Education, Culture and Sport Committee

8th Meeting, 2001

Tuesday 13 March 2001

The Committee will meet at 4.30 pm in Committee Room 4

1. **Item to be taken in private:** The Committee will consider whether to take item 2 in private.

2. **Scottish Qualifications Authority:** The Committee will consider lines of questioning for the SQA for the meeting on 20th March 2001.

The following papers are attached for this meeting—

Summary of Press Coverage on Exam Diet 2001
Scottish Executive Report to Parliament on SQA Progress Towards Diet 2001
SQA Press Release (Agenda item 2)

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee
Room 2.7 Committee Chambers
Ext. 85204
Email: martin.verity@scottish.parliament.uk
Education, Culture and Sport Committee

Meeting – Tuesday 13th March 2001

Papers circulated

| Scottish Qualification Authority | ED/01/8/1 |
Education, Culture and Sport Committee

Scottish Qualifications Authority


SQA Press Releases

February 2001
SQA Press Releases

SQA response to Ministerial announcement on markers’ fees 16th January 2001

SQA WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT ON INCREASE IN MARKERS’ FEES
The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has welcomed today’s announcement to increase payments to markers and other individuals involved in the annual Certification process.
Whilst this much welcome step is in direct response to some of last year’s problems it also reflects the importance of the work carried out by members of the teaching profession on SQA’s behalf.
Bill Morton, Chief Executive, SQA, said:
"I welcome the Minister’s announcement which complements SQA’s own actions to restore the confidence of markers. Progress with recruitment of markers and other individuals involved in this process has been encouraging and is going well. Today’s announcement helps seal this recruitment drive which this year started two months earlier than usual. Both the remuneration and marker recruitment developments should provide this year’s candidates, parents and centres with clear evidence that we are committed to restoring confidence in the Scottish examination system" Payments for marking and related activity are set to increase by 50% for 2001. SQA will carry out a further detailed review of appointee fees during the Certification 2001 activity, and beyond, and will report its findings and recommendations to the Executive later in the year.

Interim SQA Board Confirmed 12th December 2000

The Minister for Education Jack McConnell, has confirmed the composition of the interim SQA Board. The interim Board, under the Chairmanship of Professor John Ward CBE, will be made up of the following members:
• Patricia Cairns, Headteacher of Firrhill High School
• Ian Hay, Chief Executive of the Scottish Association of Master Bakers
• Linda McKay, Principal of Falkirk College
• Iain McMillan, Director of CBI Scotland
• Ian Muir, Chairman of the Board of Management, Jewel & Esk Valley College
• Charles Munn, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland
• Margaret Nicol, Principal Teacher at Madras College, St Andrews and President of the EIS
• Shelagh Rae, Director of Education and Leisure, Renfrewshire Council
Summary of Press Coverage on Exam Diet 2001
January 1st to March 6th 2001

Key areas of concern in the media coverage have been:-
• The decision to delay the publication of exams results.
• The decision not to use the ‘default pass’ system for internal assessments.
• The shortfall of moderators and markers
• The 3% error rate for pupil records

Receiving less coverage, but still reported as areas of concern were:-
• The new certificate design
• The level of ‘appeals against the appeals’
• Delays in sending out assessment materials.

The increase in markers’ fees and improvements in communication have been generally welcomed. Although most commentators report that SQA is improving, there are still worries over whether it will have improved enough for everything to run smoothly in August 2001. There has been significant criticism from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council on error rates, certificate design and arrangements to mark internal assessment units. The Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association were particularly critical of the decision to publish results on August 14th as it clashed with the start of the new school term.

Scottish Executive Reports
On 22nd November the Scottish Executive issued a report on ‘Current and planned actions for Certification 2001’

The Scottish Executive issued a report to Parliament on 31st January 2001 on SQA progress towards Diet 2001. (See Attached)

The next regular monthly meeting between Ministers and the SQA was reported in the Daily Record as being in the week beginning March 12th.¹

Responses to 31st January Executive Progress Report
Ann Hill, Chief Executive, Scottish School Boards Association, ‘I am still very concerned that things which should have been done by now have not been done. You have to ask what the SQA are doing about it. They seem to be heading in the right direction but there are fears over whether it will be in time for this year.’

Bill Morton said: ‘We are behind where we would like to be but this is a problem, not a crisis.’

Spokesman for Mr McConnell said he was happy with the way the SQA was handling this summers’ exams. ‘We can’t say everything is going perfectly, but the Minister is happy that progress is being made and his team are doing everything they can to make things go smoothly.’²

¹ Daily Record March 5th 2001
² Daily Mail Feb 1st 2001
General Opinion Pieces
Schools are not yet convinced the SQA is on top of its problems’. A survey of nine schools in East Dunbartonshire reveals continuing problems. There is concern about timescales, the continued use of candidate numbers rather than names and problems contacting SQA for advice.³

‘So far, so Good’ - SQA is ‘getting its act together quicker’ this year and is listening to teachers and parents’. This piece gives the views of a principle teacher of English. Worried that:
• pool of markers will be large enough to cope with Intermediate 1 and 2.
• timetable for internal assessments is less generous than it appears because of Easter Holidays.
• August 14th for results publication is ‘a bit late’.

Pleased that:
• Portobello’s presentation lists returned ahead of schedule,
• clearer communication with SQA,
• consultation on simplifying final certificates. ⁴

View of modern studies teacher,
Pleased that:
• Number of internal assessments has been reduced from 11 to 7,
• There is single deadline for getting information back to SQA,
• Dissemination of NAB (National Assessement Bank) materials better.

But still concerned over the amount of marking and the dominance of internal assessment over homework.⁵

Bill Morton, asked whether everything ‘would be all right on the night’, replied ‘ask me in August.’ As little change and as much cross checking as possible seems to be the strategy. Schools and local authorities certainly fear the system is far from fool proof...confidence has still to be regained as the exam clock runs down.’ (TES OPINION Feb 2nd)

SQA is optimistic pupils will receive the right results on time this year, but admit there are still problems in their systems. ‘Asking schools and colleges to verify the information we hold on their pupils at every stage of the process is central to our approach.’

Colin MacKay Edinburgh secretary for EIS - ‘They are making an effort to be upfront, but the proof is in the pudding.’ ⁶

³ TES February 2nd 2001
⁴ TES February 23rd 2001
⁵ TES February 2nd 2001
⁶ Evening News January 31st 2001
1. ‘Appeals against appeals’
Exam appeals soar to 4,000. Review teams will consider submissions, ‘as a matter of urgency,’ but no deadline has been set. If subject experts disagree with the initial appeal result, the case will be independently adjudicated. A report explaining the decision will be provided to the centre.\(^7\)

Natalie Roberts (18) is still awaiting the result of her Human Biology appeal. SQA response is that the delay has been caused by the complexity of the appeals process in this subject. “Certain subjects are, by their very nature, complex and the appeals process is complex.” SQA promise the result of this appeal will be confirmed within 14 days.\(^8\)

2. Exam Entries
SQA Denies ‘Crisis’ Over Backlog of 400,000 Forms. SQA have yet to process more than 400,000 forms more than a month after they were due. Around 30% of secondary schools have not even told the SQA which subjects their higher and standards grade pupils intend to sit.\(^9\)

An investigation carried out by the SQA has uncovered mistakes in 3% of pupil records in the west of Scotland. This figure has come to light because of a “validation process” aimed at ensuring all mistakes are rectified in advance of results being sent out in the summer. Last year 2.7% of Scots pupils were sent the wrong grades.

SQA responded that they will be able to rectify mistakes at an early stage to make sure all information is correct before results are sent out. “These mistakes have only come to light because of the process we implemented following last year’s problems.”\(^10\) SQA spokesman denied the errors could be a symptom of wider difficulties.\(^11\)

Error Rate for exam entries only 3% despite schools’ complaints about difficulties in checking the information the SQA has sent back.\(^12\)

Judith Gillespie, Scottish Parent Teacher Council, ‘I don’t’ feel they (the SQA) are facing up to reality at all. People within the SQA talk about only three per cent error rates and say there was only a 2.7% error rate last time. The reality of that figure was that nearly 17,000 people had their lives blighted. We are not at all confident that the problems from last year will not happen again’

Scottish Executive spokeswoman: ‘We are doing all we can to ensure successful certification in 2001.’\(^13\)

---

\(^7\) Scotsman, 18\(^{th}\) January 2001
\(^8\) Daily Record, 2\(^{rd}\) March 2001
\(^9\) Daily Mail, 1\(^{st}\) February 2001
\(^10\) The Courier and Advertiser, 5\(^{th}\) March 2001
\(^11\) Scotland on Sunday 4\(^{th}\) March 2001
\(^12\) TES 23\(^{rd}\) February 2001
\(^13\) Daily Record 5\(^{th}\) March 2001
3. Certificate Design
Judith Gillespie, Scottish Parent Teacher Council, suggested that the new certificate design could make them easier to fake. ‘will the pages be laminated?’ SQA spokesman said they would be hologrammed.¹⁴

Judith Gillespie criticised SQA for failing to simplify certificate, ‘Our parents have looked at this supposedly revamped certificate and, frankly, they are just as baffled as they were before.’

Spokeswoman for SQA said that a lengthy and detailed certificate was popular with employers. ‘Our systems are now set up to handle this kind of information, so we are reluctant to make any major changes in case it impacts on our ability to deliver results successfully this year.’ Jack McConnell, ‘welcomed the fact that they had consulted on the design’.¹⁵

4. Results Publication Date
Results will be posted a week later this year, on August 13th, with schools and colleges receiving advance information electronically on August 10th.¹⁶

William Mathew, Dundee rep for NASUWT: changing the date is not a good idea. ‘General consensus is that the exam system should be left alone to recover.’¹⁷

Delay until 14th August backed by three out of four in SQA consultation, although some universities warn of clash with A level results.¹⁸

UCAS will receive results one week before candidates to give UCAS time to inform higher education institutions of the results.¹⁹

‘Results Delay Brings Chaos Fear for Pupils’ Edinburgh schools return on same day as results are issued. Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association warned there would be chaos with pupils who do not get the results they expect struggling to get time with teachers to advise them on their options. Usually certificates arrive during the summer holidays and staff give up part of their vacation to begin helping those with problems.’

SQA director of development, Dr Dennis Gunning said: ‘We received helpful and constructive feedback from out national stakeholders. The outcome of the consultation affords us a little more processing and printing time at a crucial point in the summer. This will help us to ensure that the results we issue are complete, accurate and on schedule. We are grateful for the support we are receiving from national stakeholders in working with us to achieve that aim.’²⁰

¹⁴ Herald, 21st February 2001
¹⁵ Scotland on Sunday, 25th February 2001
¹⁶ TES, 2nd March 2001
¹⁷ Aberdeen Press and Journal 12th February 2001
¹⁸ TES, 23rd February 2001
¹⁹ Press Association 23rd February 2001
²⁰ Evening News, 26th February 2001
5. Assessment Materials
Edinburgh teachers delay testing pupils on Higher coursework because guidelines have not arrived from SQA. Teachers move onto the next topic without doing end of unit tests. Edinburgh City Council still confident all the assessments would be completed on time.

SQA said: We are now in the process of issuing final versions of the (specimen) papers and expect to have virtually all of them out by the end of January, with any remaining ones issued shortly thereafter.’ At least one assessment pack had been issued for 75 per cent of all Advanced Higher subjects.21

6. Internal Assessment Marks
SQA rejects ‘default pass’ system after two month review. Ministers are ‘disappointed’. (Jack McConnell had announced simplified assessment reporting in November.) Bill McIntyre, interim director of awards: ‘we will retain the system we had last year but obviously with the necessary improvements to make sure it works effectively.’

There is a 40% increase in the number of unit assessments this year because of new courses and Intermediate and Advanced Higher levels.

Co-ordinator at Scottish Parent Teacher Council, Judith Gillespie ‘I have moved from the camp that said this year’s exams will be alright to being very dodgy.’

‘The volte face displays a growing assurance within the authority that its internal reforms are making a significant difference.22

Parents’ representatives and teaching unions are angry (that) the same system to process internal assessment results will be used this year.’ Bill McIntyre, SQA interim director of awards said: ‘the study revealed there was a risk of erroneous results if the proposal was implemented.’23

7. Assessment Monitoring
Another 400 teachers are required to monitor the quality of school assessment procedures. Recruitment began two months earlier than usual, and pay has been increased. SQA are ‘hopeful we will soon achieve appointment of the teachers we need.’24

8. Vocational Qualifications
Robert Gordon University confirm that 40% of students who sat HND and HNC exams last May still have not received certificates from SQA. SQA said the situation would be resolved by the end of the month.(Aberdeen Press and Journal 2nd Feb)

21 Evening News, 5th January 2001
22 TES, 9th February 2001
23 Evening Times 7th February 2001
24 Scotsman, 1st February 2001
9. Marker Recruitment

“Exam chiefs have snubbed senior teachers who previously played a vital role in assessing the grades of thousands of pupils” despite claims that the SQA is having problems recruiting sufficient markers for the 2001 exam diet.

SQA responded that “the recruitment of markers is ahead of schedule and above 70% of the places for moderators have been filled.” The SQA won’t be sending moderators to schools which have a good track record in this area. Scottish Secondary Teachers Association have said that well-qualified teachers, who would have happily answered an invitation to mark papers had not been contacted.25

Review of fees announced for 2002 onwards.26

Markers will now be paid around £7.50 an hour.27

100 short of the target 8,000 makers.28

Fees are increased by 50% at a cost of £3 million29

10. University Places

Increase of 4.5% in Scottish people starting university courses. UCAS said the figures indicate that the exams results fiasco did not prevent people in Scotland getting into Higher Education.30

---

25 Daily Mail, 5th March 2001
26 Press Association, 16th January 2001
27 BBC News, 16th January 2001
28 TES, 2nd February 2001
29 TES, 19th January 2001
30 BBC News, 19th January 2001
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PARLIAMENT ON SQA PROGRESS TOWARDS DIET 2001 - 31 JANUARY 2001

Monitoring progress

1. The SQA are committed to providing monthly progress reports to the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs on progress towards Diet 2001. These written reports are supplemented by regular meetings between the Minister and the SQA Chief Executive and Chair. The written reports concentrate on management information for key processes leading up to Diet 2001. The latest written report from the SQA was received by the Executive on 24 January and contained information as of 23 January.

2. A number of other channels have been established for monitoring SQA’s progress towards the delivery of Diet 2001. These include the monthly meetings of the Ministerial Review Group, chaired by the Deputy Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs. The SE/SQA liaison meetings have been taking place on a weekly basis since November, and each meeting discusses progress on key processes such as registrations and entries.

3. The National Qualifications Steering Group (which merges the roles of the Higher Still Implementation Group and the Higher Still Liaison Group) is considering aspects of the implementation of the new National Qualifications, and is being consulted closely on SQA’s proposals for certificate design and recording of internal assessment for Diet 2001.

4. This report combines relevant information from these channels.

Progress report to 23 January 2001

5. Key actions for December-January include the processing of centre approval, the receipt and processing of registrations and entry data, the issuing of invitations to appointees, and the preparation and vetting of exam question papers. SQA have also reviewed their data management processes and is carrying out a data clear up to ensure that the data on their system is accurate.

Data management

6. It is important that before the processing of new data begins, checks are carried out to ensure that the data already on the system is accurate. A data clear up exercise is being carried out, as in previous years, to ensure that any remaining anomalies in the Diet 2000 data, for example duplicate registration numbers, are corrected. At each stage of the process, SQA will administer data processing checks to verify the completeness and accuracy of the data before moving to the next stage of processing.

7. While registrations and entries are being processed later this year than in previous years, this was a deliberate decision taken by SQA to ensure that the appropriate software and procedures were in place internally, and that centres had been briefed on the administrative processes.

8. SQA have also confirmed that procedures were in place for advising centres of progress with processing their data, including redesigned error reports, and confirmation reports to indicate when data had been input successfully. The data processing software had also been redesigned to avoid rejecting data due to "soft" errors as occurred in Diet 2000. Error reports have been revised to make messages about data rejection easier to interpret, though there is still scope for further refinement. Forms for collecting other data have been or are in the process of being redesigned. In addition, Schools Account Managers are in place to respond to queries from schools.

9. SQA has confirmed that procedures have been established and are being used for logging the receipt of data by paper, disk, and electronically. SQA is carrying out a study to ensure that they
have adequate facilities for storing and handling incoming scripts and other evidence for later stages of the process.

Centre approvals

10. To date, 714 centres have approved themselves for a number of mainstream subjects and have advised SQA of their intentions. 61 schools have been given approval to offer other Courses which are not normally delivered in the school context, with SQA confirming they have the appropriate resources to do so. (Many of these schools will also have sought approval for mainstream subjects and so be counted among the 714 centres mentioned above.) SQA are putting in place a mechanism which flags to the Approvals section any cases where entries data is rejected because a school is not approved to offer a particular course so that this can be followed up by SQA.

Registrations

11. SQA have indicated that the registrations process is progressing well. 520 schools had sent in their registrations, and only 27 had not sent in registrations. Of these, only 8 were "presenting" centres, i.e. expected to present candidates for 2001, and all the presenting centres had been contacted. (This contrasts with Diet 2000 when SQA was uncertain that returns had been received from all approved centres.) By 23 January 72,562 new registrations had been processed, and 57,000 amendments (for example, change of address) of existing registrations had been made.

Entries

12. SQA have indicated that the entries process is progressing well. 481 schools had responded, and only 85 had not submitted entry data. Again, SQA were contacting these centres to ensure data was received. 900,000 out of an estimated 1,293,500 entries had been processed as at 23 January 2001.

Appointments

13. SQA began the appointments procedure earlier than in previous years. The following table sets out progress across the different categories of appointees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Current position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Assessors (152)</td>
<td>93% appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Examiners (53)</td>
<td>83% appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setters (c535)</td>
<td>83% appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examiners (c250)</td>
<td>77% appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Moderators (c100)</td>
<td>80% appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderators (c800)</td>
<td>48% appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Examiners/</td>
<td>64% release granted*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Assessors (c750)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veters</td>
<td>To be confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutineers</td>
<td>Progressing January-March 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers (c8000+)</td>
<td>7,500 selected for appointment*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Markers (c200?)</td>
<td>Require release from employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be sought in February</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Appointment of markers and visiting examiners is subject to final confirmation of revised terms, and also in the case of visiting examiners, confirmation of release acceptance.

15. SQA completed a review of appointee fees for 2001 and the Executive has agreed to fund the cost of a 50% increase in fees for all appointees. SQA has indicated that the response from their initial contact with appointees has been positive. SQA has advised that they will issue letters of appointment to markers for Higher, Standard Grade, Intermediate 1 and 2, Access (all subjects) and Advanced Higher and CSYS (English and Communication only) by 29 January 2000. The
remaining markers for CSYS and Advanced Higher, will receive letters of intent to appoint on 29th January and will receive formal appointment letters as soon as possible thereafter. Letters to appointees include practical details such as dates for markers' meetings and allocation of scripts. Internal control procedures have been implemented to ensure that all those appointed meet SQA's requirements in terms of qualifications, experience, and previous performance. Progress is also being made with seeking consent from employers for the release of potential appointees.

Setting and printing of examination papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question paper production</th>
<th>Progress at 23 Jan 2001</th>
<th>Progress at 23 Jan 2000 (for comparison)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of papers required</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vetoed drafts received</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. ready for print</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. sent to print</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. The receipt of Vetted Drafts of papers from Principal Assessors is critical in the production of question papers. In comparison to the same time last year, there is a shortfall of 6.45% in the receipt of vetted drafts. This is not unexpected given the additional work required to resolve Year 2000 difficulties, and the increase in the number of papers required. SQA is monitoring this situation carefully and contingencies are in place if necessary.

Other issues

IT issues

17. SQA are ensuring that communication channels between SQA users, the IT unit and external stakeholders are in place and working effectively. Suppliers of software are also being kept informed about requirements for software used by centres. Alterations to the APS system, such as the changes in the error reports (see paragraph 8) are being designed on the basis of SQA user specifications and priorities for 2001, and thoroughly tested before going live.

Certification

19. In response to feedback from Diet 2000, SQA has reconsidered the design for the Scottish Qualifications Certificate. Samples of the new certificate design have been discussed at the Ministerial Review Group, and SQA is currently preparing to issue a consultation paper inviting comments on the new design.

Progress on National Assessment Bank materials (NABs)

20. NAB material covering 99.5% of Higher subjects is currently available, with similar percentages for Intermediate levels and Access. For some subjects, alternative second, and in some cases third, NAB packages have been made available to allow teachers additional scope for varying their course material.

21. SQA and HSDU are working to produce new NABs for Advanced Higher for Diet 2001 to agreed priorities. Publication of some NABs has been delayed for courses being taught in Diet 2001, but where this is the case HSDU has made available to centres pre-publication versions, which centres may use in exactly the same way as published versions. SQA has confirmed that work based on pre-publication NABs will be accepted as equally valid evidence of a candidate's performance. Therefore all centres should have access to NAB materials for all the courses they are teaching.

22. If any centres are concerned about lack of teaching materials, this can be raised through the Schools Account Managers with SQA, or with HSDU, and SQA and HSDU will ensure that their concerns are addressed.
23. Until processing of entry data has been completed, SQA will not have the final list of subjects for which candidates have been presented. It is quite possible that for some subjects, there will be no candidates presented at one or more levels, and this will mean that NAB material for those subjects at those levels is not required for Diet 2001. SQA has therefore given priority to preparing NABs for the more popular subjects, as some of the NABs which have not been published will not be required for courses in 2001.

24. Completion of the development timetable for NAB material for Project-Based Courses was originally planned for March 2003. The aim of HSDU/FE is to produce materials for Courses being taught this session by Easter, with materials for Courses due to be taught next session being available in August 2001.

Estimates

25. SQA is currently making final amendments to a Head of Centres Guide which will supply information on when they require data on estimates and internal assessment results of external assessment Units.

The following submission dates apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Qualification</th>
<th>Data required by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Grade and SCE Highers</td>
<td>31 March 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSYS (estimated rankings)</td>
<td>1 April 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate 1 &amp; 2, Highers and Advanced Highers</td>
<td>30 April 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocational Qualifications

26. While this report focuses on Certification 2001 for National Qualifications, SQA’s equally important role in awarding vocational qualifications proceeds to a different timetable. All FE colleges have been invited to participate in a data reconciliation exercise to check the accuracy of the data held by SQA. To date, 9 Colleges have now completed the data match exercise for group awards, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications and Higher National Certificates. Since SQA’s report to the last meeting of the Ministerial Review Group, 26,481 certificates had been issued for these qualifications in the period from 01/01/00 to 23/01/01.

Communication strategy

27. SQA has appointed a team of Schools Account Managers, to complement their counterparts for Further Education, to ensure that each school has a single contact point for queries. SQA have reviewed their processes for communicating with centres, including circulating a "National Qualifications Digest" to keep centres informed of issues as they arise, and to help ensure a good flow of information to centres.
SQA Press Releases

SQA response to Ministerial announcement on markers' fees 16th January 2001

SQA WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT ON INCREASE IN MARKERS' FEES
The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has welcomed today's announcement to increase payments to markers and other individuals involved in the annual Certification process.
Whilst this much welcome step is in direct response to some of last year's problems it also reflects the importance of the work carried out by members of the teaching profession on SQA's behalf.
Bill Morton, Chief Executive, SQA, said:
"I welcome the Minister's announcement which complements SQA's own actions to restore the confidence of markers. Progress with recruitment of markers and other individuals involved in this process has been encouraging and is going well. Today's announcement helps seal this recruitment drive which this year started two months earlier than usual. Both the remuneration and marker recruitment developments should provide this year's candidates, parents and centres with clear evidence that we are committed to restoring confidence in the Scottish examination system"
Payments for marking and related activity are set to increase by 50% for 2001. SQA will carry out a further detailed review of appointee fees during the Certification 2001 activity, and beyond, and will report its findings and recommendations to the Executive later in the year.

Interim SQA Board Confirmed 12th December 2000

The Minister for Education Jack McConnell, has confirmed the composition of the interim SQA Board. The interim Board, under the Chairmanship of Professor John Ward CBE, will be made up of the following members:

- Patricia Cairns, Headteacher of Firrhill High School
- Ian Hay, Chief Executive of the Scottish Association of Master Bakers
- Linda McKay, Principal of Falkirk College
- Iain McMillan, Director of CBI Scotland
- Ian Muir, Chairman of the Board of Management, Jewel & Esk Valley College
- Charles Munn, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland
- Margaret Nicol, Principal Teacher at Madras College, St Andrews and President of the EIS
- Shelagh Rae, Director of Education and Leisure, Renfrewshire Council