

Our ref: FOI 2020-21 130
4 November 2020

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Dear [Click here to enter text.](#)

Freedom of Information Request for Review

On 09 September 2020, SQA received your request for a review under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA). I can confirm that as the Reviewer I have had no involvement in our original response to you. You requested a review in relation to our reply to your original freedom of information request, as shown below.

1 ORIGINAL REQUEST

1) For the 2019/20 academic year and exam results please provide the following statistical breakdowns. a) How many candidates saw one grade reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? b) How many candidates saw two grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? c) How many candidates saw three grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? d) How many candidates saw four grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? e) How many candidates saw five or more grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries?

2) For the 2019/20 academic year and exam results please provide the following statistical breakdowns. a) How many candidates from schools in 0-20% SIMD range saw at least two grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? b) How many candidates from schools in 80-100% SIMD range saw at least two grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries?

SQA's RESPONSE

With the cancellation of exams, we were commissioned by Ministers to develop an alternative certification model, based on teacher and lecturer estimates, to maintain standards over time. Every school and college was in scope for moderation and all were

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treated in the same way. We did not know the name or location of the centre when it was being moderated.

The information you have requested is provided below in red against each question. Please note that this data is based on 4 August figures derived from the Alternative Certification Model (ACM). Following the Ministerial direction issued to SQA on 11 August, the results generated by the ACM have been replaced by the estimates SQA received from centres which is now the final, certificated output. The attainment tables for the revised 2020 results can be accessed [here](#).

- a) How many candidates saw one grade reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? **41,739**
- b) How many candidates saw two grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? **22,716**
- c) How many candidates saw three grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? **8,594**
- d) How many candidates saw four grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries? **2,219**
- e) How many candidates saw five or more grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries **408**

2 SQA does not hold SIMD information. Section 17 of FOISA provides that where an authority does not hold information requested then it should notify the requester to that effect.

2 REVIEW REQUEST

I am writing to you to request an internal review of this response.

While the SQA may not hold SIMD information, it did undertake analysis based on SIMD including the percentage of candidates who saw at least one grade drop due to moderation. This analysis was published in the equalities impact assessment here, the analysis on estimates versus awards is in Table A13 in the publication: https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/2020-sqa-alternative-certification-model-equality-impact-assessment.pdf

It follows that if the SQA was able to publish a proportion of candidates receiving a particular grade by SIMD, it should have the raw numbers and be able to tell me how many in total were reduced as per my initial request. Please provide this information to me.

SQA's RESPONSE

You asked SQA for the 2019/20 academic year and exam results please provide the following statistical breakdowns. a) How many candidates from schools in 0-20% SIMD range saw at least two grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of

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their entries? b) How many candidates from schools in 80-100% SIMD range saw at least two grades reduced from teacher estimates to final marks across all of their entries?

SQA quite rightly responded that we do not hold SIMD information that meets your request. The tables you refer to are based on candidate information that SQA holds. You are requesting SIMD information relating to schools within SIMD ranges and this is information that SQA does not hold.

I agree that our response was factually correct and uphold our original decision under section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have a right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision. You must apply to the Commissioner within six months of this response. The Scottish Information Commissioner has launched a new online appeal service. You can now access this online service by using the following web-link:

www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal

Should you wish to appeal against this decision, you have the right to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only. Further details on this process are available on the Commissioner's website www.itspublicknowledge.info, other contact details are as follows:

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Yours sincerely