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**Falkirk Council**  
*Children's Services*

Dear Parent/Carer

### **SQA Post-Certification Review (Appeals) Service 2020: Policy and Procedures**

As you will be aware, following the decision by the Deputy First Minister to cancel the 2020 exam diet due to the COVID19 pandemic, schools were asked to submit estimates to SQA to support certification of candidates. Since 2014 the SQA has provided a Post Results Service based on Marking Reviews and Clerical Checks. However, as a result of the cancellation of the 2020 exam diet the SQA will this year offer an appeals service, similar to that used before 2014. While this service may be familiar to some parents and carers, it will be new to others and there are some important differences to the system used before 2014. This letter will outline the process as clearly as possible for all parents and carers. Further information for parents and carers is available from the SQA at <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93825.html>

It remains the case that SQA regards accuracy in assessing pupils as of the utmost importance. To ensure this accuracy is maintained in the current circumstances, the SQA provided a range of training and advice for schools and teachers in producing estimates. In each school, teachers undertook this training, applied SQA guidance and robust quality assurance systems were put in place by Senior Leadership Teams. Following receipt of school estimates, SQA have then applied their own rigorous processes and systems to check estimates are valid and reliable.

The SQA acknowledges, however, that in a small number of instances, school staff, pupils and parents may feel that an assessment has been inaccurate.

As in all previous years, all schools in Falkirk Council are bound by the Council's policy on appeals to the SQA's Post Results (Appeals) Service. This policy, in turn, reflects the SQA's own guidance. The following information will clarify Falkirk Council's stance on the Appeals Service.

As the name implies, the Post Results Service runs after candidates have received their certificates. The school may request a post-certification review if a candidate has achieved a lower grade than the one estimated by the school. Only the school can submit a request for this review, however, the school is required to gain the consent of each candidate before any appeal is submitted.

The school must submit a wide range of assessment evidence to support the review. However, all of the **evidence submitted by the school must have been completed by the candidate before 29 May 2020** which was the deadline for the submission of estimates by schools. No new evidence generated after this date can be included in the submission by the school.

The evidence provided by the school will be reviewed by senior subject-specialist SQA examiners who will consider the evidence holistically. The examiners will also refer to any coursework that was submitted to SQA in March (this applies to National 5 subjects with **the exception of Art & Design, Care, Design & Manufacture, Fashion & textiles, Music, Physical Education, Practical Cake Craft and Practical Cookery**). Candidates in *Advanced Higher Music Technology* will also have their research project considered.



The Data Protection Act 1998 obliges Children's Services to make information accessible to the subject of the information unless there are good reasons for withholding it. In receiving information, it will be assumed that it can be disclosed without further reference to source, unless the information contains a clear indication to the contrary.

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The Post-Certification Review will lead to one of three results:

- No change in grade
- The grade is raised
- The grade is lowered

**As the candidate's grade can be changed either up or down, you and your child will be required to sign a disclaimer to indicate that you understand this before the school would proceed with the request for a review.**

- If the grade changes, the SQA will issue a new certificate to the candidate.
- If the original grade remains unchanged then no new certificate is issued.

Decisions about requests for reviews (appeals) for the Post-Certification process will be taken by the Head Teacher based on advice by the relevant Head of Faculty and in conjunction with the SQA Co-ordinator.

The SQA will provide each school with a list of candidates who are eligible for a review of their grade. Each school will then review the quantity and quality of the evidence they hold for each of these candidates and consider which candidates require a review. Schools will particularly look to request reviews for candidates where it is felt there is *compelling evidence from all available aspects of assessment*: i.e. class tests, Unit tests, coursework and any prelim examination. Schools will also take account of the fact that the SQA have factored in the previous attainment of candidates (if relevant) and other key measures in reaching their decision on which grade to award a candidate. **Only your child's school can submit a request for a review to the SQA.** Parents and candidates cannot submit a request. Information on how to discuss a request a Post Certification Review is also attached to this email on the SQA Information Sheet. In line with GDPR, pupil actual and estimate grades can also **only** be discussed with the candidate.

If a candidate is dissatisfied with the decision taken by the school, they can ask for the decision to be reconsidered. This request must be submitted in writing to Miss Jess, St Mungo's High School SQA Co-ordinator **at least 3 working days prior to 21<sup>th</sup> August in 2020 or at least 3 working days prior to 14<sup>th</sup> August** if your child has a conditional offer for University.

I hope that the details above help to clarify the purpose of, and procedures involved, in the SQA's Post-Certification Service.

Yours faithfully

Ms A M Jess  
Depute Headteacher