

SPSO decision report



Case: 201103561, **Scottish Qualifications Authority**
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C's son failed the essay component of his Higher history exam as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) deemed the title of his essay invalid. Mr C was unhappy as the school had advised his son on the title, and the school remained of the view that it was valid. Because of the difference of opinion between the SQA and the school, Mr C complained that the SQA failed to have adequate processes in place for communicating their guidelines to schools.

In responding to our enquiries, the SQA confirmed that they have processes in place for communicating their guidance. This includes detailed information on their website, annual update letters to schools and the availability of bespoke training services. In response to Mr C's concerns that there was no real-time validation process in place for essay titles, the SQA said that, due to the high number of candidates presenting to them, this was neither practical nor appropriate. We considered this reasonable and did not uphold the complaint.