

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 09 FEBRUARY 2024

Minutes of the one hundred and seventy-fourth meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Friday 9 February 2024.

Members

*Mr G Smith (Convenor)
*Ms V Mann
*Ms J Handley
*Ms A Newton
*Ms E Hutton
Mr A Clark
*Ms F Robertson
*Ms K Summers
Mr I Wilson
*Mr R Reed

Observers

*Ms S Rogers
*Ms J Duffy (SG)
Mr F Quinn (SDS)
*Ms D Miller (SDS)

Officers

*Mr G Brown

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174 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 relation to any matters covered in the papers.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

174 WELCOME

The Convenor welcomed Members to the meeting. The Convenor also welcomed Ms Shirley Rogers, the new Chair of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The Convenor also welcomed Ms Deborah Miller from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) who was substituting for Mr F Quinn.

174 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr I Wilson, Mr A Clarke, Mr F Quinn,
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174/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

174/02 MATTERS ARISING

The Convenor informed Members that the SafeCert appeal hearing will now take place on Monday 4 March 2024 at 10am.

Mr Brown reminded committee Members of the situation with City and Guilds. When the Committee met in October, it had withdrawn SVQs in Travel Services. Colleagues in Skills Development Scotland were concerned about the withdrawal because they were aware of potential learners being registered for the apprenticeship in the first quarter of 2024. City and Guilds has now re-instated the SVQs in Travel Services, however it has withdrawn the SVQs in Business and Administration. City and Guilds has indicated that it will withdraw the SVQs in Travel Services once they have reached their lapse date. Mr Brown highlighted that this links back to reform work as their offer in Scotland to colleges is a significant number of qualifications that sit on the Regulated Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland.

Mr Brown gave an update from the strategy session that took place in October 2023. Mr Brown highlighted the work is ongoing looking at the alternative competency-based qualifications. A paper will be brought to the Committee in October 2024 relating to this.

It was also highlighted that Members found it useful for Accreditation staff to be present at the Committee meeting in October 2023. This has been discussed at an Accreditation staff team meeting and it was felt that attending as an observer would be a useful experience but, also an opportunity to present or support a paper. The Committee agreed that members of the wider Accreditation team should be invited to attend meeting and asked the Head of Accreditation to make the appropriate arrangements in consultation with the team.

Action: A paper will be presented to the meeting in October 2024 in relation to the alternative competency-based qualifications.

174/03 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORTS (FIRST AID AWARDS (FAA))

Mr Brown introduced paper AC174/03 and provided an update on the above Audit Reports and Action Plans.

Members were informed that FAA had submitted evidence to close out their outstanding issues.

Outcome: Members approved the Audit Report and Action Plans.

174/04 PROVIDER MONITORING VISIT REPORTS (FAA, GQA Qualifications, City and Guilds)

Mr Brown introduced paper AC174/04 and provided an update on the above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were informed that both First Aid Awards Ltd and GQA have closed their issues. City and Guilds has closed out one of its issues with the remaining four issues due to be closed by the end of February.

It was noted that, contrary to what was stated in the paper, seven issues were closed rather than two.

Action: The paper to be updated to correct the number of issues closed.

Outcome: Members approved the Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

174/05 OPERATIONAL PLAN 2024 - 2025

Mr Brown introduced paper AC174/05 and provided Members with an overview of the SQA Accreditation Operational Plan for 2024/2025.

Members were informed that SQA Accreditation have been working with the Corporate Performance Team. They are supporting SQA Accreditation to develop a Performance Framework for the Accreditation function. When the performance framework has been finalised, this will be circulated to members for comment and approval.

Action: Mr Brown to circulate performance framework, when finalised, to Members to review.

Outcome: Members discussed the Operational Plan 2024 - 2025.

174/06 SQA ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER

Mr Brown introduced paper AC174/06 and updated Members on the SQA Accreditation's Risk Register.

Mr Brown informed Members that since last Accreditation Committee meeting, he had been provided guidance on how to log and manage the Risk Register. Mr Brown explained to Members how this would now be done.

It was highlighted to Members that two risks, 19 ACC 23 R and 14 ACC 13 R, relating to Standards and Frameworks, had been merged to create a single risk. This is now risk 24 ACC 36 R. It is proposed that the merged risk is now closed.

Members were informed that three risk scores have been decreased since the last review.

The Risk 14 ACC 10 R (There are insufficient resources) has reduced slightly, as a result of Scottish Government indication that it may be able to provide additional funding in year 2024/2025.

The Risk 14 ACC 07 R (There could be malpractice or maladministration of accredited qualifications, which are used for other regulatory purposes and in high-profile sectors eg security, care, etc.) has also reduced slightly given that there has been no evidence of an increase in notifications of malpractice although candidate numbers have increased.

The Risk 16 ACC 23 R (SQA Accreditation is not involved in discussions around the medium to long term strategy for a 3 Nation National Occupational Standards Programme) has also reduced due to the positive collaborative work with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on a process to development National Occupational Standards and Modern Apprenticeships concurrently.

Mr Brown informed Members that there are two risks very similar 16 ACC 21 R (Workforce resources come under pressure due to the cut in the grant-in-aid) and 14 ACC 10 R (There are insufficient resources). The Committee agreed to his proposal that risk 16 ACC 21 R be closed and 14 ACC 10 R t. continue to reflect risk in relation to resources.

Action: Risk 16 ACC 21 R to be closed and risk 14 ACC 10 R continue to be used to reflect risk in relation to resources.

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

174/07 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mr Brown introduced paper AC174/09 and provided Members with an update on the Quarterly Performance Report for the third quarter of 2023 - 2024.

Mr Brown informed Members that no enquires from Awarding Bodies for approval had been submitted in the last quarter.

The Convenor asked if any Awarding Body Forums were scheduled for this year. Mr Crone informed Members Forums are scheduled for late April and early May but no dates have yet been confirmed.

Action: ██████████ to advise Members of dates of Awarding Body Forums when confirmed.

Outcome: Members discussed and noted the Quarterly Performance Report.

174/08 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

██████████ introduced paper AC173/08 and updated Members on the projects.

██████████ informed Members that the final six projects from 2022-23 were approved on 14 December 2023.

With regards to projects for 2023 –24, a total of 40 NOS were commissioned.

██████████ highlighted that, given the delay in commissions projects, there was a significant risk that not all projects would be approved by the 31 March 2024. Mr Crone also provided an update on the 2024-25 projects and highlighted that draft NOS for 50% of the projects have yet to be seen.

██████████ highlighted to Members that Accreditation Managers are still having issues with poor functionality of the NOS database which was creating significant workload and staff wellbeing issues. It was agreed that this matter be added to the risk register.

The Committee welcomed Ms Robertson's offer to raise this matter with the Chief Executive of SDS.

Action: Mr Brown to add to the risk register issues with functionality of the NOS database.

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

174/09 UPDATE ON REFORM

Mr Brown gave an update on the Scottish Government's Education and Skills Reform programme.

Mr Brown informed Members there had been two meetings of the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) to date, with another scheduled for Monday 12 February 2024. Mr Brown advised that he had provided feedback on a paper produced by the Group to ensure an appreciation of the role of SQA Accreditation and future options Mr Brown informed Members that Mr Dey, the Minister for Further and Higher Education and Veterans met members of the SQA Senior Leadership team and had indicated that he would like to attend the SLWG.

Ms Roberston highlighted to members that, as suggested by SQA Accreditation, Isabel Nisbet, former Chief Executive of Ofqual, had joined the SLWG and would bring valuable knowledge and experience to the work of the Group.

174/10 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024

██████████ introduced paper AC174/10 and asked Members if they were content with the work plan for 2023 -24.

██████████ informed Members that the Annual Complaints Handling Report has been added, as has the Stakeholder Survey, which happens every three years.

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

174/11 ISO 9001 AUDIT REPORT

Mr Brown introduced paper AC174/11 and updated Members on the ISO 9001 Audit Report.

Members were informed that the audit recorded four minor non-conformities and six opportunities for improvement. None of these were directly related to SQA Accreditation.

Outcome: Members noted the ISO 9001 Audit Report.

174/12 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT

██████████ introduced paper AC174/12, drawing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 October 2023 until 31 December 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.

174/13 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BOARD

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

- Proposal of new member.
- Education reform.
- NOS database issues.

174/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Convenor advised that Ms Mann had submitted her resignation from the Committee. On behalf of the Committee, he thanked her for her considerable contribution to the work of the Committee over the past 16 years and for undertaking the role as Vice Convenor and wished her well on her retirement.

Ms Mann thanked the Convenor and the Committee for their best wishes and advised that she had thoroughly enjoyed her time as a Committee member. She also thanked the Accreditation Team for their support throughout her period of service.

It was noted that action would be taken to identify a replacement member of the Committee and that the Committee would require to appoint a new Vice-Convenor.

174/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next Accreditation Committee meeting: Wednesday 1 May 2024 at 1000 hours via MS Teams.