acknowledged by the Cab Sec and have our plans in place to communicate the changes? I know you agree this needs careful handling.

Thanks very much again for your time on Tuesday and with this week's meetings of the timetable advisory group – much appreciated.

Hope you have a nice weekend.

Regards

Jean  
**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD



**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 11:46  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Can you confirm that this has now been approved?

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 11:37  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair ; Martin Ingram ; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Confidential draft comms  
**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

We're working through the draft comms while Martin and his team process changes to the 2025 timetable.

I'd be grateful if you would comment on the attached drafts (centre message and news item) at your earliest convenience. You'll see I've provided a suggested quote from each of you – please change this as you see fit, I'm just giving you a starter for 10.

We are making good progress with editing the timetable and I'd like us to have the comms ready by tomorrow morning if possible. If we are ready tomorrow morning then there's a chance we could communicate with centres tomorrow afternoon – as long as the timetable is ready.

If we miss tomorrow's slot then the comms will be issued on Monday morning.

Our plan is to publish on Connect and the SQA website alongside a message for centres – followed by a news release. We'll also email key educational stakeholders and provide social media updates to ensure maximum reach of the message.

The team are also working on a Q&A for customer-facing colleagues and I'd be happy to include any questions that you think we will be asked.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications & Engagement, Communications Directorate  
[REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ

**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 12:09  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi [REDACTED]

There's a wee typo in the quote you've prepared. Can I suggest the following which includes minor edits but retains the core message:

*It is important that all partners continue to listen to feedback from across the education community and take appropriate action when needed. We support the updated 2025 exam timetable as it reduces the exam workload for many learners and for the staff supporting them during the exam period.*

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 11:37  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair ; Martin Ingram ; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Confidential draft comms  
**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

We're working through the draft comms while Martin and his team process changes to the 2025 timetable.

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The team are also working on a Q&A for customer-facing colleagues and I'd be happy to include any questions that you think we will be asked.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications & Engagement, Communications Directorate

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

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 16:33  
**To:** Kerry McMillan <Kerry.McMillan@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi [REDACTED]

I see what you mean about the flow, but I would rather the following:

'We continue to share feedback and work with SQA and other partners in the best interests of both learners and our members. We now acknowledge The delayed start to the exam period was designed to allow learners to be more exam-ready after the later Easter holidays. As a consequence of this then reducing the exam period due to the Easter holidays led to an increased number of learners having exams close together or coincident. We therefore agree with the changes made by SQA to reduce the impact of coincident and consecutive exams on learners.'

So our statement would read:

'We continue to share feedback and work with SQA and other partners in the best interests of both learners and our members. The delayed start to the exam period was designed to allow learners to be more exam-ready after the later Easter holidays. As a consequence reducing the exam period led to an increased number of learners having exams close together or coincident. We therefore agree with the changes made by SQA to reduce the impact of coincident and consecutive exams on learners.'

Hope this is OK.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:20 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Jean Blair ; Martin Ingram ; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi [REDACTED]

Many thanks for turning this around so quickly.

I'm happy to adopt your changes with the small exception of the text in black which I believe flows better from a comms perspective.

Can you let me know if you're happy for me to proceed.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 15:02  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]

██████████@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>;  
██████████@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi ██████████

I have now consulted with members of the SLS Presidential Team and we would be happy to go with this edited version (changes in blue). I hope this is agreeable. Please let me know what you think. I hope this allows the Comms team to get this information out to centres tomorrow, as planned.

██████████

'We continue to share feedback and work with SQA and other partners in the best interests of both learners and our members. We now acknowledge Whilst the delayed start to the exam period was designed to allow learners to be more exam-ready after the later Easter holidays, a consequence of this then reducing the exam period due to the Easter holidays led to an increased number of learners having exams close together or coincident. We therefore agree with the changes made by SQA to reduce the impact of coincident and consecutive exams on learners.'

**From:** ██████████@sqa.org.uk>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 2:32 PM  
**To:** ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk>; ██████████  
██████████@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>;  
██████████@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Many thanks for letting me know ██████████

Kind regards  
██████████

**From:** ██████████@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 14:31  
**To:** ██████████@sqa.org.uk>; ██████████  
██████████@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>;  
██████████@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi ██████████

Sorry I have been out of the office today and visiting a number of members, so just back to see these emails. I am going to look at the statement and consult with the SLS Presidential Team. I think the statement will need a bit of changing but hope very much to get back to you later this afternoon.

██████████

**From:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 1:48 PM  
**To:** Nicolson, Stewart <Stewart.Nicolson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>;  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Many thanks [REDACTED] much appreciated

**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 12:09  
**To:** Kerry McMillan <Kerry.McMillan@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>;  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi [REDACTED]

There's a wee typo in the quote you've prepared. Can I suggest the following which includes minor edits but retains the core message:

*It is important that all partners continue to listen to feedback from across the education community and take appropriate action when needed. We support the updated 2025 exam timetable as it reduces the exam workload for many learners and for the staff supporting them during the exam period.*

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 11:37  
**To:** Nicolson, Stewart <Stewart.Nicolson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>;  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** Confidential draft comms  
**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

We're working through the draft comms while Martin and his team process changes to the 2025 timetable.

I'd be grateful if you would comment on the attached drafts (centre message and news item) at your earliest convenience. You'll see I've provided a suggested quote from each of you – please change this as you see fit, I'm just giving you a starter for 10.

We are making good progress with editing the timetable and I'd like us to have the comms ready by tomorrow morning if possible. If we are ready tomorrow morning then there's a

chance we could communicate with centres tomorrow afternoon – as long as the timetable is ready.

If we miss tomorrow's slot then the comms will be issued on Monday morning.

Our plan is to publish on Connect and the SQA website alongside a message for centres – followed by a news release. We'll also email key educational stakeholders and provide social media updates to ensure maximum reach of the message.

The team are also working on a Q&A for customer-facing colleagues and I'd be happy to include any questions that you think we will be asked.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications & Engagement, Communications Directorate

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

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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

**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 30 January 2025 11:32  
**To:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Call this morning?

*It is important that all partners continue to listen to feedback from across the education community and take appropriate action when needed. We agree with the updates to the 2025 exam timetable which reduce exam workload for learners and for the staff supporting them during the exam period.*

**From:** Jean Blair  
**Sent:** 30 January 2025 10:30  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Call this morning?

Morning [REDACTED]

I think you'll probably know why I'm reaching out.... 😊

Is there any chance of a quick call this morning?

I've connected with you through teams so that might work too.

Thanks

Jean

**Jean Blair**  
Director of Operations

[REDACTED] | e: [jean.blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jean.blair@sqa.org.uk) | w: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
24 Wester Shawfair, Lowden, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD



**From:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 30 January 2025 09:11  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>  
**Cc:** Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@outlook.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Good morning [REDACTED]

Can I ask that the ADES response be revised as follows:

*It is important that all partners continue to listen to feedback from across the education community and take appropriate action when needed. We acknowledge the updated 2025 exam timetable which has been amended to reduce exam workload for learners and for the staff supporting them during the exam period.*

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

South Lanarkshire Council  
Almada Street  
Hamilton, ML3 0AA

[REDACTED]

Email: [education@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:education@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)  
Council website: [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

More information about Contact Scotland BSL can be found at their website  
<https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 29 January 2025 12:09  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk  
**Cc:** Jean Blair ; Martin Ingram ; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential draft comms

Hi [REDACTED]

There's a wee typo in the quote you've prepared. Can I suggest the following which includes minor edits but retains the core message:

*It is important that all partners continue to listen to feedback from across the education community and take appropriate action when needed. We support the updated 2025 exam*

*timetable as it reduces the exam workload for many learners and for the staff supporting them during the exam period.*

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

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

**Sent:** 29 January 2025 11:37

**To:** [REDACTED]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

**Cc:** Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Martin Ingram <[Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk)>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** Confidential draft comms

**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

We're working through the draft comms while Martin and his team process changes to the 2025 timetable.

I'd be grateful if you would comment on the attached drafts (centre message and news item) at your earliest convenience. You'll see I've provided a suggested quote from each of you – please change this as you see fit, I'm just giving you a starter for 10.

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The team are also working on a Q&A for customer-facing colleagues and I'd be happy to include any questions that you think we will be asked.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications & Engagement, Communications Directorate

[REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@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:** 04 February 2025 13:06  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk; Jean Blair  
<Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Martin Ingram <Martin.Ingram@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Revised SQA Timetable Logistics

Hi [REDACTED]

Yes, we have received complaints and are working our way through them. As you say, it was always going to be the case that in making the changes to alleviate workload for some that it would create issues for some other learners, albeit smaller in number.

Thanks for responding to [REDACTED] in the terms below. I'm afraid I can't help with the specific queries raised but Jean / Martin should be able to.

John

John Booth  
Director of Communications, SQA

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 February 2025 10:50  
**To:** John Booth ; Jean Blair ; Martin Ingram  
**Subject:** FW: Revised SQA Timetable Logistics

Hi folks,

I received my first complaint about the new revised Exam timetable and have replied. I am forwarding both complaint and my response to it to you. Could you please advise (if you are able to) on the two issues I was unclear about? Thanks. I have tried to make clear to [REDACTED] that this timetable is better than the published one, but that we thought there would still be issues, albeit different ones!

Sadly, we don't have a magic wand to sort them all out!

I'd appreciate your help here.

Have you had other similar complaints? I am thinking we are bound to get more, but hopefully not as many as the last time!

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] - SLS

Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

[School Leaders Scotland – Take a leap and join the leaders! \(sls-scotland.org.uk\)](https://sls-scotland.org.uk)

Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 10:45 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@glow.sch.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@glow.sch.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Revised SQA Timetable Logistics

Hi [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your email. I appreciate your concerns and we knew that in moving the start of the exam period back a day to the Friday to lengthen the diet, there would be new issues created. There are far fewer clashes and issues than in the previous model, but I very much appreciate that it may impact now on other young people who were previously not impacted by any exam timetable clashes. This is indeed unfortunate.

It was a difficult process in getting the start of the diet pushed back to the 28<sup>th</sup>, so that there would be days between the return to school after the Easter holidays for pupils to have contact with their teachers and become exam ready. We knew there would be increased clashes and complaints about coincident exams, and in particular the issue with the French exams on a public holiday in the west of Scotland. It was to help and support those young people affected, plus other clashes and exams on consecutive days, that SQA looked at rejogging the timetable and both ADES and SLS agreed to the change, as across the board it helped alleviate the situation for a large number of candidates.

I was aware, through HTs on the SLS Presidential Team, that moving the start date would probably impact on schools' planning for S6 Leavers' Ceremonies, Prize Givings, etc., and so we exhorted the SQA to get the details of the changes out to schools as soon as was possible, and they have done so, as this has obviously taken time to arrange and to check consequential issues.

I was not aware of the issue of the Higher Business Studies and Higher Politics being on the same day as causing a major issue, but I can go back to SQA on that.

With regard to the public holidays, SQA have only ever taken the first May Bank holiday into account. The second one seems to be on different Mondays (and Fridays) across Scotland, I am told, and to recognise these extra days would lengthen the diet further when it is already very tight due to other constraints out with SQA control.

I am not sure that the SQA have contingency plans for centres unable to cover the AAA requirements during the holiday weekend, but I can go back to them for information on that.

I am very sorry the changes have caused more disruption to candidates and staff at Cathkin High, but I can assure you they were carefully thought out and we hoped they would hit fewer candidates over all, but obviously there might be different ones affected.

I shall ask the SQA for advice on the two areas above and get back to you.

Many thanks,

Stay safe!



Email: [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk

[School Leaders Scotland – Take a leap and join the leaders! \(sls-scotland.org.uk\)](https://sls-scotland.org.uk)

Twitter: @LeadersScotland

***Speaking on behalf of Scottish School Leaders, Acting on behalf of Scotland's Young People***

**From:** [REDACTED]@glow.sch.uk>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 3, 2025 9:23 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@sls-scotland.org.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@glow.sch.uk>  
**Subject:** Revised SQA Timetable Logistics

Hi [REDACTED]

I have taken time to review the revised publication of the examination diet from the SQA. I have concerns around the logistics and planning of the revised timetable. We now find ourselves in a situation where we have lost a day of business. This will cost the school more time in terms of the set up for rooming and accommodation. This would not have been the case if we had the exams starting on Monday 28th.

It has also now had an impact on our S6 Leavers programme which we are now having to review, this may seem trivial but the change of start date has a significant impact on our school planning. Additionally, I have concerns that a significant number of learners may now not return back to school as planned on Tuesday 22nd April given the first exams now start on the Friday.

I am concerned that the SQA has not modified the scheduling of the Higher Business and Politics exams which take place on the same day. Learners who have additional assessment arrangements will now have an exams with 25% extra time lasting 7 ¼ hours, not including breaks between papers. This does not seem fair on the candidates involved.

Also, we have an issue with candidates requiring readers on the May weekend for Modern Studies and Art & Design. We will need several staff in for this who will then require a day back. I know that colleagues have booked holidays for the May weekend and we may face a challenge staffing the revised exams. I wonder if the SQA has a contingency plan for centres unable to cover the AAA requirements during the holiday weekend as we had made plans for French on the Friday, not Modern Studies.

The end of May Monday has always been a public holiday in Scotland and is listed in the Scottish Government public holidays. I am unsure why the SQA do not heed this. I am not

alone in having concerns around the revised changes as it has caused some concern with my fellow SQA coordinators.

Regards

██████

██████████

██████████████████

***Cathkin High School  
Langlea Road  
Cambuslang G72 8ES***

***Phone: (and Fridays)***