

## FOI 047 – Consolidated Emails

### Attachment List

Date	Title	Attachment	Ref	Note
6 Aug 2021	RE: Draft speaking note on 2022	GIQ	01	provided
13 Aug 2021	RE: Qualifications 2022 - Cabinet Paper (August) - Draft 1200 13 Aug	Qualifications 2022 Cabinet Paper		Redacted – confidential; free and frank
13 Aug 2021	RE: all good....	Grading – approach to communications draft text		Redacted – free and frank
13 Aug 2021	Document2	Grading – approach to communications draft text		Redacted – free and frank
1 Sept 2021	Cab Sec paper on contingencies	Update on contingency planning	03	provided
16 Sept 2021	FW: Letter re: NQ22	National Qualifications 2021-22: SQA message for centres	04	provided
22 Oct 2021	text	Grading – approach to communications draft text		Redacted – free and frank
22 Oct 2021	I am sharing 'Draft submission text on options' with you	Draft submission text on options		Redacted – free and frank
17 Nov 2021	stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder Engagement	05	Provided – redactions for views provided by stakeholders on a confidential basis redacted
18 Nov 2021	Draft text on comms around grading	Grading – approach to communications draft text		Redacted – free and frank
22 Nov 2021	Further input on grading	Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service: information for centres (2019)	06	provided
09 Dec 2021	RE: Grading approach - further assurance	AG edits	07	provided
12 Jan 2022	RE: Draft responses on exams position to Cttee and MSP	Response to Committee	08	provided
28 Jan 2022	RE: Scenario 2 comms	SG Questions - Awarding and Grading 2022	09	Provided – redactions for personal data applied
21 June 2022	Draft note of meeting with Cabinet Secretary 26 May 2022	NOTE OF MEETING BETWEEN THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS AND FIONA	10	provided

		ROBERTSON CEO, SQA ON 26 MAY 2022		
22 July 2022	Grade boundaries - confidential draft	Grade Boundaries	11	provided
3 August 2022	Grade Boundaries	Grade Boundaries	11	As above
8 August 2022	CONFIDENTIAL: news release - draft	(i) SQA NQ 2022 Results Press Release  (ii) Results 2022 Media Briefing Slides	12	Already published <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/102227.html">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/102227.html</a>  provided
8 August 2022	Confidential: NQ22 Results - news release	SQA NQ 2022 Results Press Release		As (i) above
8 August 2022	RE: Confidential	Chief Examining Officer's Report, Methodology Report and Equalities Monitoring Report		Already published <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq_2022-chief-examining-officer-report.pdf">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq_2022-chief-examining-officer-report.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq_2022-awarding-methodology-report.pdf">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq_2022-awarding-methodology-report.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/102192.html">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/102192.html</a>

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 August 2021 14:19

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Draft speaking note on 2022

Thank you both

Have tried to incorporate all suggestions. Have also had a few from [REDACTED]

John, I'm going to ping this over to [REDACTED] now for comment.

I ask this as a newbie to all this, is it "ok" to share this widely to the group before the Cab Sec has shared it with Cabinet?

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 August 2021 14:05

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Draft speaking note on 2022

Thanks [REDACTED] – looks good – some minor suggestions which I think should help some messaging.

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 06 August 2021 13:50

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Draft speaking note on 2022

Thanks [REDACTED] Some suggested changes attached. Beth will have a better handle on whether the detail is right.

I know this will be challenging given timescales but it would be good to share with the comms group, preferably for input but if not for advance notice.

John

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 August 2021 13:01

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Draft speaking note on 2022

Good afternoon

Attached is a draft of what I'm proposing Cab Sec says to cabinet as part of a Government Initiated Question on Wednesday with regards to 2022. I'm told it needs to be short, so I have done so, but tried my best to keep the nuance.

Feedback would be appreciated – it needs to “go up” by COP today, so prompt feedback really appreciated – its ¾ of a page long.

This all relies on Cab Sec “ok-ing” the proposed model, which she has not done yet (on holiday).

Available most of the afternoon on Teams or mobile [REDACTED] if needed.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 10 August 2021 17:32

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

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: For comment: Draft statement to follow announcement on National Qualifications in 2021-22

[REDACTED] (and others),

Just confirming that Cab Sec will “announce” via a Government Initiated Question (so electronically) the plan for 2022 tomorrow morning at 11am. This will be a high level announcement essentially confirming exams as the central planning assumption and stating that contingencies are being developed.

Our comms are set up to issue a press release at 1130 – has to be 30 mins after GIQ.

Would the intention be for SQA to release this statement shortly after 1130? The text reads as it is intended to follow the Cab Secs announcement on the same day.

I am offline soon, but back on from 8 or so tomorrow morning if needed.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

Sent: 10 August 2021 16:15

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

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@educationscotland.gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@npfs.org.uk;

south.lanarkshire@npfs.org.uk; south.ayrshire@npfs.org.uk

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Stuart McLaren <Stuart.McLaren@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: For comment: Draft statement to follow announcement on National Qualifications in 2021-22

Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues,

We have prepared a draft statement to follow on from the Cabinet Secretary's response on assessment of National Qualifications in 2021-22. Please find attached. Can you please review and get back to us with any comments or feedback by mid-morning tomorrow?

If possible, we would also like to include some supportive quotes from organisations represented on the NQ Group. Would any of you be willing to contribute a short quote that can be included as part of this statement?

Many thanks,

████████

████████████████

████████████████████

Marketing & Communications, Business Development

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**From:** Beth Black  
**Sent:** 11 August 2021 16:52  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: 2022 Approach

Let's do that. Shall I pop in a teams meeting?

**Beth Black**  
Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 11 August 2021 16:51  
**To:** Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: 2022 Approach

Great, thanks. Would 5 work at least for an initial word?

**From:** Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 11 August 2021 16:44  
**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
**Subject:** RE: 2022 Approach

Absolutely - when would be a good time?

**Beth Black**  
**Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
**Sent:** 11 August 2021 16:34  
**To:** Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** 2022 Approach

Hi Beth

Just been chatting to Fiona about the above. Do you have time for discussion? Keen to set out next steps re Cabinet paper etc and pick your brains on a few points.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | email: [REDACTED]@gov.scot | tel: +[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Learning Directorate | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

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From: Beth Black

Sent: 13 August 2021 14:11

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Qualifications 2022 - Cabinet Paper (August) -Draft 1200 13 Aug

[REDACTED]  
I think Fiona will have also replied to you separately re Annex C – please find our combined amends.

Kind regards

Beth

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 13 August 2021 13:16

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Qualifications 2022 - Cabinet Paper (August) -Draft 1200 13 Aug

IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND NOT FOR FORWARDING

Apologies, with Annex C now added!

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 13 August 2021 12:51

To: Fiona Robertson (fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk) <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; 'Beth Black' <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Qualifications 2022 - Cabinet Paper (August) -Draft 1200 13 Aug

IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND NOT FOR FORWARDING

Hi Fiona and Beth

Thanks for discussions earlier. Please see latest version of paper incorporating Beth's helpful material.

Fiona – grateful for feedback as soon as possible.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

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From: Beth Black

Sent: 13 August 2021 10:52

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: all good....

Quick chat now before I talk to Fiona at 11?

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 13 August 2021 10:45

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: all good....

Thanks, let me know when best to speak.

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 13 August 2021 10:15

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: all good....

[REDACTED] – I have not proofed or polished yet... but I have

1. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

■ [REDACTED]

■ [REDACTED]. s30 (b)(ii)

Chat in a bit....

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 13 August 2021 09:50

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: all good....

Thank you!

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 13 August 2021 09:49

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: all good....

Yes I'll do that... 😊

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 13 August 2021 09:49

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: all good....

Thanks Beth, is it possible to share any parts in advance of (even if they change), just to help me in the stitching of everything together? I won't pass on elsewhere.

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 13 August 2021 09:46

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: all good....

Need to check in with Fiona on a couple of points... heading for 11 ish to send over to you.... Hopefully that's ok.

Beth

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

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From: Beth Black

Sent: 13 August 2021 11:31

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Document2

Still subject to Fiona's agreement...

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 01 September 2021 13:00

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Cab Sec paper on contingencies

Hello

Find attached initial pass at describing the work done in the past fortnight or so on contingencies.  
Comments welcome.

[REDACTED] are these paras to be part of the bigger update asked for within [REDACTED] email, or is this update a "stand alone"?

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 September 2021 13:55

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: FW: Urgent - Qualifications Contingencies Update

Beth

[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

You may recall last week that we ([REDACTED] submitted it) put together some thoughts on the contingencies for 2022 for the Cab Sec. She has come back looking for additional information.

Would you have 15 minutes tomorrow to go over Cab Secs request – would appreciate the opportunity to chat through some of the aspects.

I have already noted some contents (attached Word doc) that will inform the reply to Cab Sec.

I am free 10 till noon and 1230 till 230 if either of those suited?

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 03 September 2021 18:09

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Urgent - Qualifications Contingencies Update

Hi [REDACTED]

Could you please start pulling together a note of key points, details, examples etc in relation to each of the points Cab Sec makes below. We may need more from SQA on some of this.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 02 September 2021 14:26

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc:

Subject: RE: Urgent - Qualifications Contingencies Update

Hi [REDACTED],

Please Ms Somerville's comments in red below.

Thanks

Hannah

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 01 September 2021 18:09

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc:

Subject: Urgent - Qualifications Contingencies Update

Importance: High

PS/Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Copy: as above

Urgent - Qualifications Contingencies Update

Earlier today Ms Somerville requested an urgent note ahead of CERG that provides an update on progress with the work being done to develop the two contingencies for 2022's national qualifications and timings in relation to either being invoked. The two contingencies are:

- A further round of modifications to ease assessment that would be invoked should there be disruption to teaching and learning beyond a moderate amount – 'Plan B'; and
- Teacher judgement based on normal in-year assessment invoked only in the event that examinations could not be held because of public health advice placing restrictions on the numbers of individuals in any gathering – 'Plan C'.

Updates on each are below:

Plan C

Work to develop the Plan C contingency has been prioritised at this stage as it is important that reliable and robust evidence is gathered throughout the school year and teachers and lectures need to know early in the session what expectations are upon them. Communication on this is being developed by a NQ22 communications sub-group and should be in the system by mid-September. These communications will seek to reassure teachers/lectures that there is little to no [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii) additional assessment work this year, over and above the normal planned assessment that would take place each year. In essence, the key message will be to keep good records on normal assessments, rather

than conduct more assessment. The aim is to publish guidance on this within the next week [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)  
Quality assurance of assessment evidence, and the timing of such activities, has been explored, a number of options considered, and now narrowed down. It is recognised that quality assurance processes will be in place at teacher/subject/school and LA level. SQA quality assurance processes will build on these but are necessary at national level to ensure the credibility and of the qualifications as national qualifications. It is also recognised that the quality assurance activities of session 20/21 have had a positive impact upon those delivering qualifications in terms of their confidence in assessing and marking learners. These has been a focus on the timing of quality assurance by SQA, front loaded in an attempt to ensure those setting the assessments are supported in their work, or will QA take place once the evidence has been generated and contingency C has been utilised. There is broad support within the NQ22 Group for SQA quality assurance being in place only once this contingency is invoked but there is an important message to centres through the year about the need to be to be ready for this possibility.

In relation to the timing of any decision to move to Plan C, this could occur late in the session (as late as possible), potentially March/April, in line with public health advice at the time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

#### Plan B

In terms of Plan B contingencies (a combination of various measures dependent on the subject, such as easier, more accessible question papers, more rewarding mark schemes and lower grade boundaries), the SQA is working on the detail of these for each subject and each course, trying to ensure that while these are not possible for all subjects [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii) most learners would get significant benefit across the combination of subjects. It is proposed that these would only be implemented in March – to support the learners and teachers in the final preparations for examinations – should the plan be invoked.

The trigger points for Plan B being invoked are more nuanced than Plan C. This is because the modifications in place in regard to Plan A are substantive enough to accommodate significant disruption to learning - to the extent seen in the 2020-1 academic [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii) Plan B would only be invoked should the disruption exceed that in terms of covid-related absences. Rather than a series of checkpoints (as per last year), it is more of a watching brief from January onwards. Before January, it is possible that even large scale disruption might be mitigated or recovered through other means as well as being absorbed by the modifications already [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

The potential timings for invoking either contingency could be shared with CERG. Please let us know if Ms Somerville requires any further detail at this stage.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

Thanks



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division | [REDACTED]@gov.scot | [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Learning Directorate | Area 2B North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 16 September 2021 13:48

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: FW: Letter re: NQ22

Beth

Hope you are well? Would really value your input here.

Following the publication of yesterday's Contingencies communication by SQA, Cab Sec has asked the questions below. I have put some notes beside them (largely just my thoughts as to how things may work – not official SG views by any means) – do you have anything to add?

I think we have chatted around much of what's below before.

It would be ideal if I could submit answers to Cab Sec by tomorrow noon, happy to Teams tomorrow morning if you'd rather discuss.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED],

Aware you have seen this letter, Ms Somerville has some questions for officials -

Scenario 2:

Who decides what is 'further significant disruption' – Ministers or the SQA? – [SG Comment: CERG members will be looking weekly at the attendance figures across Scotland. In the event that attendance continue to drop (or remain steady at a low rate) this would be discussed as an urgent item at CERG and NQ22. If it was the view of SQA (or NQ22?) that attendance rates were such that further modifications were required – i.e a move to Plan B – then Fiona Robertson would indicate this to Cab Sec in writing for approval.]

Who decides when the checkpoints for this are? Eg there may be a point at the turn of the year that this may already be necessary – is it me or SQA? [SG Comment: Covered by answer above – watching brief. It is possible that Plan B contingency could be indicated before March, should there be a pattern of high absences between September and February, (largely to to reassure/reduce stress in the the system), again Fiona Robertson would indicate this to Cab Sec in writing for approval.]

Is this an all or nothing option or if there is some more disruption then certain things can happen and then if there is even more than more things happen? [SG Comment: Beth – need your input here... are the plan B modifications "all or nothing" or would there be a "sliding scale" of modifications. I imagine it's all or nothing?]

Also:

What does all this talk on quality assurance actually mean in practice? Are they doing something different to what they would normally do? [SG Comment: SQA comms make this clear – there should be no additional assessment and the QA should be consistent with previous years' robust internal systems . Assuming "what they would normally do" is robust, then no extra QA required.]

When will advice go out to teachers? Over the next few weeks seems quite a long period of time.

- SSTA raised a concern about teachers already put in more assessments etc? Is this happening? Is there an issue building here or not? If so how will this be tackled by SQA/SG? – [SG Comment: SQA releasing updated Understanding Standards resources from (when???)]. All comms are clear – NO ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS – Larry Flanagan, General Secretary at the EIS Union, said on 16th September that "the guidance is clear that a dual [assessment] approach should not happen".]

Grateful if you could please take forward.

Thanks

██████████

From: Nicola Crowley <Nicola.Crowley@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 14 September 2021 17:34

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: ██████████@gov.scot>; ██████████  
██████████@gov.scot>

Subject: Letter re: NQ22

Dear ██████████

Please find attached a letter for the Cabinet Secretary from Fiona Robertson regarding the contingency arrangements for National Qualifications in 2022.

Kind regards

Nicola

Nicola Crowley

Head of Chief Executive's Office

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From: Beth Black

Sent: 18 October 2021 15:42

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Official sensitive: Grading Boundaries

[REDACTED] Out of scope

Good idea, [REDACTED]. Would 9 am work? Or 10.30?

B

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 18 October 2021 15:40

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Official sensitive: Grading Boundaries

Hi Beth

[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

Conscious you are just back but also that you had a chance to catch up with [REDACTED] earlier. We are progressing material that the Cab Sec has asked for. I'm not around this week after tomorrow and it would be good to speak if possible tomorrow morning...would you have some time that would work? Also, if ok for you, work [REDACTED] joining for continuity at this end.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 18 October 2021 12:01

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; David Middleton

<David.Middleton@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Official sensitive: Grading Boundaries

Hello [REDACTED] Out of scope

Would it be helpful to have a short conversation this afternoon around the sequencing etc? Either by telephone or by Teams?

Kind regards

Beth

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 18 October 2021 11:41

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; David Middleton  
<David.Middleton@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Official sensitive Grading Boundaries

Hi Beth

[REDACTED] Out of scope

I am following up on the future announcement from the SQA re potential approaches to grade boundaries for the 2022 diet. We recognise that this is a decision for the SQA, however, in order to ensure the Ministers are as well sighted as possible and have the opportunity to be supportive of the approach, we will need some time to sight, discuss and report back. It would be helpful to us therefore if you can confirm that the announcement of the approach agreed by the board (which I understand is meeting on 28th October) will take place no earlier that w/c 1 November.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Scottish Government

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 20 October 2021 16:05

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Update

Now is perfect! Thanks Beth. Teams ok?

[REDACTED] | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government |

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 20 October 2021 16:03

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Update

Thanks [REDACTED]. I'm not in meetings for a bit – so would now work? Or suggest another time?

B

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 20 October 2021 15:59

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Update

Hi Beth

I'm currently working on a note for FM in relation to grading but wanted to give a quick update following a chat I had with [REDACTED] MSYP about his thoughts.

His preferred option was Option 1 rather than Option 5 (Agree grade boundaries to give outcomes similar to 2020/1 to acknowledge disruption to learning). I appreciate your view that this approach would not be appropriate but given that I will need to reflect [REDACTED] views in the note to FM, it is even more important that we set out what this option would entail and the pros/cons attached to it.

I'm not clear on how this option would be achieved – is it a "lower bar" directed to Principal Assessors? Would welcome SQA support here – would [REDACTED] be able to provide?



From: Beth Black

Sent: 21 October 2021 11:52

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Update

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for getting in touch with me about this and of course understand that Scot Gov want to understand the extent to which the preferred option – the intermediary position – might land with learners and the education sector more broadly. However, I just want to iterate the careful and considered engagement we have undertaken with a number of learners. This is a difficult policy area for SQA and in conducting such engagement, discussions of some of the wider context, the potential consequences and implications of different approaches is vital to ensure that stakeholders can express reasoned views.

Our careful, thorough and considered engagement with a number of learners cohered strongly around Option 5. For the learners we engaged with, although at first, naturally, option 1 seems the most attractive to some, they could understand the risks to the value and integrity of their qualifications present in more generous options. They also welcomed a sense of the beginnings of a return to normality. Fundamentally, they felt that Option 5 overall represented a more considered position.

Kind regards

Beth

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standardsx

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 20 October 2021 15:59

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Update

As Above

\*\*



**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 22 October 2021 14:31

**To:** Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

**Subject:** text

[REDACTED] | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government |

\*\*

From: Beth Black

Sent: 22 October 2021 15:09

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: I am sharing 'Draft submission text on options' with you

Shall we have quick chat? Shall I phone you?

Or call me on [REDACTED]

Thank you!

B

\*\*

**From:** Beth Black  
**Sent:** 27 October 2021 11:16  
**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
**Subject:** RE: Quick thoughts on draft answers ahead of Cab Sec statement - deadline of 11am

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

**Beth Black**  
Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 27 October 2021 11:14  
**To:** Beth Black <[Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Quick thoughts on draft answers ahead of Cab Sec statement - deadline of 11am

Good point – added in 😊

[REDACTED] | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government |

**From:** Beth Black <[Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 27 October 2021 11:13  
**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Gill Stewart <[Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
**Subject:** RE: Quick thoughts on draft answers ahead of Cab Sec statement - deadline of 11am

Yes – think it is important to point to the longevity of qualifications more and not just the last two years. [REDACTED]. s30 (b)(ii)

**Beth Black**  
Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Sent:** 27 October 2021 11:11

**To:** Beth Black <[Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk)>; Jean Blair <[Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk)>; Gill Stewart <[Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk)>

[REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Subject:** RE: Quick thoughts on draft answers ahead of Cab Sec statement - deadline of 11am

Many thanks and sorry for the short deadline – wanted to give you the opportunity to see at least. Will incorporate that extra line.

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 27 October 2021 11:08

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Quick thoughts on draft answers ahead of Cab Sec statement - deadline of 11am

Quick thoughts in return

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] s30 (b)(ii)

**Beth Black**  
Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot <[Redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 October 2021 10:16

To: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot

Subject: Quick thoughts on draft answers ahead of Cab Sec statement - deadline of 11am

Importance: High

Hi Jean/Gill/Beth

We were asked last night by Cab Sec's office to consider the following questions and draft proposed answers ahead of the statement this afternoon. We've had a crack at it – just sharing in case you want to comment.

Sorry for the short deadline, could you come back to us with any comments by **11am**?

Many thanks

[Redacted]

- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] s30 (b)(ii)

From: Beth Black

Sent: 12 November 2021 12:43

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: England announcement on modifications

[REDACTED] Out of scope

[REDACTED] happy to have a quick catch up if easier.

But perhaps a few observations / reflections on the Ofqual announcements:

1. In the broadest terms, there are many key similarities – modifications; a contingency plan for the possibility of exams not taking place.
2. In Scotland, we announced the detail of modifications much earlier (June and Sept) to help teachers and learners know what to expect. We think this has been clear.
3. In Scotland, we announced the contingencies much earlier. (August). We think the comms have been clear. However, there is also room for continual reinforcement as there is some noise in the system detracting from the key messages.
4. It is worth remembering that GCSEs and A levels are two year courses... so the modifications being announced now represent almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the teaching hours; ours were announced essentially before teaching commenced.
5. Re: contingencies and a TAG model in England – the big difference here is that they are being much more prescriptive about the way in which the alternative evidence to support the grade is gathered – the nature, the conditions under which it is taken etc. We did have some discussions around the ‘prescription’ v ‘flexibility’ at the Working Group and there was much consensus that such a prescriptive approach would not be supported in Scotland, partly, or perhaps, mainly because it would be perceived to be ‘dual assessment’ and additional workload for teachers. So while there are undoubtedly assessment merits and some appeal from a fairness point of view. it was not considered an option in Scotland. This was one of the ‘conscious trade offs’.
6. We have also been thinking about ‘letter to learners’ ‘letter to teachers’ approach too for comms – so would be interested to hear your thoughts.

Beth

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 12 November 2021 11:50

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot





From: Beth Black

Sent: 16 November 2021 17:19

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Grading

Thanks, [REDACTED] let's go for Friday at 4! (sorry a bit antisocial!)

I'll pop it in now.

B

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 16 November 2021 16:44

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Grading

Thanks Beth, that sounds good. I'm slightly more tied up than usual this Friday with interviewing but could do from 4pm onwards or Thursday from 4pm onwards? I'm also fairly clear tomorrow (apart from 1:30) if that is better.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 16 November 2021 16:14

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Grading

Thanks [REDACTED]

Shall we have a short catch up on Friday? Would be useful in respect of EC and appeals in particular, to give you a sense of direction.

Beth

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 16 November 2021 15:54

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: FW: Grading

Hi Beth

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Out of scope

Let me know if there is anything I can helpfully do in relation to the request below in terms of providing an update to Cab Sec before I go on leave.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 09 November 2021 16:57

To: 'Beth Black' <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: Grading

Hi Beth

Further to a conversation between Cab Sec and Fiona this morning, and to further inform the grading discussion, I understand it was agreed that SQA will provide us with more detailed assessment on the reaction of stakeholders in relation to the grading dialogue, and any insight into how this may translate into their public positions.

Could you also set out what SQA could signal on exceptional circumstances and appeals in the near future.

[REDACTED] is speaking to Fiona tomorrow and so it may be picked up then.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Learning Directorate | Scottish  
Government |

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From: Beth Black

Sent: 17 November 2021 10:47

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: stakeholder engagement

[REDACTED]

Here is the document outlining the stakeholder engagement. I think John B is checking in with the comms aspects.

I've popped in a meeting today as some meetings have moved. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Out of scope

b

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

\*\*

Sent: 18 November 2021 10:26

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <john.booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Draft text on comms around grading

Good to know! Thanks [REDACTED]

**Beth Black**

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 18 November 2021 10:25

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Draft text on comms around grading

Thanks Beth; looking at my meetings today I may not actually get to this until 3 or 4 – if that helps you?

■

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

From: Beth Black <[Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk)>

Sent: 18 November 2021 10:17

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <[John.Booth@sqa.org.uk](mailto:John.Booth@sqa.org.uk)>

Subject: RE: Draft text on comms around grading

[REDACTED] – Should be able to get back to you by 2 today... with a fair wind, a bit earlier...

Hope that's ok.

B

**Beth Black**

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 17 November 2021 17:09

To: Beth Black <[Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk)>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <[John.Booth@sqa.org.uk](mailto:John.Booth@sqa.org.uk)>

Subject: Draft text on comms around grading

Hi Beth



From: Beth Black

Sent: 22 November 2021 15:32

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Further input on grading

Hello [REDACTED]

I've attached a document about EC from 2019... hopefully that gives a clear outline – but do buzz me if something isn't quite clear. As I think we've talked about, it needs to be updated to reflect covid incidence and want to make sure we are all in a good and defensible place on the nature of 'covid' EC – eg PCR test only given that lateral flows?

Regarding your second question – examiners mark scripts blind – ie do not know the background of candidates; this means they judge the evidence of performance in front of them, rather than risk bringing any unconscious bias into play.

At awarding meetings, individual's profiles are not available. There is cohort information available such as a change in the mix of centre type or change in mix of established versus new centres. But deprivation data, as for reasons above, are not included. Happy to talk through in more detail!

Does that help?

B

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 November 2021 13:57

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Further input on grading

Hi Beth

Hope that you had a nice weekend. Further to some comments from [REDACTED] could I get you to provide some additional background/info ahead of finalising a draft note on grading which Cab Sec could use with FM?

Two questions:

- Could you provide a basic explanation of how exceptional circumstances works? Also PRS and the distinction between that and appeals? Appreciate you are working up the detail for this year but just to set out the basics of how they work.

- I'm pretty sure on this but want to be definitive – my assumption is that exams are assessed "blind". At the Awarding meetings, does the Principal Assessor (or anyone else involved in the assessment) have access to personal information relevant to the candidate i.e. gender, school, geography, deprivation index? If so, what information do they have access to?

Many thanks for your help; as I'm mentioned before, tomorrow is my last day before a week's leave so trying to get this wrapped up before then if possible, so if you could get back tomorrow by 2pm tomorrow, that would be great.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

\*\*

From: Beth Black

Sent: 08 December 2021 13:18

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Draft comms to DoE

Am chasing. We've been in meetings all morning!

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 December 2021 12:32

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: FW: Draft comms to DoE

Hi Beth

Further to [REDACTED] email, I think you have commented on an earlier version of the text, can I just check whether you are following updated section in relation to the prelims:

Teachers are encouraged to continue gathering evidence where appropriate as part of the naturally occurring assessments through the academic year in case required as part of any contingency arrangements. For schools that intend to use prelims as one of the opportunities for naturally occurring assessment, to support the wider evidence base of a learner's demonstrated attainment, it is important to be clear that prelims are not a mandatory part of the SQA qualifications process. However, given the opportunity that prelims provide a useful preparation for exams as well as an opportunity to demonstrate evidence of a learner's attainment, schools would be encouraged to exercise flexibility in timing to help overcome any issues caused by significant disruption to learning.

We will need to send an update to Cab Sec by 2pm so any comments on this or any additional points on the text below before this would be appreciated.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 December 2021 12:23



To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Draft comms to DoE

Sorry Beth, would it be possible to get those further comments in the next hour or so? I've used the same text to give a further update to Cab Sec on the position and [REDACTED] keen to get it up fairly quickly but would good if all were able to confirm you were happy with the language.

█

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 08 December 2021 12:04

To: 'Beth Black' <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Draft comms to DoE

Thanks for the heads up! We've been asked for final text by cop today so hopefully timescale ok.

█

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 08 December 2021 12:03

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Draft comms to DoE

I think there might be a few other tweaks coming from colleagues – but nothing much!

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 December 2021 11:53

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>





From: Beth Black

Sent: 16 December 2021 14:36

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Draft text on prelims for inclusion in updated covid guidance

[REDACTED] I think this is useful guidance.

Thanks for sharing.

b

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 16 December 2021 13:47

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Draft text on prelims for inclusion in updated covid guidance

Importance: High

Hi Beth

You may know that it was agreed at CERG this morning to incorporate text on prelims into the updated covid guidance for schools.

I've drafted some text below – grateful for any comments. We can maybe pick up when we catch-up later today.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

“Role of prelims in National Qualifications

For schools that intend to use prelims as one of the opportunities for naturally occurring assessment, to support the wider evidence base of a learner’s demonstrated attainment in case required this year, it is important to be clear that prelims are not a mandatory part of the SQA qualifications process. However, given the opportunity that prelims provide to demonstrate evidence of a learner’s attainment, schools would be encouraged to exercise flexibility in timing to help overcome any issues caused by significant disruption to learning.”

\*\*

From: Beth Black

Sent: 09 December 2021 11:37

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Grading approach - further assurance

Thank you for spotting:

Should read:

And prior to this, question papers are written to allow equal access to all learners and not create disadvantage for learners from particular groups or with particular characteristics in line with SQA's Public Sector Equalities Duty.

b

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 09 December 2021 11:22

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Grading approach - further assurance

Hi Beth, just reviewing in a bit more detail and I see there is a word missing after "particular" in the first paragraph in the text you had added. I would normally make an assumption but I think quite a critical one – "group", "characteristic"?

Thanks

■

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 09 December 2021 09:07

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Grading approach - further assurance

■

I've made a few tweaks (in attached) – hope helpful. Fiona is travelling at the moment so may not have chance to comment.

Drop me a line if you need anything

B

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 December 2021 18:12

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Grading approach further assurance

Hi Beth

We spoke earlier in the week about providing assurance that there is nothing in the proposed grading approach that would inadvertently embed/widen the attainment gap.

When we spoke you mentioned the EQIA on this year's approach was being finalised – if that it is now done, it would be helpful to see.

I've suggested some wording below and would be grateful for any comments you have, if possible at some point tomorrow. Conscious I am writing from a point of ignorance in terms of the detail of the process, so please feel free to amend.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

-----  
All elements of SQA's role in terms of enabling the accreditation of national qualifications involve marking taking place "blind"; this prevents any conscious or unconscious bias in terms of the marking of papers and in respect of any appeals process, and the potential to inadvertently misrepresent the attainment gap in terms of assessor judgement.

SQA have completed an EQIA into the approach to qualifications in 2021/22 and while it does not specifically cover socio-economic characteristics, this did not identify any significant equality issues [tbc].

On the assumption that exams will take place in 2022, there is a risk that we will see a widening of the attainment gap compared to the last two years, to reflect a position closer to 2019, because of the different approach to assessment. SQA consider that the apparent narrowing of the attainment gap in 2020 and 2021 in the main reflects the grade distribution and increased numbers achieving an





From: Beth Black

Sent: 07 January 2022 14:11

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <john.booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Media Query - Press query: definition of disruption to schools for exam changes - Freelance journalist

Thanks, [REDACTED] – happy with that. Might also be worth looping John/[REDACTED] in too...

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 07 January 2022 13:41

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: FW: Media Query - Press query: definition of disruption to schools for exam changes - Freelance journalist

Importance: High

Hi Beth

We've been approached for lines further to an enquiry from a freelance journalist asking about specifics of plan B below. I've suggested some lines I would propose to comms but wanted to sense-check with you first if you pick up, particularly the yellow section. [Explanatory Note: marked in green]

Grateful for any feedback before I go back asap (and by 2.30).

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

"We will do everything we can to keep schools safely open and minimise disruption to learning. The plan continues to be for exams to take place in 2022, although we are closely monitoring COVID developments.

The approach to 2022 exams, co-ordinated by SQA through the National Qualifications 22 Group, has been designed to flex in response to further disruption caused by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Those contingency plans are still in place. Plan B would further support learners in their preparation for exams to help mitigate the disruption.

"The decision on whether to move to this contingency will be taken by the SQA in consultation with the Scottish Government, the National Qualifications 2022 Group and other partners.

"A range of factors, including staff and pupil absence rates, will be considered.



Could you also confirm whether the option of cancelling exams and switching to teacher judgement has now been abandoned? The SQA comment suggests that only 'support for exam revision' is being considered, which feels like something that needs clarified?

[REDACTED]

Senior Media Manager

Communications Education & Skills

\*\*

From: Beth Black

Sent: 12 January 2022 12:19

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Draft responses on exams position to Cttee and MSP

Thanks, [REDACTED], for the nudge.

Looks totally fine. Have made minor tweaks, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

B

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 January 2022 18:08

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Draft responses on exams position to Cttee and MSP

Hi Beth

[REDACTED] Out of scope

I've logged on to pick up a couple of stray requests over the Christmas period – a letter from the Education Cttee to Cab Sec about the exams position and a follow-up request from a question to FM from Martin Whitfield MSP with a similar question.

I've attached suggested responses to these and would welcome any comments you have either tomorrow or early next week.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

\*\*

From: Beth Black

Sent: 26 January 2022 17:34

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Lines etc

Thanks [REDACTED] One point I'm not sure about is highlighted.

But I have added in some bits 😊

Hope helpful!

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 January 2022 16:43

To: Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Lines etc

Importance: High

Hi Beth

Here are our draft lines for Cab Sec ahead of her UK Education Council meeting tomorrow; obviously welcome any comments, ideally before cop today.

Further to our discussion about differences between England and Scotland systems per se, I wondered if there was anything I could pull out that set out these differences in summary form like a table or something? Just to show the systems as a whole are different. Don't worry if not, just if something was easily accessible.

Many thanks for all your help.

[REDACTED]

- It is our firm intention to hold exams this year.
- The approach to appeals has been co-designed with our stakeholders through the National Qualifications 2022 group to ensure support for our approach to this year's exams.

This approach represents the standard approach to appeals pre-2013 and many key stakeholders, teachers, teacher leaders etc are familiar with this approach whereby the alternative academic evidence can support those learners and the confidence with which they go into the examination

This approach is also very similar to the standard 'exceptional circumstances' arrangements in Scotland which involve SQA examiners considering alternative academic evidence. As with every



From: Beth Black

Sent: 28 January 2022 16:30

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <john.booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Scenario 2 comms

As promised, [REDACTED]

Give me a bell if there's anything.

b

Beth Black

Director, Policy, Analysis and Standards

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 January 2022 11:47

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Beth Black <Beth.Black@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Scenario 2 comms

Importance: High

Hi all

Look forward to seeing you at 12.30.

We've had further communication from Cabinet Secretary this morning and she is keen we have Q&A available particularly on the operational elements of what is being announced, so she is able to respond to any questions on those elements on Tuesday.

To that end, I've started an "operational Q&A" document which we can incorporate into her briefing pack and have attached. Beth – can I get your input into that please by 4pm as we need to send up the briefing pack today. Hopefully you may have something similar already in which case grateful if you could share too and we can use to supplement both our "if asked" questions.

Speak soon.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

-----Original Appointment-----

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 26 January 2022 10:23

To: John Booth; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Subject: Scenario 2 comms

When: 28 January 2022 12:30-13:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

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Microsoft Teams meeting

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From: Fiona Robertson

Sent: 13 May 2022 16:59

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Follow up - exam diet

[REDACTED]

Conscious I did not come back to you on this – apologies. However, we discussed these issues at our call on 27 April and when we met on 29 April.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

Re estimates, I was able to discuss briefly when we met, but it is important to highlight that matched data is key here – estimate vs outturn at an individual level and we will not know that until grade boundaries are completed.

Finally, the Cabinet Secretary's letter, in response to mine, on the assessment approach for 2022/23 was very helpful.

Have a good weekend.

Fiona

Fiona Robertson

Chief Executive

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 April 2022 10:36

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Follow up - exam diet

Good morning Fiona

Following your meeting with the Cabinet Secretary last week and our subsequent discussion, I am following up on:

- submission of estimates across Scotland and what this picture tells us re potential appeals – helpful to understand when and how this will be shared

- attendance levels on first day of exams and comparison with pre-Covid attendance – whether we can establish a mechanism to be updated on this.

You will also be aware that England is likely to confirm later this week date tbc that exams will “return to normal” in 2023 – we understand Wales in same position and NI has commissioned advice from their qualifications body, which is likely to be received in mid May. The position as confirmed in your letter to the Cabinet Secretary is obviously different in Scotland, so it will be helpful to confirm if that is being announced tomorrow.

Happy to pick up in our discussion tomorrow.

Thanks

█

█

█

Scottish Government

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From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 18 May 2022 11:50

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Appeals guidance and grading approach

Hi [REDACTED], hi all,

I hope you're all well. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

On grading, we're currently looking at our proposed comms approach to this and the possibility of an advance briefing for media. We'll keep you posted and can cover in more detail when we meet in early June to start discussions around results handling.

All the best

Kat

Kat Hannah

Head of Communications & Engagement

Communications Directorate

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 17 May 2022 16:56

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Appeals guidance and grading approach

Hi John

Hope you're doing ok. Wanted to check-in on [REDACTED] grading approach. On the former, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

On grading approach, just wanted to flag the following tweet and find out whether there are any plans to publish more information on grading:

[REDACTED]

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 19 May 2022 17:31

To: Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Error reported in Higher Biology Paper 1

That's really helpful, thanks so much Gill.

Hope all well with you.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 19 May 2022 17:28

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Error reported in Higher Biology Paper 1

Hi [REDACTED]

We have draft marking instructions for each exam, developed alongside the question paper, following the exam we have a process called standardisation where we look at a sample of candidate answers, from different centres to each question and if required we add potential answers to the marking instructions to reflect any responses that are correct that we hadn't anticipated. This will allow us at a preliminary level to see how/if the error has impacted on how learners have responded to the multiple-choice question worth one mark.

Then when we get to grade boundary – we will have the marks achieved for all questions for all learners and a range of statistical data that enables us to see if the question performed as expected. We will also have marker reports from all markers which will tell us if there were any specific problems with specific questions. We use this qualitative and quantitative information to inform judgements about grade boundaries and to decide if we need to take action or not. In extremis we could discount the mark for that question but that will depend upon what the statistical performance data and marker reports tell us.

Hope that is helpful – happy to discuss further

Gill

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 19 May 2022 15:44

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Error reported in Higher Biology Paper 1

Hi [REDACTED]

Gill's team would be able to give a more detailed answer, if needed, but my (very) non-technical understanding is that if it becomes obvious during the marking process that a particular questions has not performed as it should in terms of assessing candidates' understanding then that would be reflected in the grading.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 19 May 2022 14:34

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Error reported in Higher Biology Paper 1

Many thanks for flagging John. If this does get any more attention, will be good to know what processes SQA has in place to manage these sorts of things (as highlighted below).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 19 May 2022 14:29

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; Gill Stewart <Gill.Stewart@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Error reported in Higher Biology Paper 1

[REDACTED]

Just flagging this for awareness. We're monitoring social media to see if any noise builds around it but only a couple of mentions so far and the rest of the commentary about the Higher Biology paper are positive.

Line below (highlighted) that we'll use if asked for comment.

John

From: Sue Pope <Sue.Pope@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 19 May 2022 11:21

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: FW: Error reported in Higher Biology Paper 1

Hello

Unfortunately, there is an error in the H Biology multiple choice paper (paper 1) in that one of the options was repeated. Please can the standard response be provided to any comments or enquiries: SQA has processes in place to deal with any issues that may emerge as a result of exam questions not performing as expected. These ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged.

Thanks in anticipation

Best wishes

Sue

Sue Pope (she/her)

Head of Service: Science, Mathematics and Core Skills

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From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 17 June 2022 16:18

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Grade Boundary Narrative

Hi [REDACTED]

We're working on the narrative and our approach to informing stakeholders as we speak, and will be doing some work with SQA Advisory Council towards the end of next week to help inform our plans. Will keep you posted!

Meantime, don't hesitate to get in touch if any enquiries drop in the meantime.

Wishing you a lovely weekend,

Kat

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 16 June 2022 09:54

To: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Grade Boundary Narrative

Hi Kat

When we met recently, you mentioned the development of background briefing on the grade boundary approach for key stakeholders over the summer period. Can you advise whether you have a narrative developed for this (even in draft) or any detailed lines on the grade boundary process that could be shared with us now so that we have lines available should we receive any media or other queries?

In addition, and apologies if you have already responded separately to [REDACTED] are you able to confirm if the below existing high level lines are still appropriate in the meantime:

#### GRADING APPROACH

In recognition of the disruption that learners have faced over the last two years, and the different approaches to assessment, SQA will take a more generous approach to grading than in a normal exam year.

- SQA experts – who are all practising teachers and lecturers – will take an expert judgement based on a wide range of evidence, as they do every year.
- This year, SQA expects that the outcomes will represent an intermediary position between 2021 and pre-pandemic years to take account of the impact of the pandemic on learners -



judgements will be made based on the national standard and will not consider individual local authority, centre or individual learner data.

- The operational detail is for SQA, but for the avoidance of doubt, I can confirm that no algorithms will be applied as part of this process.

Best regards

■

■, Education Reform Directorate, Scottish Government, Area 2B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

\*\*

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 21 June 2022 17:46

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Draft note of meeting with Cabinet Secretary 26 May 2022

Hi Fiona

Apologies for the delay – attached is a draft note of your meeting with Cabinet Secretary on 26 May.

Grateful for any input, after which I'll look to clear with Cabinet Secretary and add to the corporate record.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 29 June 2022 17:46

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Quick update and some questions

Hi [REDACTED]/John

Thank you for sending over the two timing options for a meeting with officials on the pre-release results. We can make either of those slots. Before confirming, can I check which may be more beneficial for discussing the outcomes and key points this year. Is the pre-release data likely to be available for the Wednesday slot, or at least sufficient information to inform discussion of any key points, or would it be better to wait until the Thursday to ensure that the data was available to allow a more meaningful discussion of any points?

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

[REDACTED], it would be helpful for our planning to understand when the draft grading narrative might be available so that we can brief the Cabinet Secretary. In addition, from discussions with rUK colleagues, we understand that counterparts have no plans to make any decisions/announcements on the grading approach for 2023 until after the 2022 results are available. Can you confirm whether this is SQA's expectation also?

We have also had a query from the Cabinet Secretary about teacher estimates this year and whether the difference between estimates and actual grades will be known/published on results day. My understanding is that estimates are not usually published but that SQA will have knowledge of where the differences are and what this will potentially mean for the number of appeals. Grateful if you could confirm the position.

Happy to set up a call to discuss any of the above points if it would be helpful.

Best regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], Education Reform Directorate, Scottish Government, Area 2B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

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

Sent: 24 June 2022 14:35

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Quick update and some questions

Hi [REDACTED]

We have two options that work from our side. Wed 3 1-2 or Thurs 4 12-1.

Happy to go ahead with either of these times.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Corporate Office

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 24 June 2022 14:21

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Quick update and some questions

Thanks [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] will check diaries at this end and come back to you.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

twitter: @johnbooth224 | email: john.booth@sqa.org.uk | website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk>

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 24 June 2022 14:18

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Quick update and some questions

Hi all

I've had a look in diaries for a slot for the officials meeting, and the following seem like the best options:

Wed 3 August: 1-2pm / 3.30-4.30pm

Thurs 4 August: 10.30-11.30 / 12-1pm

Please let me know which suits best and we can get this set up.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | National Qualifications Team | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 24 June 2022 09:11

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Quick update and some questions

Magic, many thanks John.

[REDACTED] could you give the names for the Cab Sec meeting to Private office please to form part of that meeting on the Friday. Could you also circulate some suggestions for timings on the Wed/Thurs for SQA colleagues to respond to? I think we should also involve [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from ES? But we can check personnel with them too.

Speak later.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 23 June 2022 19:16

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Quick update and some questions

Hi [REDACTED]

On attendance at the Cab Sec meeting, last year I think it was Fiona, Gill, Beth, [REDACTED] and me. On that basis, I think it should be Fiona, Gill, Martyn Ware, Stephen Price and me.

I think for the officials meeting same as above minus Fiona and include Kat and [REDACTED] please.

(Jean – let me know if you think you should be involved in one or both too)

We've not yet reached a decision on the approach/contingencies for 22-23, beyond the already-announced continuation of modifications.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

See you tomorrow,

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 23 June 2022 17:32

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Jean Blair <Jean.Blair@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Quick update and some questions

Hi John

I hope you're well; conscious we are meeting tomorrow morning but wanted to give you a quick update on some points we discussed last time and pose a couple of questions – very happy to pick up tomorrow though.

In our last results day comms catch-up we mentioned that we were organising a meeting with Cabinet Secretary on 5 August to discuss pre-release results. Grateful if you could advise who from your side should be included in that discussion and we will look to get an invite out asap.

Also conscious that in previous years, officials have met with SQA colleagues on the Wednesday/Thursday before results day – it would be good to do this again and get a slot in diaries soon if so. Again – it would be helpful to know who best to invite.

One final question I had in my head – although Jean may be better placed to answer. Conscious of the recent announcement from NI about their approach to 22/23 (McIlveen announces qualification arrangements for next academic year | Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk)) and wanted to confirm whether any consideration is being given to contingencies etc for the approach to exams next year?

Happy to pick up these points tomorrow morning.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate |  
Scottish Government |

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-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of CabSecES@gov.scot

Sent: 27 June 2022 14:30

To: Fiona Robertson; Gill Stewart; Jean Blair; Martyn Ware; Stephen Price; John Booth

Subject: Meeting with Officials: Pre-release results

When: 05 August 2022 10:00-11:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: MS Teams

Setting up meeting as discussed. Grateful if you can send any briefing by August 4th. Let me know if there are any issues.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

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Microsoft Teams meeting

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-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Sent: 13 July 2022 15:50

To: Fiona Robertson

Subject: FW: Results Meeting

When: 04 August 2022 12:30-14:30 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 13 July 2022 11:56

To: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Jean Blair; gill.stewart@sqa.org.uk;  
John.Booth@sqa.org.uk; Kat Hannah; Martyn.Ware@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Stephen.Price@sqa.org.uk

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Results Meeting

When: 04 August 2022 12:30-14:30 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.



Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Out of scope

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Microsoft Teams meeting

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-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of CabSecES@gov.scot

Sent: 13 July 2022 09:43

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; shirley-  
anne.somerville.msp@parliament.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Fiona Robertson; Gill Stewart;  
Jean Blair; Martyn Ware; Stephen Price; John Booth; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: Meeting with Officials: Pre-release results

When: 05 August 2022 10:00-11:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: MS Teams

Setting up meeting as discussed. Grateful if you can send any briefing by August 4th. Let me know if there are any issues.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

---

Microsoft Teams meeting

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-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of CabSecES@gov.scot

Sent: 14 July 2022 12:26

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; shirley-

anne.somerville.msp@parliament.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Fiona Robertson; Gill Stewart;  
Jean Blair; Martyn Ware; Stephen Price; John Booth; [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
Subject: Meeting with Officials: Pre-release results

When: 05 August 2022 10:00-10:30 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: MS Teams

Setting up meeting as discussed. Grateful if you can send any briefing by August 4th. Let me know if there are any issues.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

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Microsoft Teams meeting

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

Sent: 19 July 2022 16:21

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Results Day

Hi

Think that covers it – other than to let you know [REDACTED] that we've been discussing just this afternoon, the timings of the stakeholder and media warm-up briefings on the grade boundary process. We've decided to have both sessions, w/c 1 August. Will update you on exact dates as soon as we can.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 19 July 2022 10:52

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Results Day

Hi

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

On stakeholders, we have a briefing planned next week on grade boundaries etc. Then further stakeholder packs on 9th August – publications, covering note and key messages.

[REDACTED] – anything else worth a mention at this stage?

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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From: John Booth

Sent: 21 July 2022 14:53

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Grading approach

Will do, [REDACTED] Have just given some comments back on the grading narrative so will definitely have something to share tomorrow.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 21 July 2022 14:19

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Grading approach

Hi John,

When sharing draft grading approach materials tomorrow, could you also please advise what the 'phase 1' plan is in terms of socialising this content with stakeholders in the run up to results day? I think Cab Sec will be particularly interested in when you plan to share/brief the education committee (which I think is within your sights).

Cheers

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

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From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 03 August 2022 13:21

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Grade Boundaries

[REDACTED]

Final version of grade boundaries explainer as discussed. This will form the basis of our briefings and materials.

Best

Kat

Kat Hannah

Head of Communications & Engagement

Communications Directorate

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: John Booth

Sent: 22 July 2022 12:02

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Grade boundaries - confidential draft

Thanks [REDACTED] We'll take that helpful feedback into account as we continue to iterate this over the coming days.

A couple of quick points:

- [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

Thanks

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 July 2022 11:52

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: RE: Grade boundaries - confidential draft

Hi John,

Many thanks for sharing. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

[REDACTED] Out of scope

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 22 July 2022 08:37

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk

Subject: Grade boundaries - confidential draft

[REDACTED]

Please find attached the draft script / Q&A on grade boundaries. Not for wider sharing at this stage please – we are awaiting further feedback from policy specialists within SQA and want to agree this with Fiona when she is back next week. However, any early observations welcome. This document will be used as the basis for preparing various pieces of content eg slides for the briefings, social posts, results day comms etc.

We're planning to share the final draft with some trusted members of the partner comms group next week too, to get their perspectives.

Latest tbc timings for the various briefings are

- Stakeholders 3rd August
- Education committee 4th August (still to be agreed – discussion with Fiona next week)
- Media 5th August

[REDACTED]. Out of  
**scope**

John

\*\*

From: Stephen Price <Stephen.Price@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 August 2022 16:24

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Further information

Hi all,

Have just transferred both to the secure area and been in touch with [REDACTED] who confirmed that he's around to do the onward sharing.

Cheers,

Stephen

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 04 August 2022 16:02

To: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Stephen Price <Stephen.Price@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Further information

Thanks Fiona – much appreciated. When Stephen shares the SIMD data I'd be grateful if he uses this copylist, so that the EAS and SAC policy colleagues noted above can include advice on the attainment gap in the material we send to Cab Sec tonight.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: Fiona Robertson <fiona.robertson@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 August 2022 15:55

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Stephen Price <Stephen.Price@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Further information

Importance: High

[REDACTED]



Following our meeting today, I have authorised Stephen Price to send you the data on grade boundaries, in confidence. This would not normally be shared in advance of results day, but I am happy to do so this year.

Information relating to attainment by SIMD is also on its way to you following my review, also in confidence. The equalities report covering attainment across a range of protected characteristics is being finalised.

Let me know if a call before the Cab Sec meeting tomorrow would be helpful.

Many thanks.

Fiona

Fiona Robertson

Chief Executive

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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From: John Booth

Sent: 04 August 2022 21:46

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: Proactive lines core narrative

Yes we will say something about comparisons early on in press release and briefing – probably an extension of ‘not a normal year’ message.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 04 August 2022 21:37

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: Proactive lines core narrative

John

Looks spot on. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

Do we want any proactive messaging around it being difficult to make comparisons with previous years or should that stay more in the reactive space?

Speak tomorrow

[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 04 August 2022 20:36

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: Proactive lines core narrative

And this is where we've got to with messages and issues for the Cab Sec meeting slides tomorrow. Any comments welcome.

The messages will form the basis of press release, media briefing slides, stakeholder talking points – we'll share these once drafted.

John

#### Key messages

- Celebrate learner success (inc. breadth of achievement) and resilience
- A return to exams but not a return to normal – unique set of circumstances this year
- Package of support put in place for learners, inc. generous approach to grading
- Overall outcomes are as we expected – somewhere between 2019 and 2021
- Highest ever levels of attainment in an exam year
- We have delivered fairness for learners while maintaining standards

#### Key issues

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 04 August 2022 17:03

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: CONFIDENTIAL: Proactive lines core narrative



From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 August 2022 17:18

To: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Media lines - exams/[REDACTED]

Hi all

We issued the lines below to [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]

Regards

[REDACTED]

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said:

"To say that any government or any agency would set out to make more young people fail is utterly ludicrous.

"To rubbish results in this way is an insult to the young people who have worked so hard under really difficult circumstances.

"It also does a disservice to the teachers and lecturers who have supported them, many of whom have - as they do every year - worked with the SQA to ensure a credible assessment process and a credible set of results, from the setting of exam questions to marking and meetings to discuss grade boundaries.

"The SQA have moved back to exams this year, but in recognition that this is not a normal year, they have taken issues including disruption to learning and teaching into account when determining grades. That ensures a fair and credible system."

QUERY – [REDACTED]

I'm looking for a line from the Scottish Government in response to the below from [REDACTED] on the upcoming exam results.

I'll also be quoting [REDACTED], but he's not been as critical, instead pointing out the potential unfairness of someone sitting exams this year compared to 'easier' years in 2021 and 2022, and the potential return to dropping pass rates which was a problem pre-pandemic.

[REDACTED] quotes are:

"We have an idea of what will happen with results because, months ago, the SQA announced that it "expects that the overall outcomes in 2022 will represent an intermediary position between 2021 and pre-pandemic years." This means that results will be manipulated to ensure that the final picture is better than 2019 but worse than last year.

"The gap between rich and poor in terms of the Higher pass rates, for example, fell from 17 percentage points in 2019 to just 8 points in 2021, meaning that during the pandemic more young people from the most deprived areas were successful. We're now going to undo that progress.

"Put simply, the Scottish Government and SQA have decided to make sure that more students fail. They've decided that the gap between rich and poor must be widened. In doing so, they have admitted something fundamental: that a large part of so-called "attainment gap" is just a choice that is made each year by politicians and bureaucrats.

"Why not just immediately go back to 2019 results levels? Presumably they're worried that restoring the gaps between rich and poor all at once would be politically problematic, and so a balancing act is required: how many (mostly poor) pupils can be sacrificed this year, and how quickly can we race back to an unjust status quo, before people become angry about it?

"Given that students this year faced at least as much Covid disruption as the previous year, and when alternative approaches were clearly available, this all seems to me to be incredibly callous and a clear betrayal of young people - but given the contempt with which they were treated in 2020 and 2021 that is, sadly, not really a surprise."

████████████████████

████████████████████

Communications Education & Skills

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 August 2022 08:58

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Sounds like a very good plan John. Will share updated key lines etc later this morning and [REDACTED] working on press release etc

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 08 August 2022 08:46

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Thanks [REDACTED]

We'll share comms materials as they're firmed up through the day – press release, key lines, slides for briefing etc – but if it would be helpful to have a brief catch up towards the end of day let me know. We can include [REDACTED] too.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 August 2022 08:44

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Thanks John. Understand the point, will ask narrowing the gap colleagues to consider.

[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 August 2022 18:26

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Hi [REDACTED]

Just looking at this afresh (and appreciate it may have moved on), [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

Happy to chat tomorrow if helpful.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 August 2022 22:08

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Hi John

Thanks for those comments. [REDACTED] Out of scope

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] s30 (b)(ii)

Cheers



[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 August 2022 18:12

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Hi [REDACTED]

Some quick thoughts [REDACTED] **Out of scope** Copying Kat who is leading on the key defensive lines for SQA; so we can continue to share/compare.

Top three areas for us right now are:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] . s30 (b)(ii)

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 August 2022 17:06

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Thanks John. Ignore formatting etc but grateful for any thoughts/input on the attached top lines in the reactive space.

[REDACTED]

From: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 05 August 2022 14:57

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

Thanks [REDACTED]. One updated figure and a suggested addition.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 August 2022 13:57

To: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: CONFIDENTIAL: updated proactive summary narrative

John

Latest version attached for you to cast your eye over if you can. Just working on defensive lines and will share and compare notes on those later this avo. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**s30 (b)(ii)**

We need to get the mammoth briefing pack up to Cab Sec by close.

Hope the media briefing went well!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish  
Government |

\*\*

From: Robert Quinn <Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 07 August 2022 21:56

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Grade boundary example

Hi [REDACTED]

Some suggested changes:

Evidence from learners indicated that there had been a detrimental effect on some aspects of skills development in modern languages, despite the best efforts of teachers and lecturers throughout the pandemic. This was particularly noticeable in outcomes for Listening, and Principal Assessors and other senior staff concluded that this skill area had been perhaps the most difficult to access, develop and maintain across this period. In recognition of this, SQA took action to ensure fairness to learners in the setting of Grade Boundaries, whilst maintaining the integrity and credibility of awards learners achieved.

Cheers

Robert

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 07 August 2022 12:09

To: Robert Quinn <Robert.Quinn@sqa.org.uk>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Grade boundary example

Hi Robert

As per Cab Sec's comments on Friday, I am looking for an example she might use in terms of how the SQA grade boundary process took into account the impacts of the disruption to learning in a way that is fair and maintains standards. Is the following factually accurate or is there another example you would suggest?

For example, I understand that in modern foreign languages Principal Assessors reported evidence of challenges in consolidating learning in listening and speaking skills over the last two years and therefore made adjustments to grade boundaries where appropriate and necessary.

I think this would just be for Cab Sec's back pocket in terms of giving a real world example.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Education Reform Directorate | Scottish Government |

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From: John Booth

Sent: 08 August 2022 17:43

To: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: CONFIDENTIAL: news release - draft

And here's the media briefing slides – still being worked on but hopefully not too far from final.

John

John Booth

Director of Communications

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 08 August 2022 15:10

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: CONFIDENTIAL: news release - draft

Hi [REDACTED], Hi [REDACTED],

In confidence, and not for further circulation, please find attached the draft news release for tomorrow. NB – this is not yet approved.

We'll also look to drop in the following on notes to

- Links to the official stats / reports
- Potentially – a table with headlines from the non-NQ courses and certificates

Will send you a one-pager with our key messages shortly

Best

Kat

Kat Hannah

Head of Communications & Engagement

Scottish Qualifications Authority

From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 08 August 2022 23:36

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Confidential: NQ22 Results - news release

Evening,

Please find attached our near-final news release for tomorrow. Please note it's subject to a final review, but any changes are likely to be minor.

Best

Kat

Kat Hannah

Head of Communications & Engagement

Communications Directorate

Scottish Qualifications Authority

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From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 09 August 2022 10:00

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Confidential

Ah great – thanks for your help. Release is out now.

█

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | News: Education & Skills

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

@scotgovedu | gov.scot/news

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

Sent: 09 August 2022 09:52

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Confidential

The main set of attainment tables are here, [REDACTED] - <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/102188.html>

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 09 August 2022 09:48

To: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Confidential

Thanks Kat -can you share link please?

█

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | News: Education & Skills

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 09 August 2022 09:46

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Confidential

Thanks [REDACTED], yes stats are live. No further changes to our news release since I shared it last night  
K

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 09 August 2022 09:42

To: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Confidential

Thanks [REDACTED]. Our release is good to go as soon as stats are live and we have the link, so just let me  
know [REDACTED].

█

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | News: Education & Skills

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

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

Sent: 08 August 2022 21:29

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Confidential

Thanks, [REDACTED] – will do.

Cheers

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 August 2022 21:25

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

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Confidential

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for sending on. As discussed earlier, we'll share our news release with you once it's cleared.

Grateful if you could let my colleague [REDACTED] (cc-ed in) know when the results go live and provide a link, so we can include in our news release.

Thanks again

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications Education & Skills

Scottish Government | news.gov.scot

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

Sent: 08 August 2022 19:12

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Subject: Confidential

Hello

Please find attached the final drafts of the NQ 22 Chief Examining Officer's Report, Methodology Report and Equalities Monitoring Report. Please note that there may be further minor amendments overnight.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

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From: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>

Sent: 09 August 2022 15:21

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Lines

Thanks [REDACTED] yes – that looks correct. One other thing you might want to add in the second bullet is that grade boundaries are set with specific reference to that year's assessment. (The 2019 Higher English assessment is unique, as is the 2022 assessment.)

In the penultimate bullet point, the reports we'll release are called Course Reports. ('SQA will publish Course Reports to give more information on how grade boundaries were set in relation to each subject in due course.')

Best

Kat

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Sent: 09 August 2022 13:58

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@sqa.org.uk; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Subject: RE: Lines

Kat/John

Does the following work/ is it accurate?

- SQA has implemented a different approach to setting grade boundaries this year and so grade boundaries between 2019 and this year are not comparable.
- The setting of grade boundaries has always been used – in Scotland and elsewhere - when exams have taken place using rigorous and well-established procedures.
- The key difference this year however is that decisions made by SQA and Principal Assessors (who are experienced teachers) about where the grade boundaries have been set, have also been influenced by the unique circumstances in 2022 to ensure fairness to learners.
- Consideration was given to the impact of course modifications (for example, the removal or reduction of coursework) and revision support. The impact of disruption on this year's learners was

also considered. Taking all of this into account, grade boundaries were adjusted [and that could be up as well as down].

- SQA will publish [subject grading reports?] to give more information on how grade boundaries were set in relation to each subject in due course.
- This balanced approach has been supported by employers and others in education, including universities.

Thanks

█

From: █

Sent: 09 August 2022 12:18

To: █@gov.scot>; John Booth <John.Booth@sqa.org.uk>;  
█@gov.scot>; █@gov.scot>; █  
█@gov.scot>

Cc: Kat Hannah <Kat.Hannah@sqa.org.uk>; █@sqa.org.uk>; █  
█@sqa.org.uk>; █@sqa.org.uk>; █  
█@sqa.org.uk>; █@gov.scot>

Subject: Lines

John/Kat

█ claiming that students dealing with a pandemic had to do better than those in pre-pandemic years (2019) to get an A in Higher English (68% in 2022 versus 67% in 2019). Could you provide a line on that re: how you should not compare and 2019 grade boundaries not a relevant comparison?

Thanks

█

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