PRE BUDGET SCRUTINY
Autumn 2016

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Anonymous Submission

It is my contention that over the last decade or so SQA has lost the respect and trust of Scottish teachers. I write as a retired physics teacher who still does a little part-time teaching and so needs to keep in touch with developments.

- The assessment materials are of inconsistent quality, the marking guidelines unhelpful and inconsistent. Materials are being published which have not been adequately edited or pretested.
- There is no adequate help for re-assessment. Cf the NABS in higher still where there were three assessments for each unit and later five. There is one test and if you need to reassess then you are basically on your own.
- The whole unit assessment system is running round like a headless chicken: first you had to judge whether half the statements made were correct; then you could use a marking scheme and now the unit assessments are to be scrapped.
- People are perplexed by the marking of the Investigating Physics unit. I have been to three nominee training events and still don’t feel confident that I can judge students work accurately. Reading the Physics teachers mailing list people just don’t seem to understand the standards. I have marked AH investigations over the years and before that CSYS and always got good feedback that my judgments were consistent. Now I feel that I’m clutching at straws.
- The published materials are verbose and opaque. You have to wade through pages of print to find what you need. Think concise, people don’t have time to dredge through all this stuff.
- There is a general lack of gravitas. It used to seem that meeting were being led by people of formidable intellect with a clear idea of what was wanted. Now they seem woolly and vague.

It is a case of “The Emperor’s New Clothes”