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## SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

### ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 25 JANUARY 2022

Minutes of the one hundred and sixty-sixth meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Tuesday 25 January 2022.

#### Members

\*Mr G Smith (Convenor)  
\*Ms V Mann  
\*Mr P Campbell  
\*Ms J Handley  
Mr G Jamieson  
\*Ms A Newton  
\*Ms E Hutton  
\*Ms L Trainer  
Mr A Clark  
\*Ms F Robertson

#### Observers

Mr D Middleton  
\*Ms E Townhill  
\*Ms M O'Neill  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
\*Ms P Radcliffe

#### Officers

\*Mr G Brown  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

\* indicates present

### 166 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. Mr G Smith declared an interest if apprenticeship developments should come up.

This meeting was held remotely through Microsoft Teams, all Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded for minute taking purposes and that the recording would be deleted once the minutes were drafted.

### 166 WELCOME

The Convenor welcomed Members to the meeting and [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] SQA Accreditation, who was attending the Committee for the first time

### 166 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr A Clarke, Mr G Jamieson and Mr D Middleton. Mr Jamieson joined the meeting at the last agenda item.

## 166/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

## 166/02 MATTERS ARISING

Mr Brown informed Members that the outcome of the strategy session, that had taken place following the last meeting, was fed into the Ken Muir Review along with the SQA submission. The Ken Muir report is due out at the end of January 2022. Mr Brown circulated the link to Members for the SQA submission.

Mr Brown reminded Members that the corporate response recommended that the accreditation function of anybody replacing the SQA should be similar to the rest of the UK by ensure a link between accreditation, regulation and public funding.

**Action:** Members will be notified when the Ken Muir report and the Scottish Government response is available. Members agreed that this is something that should keep under review.

## 166/03 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORTS (ITC First and PIABC)

██████████ introduced paper AC166/3 and provided an update on the above Awarding Body Audit Reports.

Members were informed that two audits had been carried out which raised two Issues. All Issues have been closed out.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Awarding Body Audit Reports.

## 166/04 PROVIDER MONITORING VISIT REPORT (City and Guilds and PIABC)

██████████ introduced paper AC166/4 and provided an update on the above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were informed that two provider monitoring visits were carried out. 11 Issues were raised, the Issue have not reached the due date to be closed out.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

## 166/05 OPERATIONAL PLAN 2022 - 2023

Mr Brown introduced paper AC166/5 and gave an overview of the Operational Plan 2022 - 2023.

Mr Brown informed Members that the fifth objectives listed is actually an operational objective for this year to 'Conduct a Review of the Awarding Body Self-Assessment Process' and should read 'Implementing the Outcomes of the Review of the Awarding Body Self-Assessment Process'.

It was highlighted to Members that the first four objectives are continuations from this current financial year.

Members were informed that ,with regards to the pilot being run by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on the development of new Apprenticeship Framework, and the place in these of vocational qualifications, it would be beneficial to carry out some provider monitoring activity to determine how these qualifications are being delivered and assessed appropriately, in particular the META skills elements, and this monitoring might roll over into next year, due to the qualifications have only recently been introduced.

With regards to awarding body withdrawals, Members were informed that there is a process but this needs to be formalised given that SQA Accreditation has IS9001.

Members asked how the objectives are identified. Mr Brown informed Members that there is an initial discussion at the managers meeting which is then followed by a discussion with the whole team. Consideration is also given to the general landscape and the role that SQA Accreditation could play.

The Convenor advised that the Committee should keep this under review on an ongoing basis in order to feed views into the annual revision of objectives. Members asked about the recent Audit Scotland Report "Planning for Skills" and if this would have any impact on SQA Accreditation. Mr Brown advises that, having read the report, he did not see anything immediately in this regard although this might change in the medium and/or longer term.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Operational Plan 2022 - 2023.

## **166/06 SQA ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER**

Mr Brown introduced paper AC166/6 and updated Members on the SQA Accreditation's Risk Register.

Members were informed that the risk register had been reviewed.

Members were reminded that sometime ago members asked that a high-level risk register be prepared. Members were advised that a risk register which is more operational is also maintained, and Mr Brown queried whether the operational risk register might be more appropriate for the committee.

Members felt that this would be a good idea for the operational risk register to be presented to each meeting and that the high-level risk register be presented and discussed at the strategy session.

**Action:** High-level risk register to go to the Accreditation Committee in October for the strategy session. Operational risk register to be submitted to all meetings.

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

## **166/07 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Mr Brown introduced paper AC166/7 and provided Members with an update on the Quarterly Performance Report for the third quarter of 2021 - 2022.

Members were informed that the Awarding Body Fora session were a success and noted the paper on this later on the agenda.

Members asked about remote working and whether there any risks to maintaining the longer-term rigor of the SQA Accreditation function.

Mr Brown and [REDACTED] highlighted the aspects of provider monitoring and awarding body audits that had been affected by remote working and advised that the impact on the audit process had been relatively minor. It was noted that the audits are very much policy and procedural driven and still provided useful information on potential risks. With regards to the other work carried, remote working had had little impact. Some of the benefits had been derived from remote audits, including the financial on travel costs and e reduction in the SQA's carbon footprint.

The reduced level of engagement between colleagues and the lack of access to paper files were indented as disadvantages

[REDACTED] highlighted that going forward, a hybrid approach to audit could be introduced. One idea could be that if the awarding body is a low risk, then a remote visit could take place, whereas, if it is medium or high then it might be better for a visit.

Members discussed looking at strategies for a hybrid way of conducting audits and provider monitoring visits and asked for a paper to be presented for discussion at the April meeting. [REDACTED] also informed Members that there is also a need to consider the views of stakeholders and what they might allow with regards to face to face meetings. The Convener advised that the wider approach being taken within the SQA on hybrid working should also be considered.

**Action:** [REDACTED] to produce a paper on strategies for hybrid way of conducting audits and provider monitoring visits.

**Outcome:** Members noted the Quarterly Performance Report.

## 166/08 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

[REDACTED] introduced paper AC166/8 and updated Members on the projects.

[REDACTED] advised that since the paper was prepared a further three National Occupational Standards (NOS) projects have been approved so the new balance is 52 (87%) of NOS projects are currently outstanding.

Across all product types there are a lot outstanding projects at this time however that is customary with the vast majority of approvals made in February and March each year. There were no particular concerns highlighted at this point in time.

SQA Accreditation will shortly be discussing NOS demand for next year along with colleagues from Wales and Northern Ireland, and Skills Development Scotland (SDS), through the UK Standards & Framework Panel leading to the commissioning/tender going live hopefully next month or shortly thereafter.

There have also been initial discussions with Scottish Government regarding the demand for Scottish Products, qualifications and potentially Modern Apprenticeships but this will take longer, will need to have SDS involvement, and will be subject to a separate tender.

Members discussed the four nations meetings and whether the NOS were the same or how far does Scotland differs from the other nations. ██████ informed Members that the key issue for SQA Accreditation is in the funding for standards and frameworks. The majority of this funding is provided by the three devolved administrations. Last year there was a lower proportion of funding available to SVQ reviews than normally which meant there were only 16 SVQs funded for review this year as opposed to 39 the previous year.

**Outcome:** Members noted the Standards and Frameworks Commissioning paper.

## **166/09 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2022**

█████ introduced paper AC166/09 and asked Members if they were happy with the work plan for 2022.

Members asked for an update on the Ken Muir Review to be included at the April meeting and agreed that, depending on the outcome of the Review, an extra-ordinary meeting could take place before April if this was needed.

It was also agreed that a paper on strategies for a hybrid way of conducting audits and provider monitoring visits web added to the April Agenda.

**Action:** If needed an extra-ordinary meeting to take place to discuss the Ken Muir Review.

Include in the agenda for the April meeting the Ken Muir Review and 'hybrid working strategies'.

**Outcome:** Members discussed and approved the Accreditation Committee Work Plan 2022.

## **166/10 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT**

█████ introduced paper AC166/10, bringing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 October 2021 until 31 December 2021.

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

It was highlighted to Members that there are four conditions attached, the close out dates are March, April and July 2022.

**Outcome:** Members noted the contents of the paper.

## **166/11 AWARDING BODY FORA PROJECT**

This was discussed under agenda item 166/7.

**Outcome:** Members noted the contents of the paper.

## **166/12 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BOARD**

Members asked that the following be brought to the attention of the SQA Board:

- Hybrid working within SQA and the implications for SQA Accreditation
- The implications on SQA Accreditation of the outcome of the Ken Muir Review.

**166/13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business.

**166/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date of next Accreditation Committee meeting: Tuesday 26 April 2022 at 1000 hours.