Scottish Qualifications Authority

Code of Practice Governance Group (CoPGG)

28 April 2020

Post Certification Review of results for Graded National Courses in Examination Diet 2020

Context

At the CoPGG meeting of 14th April 2020 the policy direction for SQA's Post Certification Review service for 2020 was discussed and approved.

The next stage is to discuss and seek approval from SQA's Advisory Council (AC) and Qualifications Committee (QC).

Appendix 1 includes the draft paper for both QC and AC.

Recommendation

CoPGG is asked to discuss and approve the draft AC/QC paper.

Appendix one:

Scottish Qualifications Authority

Advisory Council/Qualifications Committee

XX May 2020

Post Certification Review of results for Graded National Courses in Examination Diet 2020

Context

SQA and Scottish Government have discussed possible options as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 public health emergency on the SQA Annual Examinations Diet. These have included exploring the feasibility of an alternative Awarding model in which the Chief Examining Officer would be prepared to certificate in the absence of a 2020 exam diet. A commitment has also been made by the Chief Examining Officer to offer a post results service, which would essentially allow a review to be requested of a grade awarded. This paper outlines SQA's proposed policy framework from which this service will operate. It will consider the grounds for review, the validation/eligibility criteria, the proposed approach for both centres and SQA and the feasibility of any further appeal of reviews. The paper also discusses the key deliverables of this service and important associated assumptions.

Status

Policy framework

1 Grounds for review

The application of centre level moderation by SQA of centre estimates and the national awarding model itself, may result in a candidate, or more likely groups of candidates, being certificated with a different grade than their centre estimated grade.

Therefore, in order to be fair to candidates and to provide an appropriate safety valve, it is proposed to supplement the awarding model with a Post Certification Review service that will allow presenting centres to request a review of the grade awarded for a candidate or group of candidates. The basis of this review will be that the centre believes the wrong grade has been awarded via the moderation and awarding process and they have assessment evidence that validates their original estimated grade.

The only other proposed grounds for review would be a centre administrative error in the original estimate submitted.

Given that the awarding model for 2020 is not based on the use of a standardised, externally set assessment, there is an expectation that review requests, as outlined above, may be for multiple candidates per centre per subject who have not been awarded their estimated grade.

2 Validation/eligibility criteria

SQA works in partnership with approved, delivering centres rather than direct to candidates. Requests for use of all SQA services must come via heads of centre and it is proposed that this remains the case for requests to access the Post Certification Review service. SQA is not able to

consider requests for reviews direct from candidates/parents/carers. Given that such centres have previously estimated candidate grades via their review of assessment evidence, then it is proposed that only candidates who are awarded a grade lower than their estimated grade are eligible for their centre to consider requesting a post certification review.

3 Approach by centre

It is proposed that centres will engage with this service in four stages:

- Post certification - Identify candidates who meet the eligibility criteria. SQA can provide this information to centres.
- Check the assessment evidence for each eligible candidate – does it convincingly demonstrate performance at the estimated grade?
- Determine candidates for whom to request reviews.
- Submit to SQA review requests for each candidate with associated assessment evidence.

The assessment evidence to be submitted will be similar to that which is currently required under SQA's Exceptional Circumstances Consideration service and should cover the key knowledge, skills and understanding of the relevant National Course. Appropriate evidence can be wide ranging and include prelim or mock papers, additional tasks or assignments, performance or practical evidence. There is a recognition that for this session, some of the assessment evidence may be incomplete or not previously marked. In some cases, SQA may already hold evidence that has previously been submitted but not marked eg N5 Coursework that was submitted for external marking. Centres will also be invited to submit a rationale for their decision making for each candidate, which highlights the key areas of evidence that they believe validates their original estimated grade.

As noted above, it is likely that centres could submit review requests for several candidates in a subject. A recheck of evidence by the centre may reduce this number. Once local moderation and national awarding decisions are made, SQA will be able to model potential volumes of review requests.

4 Approach by SQA

SQA's proposed approach will involve a senior subject specialist appointee review of the assessment evidence available for each centre review request. This review will involve three key stages:

- Review candidate performance within the evidence and rationale submitted by the centre.
- Review and mark any relevant additional non-question paper evidence held by SQA.
- Combining the above, either (i) validate the original centre estimate and upgrade the candidate, or (ii) reject the review request and confirm either the original grade or an alternative lower grade.

The same subject specialist appointee will primarily review all requests for a centre for a subject and level. However, there will also be an explicit need for appointees to work collaboratively within this process to ensure consistency of decision making across centres. Each team of appointees will be managed by SQA's Principal Assessor for that subject. Principal Assessors for related subjects will be

managed by SQA Qualification Managers. Discussions around the predictive value of the evidence presented and non-question paper and incomplete evidence will be complex and require close team working to achieve a fair outcome for all candidates.

It is proposed that SQA will use the centre estimate rank order within this review process. For example, when reviewing a group of candidates from a centre for a subject and level, the senior appointee will review the evidence of the lowest ranking candidate first. If the request is rejected (and original result confirmed) then the appointee will move to review the next candidate and so on. However, once the appointee accepts the centre evidence and validates the estimate, the remaining requests from higher ranked candidates can be automatically accepted. The detail of this process has still to be determined. However, it is likely that there will also be some sampling of higher ranked candidates to ensure the evidence is valid.

4 Further appeal from the post certification review process

SQA is not obliged to offer such an appeal. However, given the proposed review approach is based on the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Consideration Service, in the interests of fairness and consistency, it is proposed that consideration is given to developing a similar approach to the current appeals process for EC. The grounds for appeal in the current EC process is limited to procedural irregularity.

Key deliverables and assumptions

- An operating model for this service will be developed that back ends on to the new Awarding and Certification model for 2020.
- There will be no charge for this review service.
- Teachers/lecturers will be able to access and send a range of assessment evidence to support a review request.
- SQA senior appointees will be available and able to attend Post Certification Review events.
- SQA will take a priority-based approach to the consideration of review requests eg UCAS candidates, H/AH, N5 English and Mathematics, other N5 subjects.
- SQA will develop and publish *Post Certification Review – guide for centres* by the end of May 2020. Associated communication materials for wider stakeholders will be developed by the end of May 2020.
- Training materials for SQA staff and senior appointees will also be developed and delivered to support this service.

Recommendation

The Advisory Council/Qualifications Committee is asked to discuss and approve the proposed policy approach for the new Post Certification Review service for 2020.