

Case: 201102567, Scottish Qualifications Authority
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her daughter that there had been an error in how an examination had been marked. Despite consistently telling the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) that a mistake had been made, Mrs C was unhappy that her representations were treated as an appeal. She complained that the SQA failed to acknowledge that an administrative error in dealing with her daughter's results led to an incorrect result being recorded for her and that the SQA were rude and unhelpful in dealing with her complaint. She also said that they failed to properly investigate the circumstances.

When we investigated, we found that although the SQA made a full clerical check of the circumstances they did not explore the possibility that a error could have been made when originally transcribing Mrs C's daughter's mark. In the circumstances, we could not determine whether or not an error had actually been made. We could not, therefore, uphold this part of the complaint. However, it was clear that the SQA had not made appropriate and full enquiries about the matter. We upheld Mrs C's complaints about this and made recommendations to address the failings identified.

Recommendations

We recommended that the SQA:

- apologise to Mrs C and her daughter for the failures in the handling of the complaint;
- ensure staff receive training to allow them to differentiate between appeals and complaints and that their advice to the public should similarly differentiate; and
- emphasise to staff the importance of fully responding to correspondence from the public.