

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

## **SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

### **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 26 APRIL 2022**

Minutes of the one hundred and sixty-seventh meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Tuesday 26 April 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  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
\*Ms P Radcliffe

#### **Officers**

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

\* indicates present

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

### **167 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.

### **167 WELCOME**

The Convenor welcomed Members to the meeting.

### **167 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr P Campbell, Ms J Handley, Ms V Mann, Mr G Jamieson, Mr A Clark and Mr D Middleton.

## 167 RESIGNATION

Members were informed that Mr G Jamieson had resigned from the Accreditation Committee. A thank you letter will be sent out on behalf of the Committee to Mr Jamieson

Mr Brown notified members that he was seeking some new additional members for the Committee. Mr Brown will follow up on this to see if they would be willing to join the Committee.

## 167/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

## 167/02 MATTERS ARISING

Members were informed that a meeting had taken place prior to the Accreditation Committee to discuss the Committee's response to the Muir Review, and the Scottish Government's response to it. Accreditation Committee members had agreed to take up the offer of a discussion with Scottish Government and in advance of that Mr Brown will prepare a paper on its behalf that summarises the Committee's views. This will act as a basis for the discussion with Scottish Government.

## 167/03 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORTS (REHIS and Lantra Awards)

██████████ introduced paper AC167/3 and provided an update on the above Awarding Body Audit Reports.

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

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

## 167/04 PROVIDER MONITORING VISIT REPORT (REHIS, EduQual and STA)

██████████ introduced paper AC167/4 and provided an update on the above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were informed that three provider monitoring visits were carried out. Five Issues were raised, two Issues have been closed out.

It was highlighted to Members that a delay caused by an internal staff resource issue has caused the remaining three Issues to remain open. The Senior Regulation Manager has now picked this up and will endeavour to close out the remaining actions. Additional evidence was received on 25 April 2022 to help close out the Issues.

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

## 167/05 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF APPROVED AWARDING BODIES POLICY

██████████ introduced paper AC167/5 and highlighted to Members the minor changes.

Members noted that the changes made to the policy:

- Update to the links
- Footnote was added

**Outcome:** Members approved the Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Body Policy.

## 167/06 AWARDING BODY RISK ASSESSMENT

██████████ introduced paper AC167/6 and gave an overview of the Awarding Body Risk Assessment.

Members were informed that a template and process for 'Awarding Body Risk Assessment' have existed for a couple of years. This has now been reviewed and some of the questions have been changed within it. This will provide with a more granularised risk scoring which will be used for awarding bodies seeking approval.

The risk strategy document has now been updated to reflect the changes made to the pre-approval part of the Awarding Body Risk Assessment. There is also a post approval part but this needs further review. Once that has been undertaken it will complement the final policy and process.

Members asked about the ongoing risk score and were informed that has still to be reviewed. The actions won't be set with that because they will already be approved as an awarding body. ██████████ is hoping to get this done by the end of the current financial year.

**Outcome:** Members approved the amended Awarding Body Risk Assessment and the updated Risk Strategy (pre-approval only)

## 167/07 AWARDING BODY FAST TRACK APPROVAL

██████████ introduced paper AC167/7 and gave Members an overview of the Awarding Body Fast Track Approval.

Members were informed that this follows on from the Awarding Body Risk Assessment as they go hand in hand. Some examples have taken place with awarding bodies that are in the pipeline moving forward to make sure the scoring is as accurate as possible. Where an applicant gets a very, very low score this would then allow the awarding body to fall into the fast-track process. Members should note that the fast-track process is an internal process that will not be promoted externally. Awarding bodies will not know that they could automatically fall into that category as it is based on the internal risk scoring process.

Any awarding bodies that look like they could fall into the fast-track approval process will also need to be ratified by the Accreditation Coordination Group before they can go through the process of the fast-track approval.

Members were informed that SQA Accreditation has reintroduced post approval visits in order to review all the remaining Regulatory Principles and Directives within six months of approval date for those awarding bodies that are approved using the fast-track process.

It was highlighted to members that the implementation of the fast-track approval would be monitored in terms of timeframes from submissions to approval and compare this with the timeframes of the standard approach. At present it is not possible to put a timeframe on this as it depends very much on the ad hoc availability of new awarding bodies.

Members were informed that this would be picked up in the quarterly performance report.

**Action:** Any new awarding bodies that go through the fast-track approval to be shown in the Quarterly Performance Report comparing the time taken to approve using fast track versus standard approach.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Awarding Body Fast Track Approval.

## 167/08 SQA ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER

Mr Brown introduced paper AC167/8 and updated Members on the SQA Accreditation's Risk Register.

Members were informed that three new risks had been added to the register following the publication of the Ken Muir Review and the Cabinet Secretary's response to it.

Members discussed the relationship with Skills Development Scotland and the new apprenticeship model. Mr Brown advised that he understood that it was the view of the Scottish Government that this model remained in a pilot phase while it appeared that, in practice, it had now moved to a rollout phase. It was noted that this required ongoing monitoring. It was noted that Mr Crone and Mr Brown meet with Elaine Herd, from Scottish Government's Apprenticeship Policy team, monthly and that the new apprenticeship model was a standing agenda item. It was noted that, the process of development of the new model had improved but could be improved further, as there remained a lack of clarity as to what the new model means for SVQs and the use of National Occupational Standards (NOS).

It was agreed that some clarity from Scottish Government around its policy position and its expectations would be helpful.

Ms Robertson informed members that she had also had a conversation with the Director of Fair Work and Employability about this issue.

The Committee agreed to continue to monitor this issue.

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

## 167/09 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mr Brown introduced paper AC167/9 and provided Members with an update on the Quarterly Performance Report for the fourth quarter of 2021 - 2022.

Members were informed that all the deliverables due to be completed by 31 March 2022 have been completed. Phase 1 of the SVQ Research Project is nearing completion. Once the report is ready this will be submitted to the Accreditation Committee at its July meeting.

The Convenor thanked the team for its efforts in delivering the objectives over the course of the year.

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

## 167/10 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

██████████ introduced paper AC167/10 and updated Members on the projects.

Members were informed that 72% of projects for last year have been completed. For those projects outstanding there has been some additional work required but there are no concerns. It is expected that these will be approved over the next couple of months.

██████████ highlighted to members that the focus at present is current year planning. Bids have now been received for the National Occupational Standards tender. These are being evaluated at present by SQA Accreditation staff along with colleagues from Northern Ireland, Wales and Skills Development Scotland. It is hoped that the tender contracts will be issued in the week beginning 16 May 2022.

Other than that, confirmation is still awaited from Scottish Government on the funding available for Scottish qualification products, with meetings on this having been positive.

Mr Brown informed members that this is the final year of the framework agreement for the Standards and Framework programme so there is an opportunity to think about how things might be done differently future, for example, to include an ongoing care and maintenance role for NOS and Scottish Qualification Products and how the three Governments (Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Assembly) could fund this differently.

The Committee agreed that the opportunity to consider how the system might be streamlined and funded differently in future should be explored actively.

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

## 167/11 SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS RESEARCH PROJECT

██████████ introduced paper AC167/11 and updated Members on the status of the SVQs Research Project.

Members were informed that Phase 1 of the project is now complete. Members were informed 40 workshops had taken place with 280 participants involved. We are now at the stage of analysing all the responses.

██████████ is hoping to get the report finalised in the next two months.

██████████ highlighted some of the areas raised. Members were informed that a lot of positives had been identified, for example, the accessibility of the SVQ for different age groups or people seeking a non-academic qualification. Some of the less positive comments were about the processes and length of time it takes to develop SVQs and to have them updated.

One member advised that she, and other college colleagues had participated in the research project, in attending sessions for learners and lecturers and there is continued interest in the outputs of the research in the college sector.

It was agreed that phase 1 of SVQs Research project could be considered as completed with the final report to be circulated to the Committee when ready to be published.

It was noted for phase 2 of the project, consideration would be given to possible solutions to the issues raised in phase 1. It was noted that a consultation exercise on this would be conducted, in which members were encouraged to participate.

Mr Brown informed members he was hoping for phase 2 to be completed by the end of the financial year.

**Action:** Final report of phase 1 of the SVQs Research Project to be circulated to members when it is ready to be published.

**Outcome:** Members discussed the Scottish Vocational Qualifications Research Project.

## 167/12 SQA ACCREDITATION STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

██████████ introduced paper AC167/12 and updated Members on the SQA Accreditation Stakeholder Survey.

Members were informed that the stakeholder survey was sent out in late 2021. A total of 28 responses were received, a response rate of 35%, an increase of 3% on the previous survey. Members asked about the response rate and felt that it could be better. There was some discussion about how to promote the next stakeholder survey, including making it something shorter and sharper. Other suggestions included using pulse surveys to assess views more regularly.

It was highlighted to Members that one recurring theme is for SQA Accreditation to have its own application or database which would streamline communication and make submissions of documents easier for stakeholders. A discussion followed regarding the stakeholders' feedback on the lack of an on-line application process. It was noted that the investment required to create this has to be considered in light of other SQA priorities. However, the Convener noted that SQA Accreditation had been waiting for some time for action on this matter and, as it had been raised by stakeholders again it should be a matter to highlight to the SQA Board and to relevant business areas within SQA.

It was noted that where members of staff had been identified for their positive contribution in survey responses this had been relayed directly to them.

It was noted that some stakeholders had identified complications in accessing the SQA's SharePoint system due to its multi factor authentication system.

██████████ highlighted some of the areas for improvements that SQA Accreditation will take forward. Mr Brown informed members that timelines for these would be considered and the documentation updated accordingly. The Committee noted that SQA Accreditation also need to consider how it could build on the things that it is doing well. It was noted that the Committee will be updated on a quarterly basis on action taken as a result of the survey.

**Action:** Update the Accreditation Committee Action Plan to include Stakeholders Survey – Action Plan

**Outcome:** Members discussed the SQA Accreditation Stakeholders Survey.

### **167/13 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2022 - 2023**

██████████ introduced paper AC167/13 and asked Members if they were happy with the work plan for 2022 - 2023.

Members agreed to include:

- Muir Report and Role of Accreditation
- SVQ Developments and where SVQs sit in the new model for developing apprenticeship frameworks
- Stakeholders Survey – Action Plan

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

### **167/14 AWARDING BODY AUDIT PLANNING SCHEDULE**

██████████ introduced paper AC167/14 and updated Members on the Awarding Body Audit Planning Schedule.

**Outcome:** Members noted the Awarding Body Audit Planning Schedule.

### **167/15 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT**

██████████ introduced paper AC167/15, bringing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 January 2022 until 31 March 2022.

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 three conditions attached, the close out dates are June, August and May 2022.

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

### **167/16 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BOARD**

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

- Muir Report
- SVQ Development
- Stakeholder Survey – Action Plan

### **167/17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

### **167/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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