Scottish Qualifications Authority

Code of Practice Governance Group (CoPGG)

07 April 2020

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

1 Context

At the CoPGG meeting of 27th March 2020 it was agreed this project can commence based on the recommendations in the paper – see appendix one for an updated paper. The overall milestone plan should be brought back to CoPGG by RQ/AW by mid-April providing detail of the main deliverables and RAID.

This paper provides CoPGG with an interim update on the project set up.

2 Status

A project kick-off meeting was held on Friday 3rd April 2020 with representatives from Qualifications Development, Operations, Business Systems, Appointee Management and Finance.
A separate update meeting was held with the Head of Strategic Planning and Governance on Monday 6th April.

It was agreed that the project will develop with 4 separate – but related - work strands with associated leads as follows:

Policy approach, guidance and training – Robert Quinn/Alistair Wylie

Operating model – Rhona Wright

Digitisation/remote exploration – John Meehan

Appeal on outcome – Margot McKerrell

In addition. Jacqui Faulds will lead on appointee resource, Martin Campbell on systems input and Alan Dickson on costings – across all strands. [redacted]. **Redacted under section 36**

The next steps for this project will be for each strand lead to set up appropriate working groups and to start to look at key milestone dates. Project management resource is also being sought for this project and plans and outputs will feed into the CPG 2020 group.

3 Recommendation

The CoPGG is asked to note the interim update for this project.

Appendix one – updated CoPGG paper from 27th March 2020

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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27th March 2020

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

1 Context

SQA and Scottish Government have discussed possible options as a result of the impact of the COVD-19 public health emergency on the SQA Annual Examinations Diet. These have included exploring the feasibility of an Enhanced Estimates Model (EEM) 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 approach to the development of this review service and the associated assumptions, issues and risks which are required to be managed.

2 Status

SQA has a duty to ensure that the standard of its qualifications is credible with learners, their parents, schools, colleges, universities and wider stakeholders.

Developing a post certification review process to compliment the EEM

SQA's Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service is an established service that supports candidates who have been unable to attend an examination, or whose performance in the examination may have been affected by a personal circumstance, or an unplanned incident on the day, which is out with their control. This service is based on a senior examiner review of alternative assessment evidence presented by centres, which primarily covers the exam-based assessment component. The review also considers any relevant non-question paper component assessment evidence, which has been submitted and marked. Using their subject knowledge and professional experience, senior appointees will consider all assessment evidence, question paper and non-question paper, against the grade related criteria for the relevant National Course and make a judgment as to the appropriate grade to award.

For 2020, it is possible that the Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service could be adapted to deal with the situation whereby a centre wishes to request a review of the grade awarded to a candidate via the EEM. Centres would be required to submit relevant alternative assessment evidence to support their estimated grade which would be reviewed by a senior examiner.

This evidence could cover both question paper and non-question paper components. There is a recognition that for 2020, some of the assessment evidence against any relevant non-question paper components may be incomplete or not previously marked. The focus of the approach will be a holistic review by a senior subject specialist of a candidate's performance within the evidence presented. The output of this review will be to confirm the original grade awarded to the candidate via the EEM or to award an alternative grade based on the review of evidence. If an alternative grade is awarded, a candidate's grade could either go up or down.

To facilitate the above, a robust operating model would need to be developed that back ends on to the new EEM awarding model.

Management and governance of the development process

A project has been initiated to take forward the development of the appeals service. This involves the following areas of the business:

- Qualifications Development: For input into what requirements are to ensure valid and reliable results. This will include the development of guidance, training and support for senior appointees.
- Logistics: Events management for planning dates and management of resources.
- Script management: For material transfer.
- Appointee management: For release/capacity/appointee availability.
- Systems: E-marking/business systems: To explore the adaption of existing systems or development of new systems.
- Assessment and Data Services: For managing the output and certification process.
- Strategic Planning and Governance: For legal advice and support.

The project team will create appropriate development metrics and report progress to the Certificate Planning Group (CPG) 2020. External stakeholder input and agreement will be sought around the proposed approach and validation model.

Assumptions and issues to consider in the development of an appeals process for 2020:

- It is assumed there would be no charge for this service and the financial implications of this would need to be estimated and considered using scenario planning.
- Validation criteria would need to be established and agreed with all key stakeholders. For example, under SQA's previous appeals process, candidates were required to have attained a lower grade than their estimate to be eligible for appeal.
- Appeals should be requested by a centre only after guidance and consideration by Head of Centre.
- Consideration should be given to taking a priority-based approach to consideration of appeals e.g. UCAS candidates, H/AH, N5 English and Mathematics.
- The consideration of alternative evidence (in many different formats) will require a significant amount of training, collaboration and discussion in order to achieve a fair and consistent outcome across all subjects.
- It is assumed that teachers will be able to access and send a range of alternative assessment evidence to support a review request.

Risks – the following key risks have been identified:

- The tight timelines will prevent the development an operating system for this appeals process with the necessary and appropriate levels of resilience.
- Centres will find it challenging to be able to access, gather and submit evidence to SQA for a post-results appeals process.
- Access restrictions will prevent the appropriate training, collaboration and support required to ensure valid and reliable assessment judgements.
- The volume of post results appeals will be such that SQA has insufficient appointee and/or staff resource to manage the process effectively.
- The post results appeals process may contribute to an increase in grade inflation.
- Centres and candidates do not accept the outcome of the post results appeals process.

All risks will be reviewed by the project team on an ongoing basis and appropriate mitigation actions will be developed and checked.

3 Recommendation

The CoPGG is asked to note and approve the proposed approach to the development of a Post Certification Review service for examination diet 2020. The CoPGG is also asked to note the key assumptions and risks associated with this development and advise as to any additions or amendments.