Redacted - section 38(1)(b) personal data

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 18 MAY 2023

Minutes of the one hundred and seventy-one meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Thursday 18 May 2023.

Members	**Observers**
*Mr G Smith (Convenor)	Mr D Middleton
Ms V Mann	Mr S Boal (SG)
*Ms J Handley	Mr F Quinn (SDS)
Ms A Newton	*██████████████
*Ms E Hutton	*████████
Mr A Clark	Mr J Keenan (SG)
*Ms F Robertson	
*Ms K Summers	
Mr I Wilson	

Officers
*Mr G Brown
*████████████
████████████
████████████
████████████

* indicates present

As the meeting was not quorate Ms Gilligan will email all absent members asking for them to approve minutes from the previous meeting and the decisions agreed.

171   ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Convenor informed Members of the format of the meeting

The Convenor asked Members to declare whether they had any 'conflicts of interest' in the papers.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

171   WELCOME

The Convenor welcomed Members to the meeting.

171   APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms V Mann, Ms A Newton, Mr A Clark, Mr I Wilson, Mr D Middleton, Mr F Quinn, Mr J Keenan and Mr S Boal.

171/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the one hundred and seventieth meeting of the Accreditation Committee were approved as a correct record.

171/02 MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising that were not picked up later in the agenda.

171/03 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORTS (NEBOSH AND FUTUREQUALS)

██████████ introduced paper AC171/3 and provided an update on the above Audit Report and Action Plans.

Members were information that most of the Issues have derived from extraordinary action plans that have been raised against NEBOSH awarding body. Extraordinary issues are those raised out with the normal audit cycle, with no formal audit having had occurred, when SQA Accreditation become aware of incidents that would be classed as very high risk and/or pose enough of a concern to require the awarding body to address immediately.

It was highlighted to members that there are two extraordinary action plans for this awarding body. Both have fallen out of two separate complaints against the same qualifications, of which there are high risk issues and medium risk issues.

It was reported that NEBOSH is working with SQA Accreditation to mitigate the problems. The problems stem back from COVID-19 and the adaptations that were made in terms of moving from a traditional assessment method onto a closed book online assessment. This is the method they now utilise and within that the way in which these assessments are marked seems to have caused some confusion with their markers.

Members noted that NEBOSH still have actions ongoing, and that these will not be closed out until later in the year.

The Convenor highlighted that, with regards to the FutureQuals website, clicking on the list of qualifications produces a message 'this page cannot be found'. ██████████ will raise this with the Regulation Manager to feedback to FutureQuals.

Action: ██████████ will feedback to the Regulation Manager that FutureQuals needs to look at their webpage with regards to list of qualifications.

Outcome: Members approved the Audit Report and Action Plans

171/04 PROVIDER MONITORING VISIT REPORTS (VTCT, EAL, PIABC, AFS, QFI, BIIAB, NEBOSH AND ACCA)

██████████ introduced paper AC171/4 and provided an update on the above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were informed that eight provider monitoring visits were carried out.

Members noted one of the visits was carried out face to face due to it being more convenient for the individual to attend SQA offices.

There was some discussion around the criteria for determining whether an in person audit was appropriate and the balance to be struct between an awarding body's risk rating and SQA Accreditation's resources and budget.

██████ay highlighted to members that Alcohol Focus Scotland had eight Issues raised with a few of these having a very high-risk rating. This was in relation to the external quality assurance of its online assessment arrangements. SQA Accreditation is now working with Alcohol Focus Scotland to implement a more robust quality assurance process.

██████████ informed members that assessment methodology had been discussed at the Accreditation Coordination Group and is something that is being looked at with more additional guidance being provided to awarding bodies.

Action: ██████████ to look at additional guidance being provided to awarding bodies with regards to assessment methodology.

Outcome: Members approved the Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

171/05 STANDING ORDERS FOR ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE AND ACCREDITATION COORDINATION GROUP

Mr Brown introduced paper AC171/5 and updated Members on the Accreditation Committee and the Accreditation Coordination Group Standing Orders.

Members were reminded that the Standing Orders for the Accreditation Committee were approved at the January 2021 Accreditation Committee meeting and it was agreed these would be presented for approval every two years unless any changes were required in the interim.

The Convenor asked for section 12.2 of the Accreditation Coordination Group Standing Orders to be updated in line with the Accreditation Committee Standing Orders.

Action: Accreditation Officer will update the Accreditation Coordination Group Standing Orders.

Action: Accreditation Officer will pass the Standing Orders for Accreditation Committee and the Accreditation Coordination Group to SQA Board for approval.

Outcome: Members approved the Standing Orders for Accreditation Committee and the Accreditation Coordination Group, with the amendment indicated above.

171/06 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Brown introduced paper AC171/06 which invited members to approve the nomination of Mr Ryan Reed, Credit Rating and Quality Assurance Officer at NHS Education, as a member of the Committee.

It was noted that the current membership of the Accreditation Committee comprise three Board Members and six non-members and that at a number of recent

meetings, the Committee has not been quorate. It is, therefore, necessary to add one additional member to the Accreditation Committee to help ensure that the Committee is quorate at every meeting.

It was noted that Mr Brown had identified Mr Reed as a potential member of the Committee and, when approached Mr Reed had agreed to be nominated. The Committee considered his biography, which has been circulated, in particular that although he was relatively new to NHS Education Scotland he has a background in qualifications, primarily in higher education and that he was previously employed by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

The Committee approve the nomination of Ryan Reed as a Member of the Committee and noted that the nomination would be submitted to SQA Board for formal appointment.

Action: Mr Brown will submit a paper to SQA Board for formal appointment.

Outcome: Members agreed to propose Mr Ryan Reed as a Member of the Committee for formal appointment by the SQA Board.

171/07 SQA ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER

Mr Brown introduced paper AC171/7 and updated Members on the SQA Accreditation's Risk Register.

Members were informed that three risks relating to the replacement of the SQA have been combined into a single risk.

It was highlighted to Members that the new risk had been added, 23 ACC 33 R, that also relates to the scope of the accreditation function. With regards to this risk, the concern is that approved awarding bodies may consider offering alternative provision if the scope is not extended.

In relation to risk 16 ACC 23 R, members were informed that Mr Brown and █████ have been in discussion with Mr Quinn, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), around the Scottish Government's decision that National Occupational Standards are to be used in the new model of developing Apprenticeships. It was noted that a short life working group had been created, comprising Accreditation Managers and colleagues from SDS to consider the process used to develop NOS and the process used through the new Apprenticeship model with a view to determining if the processes can be combined and enhanced so that the new Apprenticeship model can be used to develop NOS.

Mr Brown and █████ advise that progress had been positive and that a paper was currently in development with a view to submission to the Scottish Government by the end of May 2023.

Members agreed that this was a positive piece of work.

Outcome: Members discussed and noted the SQA Accreditation's Risk Register.

171/08 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mr Brown introduced paper AC171/8 and provided Members with an update on the Quarterly Performance Report for the fourth quarter of 2022 - 2023.

It was noted that the SVQ Research report was published at the beginning of March 2023. It was also noted that ███████ , ████████████████████████████ , is currently analysing responses to a consultation on potential improvements to the SVQ brand, and a final report will be presented to the Accreditation Committee in July 2023, with recommendations on any suggested changes.

Action: Final report on SVQ brand consultation to be presented at the Accreditation Committee in July 2023 with recommendations on suggested changes.

Outcome: Members discussed and noted the Quarterly Performance Report.

171/09 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

███████ introduced paper AC171/09 and updated Members on the projects.

███████ informed members that there has been one additional SVQ approved, which leaves four outstanding qualification projects from last year. There has been no further NOS approved, a factor in this is that the NOS database has been inaccessible since April 2023as itis being transferred to a new software platform. It was reported that this was supposed to take a month, and if it is not available within the next week then there will be implications for the approval of NOS as these cannot currently be submitted.

There are still 17 NOS projects to be approved, which is similar to previous years. It looks like it will be late July or maybe early August 2023 before a final full completion of the projects for last year.

Once funding from the devolved administrations is confirmed then the NOS priority review and development work for 2023/24 can be commissioned. When the list of NOS projects are finalised then the Scottish qualification products, including SVQs can be identified for review. If there is a delay, then this could have an adverse impact on sector bodies to successfully bid for SVQ projects and completed within the operational year.

Outcome: Members discussed and noted the Standards and Frameworks Commissioning paper and the risks identified.

171/10 UPDATE ON THE REFORM

Mr Brown introduced paper AC171/10 and gave Members an update on the Education Reform programme.

Members were informed that at the last meeting Delivery Board overseeing the work on the reform of the SQA, both the awarding and the accreditation functions, Scottish Government official had announced a Short Life Working Group would be established to review the scope of the accreditation function. Mr Brown and Ms Robertsonadvised that they were keen to have an external regulatory expert on the Working Group and had identified an individual to undertake this role, if agreed.

Mr Brown advised that the Project Initiation Document for the reform programme had been updated to include the accreditation function

Mr Brown also provided an update on the Hayward Review on Qualifications and Assessment. Mr Brown advised that one of the proposals in the interim report was about using the SCQF to describe all qualifications.Mr Brown advised that he was concerned that, if this proposal is adopted, and there is no description of a qualification, the precise nature of a qualification would be unclear.

The Convenor asked if there was a timescale for the scope of the review of the accreditation function and what expectations were on the role of the Accreditation Committee. Mr Brown advised that he has no idea of the timescales involved and acknowledged that there will be a role in the process for the Accreditation Committee.

It was agreed that Education Reform would be discussed again at the meeting in July and that it may take some time to consider all of the implications for SQA Accreditation of the outcome of the various reviews.

Outcome: Members were Updated on the Reform.

171/11 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023 - 2024

██████ introduced paper AC171/11 and asked Members if they were content with the work plan for 2023 - 2024.

No further items were added to the work plan for 2023 -2024.

Outcome: Members discussed and approved the Accreditation Committee Work Plan 2023 -2024.

171/12 SQA ACCREDITATION STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Mr Brown introduced paper AC171/12 and updated Members on SQA Accreditation Stakeholder Survey Action Plan.

Members were informed that most of the issues in the Stakeholder Survey Action Plan have now been actioned.

With regards to the issues relating to SharePoint, although actions have been taken, feedback from awarding bodies continues to be monitored and any issues fed back to Business Systems.

With regards to the request for SQA Accreditation to share information on the various groups that it sits on, only the Apprenticeship Approval Group publishes its minutes, and it is, therefore, not possible to provide awarding bodies with information which is not in the public domain.

██████ gave an overview of the recent Awarding Body Forums, informing members that there had been an increase in attendance. He also thanked ██ ██████████████, for helping with planning the Forums and offering ideas, including asking SQA Accreditation colleagues to provide feedback on the Forums to help inform future structure and content.

The Convenor informed members that he attended one of the Awarding Body Forum meetings and there was some discussion around the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and inquired if further guidance on this for Awarding Bodies was being considered.

███████ informed members that SQA Accreditation were actively considering this issue.

Mrs Robertson also advised the Committee that the issue was also being discussed collectively between the SQA, Ofqual, the Welsh Government and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and that she would ensure SQA Accreditation was kept updated on any outcomes.

Action: Mrs Robertson to ensure SQA Accreditation is kept updated on discussions with Ofqual/ the Welsh Government and CCEA on Artificial Intelligence.

Outcome: Members noted the SQA Accreditation Stakeholders Survey Action Plan.

171/13 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT

███████ introduced paper AC171/13, drawing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 January 2023 until 31 March 2023.

The paper provided a summary of decisions made by the Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG) between these dates.

Outcome: Members noted the contents of the paper.

171/14 AWARDING BODY AUDIT PLANNING SCHEDULE

███████ introduced paper AC171/14 giving members an update on the audit planning schedule.

Members were informed that three awarding bodies had been targeted for face-to-face visits, due to having high risks or significant issues.

Outcome: Members noted the Awarding Body Audit Planning Schedule.

171/14 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BOARD

The Committee identified the following issues to be drawn to the attention of the SQA Board:

- the Standing Orders for Accreditation Committee and Accreditation Coordination Group for approval;
- The appointment of Mr Ryan Reed, Credit Rating and Quality Assurance Officer at NHS Education, as an Accreditation Committee member;
- the contribution of SQA Accreditation to the ongoing programme of education reform; and
- the consideration being given by SQA Accreditation to the implications of Artificial Intelligence.

171/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members confirmed that the Accreditation Committee meeting in October will be held in SQA Offices.

171/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next Accreditation Committee meeting: Wednesday 26 July 2023 at 1000 hours via MS Teams.