

Fiona Robertson
Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief
Examiner
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow G2 8DG

SENT BY EMAIL

Thursday 09 April 2020

Dear Fiona,

Guidance to schools and colleges about SQA awarding and certification process for 2020

As you are aware, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is the National Equality Body for Scotland, England and Wales. In carrying out this role, we promote and enforce compliance with the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

We strongly support the work being done by the Scottish Government and other public bodies, such as SQA, to keep people safe during the ongoing coronavirus emergency. We appreciate you are making difficult decisions every day and you are responding rapidly to provide others with the advice and

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support they need. In particular, we understand you have provided regular updates about the SQA awarding and certification process for 2020, and you will provide detailed guidance to schools and colleges after Easter, and by 20 April 2020.

At this time, it is critically important that public authorities meet the requirements of the PSED to their fullest ability, and consider the particular needs and disadvantages facing people with different protected characteristics when they are deciding and implementing their response to Covid-19.

We are concerned there are important equality considerations that should be included in the detailed guidance to schools and colleges to ensure that specific protected characteristic groups are not disadvantaged by the awarding and certification process for 2020. In particular, the guidance should ensure that steps are taken to guard against and check for potential bias (both conscious and unconscious) when making judgements about learners' achievements. Other equality considerations that should be covered in the guidance include an understanding that some protected characteristic groups experience exclusion and bullying more than others do, and some groups require additional help to participate fully, which is not always provided consistently throughout the academic year.

I appreciate the very tight deadlines you are working to and we are keen to

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discuss and agree the best and most appropriate ways we can support SQA.
My colleague **NR** who manages the Scotland Compliance team, is
happy to talk to your colleagues working on the guidance at their earliest
convenience. **NR** contact details are

NR [@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:NR@equalityhumanrights.com) or **Irrelevant & Sensitive**

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Data

Lynn Welsh

Head of Scotland

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