



Alistair Wylie

Head of Qualifications

TAICEP Annual Conference 2019
Vancouver



About me!

- Qualified teacher and lecturer
- Published education author
- Celebrating 15 years at SQA
- Celebrating 25 years contributing to education, learning and assessment
- 2nd time attendee at TAICEP



Dealing with malpractice and certification issues: an awarding organisation perspective

TAICEP Annual Conference 2019
Vancouver

About SQA

- ◆ SQA helps people to *realise* their potential and to *achieve* their ambitions
- ◆ Provides a wide range of high quality, internationally recognised qualifications and assessment solutions
- ◆ Based in Scotland (with sites both Edinburgh and Glasgow, we work across the UK and internationally, taking great pride in offering exceptional customer service

SQA portfolio includes:

- ◆ New National Qualifications & Awards
- ◆ Scottish Vocational Qualifications
- ◆ Advanced Certificates and Diplomas
- ◆ Professional Development Awards
- ◆ Customised Awards

SQA qualifications & services

- ◆ Developed and delivered with schools, colleges, universities, training organisations and industry specialists
- ◆ Accurately reflect learners' knowledge and skills, providing routes to jobs or further study
- ◆ Enable organisations to succeed in meeting a wide range of educational and workforce development challenges

The issues

- ◆ Malpractice
- ◆ Certification
- ◆ Impacts
- ◆ What can we do?



Our approach

- ◆ **Prevent**



- ◆ **Detect**



- ◆ **Investigate**



What is malpractice?

- ◆ Malpractice can relate to:
 - ◆ Centres – offering SQA qualifications and accountable to SQA
 - ◆ Candidates

What is malpractice?

- ♦ Malpractice means any act, default or practice (whether deliberate or resulting from neglect or default) which is a breach of SQA assessment requirements including any act, default or practice which: compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise, the process of assessment, the integrity of any SQA qualification, or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or damages the authority, reputation or credibility of SQA or any officer, employee or agent of SQA.

SQA Malpractice: Information for Centres, April 2018

A collaborative approach

- ◆ Working together to deal with malpractice and help prevent it happening in the future
- ◆ Support for centres:
 - *Malpractice: Information for Centres, April 2018*
- ◆ Published annual malpractice report
- ◆ Support for centres where there is malpractice

Malpractice: information for centres

- ◆ URL

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/malpractice>

- ◆ Contains information on all malpractice in one place
- ◆ Covers centre and candidate; internal and external assessment
- ◆ Four key sections.....

Malpractice: information for centres

- ◆ Part A – General Information
 - Definitions
 - Minimising risk
 - Working with SQA
- ◆ Part B – Candidate Malpractice
 - Types
 - How to respond
 - Retention of records (3 years & 6 years)

Malpractice: information for centres

- ◆ Part C – Centre Malpractice
 - Types
 - Reporting
 - Investigations
- ◆ Part D – Appeals Against Malpractice Decisions
 - Different types of appeal
 - Regulated qualifications and the regulator

Centre malpractice

- ♦ Intentional malpractice:
 - Some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage in an examination or assessment (deliberate non-compliance)

Centre malpractice

- ◆ Unintentional malpractice:
 - Maladministration includes incidents that arise due to ignorance of SQA requirements, carelessness or neglect in applying the requirements

Centre malpractice

- ♦ Malpractice can include both *maladministration* in the assessment and delivery of SQA qualifications and *deliberate non-compliance* with SQA requirements.
- ♦ Whether intentional or not, it is necessary to investigate any suspected instances of malpractice, to protect the ***integrity*** of the qualification and to identify any wider lessons to be learned.
- ♦ Where SQA becomes aware of concerns of possible malpractice, its approach will be ***fair, robust*** and ***proportionate*** to the nature of the concern.

Centre responsibilities to minimise the chance of malpractice

- ◆ Design of assessments
- ◆ Security of assessment materials
- ◆ Assessment delivery and completion of assessments
- ◆ Quality assurance of assessment
- ◆ Authentication of candidate evidence
- ◆ Management of candidate assessment data
- ◆ Management of the centre's administrative systems

Centre responsibilities to minimise the chance of malpractice

- ◆ Centres must develop, implement and monitor procedures for dealing fairly with concerns of candidate or centre malpractice.
- ◆ Centres should implement a documented system and procedure for recording, and reporting where appropriate, all suspected instances of centre or candidate malpractice.
- ◆ This information must be available for SQA quality assurance activities on site, and/or on request.

Candidate malpractice

- ◆ Candidate malpractice means any type of malpractice by a candidate which threatens the integrity of an examination or assessment.
- ◆ Malpractice by a candidate can occur, for example, in:
 - the preparation and authentication of coursework
 - the preparation or presentation of practical work
 - the compilation of a portfolio of assessment evidence the completion of an examination paper, or the controlled write-up stage of externally assessed coursework; and
 - conduct during or after an assessment

Candidate malpractice

- ◆ Specific examples of candidate malpractice include:
 - Breaching the security of assessment materials
 - Collusion
 - Copying
 - Misconduct
 - Frivolous content
 - Offensive content
 - Personation
 - Plagiarism
 - Prohibited items

Response to suspected malpractice

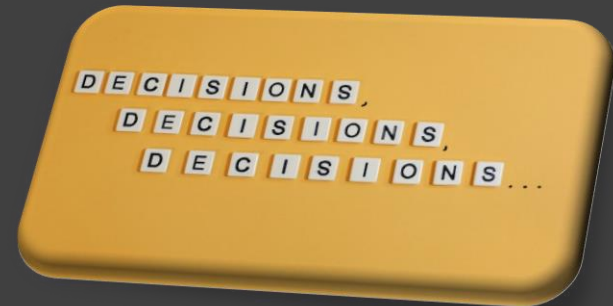
- ◆ Initial screening



- ◆ Investigation



- ◆ Decision



Treatment of candidates

- ♦ Any candidate under investigation of malpractice will be provided with:
 - information about the allegation made against them
 - information about the possible consequences
 - the opportunity to seek advice and the right to be accompanied/supported in any interviews or meetings
 - the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations (if required)
 - the opportunity to submit a written statement
 - information on the applicable SQA appeals procedure, should a decision be made against them

Other important considerations

- ◆ General principle that issues relating to candidate malpractice should firstly be considered the centre under its own malpractice procedures, except where:
 - the concern came to the centre's attention after submission of internal assessment marks
 - the concern relates to candidate malpractice for a qualification regulated by SQA Accreditation, OFQUAL or Qualifications Wales

Other important considerations

- ◆ General principle that issues relating to candidate malpractice should firstly be considered by the centre under its own malpractice procedures, except where:
 - any candidate affected by a centre's candidate malpractice decision, who having exhausted their right of appeal within the centre, wishes to exercise their right of appeal to SQA
 - there are other exceptional circumstances, eg the centre believes that the malpractice case involves a criminal act

Other important considerations

- ◆ SQA requires centres to retain all records relating to malpractice investigations for a period of 3 years
- ◆ This increases to a period of 6 years in the case of qualifications which are regulated by SQA Accreditation, OFQUAL or Qualifications Wales
- ◆ Where there is a criminal or civil court proceeding, centres are advised to retain records for a 6 year period following the completion of the legal proceedings

Additional SQA powers

- ◆ SQA always retains the right to carry out its own investigations
- ◆ We may take this stance where there are concerns of impartiality, concerns over the conduct and findings of the investigation or where important questions remain unanswered
- ◆ Sometimes the investigation of candidate malpractice also leads to the discovery and referral of centre malpractice

The additional burden of regulated qualifications

- ♦ SQA has a duty to report all instances of malpractice to the regulators:
 - SQA Accreditation
 - OFQUAL
 - Qualifications Wales
- ♦ The regulators may also decide to carry out their own investigations

Other partners and other considerations

- ♦ SQA works with many partner organisations and shares information to counteract the threat of malpractice
- ♦ For example, we have data sharing agreements in place with:
 - The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)
 - The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
- ♦ Data sharing helps us to combat certification fraud as well as safeguard these areas of industry where there may be other considerations e.g. health and safety

SQA Malpractice Panel

- ◆ Senior SQA staff who have significant expertise in assessment and quality assurance matters
- ◆ Members determine the outcome in cases of suspected candidate malpractice referred to the panel by SQA officers leading the investigation
- ◆ Neither candidates nor representatives from centres are permitted to attend the meeting of the panel
- ◆ Members of the panel are required to be independent of any case of which they have personal knowledge and have no other conflict of interest

SQA Malpractice Panel

- ◆ Following its review of the investigation report and other available information, the malpractice panel will:
 - identify the criteria alleged to have been compromised
 - consider all relevant factors and disregard all irrelevant factors
 - consider any submission by the candidate who is the subject of the investigation
 - issue a written decision using an evidence-based approach to consider the facts of the case

SQA Malpractice Panel

- ♦ Following its review of the investigation report and other available information, the malpractice panel will:
 - **consider** any response from the centre where SQA has investigated directly
 - **decide** whether the panel requires more time or information to consider the case
 - **decide** based on the information available whether malpractice has occurred
 - **establish** who is responsible if criteria have been compromised
 - **determine** an appropriate level of penalty, sanction, remedial or preventative action to be applied

What happens when there is a finding of malpractice?

- ♦ Appropriate action will be taken by the panel to:
 - **minimise** the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future
 - **maintain** public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications
 - **ensure** there has been no gain from compromising our standards
 - **minimise** any disadvantage to candidates not found to be at fault, in dealing with invalid certification; and
 - **advise** regulators as required

Proportionate response

- ◆ SQA's decision to take further action will be based only on the evidence available
- ◆ Sanctions may be applied at centre and/or individual level
- ◆ SQA's decision must be *justifiable, proportionate* and *consistent* with previous decisions

Available sanctions - candidates

- ◆ Where the malpractice panel has made a finding of malpractice, the range of sanctions includes, but is not limited to:
 - a written warning
 - revision of marks
 - cancellation of awards
 - disqualification from future entries
 - revocation of candidate certificates



Available sanctions - centres



- ◆ Where the malpractice panel has made a finding of malpractice, the range of sanctions includes, but is not limited to:
 - a written warning
 - application of required actions to enable certification to proceed
 - withdrawal of approval to offer specific qualifications
 - withdrawal of centre approval status
 - requirement for re-assessment of candidate(s)
 - exceptionally, amendment to candidate results and/or revocation of certificates

Offering support where there is no finding of malpractice

- ♦ The range of options available includes (but is not limited to):
 - taking no further action
 - providing specialist support to the centre (this will only be optional)
 - requiring the centre to carry out a review of its internal policies or procedures for dealing with malpractice

Candidates' right of appeal

- ◆ Candidates, or their authorised representatives, have a right to appeal to SQA where:
 - the centre has conducted its own investigation and the candidate disagrees with the outcome, where the centre's internal appeals process has been exhausted
 - SQA has asked the centre to conduct an investigation and the candidate disagrees with the outcome, where the centre's internal appeals process has been exhausted
 - SQA conducts its own investigation and the candidate disagrees with our decision

Centres' right of appeal

- ♦ If a centre disagrees with the malpractice panel's finding of malpractice, it can appeal
- ♦ The head of centre (who may not, in this case, be represented by a nominee) will have the right to appeal
- ♦ *In all cases of appeal, these go directly for consideration by a Director*

Further action

- ◆ Sometimes, the appeal process is exhausted and individuals or centres may still not be happy with the outcome
- ◆ Some cases turn into complaints
- ◆ SQA has a complaints process in place to deal with this
- ◆ Further referral and consideration may also be made to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman

Malpractice in numbers

- ◆ Our annual published report for the period January – December 2018 shows:
 - 270 referrals for consideration as concerns of possible centre malpractice – all qualifications, all markets
 - 222 for National Qualifications
 - 207 identified through SQA processes
 - 235 investigated to conclusion
 - 143 led to finding of malpractice

Malpractice in context

- ◆ In 2018, SQA certificated against almost 500,000 individual entries for the National Qualifications (school examinations)
- ◆ In terms of numbers, reported candidate malpractice cases represent less than 0.05% in this area alone
- ◆ Regardless, all malpractice has a significant impact on:
 - Individuals
 - Centres
 - The wider community
- ◆ As such, SQA will always investigate

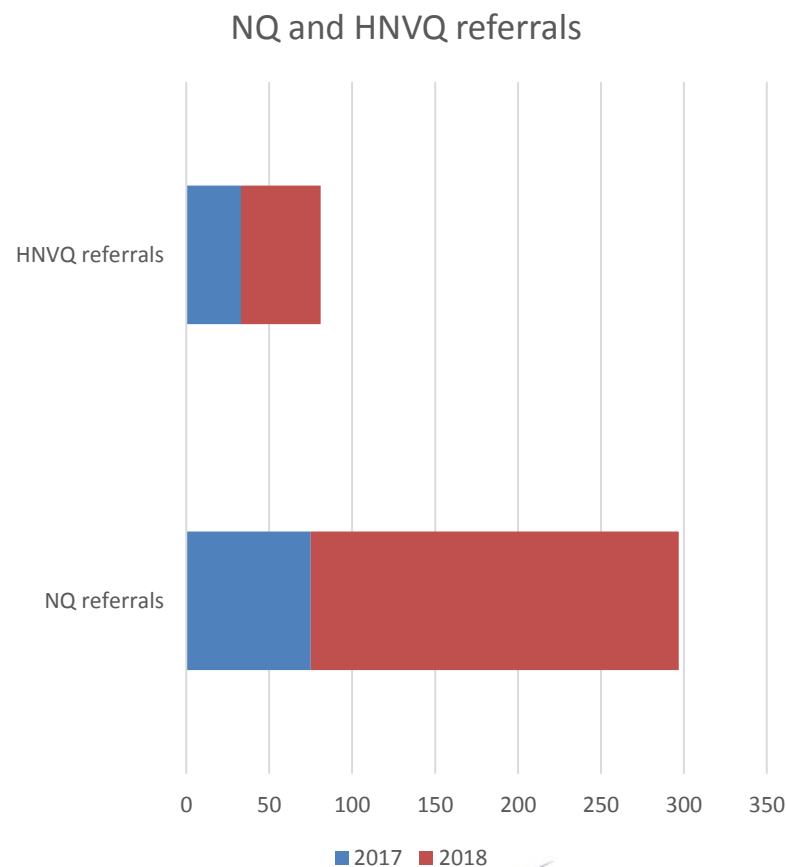
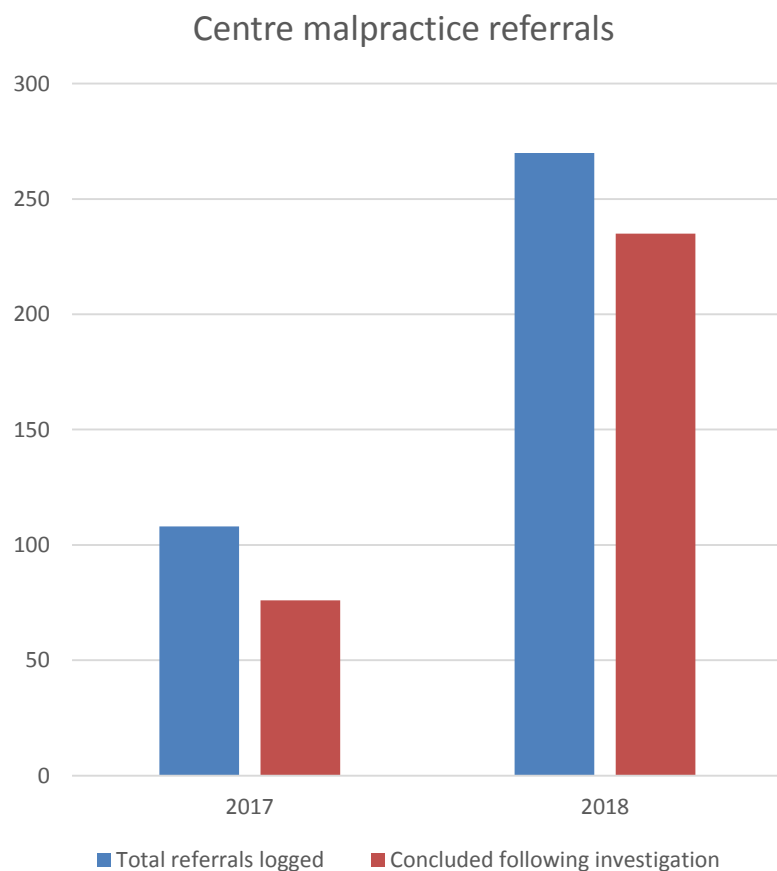
Malpractice in context

	NQ 2018	NQ 2017
Category	Number of penalties issued to candidates by category	Number of penalties issued to candidates by category
Collusion	29	27
Frivolous/Offensive	23	5
Misconduct	*	5
Personation	0	0
Plagiarism	73	76
Prohibited Items: Mobile Telephones	45	48
Prohibited Items: Notes etc	31	22
Totals	204	183

Malpractice in context

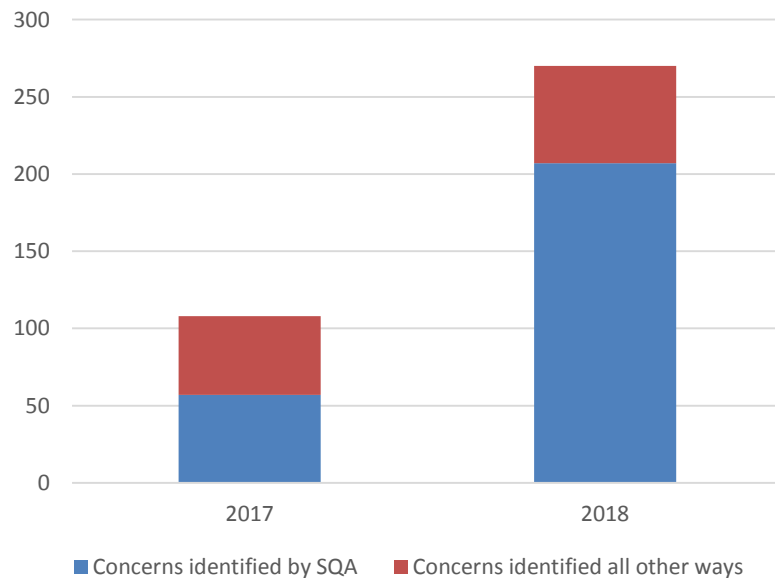
	NQ 2018	NQ 2017
Penalty	Number of penalties issued to candidates by consequence	Number of penalties issued to candidates by consequence
Warning	63	55
Warning - Revision of Marks	25	15
Cancellation	116	113
Totals	204	183

Overview of 2018 centre malpractice activity

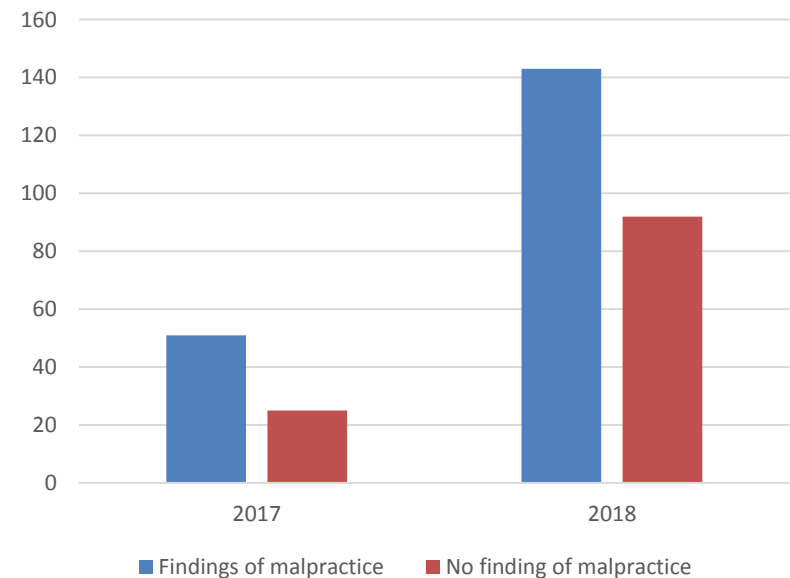


Overview of 2018 centre malpractice activity

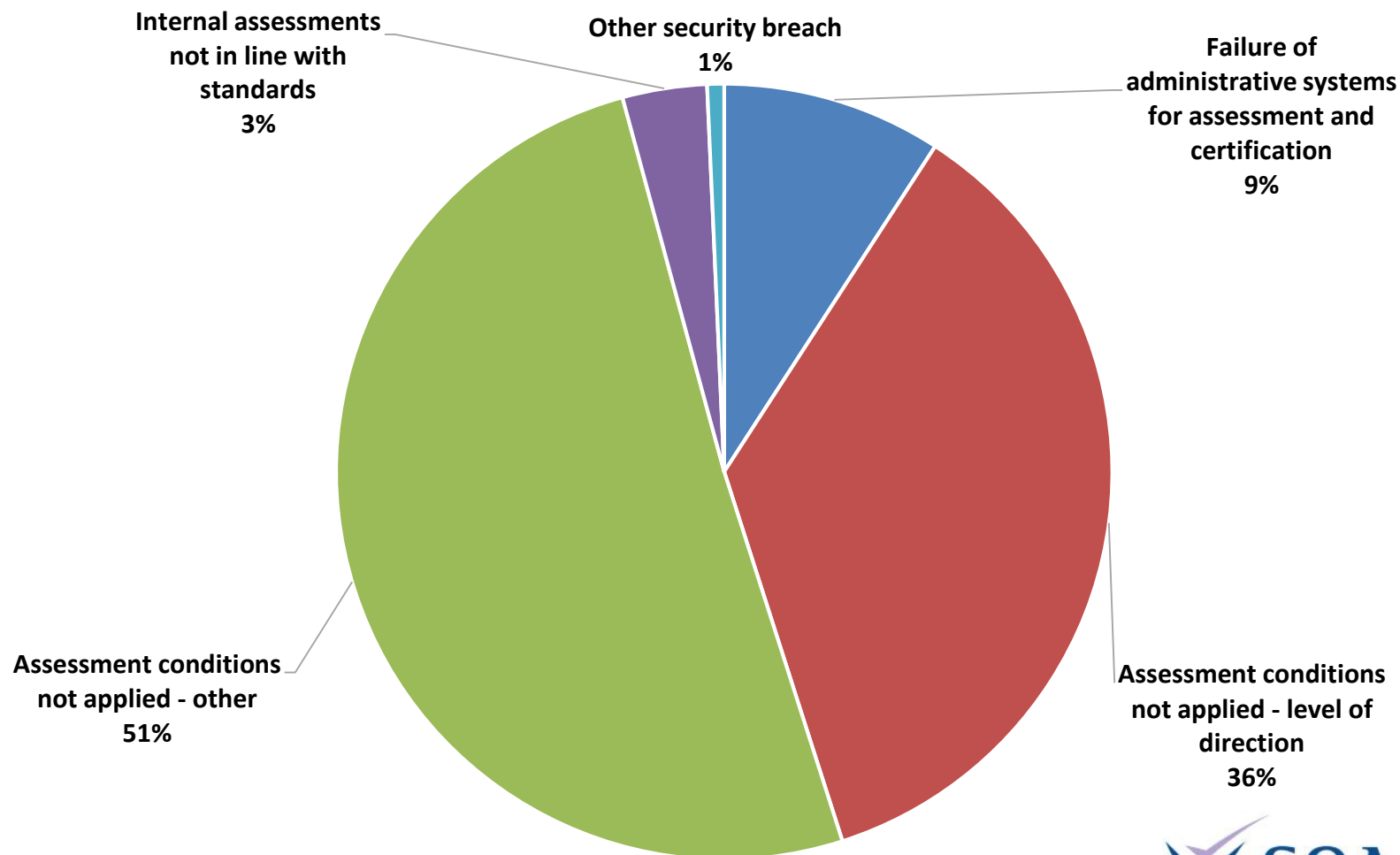
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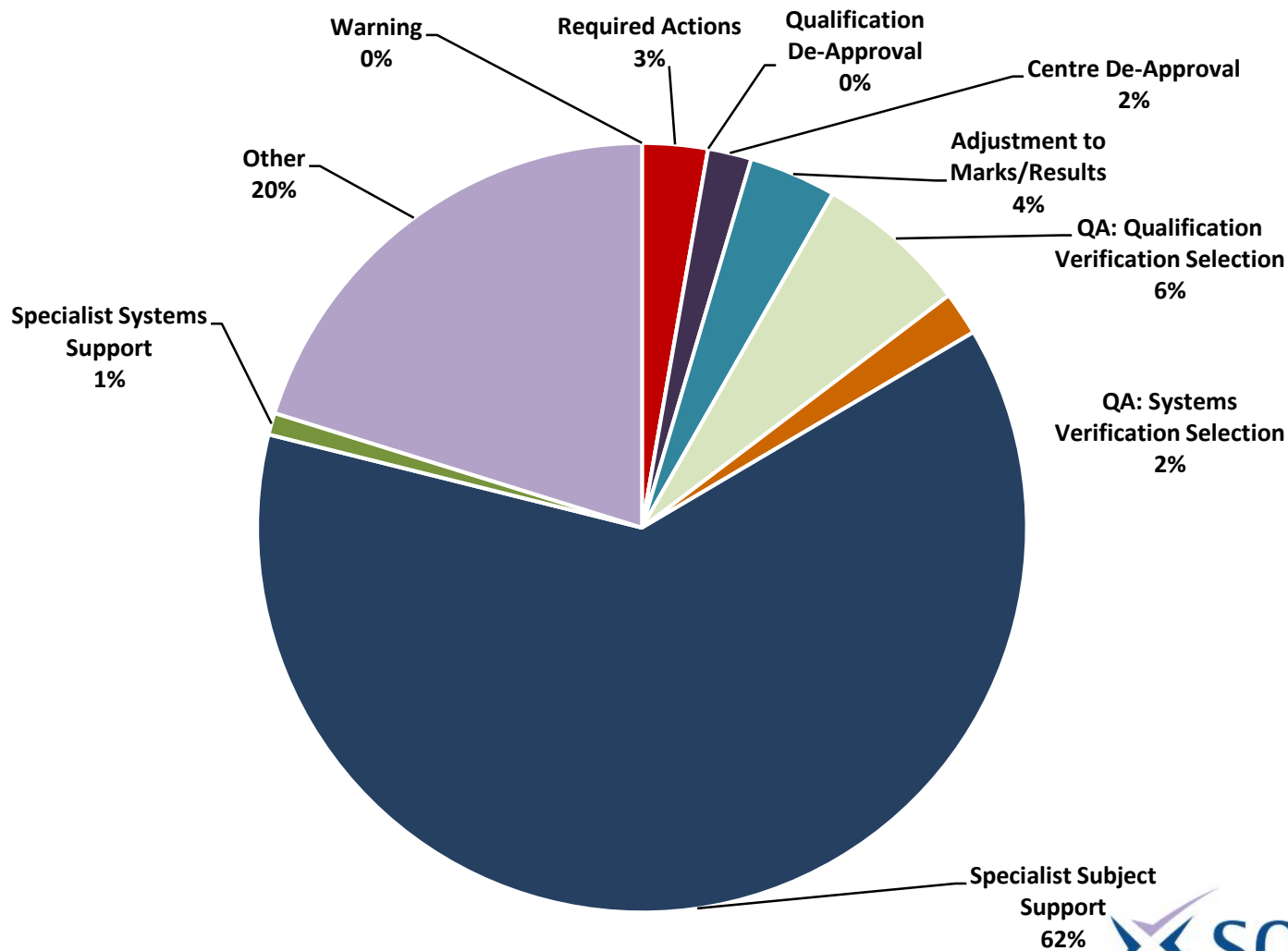
Outcome



Principal type of malpractice finding 2018



Action following malpractice investigations 2018



Observed risks

- ◆ Impersonation
- ◆ Ghost candidates
- ◆ Assessments outwith specified conditions
- ◆ Sector specific intelligence
- ◆ Increasing information sharing



Certification – what does it mean?

- ◆ Achievement
- ◆ Celebration
- ◆ Recognition
- ◆ Trust
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Standards
- ◆ Hard work
- ◆ Proof



Security measures

- ◆ All certificates have built-in security
- ◆ Some remain secret!
- ◆ Visible security:
 - Special font which cannot be replicated
 - Hologram
 - UV watermark



Security measures

- ◆ Invisible security:
 - “SQA” border
 - Almost invisible to naked eye and spelt wrong once



Security measures

- ◆ Authentication service is available for certificates
- ◆ Chargeable service
- ◆ Online service for checking is available for regular users who are also signed up to a data sharing agreement



SQA Certificates - fake



SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY



This document is issued to certify
That in October 2018

Avtar Singh

attained the

SVQ 2 Formwork (Construction)

SCQF Level 5

Chairman
Scottish Building
Apprenticeship Training Council

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

Commercial Director
CITB

Code: GF7822
SNC: 982588812



SQA Certificates - fake



This document is issued to certify that

John Breen

has achieved the

Scottish Vocational Qualification

Construction: Carpentry and Joinery
at Level 3

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

Scottish Candidate Number: 915288658

Chairman
Scottish Building
Apprenticeship and Training Council

Issued: 23 November 2018



SQA Certificates - fake



This document is issued to certify that

Maciej Antoni Mrozinski

has achieved the

Scottish Vocational Qualification

**Health and Safety in a Construction Environment
at Level 1**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to the Chief Executive of the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to the Chairman of the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Chairman
Scottish Qualifications
Apprenticeship and Training Council

Scottish Candidate Number: 979923359

Dated: 28 February 2019



SQA Certificates - fake



SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY

SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
IN
CONSTRUCTION: CARPENTRY AND JOINERY

LEVEL 2

AWARDED TO

PAWEL DANIEL CHOMA

JUNE 2019

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John D. ...'.

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

Code: 62FT 17
SCN: 852936627



SQA Certificates



SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY

SQA ADVANCED DIPLOMA

IN

BUSINESS

AWARDED TO

SAMPLE CANDIDATE

JULY 2018

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

Code: GM51 48
SCN: 995027275



SQA Certificates



SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY

Sample Candidate

SCN: 995027275

Summary of attainment up to July 2018

Qualification	Grade	Date	SCQF Level
National Group Awards SQA Advanced Diploma Business		07/2018	8

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority



SQA Certificates



Sample Candidate

SCN: 995027275

Detailed record of attainment in July 2018

Code	Qualification	Grade	Date	SCQF Level	SCQF Credit Points
National Group Awards					
GM51 48	SQA Advanced Diploma Business		07/2018	8	
Advanced Graded Units					
HP7C 47	Business: Graded Unit 1	A	07/2018	7	8
HP7D 48	Business: Graded Unit 2	A	07/2018	8	16
Advanced Units					
HP7K 47	Business Accounting		07/2018	7	16
HP6X 47	Business Contractual Relationships		07/2018	7	8
HP6Y 47	Business Law: An Introduction		07/2018	7	8
HP75 47	Communication: Business Communication		07/2018	7	8
HP77 47	Continuous Workforce Development		07/2018	7	16
HP73 47	Creating a Culture of Customer Care		07/2018	7	8
HP6T 47	Economic Issues: An Introduction		07/2018	7	8
HP74 47	Human Resource Management: Introduction		07/2018	7	8
HP78 47	IT in Business: Spreadsheets		07/2018	7	8
HP6L 47	Information Technology: Applications Software 1		07/2018	7	8
HP76 47	International Marketing: An Introduction		07/2018	7	8
HP71 47	Managing People and Organisations		07/2018	7	16
HP6N 47	Marketing: An Introduction		07/2018	7	8
HP6M 47	Personal Development Planning		07/2018	7	8
HP6W 48	Behavioural Skills for Business		07/2018	8	8
HP6R 48	Business Culture and Strategy		07/2018	8	16
HP6P 48	Economics 1: Micro and Macro Theory and Application		07/2018	8	8
HP72 48	Economics 2: The World Economy		07/2018	8	8
HP7A 48	Information and Communication Technology in Business		07/2018	8	16
HP70 48	Preparing Financial Forecasts		07/2018	8	8
HP79 48	Presentation Skills		07/2018	8	8
HP6V 48	Statistics for Business		07/2018	8	8

Fiona Robertson

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority



SQA Certificates



Sample Candidate

SCN: 995027275

Profiles up to July 2018

Core Skills	SCQF Level	Date
Core Skill - Communication		
Oral Communication	6	07/2018
Written Communication	6	07/2018
Core Skill - Numeracy		
Using Graphical Information	6	07/2018
Using Number	6	07/2018
Core Skill - Information and Communication Technology		
Accessing Information	6	07/2018
Providing/Creating Information	6	07/2018
Core Skill - Problem Solving		
Critical Thinking	6	07/2018
Planning and Organising	6	07/2018
Reviewing and Evaluating	6	07/2018
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	SCQF Level	Date
Credit Points		
96	8	07/2018
144	7	07/2018

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority



SQA Certificates



This document is issued to certify
that in October 2018

Sample Cert S Candidate 9

attained the

Customised Award

Diploma in Business and Operations Management

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

Code: GN7G 04
SCN: 995028778



SQA Certificates



SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY

Sample Cert S Candidate 9

SCN: 995028778

Summary of attainment up to October 2018

Qualification	Grade	Date	SCQF Level
Customised Awards Diploma in Business and Operations Management		10/2018	

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority



SQA Certificates



Sample Cert S Candidate 9

SCN: 995028778

Detailed record of attainment in October 2018

Code	Qualification	Grade	Date	SCQF Level	SCQF Credit Points
Customised Awards					
GN7G 04	Diploma in Business and Operations Management		10/2018		
Customised Units					
HY0H 04	Introduction to Business and Management Practice		10/2018		
HY0F 04	Introduction to Finance and Management Accounting		10/2018		
HY0A 04	Introduction to Management Practice in Organizations		10/2018		
HY0J 04	Introduction to Marketing Management Practice		10/2018		
HY0K 04	Introduction to Operations Management and Production Practice		10/2018		
HY0E 04	Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Selling		10/2018		
HY0D 04	Introduction to the Principles of Economics		10/2018		
HY0L 04	Introduction to using Information Technology for Business		10/2018		
HY0C 04	Understanding Business Communication		10/2018		
HY0G 04	Understanding Personnel Management Practice in Organizations		10/2018		
The Customised Award: Diploma in Business and Operations Management was developed by PUSAT LATIHAN & KEMAHIRAN BESTARI (PLKB) and is certificated and quality assured by SQA as a Customised Award					

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority



Integrity of certification

- ◆ Core to SQA values
- ◆ Our corporate values are:
 - Trusted
 - Enabling
 - Progressive
- ◆ Standards and public confidence matter!

Thanks!

- ◆ For attending.....and for listening
- ◆ Now for some case studies...

Based on a real case

- ◆ SQA was notified of concerns about assessment practices at a private training centre in England which is approved to offer SQA qualifications. The source was anonymous and following the initial contact, no further contact has been made.
- ◆ What action was taken in this case?

Based on a real case

- ◆ A school has reported that several candidates were found to be in possession of a prohibited item (smartphone) during their sitting of a national examination. The school has taken action against the candidates.
- ◆ What action did SQA take?

Based on a real case

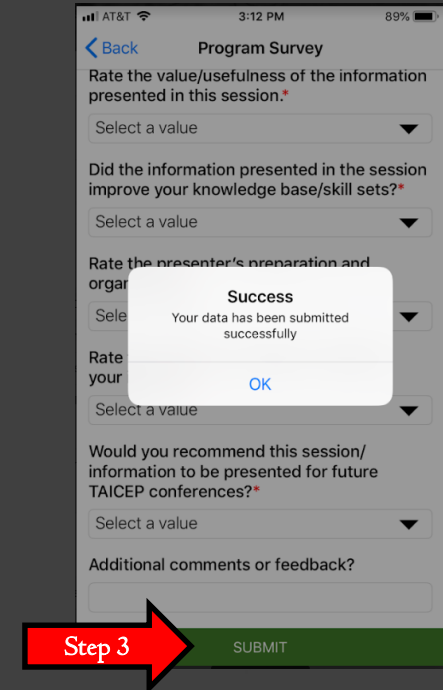
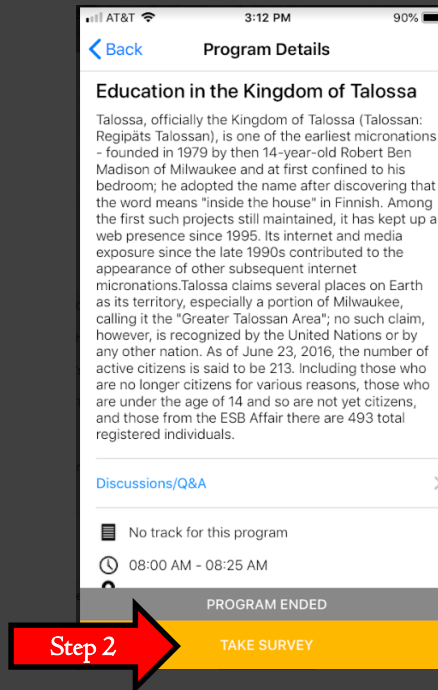
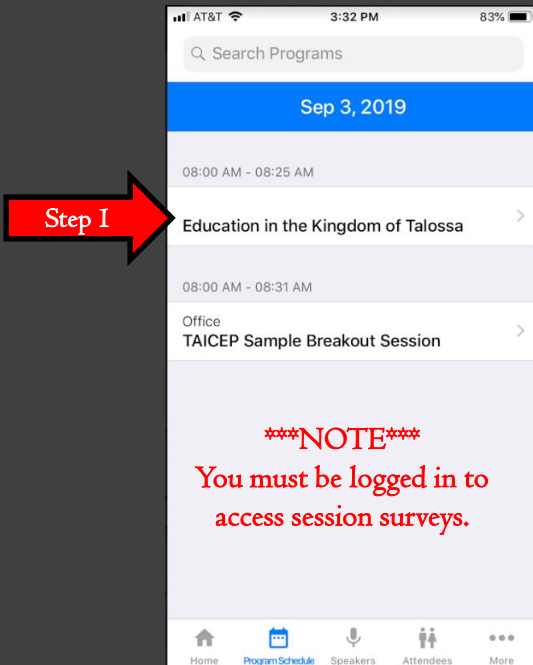
- ◆ A partner organisation has contacted SQA with concerns over criminal links to a centre which is approved to offer SQA qualifications. There have also been accusations made by another source over the conduct of assessments.
- ◆ What did SQA do in this case?

Please Complete a Session Survey

Open Session Details in the Website or Mobile App Schedule

“Take Survey” Button Available 10 Minutes Before Session Ends

“Submit” (*Then... go find coffee!*)





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