

University Principals

9 August 2022

Dear Principal,

I welcome the higher education sector's acknowledgement that this year has been another difficult one for those working towards senior phase qualifications in the recent Universities Scotland statement of reassurance to applicants. I also welcome universities' support towards the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) approach to assessment which is focused on ensuring fairness to pupils and the credibility of grades awarded.

I know that universities will begin to confirm places to conditional applicants following the release of exam results this morning. However, as you are aware, some students will make appeals if their results are lower than expected.

Where the results impact on the student taking up a conditional offer at university, SQA have committed to dealing with those as a priority and having these appeals concluded by 5th September to allow students, whose grades are adjusted positively, to take up their conditional offers.

I am aware that each institution runs their admissions autonomously and that there will be some extenuating circumstances for particular courses, including capacity issues, but can I strongly encourage universities to keep these conditional places open for students until the outcome of their appeal is known, to ensure that some students do not end up in the position where they have the required results but not a place at university.

While I appreciate it may be challenging to hold these places open in some circumstances, support from the universities is crucial to help ensure the success of the appeals process which will also help ease anxiety for such students.

Thank you for your help in supporting our students to realise their ambitions.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

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