



A former pupil from James Gillespie's High School, and a chief invigilator who has overseen hundreds of exams in a city school, have each been recognised at this year's Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Star Awards.

Alex Laird (below) was Highly Commended in the Appointee of the Year category, for the dedication she has shown throughout her 18 years as chief invigilator at Portobello High School. Alex trains and manages a team of 28 invigilators to supervise the school's busy SQA and prelim exam periods. She is one of the thousands of appointees who works with SQA every year to ensure the annual examination diet is delivered securely.

Also Highly Commended was Jamie Clarkson (above), whose achievements whilst a pupil at James Gillespie's High School saw him recognised in the Academic Excellence Award category. Jamie gained four Advanced Highers in his final year at school – scoring consistently high marks in Advanced Higher Mathematics, Mathematics of Mechanics, Physics, and Statistics.



The SQA Star Awards are unique, recognising both the individuals who work towards and the organisations that deliver SQA qualifications; rewarding those that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to learning.

Receiving SQA's highest honour on the night, the SQA Fellowship, in recognition of his dedication to providing great learning and teaching, was Grant Ritchie, principal of Dundee and Angus College. Before becoming principal, Grant developed creative industries in the college and worked with SQA on developing the Higher National Certificate and Diploma courses in the Creative Industries.

SQA Chief Executive, Dr Janet Brown, said: "I have been

overwhelmed by the dedication of our winners and have been privileged to hear moving stories of learning journeys. Our winners are an inspiration to us all!

“The SQA Star Awards shine a light on the incredible support provided to learners by teachers, lecturers, schools, colleges, employers, and training providers, encouraging them to reach their potential, and it is right that we give our exceptional centres the recognition they truly deserve.

Dr Brown continued: “This evening the excellent work of our colleagues in schools, colleges, workplaces, and training centres, and the achievements of young people and adult learners have been recognised, and we are delighted to shine a spotlight on their success.”

Deputy First Minister John Swinney said: “These awards are a wonderful opportunity to recognise the hard work and achievement of people across Scotland, and of our education and training providers.

“It is absolutely right that we should celebrate these achievements which demonstrate the best in Scottish education and training. I would like to congratulate all the winners and wish them every success for the future.”

The SQA Star Awards ceremony was hosted by TV and radio presenter Kaye Adams, and is supported by a number of sponsors, including the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership, and Skills Development Scotland.