

## Lesmahagow High School Post-Certification Review Service: policy and procedures

This policy reflects the guidance offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority in Post-results Service — Guidance for Centres (March 2014) and updated for 2020 utilising Post-Certification Review: Information for centres (June 2020).

### Post-Certification Review

In response to the cancellation of the 2020 exam diet, SQA developed an alternative certification model to allow them to award grades to all learners entered for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, as fairly and reliably as possible.

As a result of the alternative certification model, SQA may award a grade that is different to the estimated grade. To be as fair as possible to all candidates, SQA are providing a post-certification review (appeals) service to request a review of the grade awarded.

### How does post-certification review work?

As its name implies, this service runs after candidates have received their certificates. It is carried out by SQA examiners at the request of a centre. It involves a review of candidate evidence, including any completed coursework components that were submitted in the March uplift, for an eligible candidate or group of candidates identified by the centre. **A candidate is eligible for review only when they have been awarded a lower grade than the grade estimated by their centre.** A successful post-certification review request will result in a change of grade only — a change in band is not a feature of the review. Post-certification review is available for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Courses in 2020 only.

Centres will be able to request one of two post-certification review types:

- ◆ a priority review
- ◆ a review

Priority reviews are only for candidates with a conditional university or college offer.

The review can lead to a change of grade **either up or down**.

If the grade changes, then SQA will issue a new certificate to the candidate.

### Post-Certification review

If Lesmahagow High School submits a request for a post-certification review for a candidate, these will be reviewed by senior subject-specialist SQA examiners and will involve two key stages:

- ◆ Review of alternative assessment evidence generated **before** 29<sup>th</sup> May.
- ◆ Review of any additional non-question paper evidence already held by SQA, for example, any coursework materials already submitted to SQA.

The examiner will make a holistic judgement on the totality of the evidence available to them, and award the candidate a grade. There are three possible outcomes:

- ◆ Agree with the original centre estimate and upgrade the candidate result.
- ◆ Disagree with the original centre estimate and confirm the grade awarded by SQA.

- ◆ Disagree with both the original centre estimate and the original grade awarded by SQA and apply an alternative, lower grade.

It is important to note that any award will be placed in the grade's lower banding — A2, B4, C6, D7 or No Award 9.

The outcome of a post-certification review is an academic judgement. It represents the considered findings of an examiner, taking into account all the evidence available to them, and it is not possible to appeal the outcome on this basis.

### **Criteria for a post-certification review request**

A candidate is eligible for review only when they have been awarded a lower grade than the grade estimated by their centre. SQA will provide details of eligible candidates to Lesmahagow High School, when the service opens on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August. Consent from the candidate is required before a review request can be made.

Lesmahagow High School will submit a request if it holds clear and compelling evidence that there is a reasonable possibility that an error may have occurred. That is, the candidate's final grade is markedly at odds with the totality of assessment evidence gathered during the year and out of line with the performance of other candidates with similar profiles.

It is not sufficient for a candidate's final award to be below the level anticipated by any estimate submitted to SQA or that achieved in a mock examination. The expectation is that there will be compelling evidence from all aspects of assessment: class tests, unit tests, coursework and any mock exam. (An overview of assessment evidence is provided in the appendix to this policy.)

In particular, a review will not be requested where:

- ◆ the candidate's final award is in line with the estimate previously submitted to SQA by Lesmahagow High School;
- ◆ the final award is within the same grade as that predicted by the assessment evidence held by Lesmahagow High School;
- ◆ the candidate's performance has shown inconsistencies during the year such that the final award falls within the range of performance evidenced;
- ◆ the candidate's original estimate is found to be overly optimistic in the light of the actual performance of the cohort in the Course assessment.

In general terms, Lesmahagow High School will submit a request when the assessment evidence is consistent and points to an award at least two bands above the final award.

Lesmahagow High School will submit requests only on the basis of assessment evidence. It cannot do so on compassionate grounds or, for example, because entry to higher education is conditional on a particular award.

A request cannot be submitted if the candidate has already been through the Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service.

Further information about the SQA Results Services can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices>

Decisions about eligibility for the post-certification review service will be taken by the Head Teacher based on advice by the relevant head of department and in conjunction with our SQA Co-ordinator.

## **Appeals**

If a candidate is dissatisfied with the decision taken by Lesmahagow High School, then they can appeal. Such appeals must be submitted in writing at least seven working days prior to the end of the SQA submission window (see below). The appeal will be considered by the Head of Centre (Mr McGowan, Head Teacher) and/or their nominee. Appeals will be considered on the basis of the criteria set out above and will be final.

## **Submission of Post-certification Review Service requests**

Only Lesmahagow High School can submit a request to SQA. Parents and candidates cannot submit requests.

All requests must be submitted within the submission window publicised by SQA (4<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> August 2020).

## **Assessment evidence**

We gather assessment evidence throughout the session to inform estimate bands. Four different types of assessment evidence are used: class tests, Unit tests, coursework, and mock exams.

Class tests usually contain a range of question types, which sample key aspects of the Course and which replicate the demands of external assessment in terms of integration, challenge and application. They are also undertaken under 'controlled conditions'. Therefore, the collective outcomes of class tests undertaken across the session can be a very good source of evidence.

Unit tests are generally set at minimum competence level at a level below grade C and do not of themselves offer evidence that a pupil can cope with the Course assessment. However, if they contain sufficient demands in terms of integration, challenge and application and the candidate performs well above the pass threshold, then they may provide useful additional evidence.

In some subjects, coursework undertaken under exam conditions is a natural part of the programme. This too can be useful.

## **Mock exams (internal exams)**

The purpose of these exams are to:

- ◆ provide clear evidence that the pupil can cope with the demands of the external assessment instruments;
- ◆ contribute to the determination of the estimate grade which the school will send to SQA in advance of the external examinations;
- ◆ form part of the evidence in an 'exceptional circumstances' case if this becomes necessary.

Performance in the mock exam is not the sole source of evidence for estimates and cannot be the sole source of evidence for an exceptional circumstances case or a post-certification review service submission as parts of the course have not been covered at that point.

A. Gray, SQA Co-ordinator, June 2020.