

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201607831, Scottish Qualifications Authority  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** complaints handling  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA)'s handling of his complaint was unreasonable, as he felt there was a lack of transparency in their response to him.

Mr C's son's school were meant to put in place reasonable adjustments for Mr C's son to complete an exam, but failed to do so. The school submitted an exceptional circumstances consideration request to the SQA because of the exam circumstances their failure had created. The SQA considered the request and determined that Mr C's son would not have passed the exam. Mr C complained to the SQA that they had given contradictory information to the school about the request process, that the SQA had not followed their own procedures in considering the request, and that they did not use appropriate academic evidence to assess his son's ability.

We found that the school were bound by the SQA's procedures on submitting a request, and the procedures were clear that it was the school's responsibility to submit to the SQA all available alternative academic evidence for consideration. The school failed to do this and submitted only selected evidence. The SQA could only assess Mr C's son's ability based on the evidence provided by the school. We did not see any evidence that the SQA failed to follow their procedures. It would be unreasonable to hold the SQA responsible for the school's failings, including the school's failure to support Mr C's son.

We concluded that, although the SQA's response to Mr C's complaint could have provided some additional information, such as the greater level of detail they provided to us in responding to our enquiry, the response was an accurate reflection of their responsibilities as set out in their policies.

Whilst we appreciated the impact that the school's repeated failings had on Mr C's son, and that Mr C was unhappy that the SQA were unable to remedy the situation created by the school, we did not find that the SQA's handling of Mr C's complaint was unreasonable. As such, we did not uphold the complaint.