



Scottish Qualifications Authority
Ùghdarras Theisteanas Na H-Alba

06 August 2024

Sue Webber MSP
Education, Children and Young People Committee
By email to: ecyp.committee@parliament.scot

Dear Ms Webber

Today, around 145,000 learners across the country are receiving their Scottish Qualifications Certificates. I know you and your fellow Committee members will want to join SQA in celebrating their achievements.

Results Day is a major milestone in the life of every learner, and the qualifications they receive today will allow them to take the next step on their learning journey; either continuing at school, moving on to college or university, or entering the world of work.

Once again, we are seeing a welcome breadth of achievement. The total number of National Progression Awards, National Certificates, Skills for Work, and SQA Awards rose by 24.8% to 90,035. This marks a record-breaking year for vocational qualifications, as Scotland's learners excelled in achieving valuable skills to build rewarding careers.

In terms of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, you will be aware that this year saw the return of full assessment, following consultation with learners, teachers and lecturers and their representative groups, parents, carers, education partners and the Scottish Government. Coursework and exams for some practical subjects were removed temporarily during the pandemic.

Full course assessment provides a more balanced approach for learners and helps ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and full range of skills needed to support their next steps.

We took into account any impact caused by the return to full course assessment as part of our well-established grading approach. However, analysis shows that on the whole the return of full course assessment has benefited learners with coursework performance this year on a par with pre-pandemic performance.

The achievements of this year's learners are a testament to their dedication, particularly given they experienced some of the most severe pandemic-related disruption to their learning during their late primary/early secondary years.

We also thank Scotland's teachers, lecturers and the wider education and skills community for their dedication and support to learners over the past year.

To help you mark this important day and support young people, I am pleased to share with you information about today's results, and importantly, the help and support that is available to learners as they take their next steps in education, training or employment.

Results Day 2024

Learners are receiving their results by post today and those who signed up for and activated their MySQA account will also be receiving their results by text and/or email from 8am this morning (Tuesday 6 August).

Together with Nationals, Highers and Advanced Highers, learners will be achieving a wide range of Skills for Work courses, Awards, National Certificates and National Progression Awards, which are part of a broadening of the curriculum and support a range of initiatives such as Developing the Young Workforce.

We are a proud Corporate Parent and SQA colleagues and their families, along with representatives of Who Cares? Scotland, MCR Pathways, and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, will be publishing a congratulatory video message to all care experienced young people to recognise their success in their SQA courses and awards.

Given the return to full course assessment in 2024, and the significantly different approaches to awarding between 2020 and 2023, comparisons with other years should be treated with some caution, noting that it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions on any changes in education performance. There is some variability in the national attainment picture this year.

The headline attainment figures for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses are:

National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
327,950 entries	196,250 entries	28,495 entries
A-C attainment rate 77.2%	A-C attainment rate 74.9%	A-C attainment rate 75.3%
A attainment rate 38.0%	A attainment rate 30.3%	A attainment rate 30.0%

For any young person who has a concern about a grade, our free direct appeals service is now open. Our advice is for learners or their parents and carers to speak to their school, college or

training provider in the first instance if they have concerns. They are best placed to address any concerns and provide their learners with advice and support.

Support for learners

- SQA's Appeals service is free of charge and can be accessed directly by learners or on their behalf by their school or college. It opens at 9am today. More information has been included with learners' certificates and is available at www.sqa.org.uk/appeals
- A trial service for learners to request access to their marked exam papers in five subjects is also available today and can help them decide whether to appeal. To take part learners need to speak to their school or college. More information has been included with learners' certificates and is available at www.sqa.org.uk/markedexamtrial
- If learners have a query about their certificate, they can call SQA's Candidate Advice Line on 0345 279 1000
- Skills Development Scotland's Results Helpline is available on 0808 100 8000
- UCAS Clearing resources can be found at www.ucas.com/clearing-launch

The national attainment statistics and further information about how the qualifications were awarded can be found at:

- [Provisional Attainment Statistics \(August\) 2024](#)
- [SQA Chief Examining Officer's 2024 National Qualifications and Awards Results Report](#)
- [Grade Boundaries 2024](#)
- [Component Marks 2024](#)
- [Assessment Arrangements 2024](#)
- [National Qualifications 2024 Methodology Report](#)
- [2024 Awarding: Equalities Monitoring Report](#)
- [SQA News Release](#)

How results were arrived at in 2024

Every year, SQA's role is to evaluate performance in assessments in an equitable and fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that qualifications remain credible – and this year was no different. Learners' demonstrated attainment – evidence of a learner's knowledge and skills in a course measured against the required national standard – is at the core of our approach.

Thousands of practising teachers and lecturers work with experienced SQA staff every year and are at the heart of the awarding process – they set the assessments (exams and coursework), mark and quality assure them. They also play a key role in setting the grade boundaries and in SQA's exceptional circumstances and appeals services.

Learners have been supported by a package of measures, including:

- a range of assessment arrangements to provide support to learners during exams
- an exam exceptional circumstances service for learners who were unable to attend an exam or whose performance was impacted by personal circumstances
- consideration of any impact from the reintroduction of full course assessments
- a free, learner direct, appeals service for any learner who has concerns about a grade — further details are available at www.sqa.org.uk/appeals
- a trial service for learners to request access to their marked exam papers from their school or college in five subjects, which can help learners decide whether to appeal — further details are available at www.sqa.org.uk/markedexamtrial

In conclusion, learners can be confident that the qualifications they receive today are credible and fair, and reflect the knowledge, understanding and skills they have acquired. Universities, colleges and employers can also be confident that standards and integrity have been maintained in 2024.

I look forward to joining you at Committee in September.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Robertson
SQA Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer