

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Taking the role of the *pupil*, imagine that you were at a school in Scotland where you sat your Scottish Higher exams. Your university place depended upon you scoring an 'A' and three 'B's – the grades you got in your mock exams. The Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) did not return your results in time for you to confirm your place and you instead accepted a place at your second choice university, which was willing to take you based on the results you achieved in the mocks. When the real results arrive, a month late, you find that you scored two 'A's and two 'B's. You complain to the SQA and are not satisfied with their response, so you go to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

As person playing the part of the **SQA representative**, you should defend the Authority's actions. You wrote and apologised for the computer error which led to the pupil's late result, explaining that steps had been taken to ensure it would not happen again. You warned the pupil that the results would be delayed a week before they were due, although you did not notify the universities of this. You feel that it is up to the university to decide whether to accept mock exam grades or not. Since the pupil does not want to change university, you do not see what more you can do.

The person in the role of the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman** should try to resolve this situation. Is the SQA guilty of maladministration, and if so can anything be done to put it right? How can you determine the truth of what the pupil and the SQA are saying?