Audit Report

Pearson Education Limited

21 February 2023

Contents

1 Background

This was the eighth audit of Pearson Education Limited (Pearson) since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation in November 2006. Pearson headquarters is situated in Holborn, London.

1.1 Scope

SQA Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy*. This states the type and frequency of our quality assurance activities, describes our reporting procedures and indicates how the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated.

As this was a remote, scoped audit of Pearson, regulatory principles two, four, five, seven, ten, eleven and thirteen were included within the scope of the audit. Our quality assurance activities are conducted on a sampling basis and, consequently, not all aspects of the awarding body's systems, procedures and performance have been considered in this report to the same depth.

SQA Accreditation audit reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended. Consequently, this approach to audit reporting does not detail areas where compliance or good practice was found.

The audit was designed to ensure Pearson complies with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements, namely:

♦ *SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles* (2021)
♦ all *Regulatory Principle* Directives
♦ the awarding body's Accreditation Licence

Awarding body documentation considered for review by the Audit Team includes all documents banked on Pearson SharePoint site at the time of audit and information supplied to support audit activity. Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence.

1.2 Audit Report and Action Plan Timescales

Pearson Education Limited: audit date: 21 February 2023

Audit Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 08 March 2023

Audit Report to be signed by Pearson Education Limited: 21 April 2023

Action Plan to be emailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by Pearson Education Limited: 21 April 2023

The process will apply in relation to the timescales specified above:

♦   The awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the Audit Report by email.

♦   The awarding body must sign the copy of the Audit Report and return by email to SQA
    Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.

♦   The awarding body will also be emailed a copy of the Action Plan.

♦   The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the
    timescale specified above and email this in Microsoft Word format to
    regulation@sqa.org.uk.

♦   SQA Accreditation will confirm when the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Issues
    and present it to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for approval.

♦   Following approval by ACG, the awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the
    approved Action Plan by email.

♦   The awarding body must sign the copy of the Action Plan and return by email to SQA
    Accreditation.

The findings of this Audit Report and the associated Action Plan will be published on SQA
Accreditation's website following signed agreement.

SQA Accreditation will continually monitor progress towards completion of the proposed
actions identified in the Action Plan and update the awarding body's Quality Enhancement
Rating as appropriate.

1.3 Summary of Audit Issues and Recommendations

An Issue has been recorded where evidence shows that the awarding body is not compliant with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements. The awarding body must address the Issues and specify corrective and preventative measures to address them through its Action Plan.

The Action Plan is emailed to Pearson as a separate document to the Audit Report and must be submitted to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2.

As a result of the audit and post-audit activities, one Issue has been recorded and no Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principles 2,7,10,11	The awarding body must provide strategic and operational documentation detailing their decision-making process, including timescales for determining their continuation as an approved awarding body with SQA Accreditation.	High

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for enhancement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations in order to reinforce ongoing continuous improvement. However, measures to correct or prevent these are not mandatory and therefore do not form part of the Action Plan.

Recommendation	Detail of Recommendation noted
1. Principle	There were no Recommendations made.

1.4 Risk Rating of Issues

SQA Accreditation assigns a rating to each Issue recorded, depending on the impact on or risk to the awarding body's operations, its SQA Accredited qualifications and/or the learner. Issues recorded during the audit will count towards Pearson Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards future quality assurance activity. Further detail on how the Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated can be found on the [SQA Accreditation website](#).

2 Detail of Audit Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail Issues recorded and Recommendations noted against SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements.

2.1 Issues

Regulatory Principle 2. The awarding body must demonstrate clearly defined business planning processes which show evidence of management commitment and decision making and ongoing review.

Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body must ensure that its systems and processes for the identification, design, development, implementation and review of qualifications and assessments are fit for purpose.

Regulatory Principle 11. The awarding body must ensure that its qualifications portfolio is effectively managed, maintained and reviewed.

SQA Accreditation Auditors together with Pearson representatives discussed the business plan for its SQA Accredited provision. Through discussion, Pearson representatives advised that a decision had been taken to extend the SVQ Retail provision for a further six months and then to withdraw the courses after this period. Pearson representatives confirmed learners will continue to be supported through to completion.

With regards to Core Skills provision, Pearson representatives advised that a decision regarding extending or withdrawing this provision will be made by 8 March 2023.

A decision has not yet been made for the remaining qualification, Pearson BTEC Certificate in Teamwork and Personal Skills for Uniformed Youth Organisations at SCQF level 4, which has a lapsing date of 30 September 2023. As Pearson *Strategic Portfolio Management V4.0 19/01/2021* states, *'Sector/Portfolio Managers must ensure that they present products to be sustained or retired in the appropriate review month to give customers a 6-month notice period from the point of communication and website update.'* And *'It is recommended that this work should begin at least 6 weeks before the intended review month to allow sufficient time for strategic decision.'* SQA Accreditation Auditors believe there needs to be a detailed documented timeline in place which sets out Pearson's strategic and operational plans going forward. This may include the potential of having no accredited provision and therefore no longer being SQA Accreditation approved. The documentation should ensure clear communication with its learners, providers, and regulator and which protects learners through to qualification completion.

This has been recorded as **Issue 1**.

2.2 Recommendations

There were no Recommendations made.

3 Acceptance of Audit Findings

Document control and revision history

Version	Date	Author	Amendment Details
11	18 March 2019	Senior Regulation Manager	Removal of the wording reference to 'good practice' under Recommendations. Footer updated.