



Clackmannanshire Council Guidance: SQA Results Services

Rationale

In April 2014, SQA introduced a new Results Service to support pupils undertaking externally assessed National Qualifications. The following local guidance aims to deliver clarity and consistency when engaging with SQA Results Services. A shared understanding and adoption of this guidance by all schools will ensure that our approach is fair and transparent and applied in an equitable manner for all Stirling's learners.

The following information is provided by the SQA:

Exceptional Circumstances

The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service supports pupils who have been unable to attend an externally-assessed timetabled examination, or whose performance in the examination may have been fundamentally affected as a result of an incident beyond their control.

By making an Exceptional Circumstances request, the Head Teacher confirms that:

- The pupil has an open entry for the qualification, has completed all non-question paper components, and has had an estimated grade submitted to SQA
- The exceptional circumstance fundamentally affected performance during the externally timetabled examination
- The request is made within 10 working days of the timetabled examination. SQA coordinators may liaise with their SQA liaison manager if further clarification is required.
- The school holds detailed documentation supporting the submission
- The school has obtained, holds and can provide SQA on request, the written consent of the pupil to submit the request and the accompanying personal data to SQA
- If Exceptional Circumstances are been applied, then the Post-results Service is not available to pupils.

Criteria for Post-results Clerical Check or Marking Review

Heads of Centre should exercise their professional judgement, taking account of all relevant factors, before reaching a decision on whether or not they believe that a pupil merits a different grade than originally awarded. They should be of the view that the pupil's final grade is *markedly at odds* with the totality of assessment evidence gathered during the year, and that it is out of line with the performance of other pupils with similar profiles.

Non-achievement of an estimated grade should not automatically result in a Post-results Services request.

For a request to be considered by SQA, the centre must satisfy the following conditions for each subject for which it is submitting a request on behalf of a pupil:

- The pupil must have been advised beforehand that submission of the request has three potential outcomes; namely that the pupil's exam grade could be upgraded, downgraded or remain the same.
- The pupil, having been advised of the said outcomes, must have given his/her consent to a request being submitted on his/her behalf.
- The Head of Centre must have given authorisation for a request under the PRS to be submitted on the pupil's behalf
- The request must be filed by the centre within the respective SQA deadlines

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The following criteria must be applied consistently across all Clackmannanshire schools when considering submitting a request:

- A pupil's grade is *markedly at odds with the totality of assessment evidence* gathered during the year. The expectation is that there will be *compelling evidence from all aspects of assessment* :i.e class and unit assessments, coursework and prelims

and

- Their grade is out of line with the performance of other pupils with similar profiles

and

- There is *clear and compelling evidence* that there is a reasonable possibility that an error has occurred with the marking or totalling of marks in the pupil's examination script

Each request for a marking review must be based on all of the above criteria. A request should not be submitted on compassionate grounds or, for example, because entry to Higher Education is conditional upon a particular award. Neither can a request be submitted because the pupil or others have offered to pay any charges arising.

A review of marking/clerical check should **not** be requested where:

- A pupil's final grade is in line with the estimate submitted to SQA and the expectation of the school based on performance throughout the course
- A pupil is one or two marks off an improved grade but their final grade is in line with their estimate
- A pupil's original estimate is found to be overly optimistic in the light of the actual performance of the class cohort in the examination

The final decision on whether to submit a Post-results Service request lies with the Head Teacher. This responsibility may be delegated to the SQA coordinator. Good practice dictates that they work closely with Faculty Managers /Principal Teachers to identify potential requests.

Estimates

Estimate grades should be robust and based on the totality of evidence generated throughout the course. Before submitting a request, schools should review estimates to ensure they are realistic in light of their actual performance in the Course assessment. For example, on reviewing estimates for a particular cohort, a school may find a pattern emerges which indicates that their original estimates were over-optimistic. A discrepancy between an estimate and result does not always indicate a marking or clerical error. Schools should have a clear, consistent approach to sharing estimate grades with pupils.

Component marks

Schools should have a transparent process for sharing component marks with pupils. Staff should give careful consideration to the dialogue which takes place in relation to these marks. Component marks should not be used as the sole basis for requesting a marking review.

Communication

SQA recommends that schools implement Post-results Services in a fair, equitable and consistent manner that is easily understood by teachers, pupils and parents/carers. It is essential that schools clearly communicate the purpose of the Post-results service to pupils and parents/carers. In summary, this service exists to rectify a situation where there is clear and compelling evidence that there is a reasonable possibility that there is an anomaly in the marking or totalling of marks in a pupil's examination script.

Best practice includes:

- Information being disseminated to pupils and parents/carers at Senior Phase events such as Option Choice evenings and Parents Evenings
- Information which relates to Post-results Services being relayed to parents by letter at appropriate points in the academic year. *See Appendix 1 as an example*
- Relevant information displayed on the school website and parents informed of this via Twitter

Pupils and parents who are dissatisfied with the decision not to request a clerical check or marking review can ask the Head Teacher to reconsider their original decision. The request must be submitted in writing and within the timeframe published by SQA for accepting Post Results Services requests. The request will be considered on the basis of the above criteria and will be final. The Head Teacher will confirm the reasons for rejecting the request in writing to the pupil/parent within 5 working dates of the request being considered.

All school staff should have knowledge of this guidance and be consistent in their application of this.

Checklist for Post-results Services

It is not envisaged that a school would complete the checklist below for every request. It may be useful, however, to complete a checklist should there be an appeal against the school's decision not to submit or to evidence why a submission is being made.

Checklist item	Tick
Is the grade <i>markedly at odds</i> with the totality of assessment evidence?	
Has the pupil shown consistent performance throughout the year including class tests, unit assessments and prelims?	
Is the grade out of line with the performance of other pupils with a similar profile?	
Is there clear and compelling evidence that there is a reasonable possibility that an error has occurred with the marking or totalling of marks?	
Has consent been given for the request to be made?	

Appendix 1:

Parental Information for SQA Qualifications 2017

An update about qualifications from 2017

2017 is the fourth year of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) qualifications called Nationals, the third year of new CfE Highers and the second year of new CfE Advanced Highers. All pupils in fourth year (S4) are being presented for Nationals. Pupils in fifth (S5) and sixth (S6) year will be studying a mixture of qualifications, mainly Highers, Advanced Highers and Nationals.

Nationals can be roughly equated to the former Standard Grade and Intermediate examinations according to the table below.

National	Equivalent previous qualification	SCQF levels
National 1	Access 1	1
National 2	Access 2	2
National 3	Access 3 / Foundation	3
National 4	Intermediate 1 / General	4
National 5	Intermediate 2/ Credit	5

Nationals are assessed throughout the year in a variety of ways by using coursework, end of unit tests, folio work and assignments. These assessments are rigorously verified by

SQA throughout the year. The only pupils who are required to sit an external examination in S4-6 are those working towards National 5 qualifications or above.

How are the qualifications graded?

Nationals 1 to 4 are graded as a pass or fail. National 5 is graded A, B, C or D and 'No Award': grades A to C indicate a pass and grade D indicates an achievement at SCQF Level 5. Highers and Advanced Highers are graded A-D and No Award, with A-C indicating a pass.

Will we be able to appeal an examination result?

No, there are **no** appeals for **any** examinations.

Results Service

An updated service called the results service has been put in place. The results service has two main purposes, namely “exceptional circumstance consideration” and “post results service”.

Exceptional Circumstance Consideration.

An **exceptional circumstance** return can be made for pupils too ill to attend their external examination (a doctor’s note to support this submission would be useful) or those who have an exceptional reason for being unable to sit the examination (eg. representing the country in a sporting event, an official letter detailing the event should be provided to support this submission).

Where a school makes an exceptional circumstance submission they will collate evidence from that pupil for **the whole course**, pre and post prelim examination. The SQA will consider the quality of the pupil work and will compare it to the estimates from the school in that subject at that level. A decision will be made and the pupil result will appear on the pupil’s SQA certificate in August.

If your child is too ill to attend an exam we would ask that you:

- Contact the school on the morning of the exam or prior to the exam if the illness is evident then. The school will then collate your child’s work for the submission.
- Any doctor’s letter should be submitted to the school at the latest **5 days** after the date of the exam.

In any other exceptional circumstance please inform the school with the supporting documentation as soon as you can, this will allow the school to make the submission swiftly.

All material for exceptional circumstance submissions **must** be with the SQA **10 days** after the date of the examination.

Post Results Service

The **post results service** has been introduced as a way for schools to ask for pupil scripts to be remarked.

The SQA have rigorous quality assurance procedures in place to ensure that all scripts are consistently marked to the highest standard and that the final mark is correct.

Schools can, if they believe there to be an anomaly in marking, ask the SQA to review the marking of a group of or an individual pupil's script(s). This will entail the script having its marking checked and the overall marks re-totalled.

There is no supporting evidence of the pupil's attainment submitted to support this marking review.

Only in extremely unusual circumstances will a school request a marking review, an example of which may be a whole subject area receiving grades the school does not agree with. Requesting a marking review **does not involve submitting supporting evidence that the pupil could have done better, it only reviews the script from the day.**

It is important to acknowledge that as a result of a marking review, if grades are changed, they can be changed down as well as up. As this has the potential to adversely affect your child's grade, you will be asked for your permission prior to a marking review being requested, without this permission the school will not proceed with the request. It should also be noted that **parental request does not guarantee a marking review.** The subject Faculty Manager will be consulted before a review is considered.