

People Directorate

Depute Chief Executive and Director - People: Douglas Hutchison

County Buildings
Wellington Square
Ayr

KA7 1DR

Our Ref: DH/LD

Your Ref

Date: 18 June 2021



Dear Parent / Carer

Alternative Certification Model Provisional Grades

The Alternative Certification Model was always going to be challenging for young people and staff but was made even more so by schools closing in January. Teaching staff however have worked very hard to ensure fairness and balance. The provisional grades your child has been awarded are based on the best possible evidence their teachers have from across the year.

As I mentioned in a previous letter, trust in the process by which young people are given provisional grades is very important and quality assurance of these judgements is absolutely key. The quality assurance process involved checking the assessments young people undertook, and swapping marking of assessments between schools to make sure that SQA standards are applied consistently. All schools also took part in the national quality assurance process undertaken by SQA.

Appeal Process

The SQA appeals process has been well publicised and I'm sure your child's school will have already circulated a range of information. The key features and timescales for the process are as follows:

- Young people can register an appeal, free of charge, directly with SQA from Friday 25th June to Thursday 12th August using the SQA website.
- Young people can appeal through their school from results day which is Tuesday 10th August.
- Priority appeals must be submitted by **Tuesday 24th August**. A priority appeal is available for young people whose grades are required for immediate progression to a university or college place, or an offer of employment.
- **The closing date for all appeal requests is Friday 27th August.**
- Three types of appeal are available:
 - A young person disagrees with the grade given by the school.
 - The school or a young person believes an administrative error has resulted in the wrong grade being awarded.
 - An appeal on grounds of discrimination where there has been a breach of the Equality Act 2010.
- There are 3 possible outcomes to an appeal:
 - The grade can go up e.g. a B to an A
 - The grade can go down e.g. a C to a D
 - The grade stays the same

Where possible, I would advise that young people speak to their school prior to submitting an appeal request.

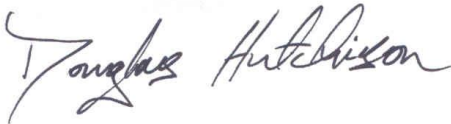
Support during the summer

Schools close for the summer on Friday 25th June. During the summer period support is still available through national bodies including the SQA Customer Service Centre (details below) and through Skills Development Scotland Careers Advisers. Information such as Careers Adviser contact details and dates that school staff will be in school to offer support and advice will be available through social media platforms.

SQA Customer Service Centre - 0345 279 1000/ customer@sqa.org.uk

I appreciate this has been an extremely difficult year for young people at S4, S5 and S6. We need to learn from the experience and consider whether there is still merit in high stakes exams at S4 as well as S5 and S6 given almost all young people remain in school beyond the statutory leaving age. That question will form part of the review process of SQA which I hope you will contribute to based on your experience. For now, my thanks for your support of school staff and my thanks to the teachers and senior leaders who have worked exceptionally hard to get the best possible results for all our young people.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Hutchison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'H'.

Douglas Hutchison
Depute Chief Executive and Director - People