



SQA Accreditation Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy

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Policy author	Senior Regulation Manager
Policy owner	Head of Accreditation
Business Area	Accreditation
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Why do we need the policy?

This policy details SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities and the frequency of audit and provider quality assurance activity. It also highlights the non-exhaustive factors which can contribute towards the awarding body Quality Enhancement Rating (QER) and the reports that are made public by SQA Accreditation on its website.

Who is it for?

SQA Accreditation will apply this policy to all organisations with approved awarding body status.

What support is available?

Regulation and Accreditation

Regulatory Principles

Regulatory Principle Directives

Accreditation License

Quality Enhancement Rating

Risk Level Descriptors

Process for Appeals and Complaints

https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Regulation/Quality_Assurance

https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Regulation/Regulatory_Requirements

https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Regulation/Quality_Assurance/Quality_Enhancement_Rating

<https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Regulation/Policies>

https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/About_Us/Complaints_Handling_Procedure

1 Policy Statement

SQA is committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference. We believe that, as an employer and public body, we can play a leading part in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion by making them an integral part of our decision making. This policy has an Equality Impact Assessment completed on it at the development stage to assess how this policy may impact on equality groups and the findings from this are reflected in this policy.

This policy has been approved by SQA's Accreditation's Accreditation Committee (AC).

The Accreditation Committee is authorised by the Scottish Government to delegate authority to the Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG).

The ACG is an internal group made up of members of SQA Accreditation and provides regular updates to the AC.

2 Responsibilities

In line with Scottish Government's Business Regulation agenda (known as the 5 Principles of Better Regulation in the rest of the UK), we take a risk-based approach to quality assurance.

Our Quality Enhancement Rating (QER) process informs our risk assessment of each awarding body and is used to consider the level and frequency of audit activity.

The frequency of audit activity will depend on the time elapsed since the most recent audit and the QER attached to the awarding body.

As part of our Quality Assurance process, SQA Accreditation will:

- Carry out audits of approved awarding bodies a least once in a three year period and where the risk determines the activity
- Conduct monitoring of awarding body providers on an annual basis (where appropriate)

Both activities will measure an awarding body's compliance with SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles, Directives, the requirements of the clauses within and any conditions applied to the Accreditation Licence.

The audit and provider monitoring reports will be published on SQA Accreditation's website.

SQA Accreditation will not publish the QER applied to the approved awarding body.

3 Process

In line with Scottish Government's Business Regulation agenda we take a risk-based approach to quality assurance. Our QER process informs our risk assessment of each awarding body and is used to consider the level and frequency of audit activity.

Our quality assurance focus is to ensure awarding bodies can demonstrate compliance with the:

- Accreditation Licence and/or any attached conditions
- Regulatory Principles and Directives

As a regulator SQA Accreditation will ensure that awarding bodies achieve compliance by continually monitoring performance using robust quality assurance processes including:

- conduct awarding body audits
- carry out provider quality assurance activity
- carry out risk profiling of awarding bodies using the QER
- review awarding body self-assessment reports/action plans
- review and evaluate accreditation submissions
- investigate cases of malpractice and maladministration
- review complaints and appeals

We use our QER to assess and evaluate the level of risk and ensure a fair, consistent and proportionate approach to regulation.

All processes underpinning the Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy, including all Regulatory requirements, can be found on the SQA Accreditation website.

4 Details

Approved awarding bodies can obtain their QER at any time by requesting this from SQA Accreditation.

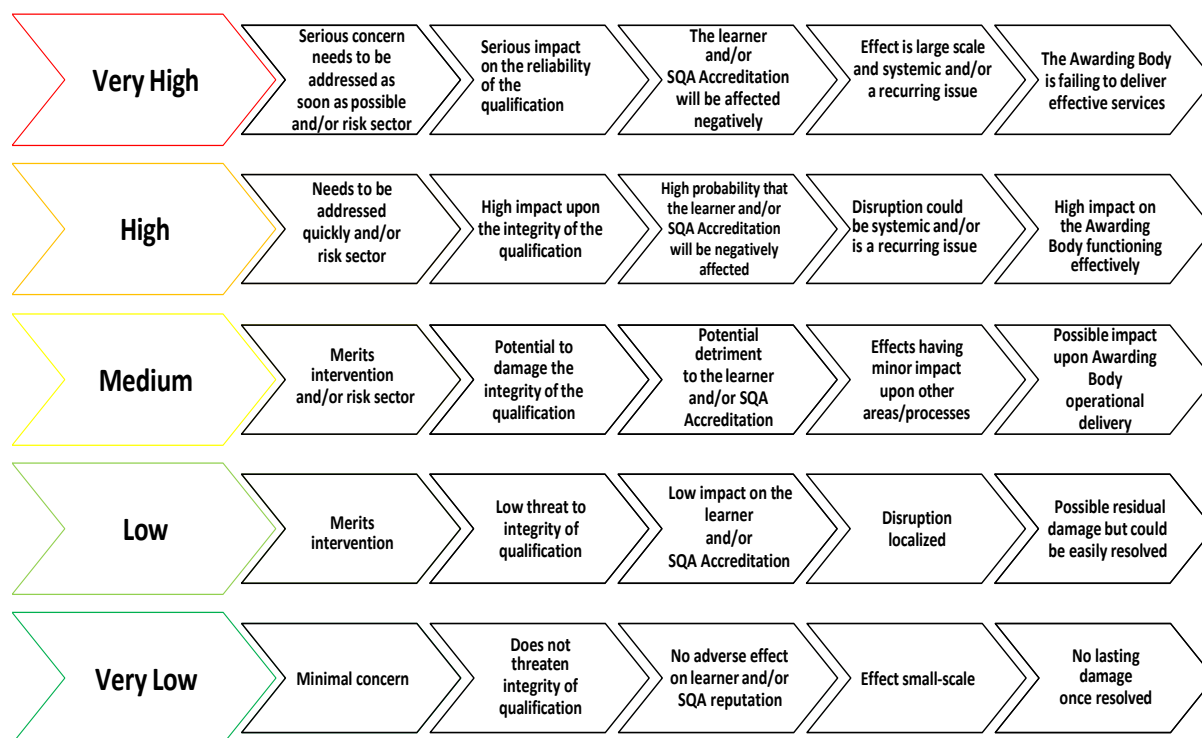
The QER may be calculated using the following factors:

- the number of 'Issues' raised at audit and the associated risk rating(s)
- the number of 'Issues' raised during the provider quality assurance activity and the associated risk rating(s)
- persistent failure to either meet deadlines or implement actions to close out issues raised in action plans
- self-assessment
- data submissions
- compliance investigations
- extraordinary circumstances which may be raised outside of standard quality assurance activities

- complaints and/or validated information
- Imposed sanctions

Each risk identified is also rated using our risk level descriptors:

Risk Level Descriptors



Further detail on the QER can be found on the SQA Accreditation website.

5 Appeals

All awarding bodies will have the right to appeal decisions made by the Accreditation Coordination Group. Grounds for appeal will vary depending on a case by case basis, therefore all appeals made will be considered in their own right.

Full details of the process for Appeals and Complaints can be found on the SQA Accreditation website.

6 Definitions

Provider: covers providers, centres and/or assessment locations, exam venues and any satellite sites.

7 Related SQA policies and legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant SQA Accreditation policies that are updated as necessary to meet SQA Accreditation's business needs and legal obligations. All policies are available on SQA Accreditation's website.

- Regulatory Sanctions Policy