

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 1 MAY 2024

Minutes of the one hundred and seventy-fifth meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Wednesday 1 May 2024.

Members

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

Observers

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

Officers

*Mr G Brown
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* 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 at this meeting.

175 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.

175 WELCOME

The Convenor welcomed Members to the meeting. The Convenor also welcomed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

175 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr I Wilson, Mr A Clark, Ms A Newton and [REDACTED].

175 Vice Convenor

Members approved the appointment of Elaine Hutton as Vice Convenor.

175/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

175/02 MATTERS ARISING

Mr Brown gave an update on the Performance Framework and the work that has been carried out with the Corporate Performance Team.

Mr Brown informed members that there had been significant work undertaken in relation to the development of a Performance Framework, which links to the Corporate Plan. Some of the deliverables in the Performance Framework are taken from the Corporate Plan and there are some deliverables which relate solely to the Accreditation function.

The Operation Plan needs to be completed by 10 May 2024. This time a three-year Operational Plan is required to be produced. This will cover the transition from SQA into the new qualifications body, and there is a deliverable regarding this.

[REDACTED], joined the meeting and gave an update on the SQA's Corporate Plan. Members were informed that there had been engagement programmes with staff to gain feedback as well as our ambitions and the deliverables that would make up SQA Accreditation's Performance Framework. The Executive Management Team colleagues have reviewed these on numerous occasions and considered some of the key themes.

Members were informed that the distinct roles and remits of SQA Accreditation were reflected in this work.

It was agreed that when the Operational Plan has been finalised, it will be circulated to members, along with the Performance Framework for comment and approval.

It was agreed that draft documents would be circulated to members after the meeting, and the final document would then be circulated on Monday 13 May 2024 with Accreditation Committee members to provide feedback by Friday 31 May 2024.

Action: Mr Brown to circulate the draft Performance Framework and Operational Plan to members.

Action: Mr Brown to circulate the finalised Performance Framework and Operational Plan to members on Monday 13 May 2024.

Action: Accreditation Committee members to provide feedback on the Performance Framework and Operational Plan by Friday 31 May 2024.

Action: The Convenor will follow up the feedback with Mr Brown to agree approval.

175/03 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORTS (VTCT, SMART AWARDS, HIGHFIELD QUALIFICATIONS, THE PRINCE'S TRUST AND GQA QUALIFICATIONS)

Mr Brown introduced paper AC175/03 and provided an update on the above Audit Reports and Action Plans.

Members were informed that The Prince's Trust had closed out one Issue and the date of closure of the other two Issues had been extended until 10 May 2024

It was noted that GQA Qualifications had closed out one Issue and its other two Issues were not due to be closed until 31 May 2024.

Outcome: Members approved the Audit Report and Action Plans.

174/04 PROVIDER MONITORING VISIT REPORTS (AAT, BHSQL, EAL AND SQA)

Mr Brown introduced paper AC175/04 and provided an update on the above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were informed that SQA had submitted evidence to close out its Issues, although this had still to be reviewed by the Regulation Officer.

Outcome: Members approved the Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

175/05 SQA ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER

Mr Brown introduced paper AC175/05 and updated Members on the SQA Accreditation Risk Register.

It was highlighted to Members that one risk had decreased, Risk 14 ACC 07 R, relating to malpractice or maladministration of accredited qualifications as no malpractice or maladministration incidences had been reported or were expected. It was noted that this will continue to be monitored.

Members discussed risk 23 ACC 35 I, in relation to the transfer of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) Database. It was noted that that Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and SQA Accreditation were working together to address the issues raises and is hoped that they will be resolved by June / July 2024.

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

175/06 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mr Brown introduced paper AC175/06 and provided Members with an update on the Quarterly Performance Report for the fourth quarter of 2023 - 2024.

Members were informed that one awarding body had been processed through the 'Fast Track Approval' process and that one other awarding body might come forward for approval and would also be processed through the 'Fast Track Approval' process if they do.

██████████ gave an overview of the Awarding Body Forums that had taken place in April 2024. Members of the Accreditation Committee had attended one of the sessions and found it very interesting and helpful. Members commended the Accreditation Team for the quality of the presentations made at the Forums.

A number of actions had arisen from the sessions which include to:

- share Scottish Government's engagement plans with awarding bodies, when confirmed, and to provide awarding bodies with updates on education and skills reform when required;
- consider options for a depository for old newsletters and communication articles;

- add a table of changes to the Regulatory Directives when they are updated;
- share outcomes and lessons learned on accessibility; and
- consider opportunities for holding a specific awarding body Forum on the issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

In relation to AI, Members were informed that a survey of awarding bodies would be carried out in the summer, and the results would form the basis for discussion with awarding bodies at a Forum in the autumn.

Outcome: Members discussed and noted the Quarterly Performance Report.

175/07 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

██████████ introduced paper AC175/07 and updated Members on the projects.

Members were informed that 20 NOS had now been completed with a further five expected to be completed later that week, which would leave 50% of commissioned projects outstanding.

With regard to SVQs, it was reported that approvals would not happen until the end of May and into June which was comparable with recent years.

Mr Brown reported that SQA Accreditation has been working closely with Skills Development Scotland over the last year looking at the processes used to develop NOS and at the development of apprenticeships, the outcome of which would be submitted to the NOS Governance Group in due course for approval.

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

175/08 UPDATE ON REFORM

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

Mr Brown reported on the work of the Short Life Working Group established to consider the role of accreditation and regulation in the new qualifications body. It was reported that Scottish Government colleagues were producing an Options paper which it was hoped would be shared with SQA Accreditation in May before submission to the Minister in June 2024.

The Convenor asked that the Scottish Government engage with Accreditation Committee members on the content of the Options Paper. It was agreed that Mr Brown and the Convenor will discuss how this should happen.

Ms Rogers reported on the work of the Transition Board which had been established to prepare for the transition from the SQA to the new qualifications body. Committee members emphasised that it was essential transition work which took full account of the accreditation and regulation function. Ms Rogers agreed to provide the Committee with regular updates on the work of the Transition Board.

Action: The Convenor and Mr Brown to discuss how the Committee should be engaged in discussion on the Options Paper being prepared by Scottish Government.

175/09 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024

██████████ introduced paper AC175/09 and asked Members if they were content with the work plan for 2024 -25.

Members asked for the following to be included:

- Specific item on the Accreditation Committee agenda on AI
- Accreditation Committee members to be involved in the discussions on the agenda for the next Awarding Body Forums
- Performance Framework Report

Action: ██████████ to update the 'Work Plan' to include the above items.

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

175/10 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT

██████████ introduced paper AC175/10, drawing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 January 2024 until 31 March 2024.

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.

175/11 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BOARD

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

- The continued commitment of the Committee to engage in work relating to education and skills reform, including the work of the Transition Board.

175/12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Brown informed members that he had used a number of qualifications and skills networks to identify potential new members of the Committee.

He reported that an expression of interest in joining the Committee had been received from Ms Angela Hamilton, the Early Careers and Skills Manager at Naval Ships BAE Systems. The Committee agreed that Mr Brown would circulate Ms Hamilton's biography to the Committee, and if members were happy to endorse her appointment, he would put her nomination forward to the SQA Board for approval.

Before closing the meeting, the Convenor, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Accreditation team for their efforts in supporting the work of the Committee.

Action: Mr Brown to circulate Ms Hamilton's biography and, subject to the Committee's endorsement, submit her nomination to the SQA Board for approval.

175/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next Accreditation Committee meeting: Wednesday 24 July 2024 at 1000 hours via MS Teams.