

National Qualifications 2021 Appeals Service – Overview

Introduction

As a result of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cancellation of exams, an [alternative certification model](#) has been developed by the education system to decide your National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher results this year. Your teachers and lecturers are using a range of assessment evidence to decide what your results should be, and every effort is being made to ensure you get the right result, first time. However, the ability to appeal your grade is important.

A free appeals service, available directly to learners for the first time, is the fifth and final stage of the [alternative certification model](#).

The grounds for appeal are broad. There are three types of appeal:

- an appeal against the academic judgement made
- an appeal against an unresolved administrative error
- an appeal on grounds of discrimination where:
 - (i) there has been a breach of the Equality Act 2010 (which must have been either acknowledged by your school, college or training provider or established by a court or the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman), or
 - (ii) your school, college or training provider failed to provide agreed Assessment Arrangements.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) and an [information booklet for learners](#) are available.

How will the Appeals Service work?

Up to Friday 25 June

As part of the alternative certification model, your teacher or lecturer will be discussing your progress over the course of the year and, before the summer break, will tell you what your provisional results are, based on the assessments you have completed. SQA will not change these results.

Your school, college or training provider must either talk to you or write to you to:

- confirm how your provisional results were determined
- discuss the assessment evidence that was used to support your teacher or lecturer's awarding decisions
- explain the quality checks they have used – both locally, and nationally – to make sure the provisional results you have been awarded have been assessed fairly, and in line with the national standard.

We know you have concerns about the levels of disruption to your learning this year, and the effects this will have on gathering the evidence that your teachers or lecturers need to determine your provisional results. Further information on how this disruption is being managed has been published by the [National Qualifications 2021 Group](#).

Support to help answer any questions you may have about next steps and your options [is available](#).

From Friday 25 June

Once your teacher or lecturer has explained your provisional results, if you are still unhappy, you can register that you want to appeal directly on the SQA website. The registration service will open on Friday 25 June and will close on Thursday 12 August. Your appeal will be processed after Results Day on Tuesday 10 August.

If you are waiting on a result for a university or college place or for an employment or training programme, your appeal will be processed as a priority and you must register that you want to appeal by Thursday 12 August.

If you need to, or prefer to, you can ask a parent or carer to register for you.

You will be asked for the following information:

- your name
- your date of birth
- your Scottish Candidate Number
- the subject and level of the course that you want to register an appeal for
- notification that you are waiting on a result for a university or college place or for an employment or training programme – if so, your request will be processed as part of the priority appeal service and we will ask you for details of your conditional offer
- your reason for appealing, from one of the three types
- if you are appealing against an unresolved administrative error or on the grounds of discrimination contrary to the Equality Act – you will be asked to provide a short, written explanation of what you believe has happened.

Results Day – Tuesday 10 August

If you registered that you wanted to appeal with SQA over the summer

SQA will have informed your school, college or training provider that you have registered that you want to appeal.

Once you have received your Scottish Qualifications Certificate, you should have another discussion about your options with your teacher or lecturer, as you did before 25 June, and hear their professional view as to whether an appeal is in your best interests. You should do this even if you have left school.

The final decision to appeal is yours. If you decide to go ahead, you will not need to do anything else.

If you decide not to appeal, you can withdraw your request by Thursday 12 August by contacting customer@sqa.org.uk.

If you did not register with SQA over the summer

You can still register that you want to make a priority appeal with SQA until Thursday 12 August. However, if you miss that date, your teacher or lecturer can submit a priority appeal for you until Monday 16 August.

If you do not need to use the priority service, you can still ask your teacher or lecturer to submit an appeal to SQA for you. They will be able to do this until Friday 27 August.

You will need to have a conversation with your teacher or lecturer and hear their professional view as to whether an appeal is in your best interests. The final decision to appeal is yours.

What happens next?

If you are appealing against the academic judgement made

All the necessary evidence that was used to determine your result will be provided to SQA by your school, college or training provider – you will not need to submit any assessment evidence.

When your assessment evidence is received, it will be reviewed by SQA against the required national standard for the course.

Your result was based on demonstrated attainment and so your appeal must also be based on the evidence of your knowledge and skills in a course against the national standard. This is necessary to make sure that an A grade in the north of Scotland is worth the same as an A grade in the south of Scotland and everywhere in between.

This means that your grade could go up, go down or stay the same. This is consistent with what we do every year and makes sure that decisions are based on evidence.

If you are appealing against an unresolved administrative error or are appealing on the grounds of discrimination contrary to the Equality Act

As part of your appeal registration, you will be asked to provide a short, written explanation of what you believe has happened. If you need to, or prefer to, you can ask a parent or carer to help you. SQA will review the submission in discussion with your school, college or training provider.

Your school, college or training provider can also advise SQA of any administrative errors they identify.

Appeal decision

Once your appeal has been completed, SQA will inform your school, college or training provider and they will tell you the outcome. If you have a priority appeal, it will be processed by Friday 3 September, to meet Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) and employment/training timescales. Other appeals will be processed as quickly as possible thereafter.

If there has been a change to any of your grades, SQA will issue you with a replacement certificate later in the year.

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