

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B166/1.4 i

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 27 NOVEMBER 2024

For approval

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 10am on Wednesday 28 August 2024 in Inglis/Livingstone/MacDonald, Lowden and by video conference.

Members

- * Ms S Rogers (Chair)
- * Ms F Robertson (Chief Executive)
- * Ms A Davis
- * Mr S Hagney
- Mr J Morton
- Mr G Smith (virtual)
- Professor K Thomson
- * Ms M Wailes

Officers

- Ms J Blair
- * Mr J Booth
- * Mr M Campbell
- * Mr A Dickson
- * Mrs D Mahmoud
- * Mr J McMorris
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mr M Ware

Qualifications Committee Members (virtual)

- * Mr P Bain
- * Prof J-A Baird
- * Ms J Davis
- * Mr S Hewitt
- * Mr S McKenna
- * Mr J Reid
- * Mr D Swinney
- * Ms Y Hussain

- * Indicates present

In attendance

Mr S Borley, Head of Chief Executive's Office, SQA

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1 **OPENING REMARKS**

1.1 **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including members of the Qualifications Committee that would be joining the Board virtually for the annual joint session on certification. She noted that no apologies had been received.

2 **2024 CERTIFICATION PRESENTATION FOR BOARD & QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Executive team delivered a presentation providing an overview of the awarding and certification process for 2024 to the Board and Qualifications Committee members.

Members discussed the technical issues related to the delivery of results via email on results day. They noted that the issue was resolved swiftly, with all affected candidates receiving their correct results by 0915. The Candidate Advice Line and communications team were commended for providing support and reassurance through social media and other channels during this time.

It was acknowledged that the underpinning issue was the need for long-term investment in SQA systems.

The limited trial service allowing learners to access their marked exam papers over a selection of subjects had opened concurrently with the appeals process. The level of appeals was reported to be broadly comparable to previous years.

Members discussed whether the current attainment levels were the lowest since the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), comparing them to 2019 levels, including the attainment for example in Higher History. It was noted that, comparisons should be treated with caution.

The reintroduction of coursework in Higher History, aligned with a broader assessment approach, saw a marked reduction in performance in especially in the area of analysis. There was significant movement in results this year. SQA had provided a clear position on this matter through official communications.

Members noted that there had been a 25% increase in the uptake of vocational qualifications. This was seen as potentially reflective of a broader trend. Members discussed how to build on this momentum and continue to advance this narrative.

Members noted that SQA had submitted a business case to the Scottish Government in June.

The Board and Committee discussed the ongoing recruitment strategy for markers and how to encourage retention, noting that a deeper examination of the issues surrounding marker recruitment and retention was planned. SQA had invoked a series of contingencies to assist with challenges in some subjects and would be planning a system-wide promotional campaign. The possibility of adopting a principle where all teachers participate in marking as part of ongoing education reform was

discussed. It was agreed that this would be explored further as part of the work being done on this matter.

The Board and QC members expressed their thanks to all throughout the organisation for their work in delivering the diet and certification in 2024.

Qualifications Committee members then left the meeting.

3 **STRATEGY SESSION**

The Board then entered a closed strategy session.

4 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday 18 September 2024.