



Undertaking given by AQA to Ofqual under Condition B8 of the General Conditions of Recognition.

Background

In 2016 Ofqual introduced new regulations for the conduct of reviews of marking, moderation and appeals. This autumn represented the second year of operation of those regulations.

The regulations, which are defined in GCE and GCSE Qualification-level Conditions (herein referred to as Reviews of Marking and Moderation or ROMM Conditions), set out Ofqual's requirements of exam boards in relation to the steps that reviewers should take when considering whether an error had been made by an original marker, and the training and monitoring of reviewers that exam boards should undertake to ensure those steps are appropriately and consistently taken by reviewers.

Following a review of post-results data relating to reviews undertaken after the summer 2017 examination series, Ofqual identified increases of marks and grades that it considered to be inconsistent with fully compliant application of aspects of the ROMM Conditions. Ofqual investigated this issue and concluded that AQA had not acted sufficiently to change reviewers' behaviours and practices.

AQA recognises that it failed to secure full compliance with the ROMM Conditions, specifically the requirement set out in Conditions: GCSE (A*-G) 9.4, GCSE 17.4, GCE (Pre-Reform) 10.4, and GCE 17.4.

Accordingly, Ofqual has requested assurances from AQA that we will take steps to:

- I. review and improve our Reviewer training (and make it mandatory);
- II. review and improve our approach to monitoring Reviewers to identify any potential for non-compliant practices; and
- III. consider and explain how, as a result of that monitoring, we will intervene where necessary.

AQA has agreed to provide an undertaking to Ofqual as set out below, to assure Ofqual of our arrangements for ensuring full compliance with the ROMM Conditions, initially in respect of the delivery of post-results services for the November examination series, in January 2018.

These undertakings are given by AQA in accordance with Condition B8 of the General Conditions of Recognition, and are intended to have effect for the purposes of that Condition. AQA understands that they represent a set of legally binding agreements.

The Undertaking

AQA undertakes that it will:

Training and reviewer behaviour

1. Review our training methods and materials for Reviewers and ensure that we more clearly explain, including through exemplification, the circumstances in which changes of marks are appropriate, and in which they are not.
2. Ensure reviews of marking are conducted only by Reviewers who have completed the mandatory training stipulated by AQA.
3. Amend Reviewer contracts to include a specific requirement to undertake the mandatory training stipulated by AQA, and enforce that requirement.

Monitoring and Intervention

1. Before noon on 9 January 2018, demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that we have in place an appropriate Monitoring and Intervention plan for reviews of marking to take place in respect of the November 2017 examination series.
2. In the Monitoring and Intervention Plan, specify in particular our approach to securing compliance with each facet of Condition GCSE (A*-G) 9.4, GCSE 17.4, GCE (Pre-Reform) 10.4, and GCE 17.4.
3. At all times comply with the Monitoring and Intervention Plan.
4. Promptly notify Ofqual if we intend to amend or deviate from the Monitoring and Intervention Plan.

Communication

1. Communicate that we have given this undertaking to Ofqual.

Reporting

AQA will report to Ofqual in respect of the implementation of this undertaking.

Follow up

AQA will review the effectiveness of the measures introduced in accordance with this undertaking after the conclusion of the January 2018 review of marking period and will report the findings of that review to Ofqual on or before 15 March 2018.

AQA will set out in its report to Ofqual how it intends to incorporate lessons learnt into its plans for the management of reviews of marking for the summer 2018 examination series.



SIGNED – A Scharaschkin
(AQA Responsible Officer)

DATED – 20 December 2017