

About SQA

Ken Muir Review

September 2021



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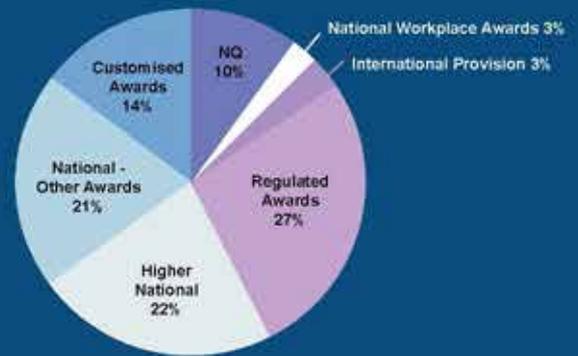
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Our Qualifications

- National Workplace Awards 72 (3%)
- International Provision 76 (3%)
- National Qualifications 262 (10%)
- Customised 378 (14%)
- National - Other Awards 535 (21%)
- Higher National 586 (22%)
- Regulated Awards 705 (27%)



NQ 
136,000

candidates certificated

During 2021 we processed

- 1.3m external assessment marks
- 800k Unit entries
- 632k Course entries



Higher National Vocational Qualifications

160,000
Group Awards

90,000
Units

7,000
Replacement
certificates

15,000
Appointees



- 8,000 Markers
- 5,000 Invigilators
- 500 SEVs and EVs
- 1,500 Senior appointees



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Part 1

About SQA

1 SQA's core purpose and activities

SQA is the national accreditation and awarding body in Scotland. Our purpose is to help people fulfil their full potential whilst maintaining standards across Scottish education. We are an executive non-departmental public body that reports to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament established under the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1996](#). SQA is sponsored by the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate.

Our remit and function are outlined in the amended [Scottish Qualifications Act 2002](#). With a current staff of almost 1000 based in Glasgow and Dalkeith, SQA engages with learners, schools, colleges and training providers across Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally, to develop, maintain, and improve a framework of qualifications, and to set and maintain standards for many other awarding bodies, and accredited qualifications.

Awarding

As an awarding body, SQA develops, maintains, and improves a framework of qualifications. These can be gained at Scotland's schools, colleges, employers and training providers. They include:

- ◆ National Qualifications. These are studied for at schools and colleges, and include National 1–5, Highers, and Advanced Highers.
- ◆ Higher National Qualifications. These are often studied for at colleges. They are made up of units which are qualifications in their own right. They can serve as a bridge to further study at university, and are currently being redesigned under the 'Next Gen' project.
- ◆ A range of vocational qualifications, developed with industry partners, and responding to perceived skills needs.

A more detailed overview of SQA's range of qualifications can be found in our [Guide to Scottish Qualifications](#).

Accrediting

As an [accrediting body](#), SQA sets and maintains standards for many other awarding bodies, and for accredited qualifications such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), which provide evidence that learners can do their jobs well (these can be studied in colleges or in the workplace). This role is similar to the role carried out by Ofqual in other parts of the UK.

SQA Accreditation provides extensive support and quality assurance that offers a badge of quality for awarding bodies and their customers, working with Standards Setting Organisations and other stakeholders in development of National Occupational Standards (NOS), development of the qualification structures and associated products, credit rating of qualifications for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

SQA also plays an important role in supporting Foundation Apprenticeships and the wider Developing the Young Workforce policy, and our qualifications form part of the majority of Scotland's Modern Apprenticeships. Our accreditation function also makes an important contribution in this area.

As the Scottish qualifications regulator, the accreditation function promotes itself as SQA Accreditation to minimise any potential confusion with the awarding function of SQA.

SQA's functions and products

What SQA does

- ◆ Accredit, assess and award qualifications
- ◆ Devise and develop qualifications and assessments
- ◆ Provide qualifications to support all learners
- ◆ Approve and quality assure centres (secondary schools, colleges, training providers and employers (private and public sector)) who are approved to deliver SQA qualifications.
- ◆ Deliver SQA qualifications
- ◆ Certificate qualifications
- ◆ Provide consultancy services
- ◆ Deliver contract services

The Scottish Qualifications Authority has two distinct parts, SQA Accreditation and SQA the awarding body.

SQA Accreditation

Operating separately from the awarding body, SQA Accreditation quality assures qualifications offered in Scotland and the rest of the UK by approving awarding bodies and accrediting their qualifications. This is done by checking awarding bodies and their qualifications against published regulatory principles and accreditation criteria. The accreditation arm of SQA reports to the Accreditation Committee and is accountable to the Scottish Government.

Accreditation is:

- ◆ mandatory for SVQs
- ◆ necessary for qualifications included in Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks
- ◆ sometimes required by legislation
- ◆ voluntary for most other qualifications

There is more information about the accreditation function in Part 2.

SQA as an awarding body

- ◆ Responsible for all qualifications in Scotland (other than university degrees).
- ◆ Devises and develops a portfolio of qualifications.
- ◆ Validates qualifications (makes sure they are well written and meet the needs of learners and tutors).
- ◆ Reviews qualifications to ensure they are up to date.
- ◆ Arranges for, assists in, and carries out, the assessment of people taking SQA qualifications.
- ◆ Quality-assures education and training establishments which offer SQA qualifications.
- ◆ Issues certificates to candidates.

The principles that underly SQA's portfolio

- ◆ Aims to assist all citizens to achieve their learning goals and ensure our competitiveness as a nation.
- ◆ Responsive, partnership approach to development and delivery.
- ◆ Portfolio supports development of general and specific skills, knowledge and capabilities.
- ◆ Breadth and depth of current portfolio – from Latin to Leather Production and from SCQF levels 1 – 10.

- ◆ Allows for progression within SQA qualifications and beyond, eg to HE.
- ◆ Flexibility - support for wide range of approaches to delivery and assessment.

SQA's qualifications portfolio

- ◆ National Qualifications (NQ)
- ◆ Higher National Qualifications (HN)
- ◆ Vocational Qualifications (VQ)
- ◆ Specialised Awards

National Qualifications

Delivered in schools/community education/colleges (non-advanced)

- ◆ National 1 to 5
- ◆ Higher
- ◆ Advanced Higher
- ◆ Scottish Baccalaureate
- ◆ Foundation Apprenticeships

Higher National Qualifications

Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC/HND) - Colleges/Employers/Training Providers

- ◆ HNCs are designed to SCQF level 7 and HNDs are designed to SCQF level 8
- ◆ Normally college based
- ◆ Often used by those in employment
- ◆ Based on National Occupational Standards
- ◆ higher education qualifications
- ◆ Internationally recognised
- ◆ Prepare students for employment and enable advanced entry to a degree programme
- ◆ Can be delivered flexibly
- ◆ Designed in partnership with colleges, universities and employers based on National Occupational Standards
- ◆ At SCQF Levels 7 and 8

Vocational qualifications

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) — Employers/training providers

- ◆ Demonstrates competence in a particular occupational area
- ◆ Normally delivered and assessed in the workplace
- ◆ Based on National Occupational Standards
- ◆ At SCQF levels 4 to 11
- ◆ Must be accredited by SQA Accreditation

Competence-Based Qualifications (CBQs)

- ◆ Based on qualifications and/or standards developed by Sector Skills Councils or Standard Setting Bodies
- ◆ Accredited by SQA Accreditation
- ◆ Perform a similar role to Scottish Vocational Qualifications

- ◆ Can be used as an alternative to Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Modern Apprenticeship frameworks
- ◆ Titled as Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

Professional Development Awards (PDAs)

- ◆ Shorter than HNs, PDAs are designed for those in a career or vocation to extend or broaden skills
- ◆ Aligned to National Occupational Standards or Professional Body requirements
- ◆ Made up of HN Units and/or SVQ Units
- ◆ Available at SCQF levels 6-12

Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Qualifications

- ◆ Ofqual introduced a new Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) on 1 October 2015. This replaces both the QCF and NQF in England and Northern Ireland.
- ◆ We offer qualifications in sectors including Construction, Creative & Cultural, Logistics and Maritime.
- ◆ SQA is the sole awarding body for the Maritime sector

International Vocational Awards (IVAs)

- ◆ Devised for customers who operate internationally
- ◆ Created from existing SQA qualifications or designed to suit specific needs
- ◆ These include Criminal Investigation Skills, Operational Policing: Models and Practice, Police Management, and Hydrocarbon Process Operations

Awards

- ◆ Awards are part of the National Qualifications family
- ◆ Characterised by their flexible nature and are nationally recognised
- ◆ Suitable for a wide range of people at different stages
- ◆ Recognise the life and work skills that learners gain from activities they may already be doing in at school, at college or elsewhere – such as sport, mentoring, voluntary work or fund-raising activities
- ◆ They provide learners with opportunities to acquire skills, recognise achievement and promote confidence through independent thinking and positive attitudes
- ◆ Available at SCQF levels 2-6

National Progression Awards (NPAs)

- ◆ Suitable for:
 - 16+, adult unemployed and employed
 - People preparing to go into or return to work
 - Those in employment for career development
- ◆ Designed to assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas, linked to National Occupational Standards
- ◆ Available at SCQF levels 2-6

National Certificates

- ◆ Mainly delivered by colleges, but can also be delivered through school/college partnerships
- ◆ Relates to subject/occupational areas and mapped to National Occupational Standards
- ◆ Develops a range of skills, including transferable skills
- ◆ Made up of National Units

- ◆ Available from SCQF levels 2-6

Core Skills

- ◆ Transferable skills covering:
 - Communication
 - Information technology
 - Numeracy
 - Problem solving
 - Working with others
- ◆ Found in NQ, HN and Modern Apprenticeships
- ◆ Candidate's Core Skills profile included on Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC)
- ◆ SCQF levels 2-6

Specialised Awards

- ◆ Customised Awards: Customer can create their own bespoke qualification
- ◆ SQA administered, quality assured, certificated
- ◆ Credit rating
- ◆ Credit and levelling customer training programme and qualifications onto the SCQF

Units: the building blocks of SQA qualifications

- ◆ The smallest qualification offered and certificated by SQA
- ◆ Used as building blocks to form all courses and group awards
- ◆ Internally assessed and quality assured by SQA
- ◆ Available at all SCQF levels and in all subject and vocational areas
- ◆ Based on achievement of set outcomes

Most units are designed to take 40 hours of teaching time to complete and learners are expected to do some additional work on their own. You achieve a unit by passing an assessment — coursework, tests, or practical work marked by the teacher or tutor. The marking is then checked by SQA.

HN units

- ◆ Building blocks for Higher National Certificates and Diplomas and Professional Development Awards
- ◆ At SCQF levels 6-11
- ◆ Provide skills and knowledge for specific occupational areas and generalist areas, usually at technician or middle manager level
- ◆ Unit is 40 hours (comprising 20 hours learning, 20 hours studying)

How we work: developing qualifications

- ◆ We develop qualifications in partnership with schools, colleges, universities and industry
- ◆ We embed industry standards where appropriate
- ◆ We create qualifications and assessments that are relevant to users

See section 3 'Developing and managing qualifications' for more information.

2 Business model and environments

SQA is an executive non-departmental public body that reports to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament. It is sponsored by the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate and employs nearly 1000 people. The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 (as amended by the Scottish Qualifications Act 2002) sets out SQA's statutory remit and the governance arrangements to oversee SQA's distinct accreditation and awarding functions.

SQA provides statistical reports on the wide range of SQA qualifications. Our online statistics archive reaches back to 1986, and our publication schedule details when our latest statistical work will be available online.

The period 2020–21 was dominated by the biggest challenge SQA has faced in its existence. As part of the UK-wide response to the COVID–19 pandemic, the 2020 and 2021 national exam diets were cancelled, and work was directed, in each case, to establishing an alternative method of certifying attainment for the many thousands of learners registered for our national qualifications. This effort has drawn deep on the resources, resilience and commitment of all colleagues at SQA.

Non-NQ activity

SQA delivers a range of services on behalf of our commercial clients, principally focusing on the administration of assessments in transport and education sectors. Services include:

- ♦ the implementation and oversight of all contract requirements and KPIs
- ♦ management and oversight of the IT/database technology platforms used to deliver these schemes
- ♦ the management of a team of appointees used to quality assure training providers
- ♦ management and oversight of syllabus, exams and/or question banks
- ♦ marking assessments, publishing results and printing cards/certificates
- ♦ ensuring the Manual of Practice remains contemporaneous

International work

SQA has engaged and operated internationally since its inception in 1997, recognising the value and opportunity for Scotland as an outward-looking nation contributing to and benefiting from the international community, supporting the Scottish Government's international strategy, promoting Scottish education and Scotland worldwide. This generates income to offset our draw on the public purse, supports the Scottish Government's international agenda, and allows us to share good practice. SQA is proud to operate internationally and to show the world what Scotland has to offer. We demonstrate in practice that working with SQA — and so with Scotland — is beneficial and positive for our international partners and customers.

SQA offers a range of qualifications including Advanced Certificates and Diplomas, National Progression Awards, Professional Development Awards and Customised Awards that are delivered by universities and training providers. SQA provides consultancy services that help establish educational and training supply chains.

The provision in the Education Act sets out:

- ♦ SQA may provide services (including advice or assistance), whether within or outwith Scotland, for any person in respect of any matter to which its functions relate.

- ◆ SQA may collaborate with other persons, whether within or outwith Scotland, in respect of any matter to which its functions relate.
- ◆ SQA may, whether within or outwith Scotland, carry out any of its functions or do anything incidental or related to the carrying out of its functions as agent for another person.

SQA is continually reviewing its international business, as part of its human rights policy, and has recently ceased business in six countries. Other countries remain under review.

Increasing opportunities to learners, supporting workforce development, and helping to build in-country capacity have been at the heart of SQA's approach. Developing strong relationships and opportunities that contribute to sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

More information

The [SQA framework document 2020–23](#) is drawn up by the Scottish Government (SG) in consultation with SQA. It sets out the broad framework within which SQA will operate, defining key roles and responsibilities that underpin the relationship between SQA and SG.

3 Objectives, strategies and managing our performance

In 2019–20, we carried out an internal consultation and development exercise to assess and update the ways we express, implement and monitor our strategy as an organisation. As a result of this process, we now have our five Outcomes, which we have published in our [Corporate Plan for 2020–23](#):

- ◆ We provide a credible qualifications system
- ◆ We are flexible in meeting customer needs
- ◆ We have a sustainable business operating model that is appropriately resourced in order to deliver our remit now and in the future
- ◆ We are a thriving organisation, with quality jobs and a fair work environment for all our people
- ◆ We are trusted, respected and valued by our customers, stakeholders and partners

These Outcomes help us in our aim of maintaining, developing, and continually improving our qualifications, accreditation, and other activities. We seek to do this through continued engagement with those who use and are affected by our products and services. We are open to feedback and are very willing to respond to it.

SQA's strategic objectives are embodied in our Outcomes. These set out our aims and aspirations as an organisation that makes a vital contribution to the wellbeing, progress, and development of Scottish society as a whole, and of the individuals who form part of it. They cover both our accreditation and awarding functions, and align with and support the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF).

Developing and managing qualifications

SQA's portfolio of qualifications, and the way we deliver them, makes a significant contribution to the Scottish economy and boosts Scotland's reputation as a nation with a successful and sustainable economy. SQA develops and implements new qualifications and assessments, using best-value models, whilst maintaining the existing portfolio, ensuring that SQA Awarding complies with all legislative and regulatory requirements.

National Qualifications

Since 2000 and in line with its statutory obligations, SQA has been responsible for delivering the national diet of examinations in Scotland. With the exception of the last two years, the diet typically runs from end of April to the beginning of June with results day on the second Tuesday in August. This is also the plan we will follow for 2022.

The main diet consists of a series of exams (question papers) for National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers and in 2019, the timetable consisted of 201 exams. In addition to exams, SQA marks and verifies other components to determine awards, for example, Art and Design folios.

In essence, the annual cycle starts with the setting and vetting of the questions papers for the diet. These are of course reflective of the qualifications and coursework content arrangements. Question papers are developed by experienced subject specialists (appointees) overseen by Qualifications staff. There is a significant logistical exercise supporting the development, print and distribution of question papers to centres, usually in mid-April. This involves sending around two million question papers (including answer booklets) and 15,000 audio CDs. We deliver to approximately 510 centres. This exercise must be handled securely to avoid any breach of question paper confidentiality.

To ensure that the correct question papers are delivered to the right learners, centres submit entry data to SQA by the end of November. This entry data is essential in helping SQA run a number of dependent processes, such as:

- ◆ Appointee recruitment, for example markers, invigilators, quality assurance verifiers, visiting assessors. There are around 15,000 appointees, filling 23,000 appointments; about 500 are external verifiers; 5000 are exam invigilators; and 8000 are markers for examinations. There is an upper level of senior appointees — principal assessors and principal verifiers, of whom there are approximately 1500.
- ◆ Approval of centres to deliver qualifications.
- ◆ Processing requests for assessment arrangements for learners with disabilities or difficulties in accessing assessment (there were around 71,500 in 2019). These include allowing extra time, use of a scribe or reader, providing question papers on different coloured paper, and providing digital papers and answer books. In 2019, we sent out around 10,000 modified papers (includes adapted, colour, enlarged, Braille). Providing assessment arrangements is a legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- ◆ Generating exam stationery, such as attendance registers.
- ◆ Planning visiting examining, for example oral assessments for modern languages (around 1,500 events in 2019).
- ◆ Quality assurance of internally-assessed components and units delivered in centres (3,100 'events' in 2019).
- ◆ Gathering and processing data such as estimates and results (1.1 million marks processed and 900,000 units in 2019).
- ◆ Uplift and reconciliation of coursework assignments, such as projects and folios completed in centres.
- ◆ Organising quality assurance 'events' to mark external assessments such as question papers, and coursework assignments. In 2019, there were 1850 event days in a 120-day period. Attended by 7,100 appointees, covering 13,000 appointments.
- ◆ Delivering the exceptional circumstances consideration service for learners who were unable to sit exams on the day (4,000 requests in 2019) or whose performance was affected by unforeseen circumstances in the run-up to exams.
- ◆ Production, secure print, and distribution of paper certificates for results day.
- ◆ Post Results Services, allowing learners to seek a review of the results awarded in August.

Higher National and Vocational Qualifications

Qualifications such as Higher National Certificates/Diplomas, Personal Development Awards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, National Progression Awards, Skills for Work Awards, Advanced Certificates/Diplomas, Ofqual Certificates and Diplomas, Licence to Practise qualifications, National Workplace units and Customised Awards are delivered by schools, colleges, universities, training providers and employers in Scotland, the rest of the UK (The rest of the UK), and around the globe.

Our centres

Our qualifications are delivered by approved centres (schools, colleges, training providers and employers) at home and abroad.



104

International



1334

Scotland



233

Rest of UK



SQA provides centre and qualifications approval, qualification and systems verification, pre-verification services, supports development activities and standardisation events, and appointee training, and manages quality assurance sanctions. This also includes QA policy development and regulatory compliance.

Key Stats*

- ◆ Approximately 250 new SQA centres approved each year in Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally. There are currently 1334 centres in Scotland, 233 in the rest of the UK, and 104 overseas.
- ◆ Approximately 2000 new qualifications approved each year for centre delivery in Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally.
- ◆ 3000-3500 qualification verification activities carried out each year in Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally.
- ◆ Around 160,000 group award certificates annually.
- ◆ In the region of 90,000 unit certificates annually.

*These figures are based on a 'normal' academic year.

SQA has also established a project working with Scotland's Colleges and other key stakeholders to work on the next generation of Higher National Qualifications. An external steering group chaired by Simon Hewitt, Principal of Dundee and Angus college, oversees this work.

In the new academic session SQA will pilot the first of the next generation of HNCs and HNDs with colleges.

Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards

SQA has a responsibility to individual learners and to the wider community of providers and educational establishments and end users (employers, universities, colleges) in Scotland and beyond to ensure that the standard of our qualifications is maintained over time and across courses. This means that we have to make sure that the grade a learner receives recognises achievement against the established grade descriptions of a course. It also means that we have to make sure that it is not easier or harder to achieve the same result in different years.

SQA carries out this function for National Qualifications and Higher National Vocational Qualifications. SQA uses the SCQF framework to benchmark our vocational qualifications at the correct level. We also use National Occupational Standards to identify the standard required by employers in different sectors. We provide clearly-defined standards in the units, and provide guidance, assessment materials and support for our centres to help them to apply this consistently. We carry out quality assurance of centres through verification processes to ensure that different standards are applied consistently across the country. This ensures the credibility of these qualifications for our learners and for end-users, employers, FE and HE.

For National Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the course specification provides the template for the development of course assessments that meet the national standard and are consistent from year to year.

The awarding process is what many people would consider as 'standard setting'. This is where the grade boundaries for a course assessment are decided. Grade boundaries are the marks a learner needs in order to achieve a particular grade for a course. SQA reviews these grade boundaries each year to ensure exam results are fair across the whole of Scotland, year on year. Senior SQA staff meet with subject specialists so that they can talk about whether the course assessment was set at the right level of difficulty.

To determine how difficult a course assessment was, we review a range of information such as feedback from markers, information on learners' marks achieved at course, assessment component, and (sometimes) question level, and candidate assessment answer booklets.

These activities provide the stability that is essential for securing confidence in qualifications and maintaining the meaning and value of the qualifications and their grades for those who hold them and for end-users.

Curriculum for Excellence

SQA carried out extensive research, engagement and consultation with stakeholder groups, including practitioners, throughout the design and development of the new National Courses, beginning in 2005. All decisions relating to the design and development were made on a co-created basis with senior stakeholder groups, closely governed by the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board. This work involved close collaboration between SQA and Education Scotland to ensure that there was good progression from the curriculum outcomes within the BGE and the curriculum outcomes of the National Courses.

There were Curriculum Area Reference Groups (eg for science, social subjects, science, technology) and Subject Working Groups. These groups included a mix of delivering centres, professional associations, FE and HE representatives. There was a system for people to register their interest in being involved. These groups worked to co-create the new qualifications to the design agreed by the CfE Management Board. In this respect, the new National Courses were the first senior-phase qualifications to be developed in system-wide co-creation.

The design and development phases of the new National Courses aligned with the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence. The governance structure played a key role in ensuring this. However, issues at implementation — specifically linked to teachers' and lecturers' understanding of the relationship between National 4 and 5, and the national standard at these levels — directly contributed to a perception of over-assessment. Consequently, this may have resulted in assessment leading learning and teaching — an outcome that conflicted with the values, principles and purposes of the curriculum.

The revision of National Courses in 2016–19 sought to address issues of over-assessment by removing internal unit assessment at the request of the education system. SQA rationalised course materials to support greater understanding of the national standard. Although the revision of the National Courses is now complete, it is clear that there would be unintended consequences of the decision to remove units. SQA did provide advice about the potential negative impact of such a change on the alignment of the design of the assessment to Building the Curriculum 5. However, what is clear is that the strong alignment of National Courses with Curriculum for Excellence has been weakened by this ministerial decision.

SQA's Assessment Futures work continues to build on good practice within the senior phase qualifications and assessments whilst looking at to the future of qualification and assessment design with a view to influencing the next generation of National Courses.

SCQF Partnership

The [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#) provides a way for people to compare different qualifications. It does this by credit-rating each qualification — describing them in terms of how difficult they are to achieve (by placing the qualification at one of 12 **levels**) and how much effort or work is required to achieve them (by assigning them a number of **credit points**). This improves understanding of and access to qualifications.

SQA is a founding member of the SCQF Partnership and is represented on the Partnership Board. As well as SQA Awarding Body and SQA Accreditation, SQA is a recognised SCQF Partnership approved credit rating body.

SQA as a credit rating body can credit rate our own learning provision and we are approved by the SCQF to credit rate learning for other organisations, referred to as Third Party credit rating.

- ◆ This service offers the opportunity to credit rate third party provision on the SCQF.
- ◆ The process ensures that the learning programmes meet the SCQF guidelines and confirms an official SCQF credit rating.
- ◆ This allows both employers and employees to understand and compare the range of qualifications available in Scotland and makes the relationships between them clearer
- ◆ Having qualifications/learning programmes credit rated demonstrates that they have been confirmed, by a recognised credit rating body, as meeting the required standards set by SCQF in order to be recognised on a national framework of learning.
- ◆ By credit rating qualification/learning programmes organisations will also be able to show alignment to other National and European frameworks.

Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005

SQA published its first Gaelic Language Plan in 2010, and is in discussions with key partners around its third iteration, building on the achievements of the last decade. This area of our work, and SQA's wider provision for languages (including BSL and Scots language) in schools, colleges, and private training providers, forms an integral part of our national catalogue of qualifications.

Further information can be found here: [SQA Gaelic Language Plan](#)

More information

[SQA Information for OECD Review](#) is an extensive report into the development and implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, prepared for the OECD's review announced in May 2019.

[SQA's Code of Practice](#) is based on 13 governing principles that ensure that our qualifications are high-quality, fit-for-purpose, and assessed to a consistently high standard.

There is more information on the [next generation of Higher National qualifications](#) in Part 2.

4 People and values

As a provider of products and services, and as an employer, SQA puts people at the heart of everything it does. Equality is a key consideration in qualifications — as it is for the people who work with us. Impact assessments are carried out on new and existing ventures.

SQA staff

Fiona Robertson was appointed the Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer (with approval of the Scottish Ministers) in July 2019. Fiona is supported by the Executive Management team and 35 Heads of Service across all SQA functions.

SQA currently has 999 staff, the vast majority currently working from home, but who would normally work from offices in central Glasgow and Dalkeith, Midlothian. There are 1109 staff positions; 110 are not currently filled.

SQA values the relationships with the centres that deliver SQA qualifications, including schools, colleges and training providers.

SQA also contracts around 15,000 appointees each year. They work on a range of subject expert activities, from devising qualifications, creating assessments, and marking, to quality assurance visits and exam invigilation. SQA's appointees are vital in ensuring that our education and training systems work effectively.

SQA as an employer

As an employer, SQA has won many awards including, for example, from Investors in Young People (IiYP), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), and Healthy Working Lives. We're a certified Disability Confident employer; we are accredited members of the Race at Work Charter, Happy to Talk Flexible Working, and the Living Wage Foundation.

We enable and foster mutual support and networking among our staff members — there are networks providing support and information on Culture and Ethnicity, Disability, LGBT+ issues. Our largest support group is the SQA Women's Network, and our newest the SQA Young People Network.

We have also established a Young Talent strategy based around our Young Persons' Guarantee, which promises that we will make do everything we can to source and recruit, develop, and retain young talent.

Our values-led leadership programme is based on our organisational values: Trusted, Progressive and Enabling. It is grounded in the principles of collective leadership, and aims to raise leaders' awareness of their leadership style and how it informs the way they lead others in SQA, the impacts they make and their strengths and growth opportunities. It sits alongside the Values for All programme, which offers values-based learning opportunities for all staff members.

The organisational values also inform our Joint Engagement Forum. This is the place where SQA and its recognised trade unions (Unison and Unite) negotiate, consult and inform one another of issues of mutual interest and concern. In the spirit of working collaboratively to find solutions to any issues and opportunities, both SQA and the unions commit to raising any threats and opportunities at as early a stage as possible.

Embedded equality and diversity

Equality and diversity (E&D) considerations are embedded within all the organisation's decision-making procedures. All committee papers will include consideration of E&D impacts as a standard part of the governance process. We actively consider E&D impacts in new or revised policy or practice, and provide online training in E&D and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to support staff.

Completed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) on policies and procedures are published on the website. This includes, on behalf of the NQ 2021 group, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Alternative Certification Model for graded National Courses in session 2020–21.

As an awarding body, we work with schools, colleges, universities, industry and government, to ensure that qualifications, including National Courses, are inclusive and accessible to all, recognise the achievements of learners, and enable progression to further learning or employment.

The SQA Code of Practice outlines how SQA ensures that its qualifications are of a high quality and fit for purpose, and that the assessment of these qualifications is monitored and maintained to a consistently high standard. It sets out the framework by which we safeguard the integrity of SQA's qualifications and assessment standards and ensures public confidence.

The Code of Practice is based on a set of 13 Governing Principles that govern how SQA meets its statutory duties and regulates its activities. Similar principles apply to SQA qualifications that are regulated by other organisations. Governing Principle 7 states: SQA will ensure that all qualifications and assessments are as fair and accessible as possible and that the needs of learners are met in the administration of its assessments.

The SQA Equality of Access to SQA Qualifications Policy outlines the organisation's commitment to promoting and facilitating access to our qualifications. In practice, this means that every reasonable step will be taken to ensure we:

- ◆ Produce qualifications based on national standards that are as accessible as possible. We equality review our qualifications to identify any aspects that might adversely impact learners who share particular characteristics, and we aim to remove any such adverse impacts, wherever possible, and minimise them where it is not possible to remove them altogether.
- ◆ Develop methods of assessment and quality assurance that are sensitive to the needs of all learners, but which do not compromise our overarching aims of fairness and consistency.
- ◆ Provide assessment arrangements to allow disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs to access the assessment without compromising its integrity. For disabled learners, we will make reasonable adjustments in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010

SQA people



999

staff members



Locations

- 658 Glasgow
- 270 Dalkeith
- 69 Homebased
- 2 Split site

2020

80% employee engagement

2021-22



4.64% Turnover



2.35% Absence



Equality and Human Rights: approach to embedding Equality Impact Assessment

SQA published its [Equality Mainstreaming Report 2019-21](#) and revised [Equality Outcomes](#) in May 2021. As part of our work to revise SQA's equality outcomes and action plans, we identified areas for improvement relating to equality impact assessments. This work aims to further emphasise the importance of embedding equality in policy development, planning and decision-making processes in SQA.

SQA has also signed an agreement with the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The agreement commits us to reviewing and documenting equality impact assessments on all policies and processes across the organisation's functions and further developing our approach to the development of new policies and procedures. The EHRC identified that SQA could improve the way it demonstrates its assessment of the impact of policies and practices against the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty. During the agreement, which will be in place for two years, SQA will implement a jointly agreed action plan and report on its progress ensuring that all equality impact assessments are undertaken and documented in accordance with its duties.

We are committed to making progress with equality impact assessments (EqIAs) to maximise potential positive impacts and reduce potential negative impacts on people who share one or more of the protected characteristics. We aim to ensure all SQA policies and procedures promote equality, and that employees embed equality impact considerations in the work they do. Equality impact assessment of new and revised policies is an ongoing requirement of SQA's policy development cycle and we aim to engage with our union representatives and employee networks as part of this process.

Online Equality Impact Assessment training has been developed and will be launched as part of the work to implement the equality impact assessment action plan as part of the agreement with the EHRC.

People strategy

Our People Strategy, launched in June 2020, is centred on being a values-led, learning organisation with people at its heart.

Each aspect of the strategy is made up of activities that support three core drivers:

- ◆ Strengthening our foundations
- ◆ Build our capability
- ◆ Advance our business

The outcome of this work is a strategy designed for supporting our organisation based on four aspects:

- ◆ **Develop** our organisation design and culture
- ◆ **Improve** our performance
- ◆ **Improve** our health, wellbeing and our environment
- ◆ **Be** a responsible business



GTCS Registered Teachers

SQA employs a number of individuals who were previously teachers and are registered with the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS). To maintain their registration, the teachers are required, every five years, to provide evidence of their continued professional development. This is done against the professional standards set out by the GTCS. Registered teachers can access formal development opportunities, in the same way as all other SQA colleagues, through the OD and Change team.

SQA completed the original Professional Update (PU) Validation process in July 2015, which meant that registered teachers working in SQA could use the MYReview documentation as evidence of this development. Since then there have been changes in approaches to Professional Review and Development for teachers (PRD) and the PU process taking into consideration national developments in professional learning strategy, the launch of the revised GTC Scotland PRD Guidelines, and the revision of the PU Revalidation Guidelines.

SQA retained this validation in July 2021.

5 Organisational structure

SQA's activities are directed by an Executive Management Team (EMT) consisting of the Chief Executive and the directors responsible for the major functions of the organisation. These functions include awarding our own qualifications, and accrediting and regulating the activity of other awarding bodies. This function is overseen by our Accreditation Committee, a statutory committee established by the Education (Scotland) Act 1996.

SQA's policy, and in particular our Corporate Plan, is developed by the EMT, with strategic direction provided by the non-executive members of the Board of Management, and in consultation with the Scottish Government. The EMT oversees the implementation of the plan, and provides regular progress reports for review by the Board. The role of our Advisory Council, whose members are appointed by Scottish Government, is to represent our various stakeholders and consider and advise SQA on their needs and views in relation to our qualifications and awards.

The organisation's functions are split across eight directorates:

- ◆ Business Development
- ◆ Business Systems
- ◆ Communications
- ◆ Finance and Corporate Services
- ◆ Operations
- ◆ Qualifications
- ◆ People
- ◆ Policy, Analysis and Standards

Research and data informing practice

SQA's Policy, Analysis and Standards Directorate puts research and analysis at the heart of all SQA's work. Building on and strengthening the organisation's work to date in this area, the purpose of the new Directorate is to ensure that decisions made about SQA's qualifications, assessments and wider services are based on a robust evidence and analysis. We also seek to ensure that this evidence and analysis is used to inform decision making across the wider education system, that we demonstrate thought leadership, and that our research and official statistics are accessible to as many people as possible.

SQA Committee structure and remit

SQA Board of Management

The SQA Board of Management has a collective responsibility for ensuring that SQA's statutory functions and Scottish Government policies and priorities are being fulfilled and that the use of resources is appropriate and effective. The Board of Management members offer a range of expertise across the Scottish education and business sectors and are by Ministerial appointment.

The Board is supported by the Chief Executive and her Executive Management Team. The main opportunity for Board members to influence and contribute to the workings of SQA is through formal Board meetings.

The Committee structure that has been established by, and supports the Board, comprises:

- ♦ Audit Committee
- ♦ Performance Committee
- ♦ Qualifications Committee
- ♦ Remuneration Committee
- ♦ Accreditation Committee

SQA Board of Management membership					
Position	Name	Initial appointment date	Re-appointment date	Current end date	Term of appointment
Chair	David Middleton	01/09/17	01/09/21	31/08/23	6 years
Member	Eleanor Craig	15/08/16	14/08/20	13/02/22	5 years 6 months
Member	Hamish McKay	01/08/16	31/07/20	31/01/22	5 years 6 months
Member	Jane Handley	15/08/16	14/08/20	13/02/22	5 years 6 months
Member	Sean Hagney	01/08/16	31/07/20	31/01/22	5 years 6 months
Member	Dr Wendy Mayne	15/08/16	14/08/20	13/02/22	5 years 6 months
Member	Col Roger Stewart	01/05/13	01/05/17	31/08/21	8 years 3 months
Member	Anna Davis	01/07/18		30/06/22	4 years
Member	Grahame Smith	01/07/18		30/06/22	4 years
Member	Dr Ken Thomson	01/07/18		30/06/22	4 years

Under powers conferred on Scottish Ministers by the SQA Act 2002, one of the major new developments brought in was the establishment of an Advisory Council.

SQA Advisory Council

The SQA Advisory Council was established under the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002 as a body independent from the SQA Board to consider and provide advice to the SQA and Scottish Ministers.

The Act came into force in the Scottish Parliament in August 2002. It created a dedicated group to represent SQA's stakeholders, and at the same time, reduced the size of the Board in order to accommodate more focus on governance and strategy going forward. The Act also required clear lines of communication between the two bodies and Scottish Ministers to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the decision-making process.

The Advisory Council is a unique partnership that provides a representation of SQA's stakeholders. It brings together a wide range of stakeholder interest, knowledge and contacts from across Scotland for regular exchange on ideas and information. The Council's primary role is to consider and advise on matters relating to SQA's qualifications, awards and functions.

The aim of the Council is to offer sound and well-informed advice to SQA on the needs and views of stakeholders as well as working in such a way that recognises and involves key stakeholders as part of a commitment to openness.

The Advisory Council is convened by SQA Board member Jane Handley and further Board members Sean Hagney, Grahame Smith, and Ken Thomson. Further membership is made up of members representing SQA's various stakeholders appointed by Scottish Government.

SQA Audit Committee

This Committee was established by the Board of Management, in accordance with the guidance on Audit Committees within the Scottish Public Finance Manual and has very specific requirements.

It is responsible, on behalf of the Board of Management, to ensure SQA is subject to independent and objective review of financial systems and reporting, to review the effectiveness of internal controls and risk management systems, to ensure compliance with law and codes of conduct and to monitor SQA's relationship with its auditors.

The SQA Audit Committee:

- ◆ provides independent advice and assurance on the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control, risk management systems and governance
- ◆ supports the SQA Board and Accountable Officer with regard to their responsibilities for issues of risk, control, governance and associated assurance through a process of constructive challenge
- ◆ ensures that effective arrangements are in place to provide assurances on risk management, in line with the SQA's Assurance Framework, as established in partnership with SQA's Internal Auditors.

The Committee meets at least four times per year.

SQA Performance Committee

Established in February 2019, this Committee was developed to fulfil three primary functions:

- ◆ to monitor SQA's progress towards and successful delivery of its corporate objectives
- ◆ to monitor the achievement of Best Value in the use of public resources
- ◆ to review and support the continued development of key performance indicators for SQA that align with Scottish Government's National Performance Framework

The Committee comprises of a Convenor and three non-executive Board members who are appointed by the Board.

The Committee may seek to appoint co-opted members in order to add value from specialist skill sets not currently met from within existing membership.

The Committee meets four times a year.

SQA Qualifications Committee

The Qualifications Committee provides strategic, policy and technical advice to the Board and senior officers on SQA's qualifications and their assessment, quality assurance and awarding systems. It also oversees the work of SQA in developing qualifications that meet the needs of candidates, centres and employers, now and into the future.

This Committee has the ability to co-opt members as part of its membership.

The Committee meets at least five times per year.

SQA Remuneration Committee

The duties of the Remuneration Committee include setting and reviewing the annual performance plan for the Chief Executive and members of the Executive Management Team for each calendar year in advance.

The Remuneration Committee meets at least once a year and reports annually to the Board.

6 Finance

SQA's activities are not self-financing and the net expenditure requirement — after taking into account all fees, charges and commercial income — is funded by grant-in-aid from the Scottish Government. Any capital expenditure incurred is funded via capital grant-in-aid from the Scottish Government.

SQA's budget setting takes into account the planning and delivery of two academic cycles (delivery of awarding in August and subsequent appeals) and preparations for the following awarding cycle. Recognising this, the budget requirement for 2022–23 will increase as this, at this stage, is assumed to cover two exam diet cycles.

Accreditation budget

SQA Accreditation is funded via grant-in-aid from Scottish Government.

Scottish Government has determined that accreditation is a free-of-charge public good and that we are not permitted to charge for any of our activities. This is similar to the other qualification regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Part 2

More information

SQA Accreditation: who we are

The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 sets out the functions of SQA. Part 1, Section 3 sets out the requirements of the accreditation function. This section states that 'SQA shall have the function of accrediting qualifications as meeting such requirements as are specified by SQA' and that the qualifications shall be accredited by an Accreditation Committee (AC), the majority of whose members are neither members nor employees of SQA.

In the early 2000s Scottish Government, having taken legal advice, agreed to the accreditation of qualifications being delegated from the AC to the Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG) to assist in speeding up the process. However, decisions made by ACG are taken on behalf of the AC and a list of accredited decisions made by ACG are presented to the quarterly meetings of AC.

The AC's main role is to oversee the work of SQA Accreditation. It approves awarding body audit and provider monitoring reports, items of policy, regulatory documents such as the Regulatory Principles and Regulatory Directives. In terms of Governance, the Accreditation Committee reports to Ministers rather than to the SQA Board of Management and the SQA Board of Management cannot overturn a decision made by the AC. The AC is chaired by a member of the SQA Board of Management.

ACG approves qualification products, accredits qualifications, approves SCQF credit rating for qualifications, approves new awarding bodies, approves awarding body audit and provider monitoring reports and action plans, and agrees sanctions, where applicable, to be placed on awarding bodies. ACG also provides advice and guidance to a wide range of stakeholders including internal staff, awarding bodies, sector bodies (this includes Sector Skills Councils, Standards Setting Organisations and other organisations contracted in the Standards & Framework programme).

As the Scottish qualifications' regulator, the Accreditation function promotes itself as SQA Accreditation to minimise any potential confusion with the awarding function of SQA. We also have our own dedicated website so that we further minimise any confusion. Our website can be found at <https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/home>.

We can accredit any qualification providing that it is not a degree. We previously agreed with the other UK qualification regulators (Ofqual, Qualification Wales and CCEA Regulation) that we would not accredit a qualification which includes 'Postgraduate' in the title.

There are currently 21 members of staff, including a Modern Apprentice within the accreditation team. SQA Accreditation is funded via grant-in-aid from Scottish Government. The current level of funding is £1.025m and we receive additional funding from the Corporate grant-in-aid given that our grant-in-aid has remained static for 10 years. In that time our staff costs have risen and in this financial year are forecasted to be £1.015m. Our current structure can be found at [appendix 1](#).

Scottish Government has determined that we are a free of charge public good and that we are not permitted to charge for any of our activities. This is similar to the other qualification regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

SQA Accreditation is accredited to ISO 9001:2015 with the following scope:

‘The approval and subsequent monitoring of awarding bodies. The accreditation, and when required credit rating for inclusion on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) of qualifications, other than those conferred by Higher Education Institutions.’

What we do

Approve awarding bodies

Our [Regulatory Framework document](#) sets out in detail our rationale and approaches to the regulation of awarding bodies including:

- ◆ Our regulatory vision
- ◆ Regulatory responsibilities
- ◆ A detailed description of how we regulate
- ◆ An overview of the lifecycle of awarding body approval
- ◆ Activities that awarding bodies are required to carry out

This is a summary of these activities:

SQA Accreditation approves awarding bodies so they can submit qualifications for accreditation but also to hold the awarding body to account if there are issues with the accredited qualification or its delivery. We will normally deal with all enquiries and applications in order of receipt. However, at times we prioritise enquires/applications as follows:

- a. Qualifications are offered in both Scottish Government's and Skills Development Scotland's growth sectors.
- b. Qualifications are offered in Scottish Government's growth sectors.
- c. Qualifications are offered in Skills Development Scotland's growth sectors.
- d. Qualifications are not offered in growth sectors.

Any organisation can be approved by us as an awarding body providing that they can demonstrate that it can meet our regulatory requirements¹.

Before applying for approval, the organisation is required to check that it can meet our general approval requirements:

- ◆ The organisation has a demonstrable track record effectively delivering qualifications
- ◆ The organisation is currently based and operates from within the European Union (EU) and/ or the European Free trade Association (EFTA)²
- ◆ The organisation is able to provide evidence of financial stability
- ◆ There are no grounds for believing that the organisation's owners, Directors or Senior Managers are unfit to be in charge of the organisation

We require all applicants to carry out a self-appraisal so that they can satisfy themselves that they can meet our requirements. If content then the prospective awarding body is asked to contact us so that we can discuss their intention and go through the application process in detail.

1 Our regulatory requirements comprises of an Accreditation Licence, Regulatory Principle and Regulatory Directives

2 We are waiting on confirmation from Department of Education lawyers whether we have to continue to accept applications from the EU and EFTA. It is worth noting that we have had no such applications.

If progressing, the prospective awarding body is required to complete an enquiry form. The enquiry form asks for a range of information including company status, details of the directors, why it is seeking approval, qualifications that it is intending to submit for accreditation. The enquiry form enables us to carry out a risk assessment on the prospective awarding body which includes a financial check, checking Companies House, consideration of the sectors that it operates in etc.

If the review of enquiry form and the risk assessment is positive, then the prospective awarding body is asked to complete the awarding body application form and an accreditation submission form. All applicants must submit at least one qualification for accreditation when applying for awarding body approval.

The application is assigned to an Accreditation Manager and Regulation Manager for review. They will continue to liaise with the prospective awarding body until they consider that the application the application is of suitable standard to be considered by the Accreditation Coordination Group.

If the application is successful, the awarding body is required to sign and agree to the conditions set out in our [Accreditation Licence](#). Once the licence has been signed, we issue the awarding body with a copy of the SQA Accreditation logo which it can use on its website to promote it has been approved by us and it must be used on certificates issued to candidates who successfully complete a qualification accredited by us.

Regulate approved awarding bodies

Approved awarding bodies must be audited at least once every three years. Awarding bodies are assigned a risk score using our [quality enhancement rating \(QER\) process](#). The QER score can be based on information from:

- ◆ issues raised during audit activity
- ◆ issues raised during provider monitoring activity
- ◆ persistent failure to meet deadlines or implement actions to close out issues
- ◆ self-assessment
- ◆ data submissions
- ◆ compliance investigations
- ◆ complaints and/or validated information
- ◆ extraordinary circumstances which may be raised outside of visit activities

As a risk-based regulator, we focus our resources on areas which may have the greatest potential impact on the learner, employers, parents, funding bodies and government.

Our QER process informs our risk assessment of each awarding body and is used to consider the level and frequency of audit activity. This includes how we identify and respond to the different types of risk. We use the QER to identify any potential non-compliance with the Accreditation Licence, [Regulatory Principles](#) and [Regulatory Directives](#) and plan our activities appropriately.

Our risk analysis of each awarding body is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, allowing us to take account of emerging trends and maintain a proportionate response.

Where an awarding body is identified as high risk then it will be audited every year, medium risk it will be audited once every two years, and if it is low risk then it will be audited once every three years.

Our awarding body audits are used to examine each aspect of our regulatory requirements.

We can also carry out scoped audits which are designed to look in greater detail at specific areas of the awarding body's activity.

Both types of audit can be carried out at awarding body premises or remotely. This will be determined by our QER process. Since the pandemic began all audit activity has been carried out remotely.

Audit reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended. Where an awarding body is found not to be meeting our regulatory requirements, we will raise an issue. The awarding body is required to advise us of the corrective action that it intends to take. All issues are risk rated. Where it is identified that improvements could be made and the awarding body remains in compliance with our regulatory requirements then we raise a recommendation. All awarding body audit reports and action plans are published on our website.

Audits are supplemented by provider monitoring activity.

Conduct Provider Monitoring Visits (PMV)

We review awarding body systems and processes by monitoring their approved providers. Provider monitoring activity is conducted on an annual basis where possible. Our QER process informs the level of monitoring activity. Since the pandemic began all PMV activity has been carried out remotely.

Provider monitoring activity assesses how effective awarding bodies are in meeting regulatory requirements. This ensures that the awarding body has adequate provision in place to support providers in achieving high standards of accredited qualification delivery.

Provider monitoring reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended. Similar to our awarding body audit reports, we raise issues and recommendations and all provider monitoring reports and the awarding body action plans are published on our website.

Periodically, we will carry out thematic provider monitoring reviews. With a thematic review, we will look at a sector and all approved awarding bodies operating in that sector and their accredited qualification provision. This allows us to look at individual performance of the awarding bodies but also to identify themes or trends that could affect the qualifications. By way of an example, we carried out a thematic review of the Health & Social Care sector and identified issues with the assessment strategy which links to the SVQs.

Self-assessment

We encourage continual improvement with a vision that awarding bodies are not only compliant with the regulatory requirements but also that they are continuing to improve the way they in which they develop, design and deliver qualifications to help contribute to the Scottish economy.

As a result we require awarding bodies to demonstrate that they have systems in place which facilitate continual improvement and show evidence of regular ongoing review and evaluation of its key business activities. The findings from this regular ongoing review must result in an annual self-assessment.

In order to assist awarding bodies, we have written [Demonstrating Continual Review: Guidance to Awarding Bodies on Self-assessment](#) to make our requirements clear and transparent and to assist with your self-assessment submission.

We have also included a number of Self-assessment exemplars [exemplar one](#), [exemplar two](#) and [exemplar three](#) which Awarding Bodies may wish to consider when putting together their annual self-assessment return.

Accredit qualifications from approved awarding bodies

As stated earlier the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 gives us the power to accredit any qualification other than degrees providing that the qualification meets our requirements.

There are certain qualifications which we must accredit:

- 1 Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) – The ownership of this brand rests with us, we have trademarked the SVQ logo (which can only be used by us and approved awarding bodies that have been accredited to award SVQs), the abbreviation ‘SVQ’ and the phrase ‘Scottish Vocational Qualification’. SVQs are competence-based qualifications and many form the main component of Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks as required by Scottish Government policy. SVQs are also used as stand-alone qualifications by employers and not all SVQs are included in Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks.

SVQs are based on National Occupational Standards (NOS) and there is a one-to-one relationship between a unit in the SVQ and the corresponding NOS. SVQs were introduced in 1990 and are designed to measure competence in the workplace. Assessment of the candidate’s competence must occur in the workplace.

There are currently 385 unique³ SVQ titles and 287 unique SVQ titles in Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. There are currently 464 accredited SVQs. SVQs are currently awarded by the following 14 approved awarding bodies:

- ◆ Chartered Management Institute
- ◆ City & Guilds
- ◆ Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited (EAL)
- ◆ GQA Qualifications Ltd
- ◆ Institute of the Motor Industry
- ◆ Mineral Products Qualifications Council
- ◆ Pearson Education Limited
- ◆ PIABC Limited
- ◆ Qualifications for Industry Limited
- ◆ SFJ Awards
- ◆ Smart Awards
- ◆ SQA
- ◆ The British Horse Society Qualifications Limited
- ◆ Vocational Training Charitable Trust

- 2 Alternative Competence Based Qualifications, which are used as the main qualification in Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks. In the early 2010s, the Scottish Government permitted the use of alternative Competence Based Qualifications where the SVQ was not used by the sector. The Modern Apprenticeship Group⁴ determined the criteria on which an alternative Competence Based Qualification must meet. These are:

3 A single qualification can be awarded by multiple awarding bodies. The unique total therefore refers to the number of qualifications with a particular title.

4 Now replaced by the Apprenticeship Approvals Group. The Modern Apprenticeship Group was accountable to Scottish Ministers and was chaired by a civil servant from the Scottish Government.

- ◆ 'It must be a vocational qualification which enables the learner to demonstrate both underpinning knowledge and performance evidence of competence in a particular vocational area
- ◆ It must be primarily based on the most current version of NOS defined by the appropriate SSC and/or SSB
- ◆ The evidence demonstrating achievement of the qualification must be assessed within a workplace environment or, where simulation is used, within a realistic working environment as agreed by the SSC/SSB
- ◆ It must be accredited by SQA Accreditation
- ◆ It must be SCQF credit rated.'

There are currently 54 unique alternative Competence Based Qualification titles in Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks. Alternative Competence Based Qualifications are awarded by the following approved awarding bodies:

- ◆ Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)
- ◆ Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- ◆ BIIAB Qualifications Limited
- ◆ City & Guilds (CGE)
- ◆ Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)
- ◆ Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited (EAL)
- ◆ Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)
- ◆ SQA

In addition, there are a small number of accredited qualifications, mostly in First Aid, that are included within a Modern Apprenticeship Framework as an enhancement.

1 Qualifications required for regulatory purpose and/or licencing:

The Security Industry Authority requires individuals working in certain roles within the security sector to have a licence. To gain a licence, the individual must achieve a qualification. In Scotland, the SIA requires us to accredit the following qualifications:

- ◆ Award for Door Supervisors in the Private Security Industry (Scotland) at SCQF Level 6
- ◆ Award for CCTV Operators (Public Space Surveillance) in the Private Security Industry (Scotland) at SCQF Level 6
- ◆ Award for Security Officers in the Private Security Industry (Scotland) at SCQF Level 6
- ◆ Award for Security Officers in the Private Security Industry (Top up)
- ◆ Award for Door Supervisors in the Private Security Industry (Top up)

These qualifications are awarded by BIIAB Qualifications Limited and Highfield Qualifications.

The Scottish Government via its Criminal Law, Practice and Licensing Unit within the Justice Directorate requires that certain individuals in the Licenced Trade sector must undertake a qualification and that we must accredit the qualifications. The qualifications are:

- ◆ Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher) at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Licensing Board Members' Qualification
- ◆ Licensing Standards Officers' Qualification

The first two qualifications are awarded by:

- ◆ BIIAB Qualifications Limited
- ◆ City & Guilds (CGE)
- ◆ Highfield Qualifications
- ◆ REHIS
- ◆ SQA

The last two qualifications are awarded by Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS).

It should also be noted that some SVQs are also used as a licence to practice qualification. For example, in the Health and Social Care sector, the SVQs are required for registration purposes with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC).

- 2 Workplace Core Skills – SQA, via its awarding function, manages the Core Skills Framework on behalf of the Scottish Government and the awarding function of SQA has developed National Core Skills units which only it can award. The accreditation function has developed Workplace Core Skills, from the Core Skills Framework, which any approved awarding body can seek accreditation. Workplace Core Skills were specifically developed to assess core skills in a work environment. They contribute to employability and are a component of Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland.

There are five Workplace Core Skills:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

Each Workplace Core Skill is available at SCQF levels 3 to 6. Workplace Core Skills can be signposted against qualifications to highlight opportunities for assessment. This is mandatory for SVQs.

The following awarding bodies have been approved to offer the Workplace Core Skills, although not all offer all Core Skills across all levels:

- ◆ BIIAB Qualifications Limited
- ◆ City & Guilds (CGE)
- ◆ Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited (EAL)
- ◆ Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)
- ◆ Pearson Education Limited
- ◆ Qualifications for Industry Limited
- ◆ SQA
- ◆ Vocational Training Charitable Trust

- 3 The accreditation of all other qualifications is on a voluntary basis. We currently have accredited 173 qualifications submitted to us on a voluntary basis across 24 approved awarding bodies. Most of these awarding bodies wanted a Scottish version with SCQF level and credit to be available to their learners in Scotland. Some also wanted the Scottish regulator to accredit and regulate their provision so that they could demonstrate to their market that their qualifications meet a quality standard.

The awarding bodies which award qualifications submitted for accreditation on a voluntary basis are:

- ◆ Associated Sports Qualifications (ASQ)
- ◆ Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- ◆ BIIAB Qualifications Limited
- ◆ Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)
- ◆ Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
- ◆ EduQual
- ◆ Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)
- ◆ FireQual Ltd
- ◆ First Aid Awards Limited (FAA)
- ◆ Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd
- ◆ Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)
- ◆ ITC First
- ◆ Lantra Awards
- ◆ National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH)
- ◆ Pearson Education Limited
- ◆ PIABC Limited
- ◆ Royal Academy of Dance (RAD)
- ◆ RSL and UKA
- ◆ SafeCert Awards Ltd
- ◆ Safety Training Awards (STA)
- ◆ SFEDI Awards
- ◆ Smart Awards Ltd
- ◆ SQA
- ◆ The Prince's Trust

Credit rate accredited qualifications for inclusion on the SCQF

(This includes training individuals from awarding bodies and Standards Setting Organisations on how to credit rate⁵.)

SQA is one of the founding partners of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and as such is a Credit Rating Body. As one of the founding partners, SQA can credit rate its own qualifications as well credit rating qualifications and learning programmes belonging to third parties. SQA Accreditation is a third party Credit Rating Body in that it approves the credit rating proposals for Scottish qualification products and accreditation submissions. SQA Accreditation is the only Credit Rating Body that can approve the SCQF level and credit for SVQs and SVQ units.

Credit rating is mandatory for SVQs, and for alternative competence-based qualifications which form the mandatory components of a Modern Apprenticeship Framework and for Workplace Core Skills.

In October 2008, the then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop, wrote to SQA's Chief Executive instructing SQA Accreditation to credit rate those qualifications which are voluntarily submitted for accreditation, where the qualification meets the criteria for credit rating.

We have developed [guidance](#) for approved awarding bodies and other sector bodies to use when they allocate proposed SCQF level and credit. The guidance is not mandatory. If an awarding body or sector body wishes to use an alternative approach, then this must be approved by us prior to any credit rating submission being made.

For new awarding bodies, we provide a training service whereby the relevant Accreditation Manager trains the awarding body staff in our credit rating methodology. This service is also available to existing awarding bodies either for new staff or as a refresher for existing staff. The training is also available to external verifiers appointed by awarding bodies.

We also provide training to staff from sector bodies in relation to the allocation of SCQF level and credit for Scottish Qualification Products developed via the Standards & Framework Programme. This can include staff from employers operating in the sector.

To undertake the allocation of SCQF credit and level, participants must be:

- ◆ 'knowledgeable about the qualification, the units, and the sector occupation(s) to which they relate with the diploma)
- ◆ unbiased and capable of acting objectively
- ◆ respected by others in the sector
- ◆ able to reach balanced judgements on the basis of experience and the analysis of relevant information
- ◆ able to record the outcomes of their decision-making in a manner that is auditable and shows how decisions have been reached'

Quality assure National Occupational Standards (NOS) and Scottish qualification products funded via the standards & framework programme

The NOS programme was originally managed and overseen by the UK Government's Department for Education and Employment. This was transferred to SQA and to the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England in April 1997 as joint managers. The programme saw the development of NOS, SVQ structures and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) structures.

Following several structural changes, the NOS Programme (now renamed as the Standards & Framework programme) sits with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. The three devolved administrations have contracted with Skills Development Scotland to administer the programme on their behalf.

Despite the many structural changes to the programme, the one constant has been that SQA Accreditation has quality assured the content of NOS developed via the programme since 1997. We are currently the only organisation that does this, and we are effectively doing this on behalf of all of the UK Nations⁶. In addition to quality assuring the development of NOS, we also quality assure the development of Scottish Qualification Products, which includes SVQ structures, Core Skills Signpostings and Assessment Strategies.

Where a Sector Body has been contracted to develop an alternative Competence Based Qualification for inclusion in a Modern Apprenticeship Framework, which will be available to any approved awarding body then SQA Accreditation will also quality assure that development.

Approve NOS and Scottish qualification products

For those sector bodies that have successfully contracted for a NOS project, they are initially asked to submit what is known as a Part A. In this, they are required to set out what their proposals are eg consultation, which employers they plan to engage with and how they are going to carry out the activity. The Part A has to be signed off by each of the devolved nations, and the Accreditation Managers within SQA Accreditation have responsibility for signing off the Part A.

Like the other devolved nations, the Accreditation Managers will want to be satisfied regarding the proposed level of engagement with employers in Scotland, that the proposed consultation is appropriate, timescales for carrying out the work etc. Once the Part A is signed off by all three nations, the sector body can commence its' planned activities. The Accreditation Managers monitor the progress of the project, provide advice and guidance to the sector body and attend consultation events.

Sector bodies are required to submit draft NOS to the Accreditation Managers for review, comment and technical edit. The draft NOS should be developed or reviewed to the point where they are ready for wider industry consultation. Accreditation Managers provide advice and guidance to sector bodies to ensure that the final NOS will meet the Quality Criteria for NOS.

When the sector bodies have finished their consultations and supplied re-drafted NOS, they will then submit a Part B. This summarises the work undertaken with regards to the consultation, the feedback from the consultation and any changes made to the draft NOS following the consultation.

The final NOS must also be submitted for a final review by the Accreditation Managers. As stated in the previous section, the Accreditation Managers quality assure the content of the NOS and, if they are not content with the NOS, they will not sign off the Part B. They will also need to be assured that the level of consultation has been appropriate and that the sector body has responded appropriately to the feedback from the consultation. Approval of the NOS is not complete until all nations have signed off the part B and SQA Accreditation has approved the NOS.

For Scottish qualification products, there is no Part A and Part B, although the development process is broadly similar. The sector body will develop, in the case of an SVQ, a draft qualification structure and a draft assessment strategy. The qualification structure will be consulted upon, and feedback sought from employers, qualification providers and awarding bodies. The draft assessment strategy goes to awarding bodies who offer or intend to offer the SVQ for consideration.

Again, throughout the duration of the project, the Accreditation Managers will offer advice and guidance and monitor progress. When the Accreditation Manager is content with the final product, they advise the sector body to make a submission to ACG so that ACG can approve the Scottish Qualification Product. In the case of an SVQ, this includes the SVQ structure, the proposed SCQF level and credit, an assessment strategy and a Workplace Core Skill signposting.

Act as Official Statistics Provider, including collection of data from approved awarding bodies

SQA Accreditation is an Office of National Statistics (ONS) recognised Official Statistics Provider and the published statistics are considered Official Statistics by the ONS. The published data is the registration and certification data collected from approved Awarding Bodies. The data is published in quarterly and annual statistics reports which are located on the [SQA Accreditation website](#).

An [annual review](#)⁷ document is also published which provides a wider perspective of SQA Accreditation activity throughout the year. The review includes information about the progress of project groups, the regulation and accreditation sections, and a future vision for the following year. The reports and review are designed to provide stakeholders with more information about what SQA Accreditation does and how it operates.

There is also a new research group called The Education and Labour Market Research Group. The group aims to connect researchers in the field of educations and labour market dynamics together with UK regulators to support data led policy creation. This is in support of a wider aim of SQA Accreditation to have clear communication channels with its stakeholders which promotes its aims of being a positive social force.

Member of external groups and committees

SQA Accreditation is a member of the:

- ◆ Apprenticeship Approval Group (AAG)
- ◆ SCQF Partnership Quality Committee
- ◆ SCQF Partnership Forum
- ◆ SCQF Partnership Veterans Project
- ◆ Scottish Apprenticeship and Advisory Board (SAAB): Standards & Framework
- ◆ Five Countries Qualifications Framework Group
- ◆ Scottish Cosmetics Intervention Expert Group (SCIEG)

The Head of Accreditation represents SQA Accreditation on AAG and is the Vice-Chair of AAG. In addition, SQA Accreditation is a member of the AAG Sub-Group and is represented by the Senior Accreditation Manager.

The Head of Accreditation represents SQA Accreditation on the SCQF Partnership Quality Group and on the SAAB: Standards & Framework Group. In addition, the Head of Accreditation is an observer on the SAAB: Employer Engagement Group.

The Senior Accreditation Manager represents SQA Accreditation on both the SCQF Partnership Forum and the SCQF Partnership Veterans Project.

The Five Countries Qualifications Framework Group considers issues relating to qualification frameworks including regulation. Membership is drawn from relevant Government departments from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland along with relevant framework owners and regulators from each of these five countries.

The SCIEG has been set up by Scottish Government and was set up to provide advice to Scottish Government on issues affecting the cosmetic sector. One of the issues being considered is the use of competency-based training. SQA Accreditation is represented on the group by an Accreditation Manager and a Regulation Manager and are providing advice and guidance on the potential use of qualifications accredited by SQA Accreditation. Additionally, SQA Accreditation has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Joint Council for Cosmetic Practitioners (JCCP).

Current and planned activities

SVQ Research

We have embarked on a major piece of research looking at the SVQ brand. The aim of the research is to understand what is working well with the brand, what less so and what possible solutions there might be. Thus far we have engaged in discussions with learners, training providers, colleges, awarding bodies, sector bodies and some employers. We have more sessions planned with employers and hope to conclude this evidence gathering phase in the Autumn of 2021.

We will then analyse the information for trends etc. We will then move into a second phase where we will carry out a wider and broader stakeholder consultation on the options for improvement. The final recommendations will go to the AC for approval.

Fast track approval

Almost all of our approved awarding bodies operate across the UK and most of these have been approved by either Ofqual (England), Qualification Wales (Wales) or CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland). We regulate using high level Regulatory Principles, whilst the other three nations use detailed Conditions of Recognition. In this financial year, we are going to map our regulatory principles against the Conditions of Recognition. This should speed up the process of approval for those prospective awarding bodies that are currently approved by one or more of the other three nations.

Use of accredited qualifications outside of the UK

Given our limited resources, we have not permitted our logo to be used on any qualification accredited by us outside of the UK. We have recently identified and implemented a solution to this. We will permit a centre operating in the UK to have satellite sites outside of the UK and to offer qualifications accredited by us in these satellite sites. As the centre is based in the UK, we will be able to carry out provider monitoring activity on the centre and can ensure that standards are being met both within the UK and outside. This will allow awarding bodies and their providers to promote the benefits of Scottish qualification internationally.

Review of self-assessment

In this current financial year, we plan to carry out a review of the self-assessment process. When this was introduced, the idea was that this would be something that awarding bodies would do that benefits them but also brings us confidence that the awarding body is managing its qualifications robustly and securely. In some cases, it has become a 'tick-box' exercise to keep the regulator happy. We want to review the process so that it is a meaningful and useful exercise for both parties.

Review the risk assessment process

We introduced our awarding body risk assessment process in 2019. Having had this in operation for two years, we want to review to ensure that it does fully meet our requirements. In the last financial year, when reviewing our regulatory principles, it was identified that there could be improvements made to the scoring system.

Next Generation: HN Overview

Background

We have seen significant changes in the education, skills and employment landscape since the HN Qualifications were last reviewed and revised. **Consultation** on how to reshape and transform HN qualifications for the future took place between February 2018 and March 2019. The consultation included extensive engagement with colleges, sector skills bodies, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the Scottish Funding Council and other stakeholders.

Government strategies and drivers that influenced the NextGen: HN consultation include:

- ◆ Developing the Young Workforce (including Curriculum for Excellence, Education Working for All! and Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy)
- ◆ Skills 4.0: A skills model to drive Scotland's future (SDS)
- ◆ The 15–24 Learner Journey Review (The Scottish Government)
- ◆ Scotland's Colleges: Delivering for All
- ◆ Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland (Education Scotland)
- ◆ Scottish Articulation Strategy (support for progression from HNC to year-two degree or HND to year-three degree)
- ◆ SQA Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Review 2019 (engagement with stakeholders, and strategic curriculum development to enable high-quality qualification delivery)
- ◆ #SQAfutures 2018 (Young Scot and SQA report examining future of assessment)

We considered the current position of HN Qualifications, using service design elements to collate ideas and opportunities to develop world-class, ambitious qualifications that will meet the needs of learners, education and industry. It is important that the NextGen: HN qualifications are innovative, creative, dynamic, flexible and resilient, and serve as key enablers to both further study and work.

Project purpose

Our process to design and maintain a framework at SCQF level 7 and level 8 will facilitate world-leading education and training. It will promote excellence, focus on the needs of the individual and support the transition to further study and/or work. We will provide a coherent, flexible and agile curriculum framework that delivers outstanding industry-specific training, alongside enhanced skills for learning, life and work.

Our goals for 21st century learners include:

- ◆ supporting them in developing to be highly effective citizens, workers and leaders
- ◆ providing key skills for 21st century workplaces AND communities
- ◆ providing learning environments aligned to the real world
- ◆ developing dynamic, flexible, creative and resilient qualifications AND learners

Key features

- ◆ stakeholder engagement and insights via service design-led and collaborative activity
- ◆ new design principles for HN products that are based on our engagement findings
- ◆ broadly designed parameters, sectors and/or subjects for prototype, and working with development partners in an agile way
- ◆ an External Reference and Steering Group (development partners) that help inform, test and prototype the new design principles, and refine them, if appropriate
- ◆ 'digital by design' products for the full product and delivery lifecycle, where appropriate

- ◆ an approach for the meta-skills component of HN Qualifications
- ◆ tested approaches to work-based learning, informed by SQA's joint programme with SDS
- ◆ formulating a new cost model to develop and maintain the prototypes
- ◆ evaluating engagement, prototypes and pilots, and creating an implementation plan including full portfolio cost and benefit considerations
- ◆ a rationalised, modernised portfolio

What will be different?

Qualifications: HNC at SCQF level 7 and HND at SCQF level 8 will be stand-alone qualifications worth 120 SCQF credit points (equivalent to 15 SQA credits) each. Fewer, larger units will result in a lower assessment load for students and encourage more integrated learning, teaching and assessment approaches.

Learning: Meta-skills embedded into units can help students develop and excel in skills that will be useful in further education, employment and beyond. Meta-skills include self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Assessment: Larger units will result in a significantly reduced assessment load for both students and staff. Unlike their predecessor, the NextGen: HN Qualifications will not contain graded units.

Digital technology: Using digital technology to support and underpin teaching, learning and assessment approaches will give students more input and confidence in the qualifications.

Benefits

NextGen: HN will benefit SQA and Scotland's learners significantly. The main benefits are:

- ◆ clear purpose, progression and flexibility for learners
- ◆ digital approaches to delivery, assessment and quality assurance (how we ensure our qualifications meet SQA standards)
- ◆ an appropriate focus on work-based learning
- ◆ a revised architecture and framework for standards
- ◆ the introduction of a single skills framework, fit for the 21st century learner

How are meta-skills included?

Meta-skills are central to the content of NextGen: HN Qualifications. Meta-skills are grouped into three broad categories of self-management, social intelligence and innovation. They complement industry requirements and allow learners to develop in line with professional practices and behaviours as well as personal aims. Relevant meta-skills will be part of courses from the beginning, as opposed to being delivered as stand-alone units with separate assessment requirements. Lecturers and teaching staff will use a variety of methods to embed meta-skills in the course frameworks for learning, teaching and assessment.

Developments and pilot delivery

Two prototype development and pilot delivery phases are currently being progressed – Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Phase 1 development commenced in 2020–21 and addressed:

- ◆ HNC Television - pilot delivery begins in August 21 in New College Lanarkshire and Edinburgh College
- ◆ HNC Computing*
- ◆ HNC Engineering*
- ◆ HND Data Science*

* The deadline to apply to pilot these awards is 24 September 21.

Development of the corresponding HNDs will take place in 2021–22 for pilot delivery in 2022–23.

Phase 2 is a mix of SQA-led, national developments and centre-led developments.

Confirmed SQA-led developments:

- ◆ HNC/D Accounting
- ◆ Care, incorporating:
 - HNC Childhood Practice
 - HNC Social Services
- ◆ HNC/D Fitness, Health and Exercise
- ◆ HNC/D Social Sciences

Centre-led developments will provide SQA with a valuable opportunity to support local centre priorities and specialisms. This strand of Phase 2 supports the underlying principles behind the NextGen: HN project. It enables local flexibility and meets centre and employer needs, while providing qualifications that meet a robust national standard.

Confirmed centre-led developments:

- ◆ HNC/D Agriculture – led by SRUC
- ◆ HNC/D Agricultural Technology – led by SRUC

Timescale and roll-out

Phases 1 and 2 span a five-year period: 2020–21 – 2024–25.

The primary purpose of the developments in Phase 1 and 2 is to test the prototype design principles so that once confirmed, they can be rolled out and applied to the broader HN portfolio.

- ◆ These phases **only address a relatively small percentage of the HN portfolio**. (25 from a portfolio containing over 300). Whilst the current lapsing/end date process and combined UAR/NextGen rationalisation exercise will reduce that number, it will not address the full HN portfolio.
- ◆ There is significant **evidence of raised expectations in the College and ETP sector** of NextGen: HN and how and when it will reach the qualifications they deliver. To meet this demand, it is likely that the current NextGen: HN project will need to be expanded beyond Phase 2 into an official programme to ensure the successful development of new NextGen: HN qualifications and the accelerated transition from the existing portfolio.
- ◆ This development programme will also include the development of PDAs and any work to be done into the **development of level 9/10 qualifications based on the NextGen: HN design principles**.

Communication and engagement

During the pilot we will continually evaluate the new qualifications. We will measure how well they increase learner opportunities and support learners' continuing education and employment.

We will document and communicate our progress through key channels, including:

- ◆ College Principals' Group
- ◆ college quality managers
- ◆ External Reference and Steering Group (membership made up of college principals/ curriculum managers/the Scottish Government/the Scottish Funding Council/College Development Network)
- ◆ NextGen: HN specific communications such as newsletters