



## NOS Approval Process Guidance

**This is a summary of the SQA Accreditation requirements for NOS consultation and approval. It provides guidance on each of the stages of the approval process.**

You are required to consult with employers and stakeholders across all four nations to ensure that NOS remain UK-wide and continue to offer portability/mobility of occupational competence. However, this guidance will focus on consultation with employers and stakeholders in Scotland. So prior to commencement you should engage with your SQA Accreditation Manager to discuss your project plans and agree milestones and timelines.

You must adhere to the following stages of the NOS approval process:

### NOS Approval

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|--------------------------------|
| Stage 1 – Part A               |
| Stage 2 – Draft NOS            |
| Stage 3 – Part B and Checklist |
| Stage 4 – Final NOS            |

and provide the NOS to the required quality, ready for publication and supply relevant evidence to support the development. Failure to do so will result in delays to approval sign off.

All submissions made to the NOS database ([www.ukstandards.org.uk/admin](http://www.ukstandards.org.uk/admin)) must allow at least 10 working days for evaluation of each stage. You should bear processing times in mind when planning your submission and allow some contingency time in case the submission is rejected and needs further work before it can be approved.

A colour coded status is used on the NOS Directory for each part of the process, to indicate the current position of each project within the review process:

- **Orange** indicates that your NOS stage is awaiting submission
- **Blue** indicates that your NOS stage is awaiting review
- **Green** indicates that your NOS stage is approved

## Part A – Evidence of Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

The Part A describes your intended plans and consultation activity. It should be submitted after some initial planning and scoping, but before you actually start the described engagement activities.

**As well as completing the Part A return, you must upload any relevant supporting evidence to the NOS database and reference it in Part A (see Appendix 1 for guidance on uploading supporting documentation).**

| Engagement Intended Activity  | Guidance on meeting requirements   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Rationale</b><br/> <i>Outline the type/method of engagement activity and the rationale for its choice - for example, engagement activities may consist of online surveys, focus groups, advisory panels, working groups or other suitable methods</i></p> | <p>Please provide details of the methods of governance, engagement and consultation you intend to use, and a rationale for your choice.</p> <p>Governance relates to industry overview and the mechanism for industry final approval. This is commonly provided through a steering group with membership across all nations. It is helpful to indicate intended membership, or who has already agreed to be part of any steering groups. Alternative methods should be explained here and discussed and agreed with your Accreditation Manager.</p> <p>Engagement and consultation activities may consist of, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering/Working groups</li> <li>• Online surveys</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Advisory panels</li> <li>• 1:1 meetings</li> <li>• Telephone interviews</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Employers/Organisations</b><br/> <i>Outline the target audience for this activity. Give appropriate details of the employers/organisations approached with particular regard to their size (small, medium or large) and geographical location</i></p>     | <p>Please provide details of the scope, size, and geographical spread of employers and stakeholders in the sector. This should be both UK-wide and specific to each nation.</p> <p>List the organisations you intend to approach, clearly indicating which nation(s) they are representing and ensuring that there is sufficient representation from Scotland.</p> <p>Please ensure that consultees representing UK wide organisations are eligible to comment and provide feedback on behalf of Scottish employers/ stakeholders.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Timescale</b><br/> Give dates, locations and timescales for events connected to each of these activities Local SSC/SSO involvement</p>        | <p>Please provide as much information as possible regarding dates, locations and timescales for events connected to the above activities. This should include steering/working group meetings and consultation events (including those held out with Scotland).</p> <p>Your Accreditation Manager should be provided with a copy of your project plan showing milestones and timelines (alternatively this could be uploaded to the NOS Database – (see <i>Appendix 1 guidance on uploading supporting documentation</i>).</p> |
| <p><b>SSC/SSO Involvement</b><br/> Outline how will your Scotland regional manager or local representative will be involved in these activities</p> | <p>Please provide details of all those involved in this project and their role in these activities. If your organisation has any nation specific staff please explain how they will be involved and how they will engage with the project manager.</p>   |
| <p><b>UK NOS Panel</b><br/> Outline how SQA Accreditation will be involved in each of these activities</p>  | <p>Please explain how you have already engaged with your Accreditation Manager in your project planning activities to agree project plans, milestones and timelines with them. Please also explain how you will engage with your Accreditation Manager throughout the project and how they can attend/participate in any meetings or events.</p>   |

## Draft NOS

Draft NOS are quality assured by SQA Accreditation only on behalf of the UK. The draft NOS should be developed or reviewed to the point where they are ready for wider industry consultation. This means that you should already have agreed your functional map, reviewed the content of existing NOS, have made recommendations for improvement/update, and developed an initial draft of any new NOS.

**Please Note:** Draft NOS should now be emailed to your Accreditation Manager rather than uploading them to the NOS Database. However a *Status of NOS Document* should still be uploaded to the NOS Database and the Sign Off/Approval of Draft NOS will still be recorded on the NOS Database.

The ***Status of NOS Document*** you need to upload to the NOS database must include all NOS within the suite and indicate whether they are new, revised or imported. Please note that imported NOS do not require to be submitted. In addition all documentation should be sent to your Accreditation Manager by email. You must provide:

- a functional map
- a Status of NOS document
- a draft of all NOS that conforms to the current NOS Template and *Setting the Standard – Principles for Writing NOS*
- evidence of tracked changes where NOS have been revised.

## Part B – Evidence of employer and stakeholder engagement

Where the Part A describes your planned engagement activity, the Part B is to record your actual engagement activity. It should be submitted after your consultation has concluded. It would be good practice to ensure the steering group were happy with the consultation and levels of engagement before submitting the Part B. It would also be good practice to produce a project report which covers the development, methods used, participants, findings, outcomes and recommendations.

**As well as completing the Part B return, you must upload any relevant supporting evidence to the NOS database and reference it in Part B (see Appendix 1 for guidance on uploading supporting documentation).**

| Engagement Actual Activity   | Guidance on meeting requirements   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Participation</b><br/> <i>Give details of those who participated in your engagement activities</i></p> | <p>Please provide details of all Scottish representatives who actually participated in your engagement/consultation activities. (Please ensure that consultees representing UK wide organisations are eligible to comment and provide feedback on behalf of Scottish employers/ stakeholders). You should include all your engagement activities – eg. steering/working group meetings, consultation events, consultation responses.</p> <p>Your actual participation should be contrasted against your initial planned engagement in the Part A. Where there is a marked difference or poor initial participation, you should explain why this happened, how you mitigated the issue and what improvements resulted from your actions. You must ensure you have an appropriate and representative response rate.</p> <p>You must also explain how your actual governance arrangements contrasted against your planned arrangements in Part A.</p> |
| <p><b>Findings</b><br/> <i>Give a brief summary of your Scottish findings/outcomes</i></p>                   | <p>Please provide details of the key findings for the project and identify those that specifically relate to Scotland or are from Scottish employers or stakeholders. This should include an analysis of consultation responses ensuring sufficient coverage of the sector in Scotland. Evidence may also take the form of minutes, summary consultation reports etc.</p> <p>In addition, you should provide a finalised functional map</p>  |

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| <p><b><i>Informed Development</i></b><br/> <i>Explain how the findings in Scotland informed the development of the NOS</i></p>  | <p>This section should reflect the information identified in the findings section of the Part B. You must provide evidence that you have considered and, where appropriate, have reflected the Scottish feedback in the final NOS, showing whether feedback was accepted, partially accepted or rejected, and indicating changes to the NOS which have been a result of/ take account of Scottish feedback.</p> <p>This could be evidenced in the form of a NOS change document ie a document which identifies the changes made to NOS, specifying which nation the feedback originated from.</p> <p>Alternatively this could be evidenced through extracts/copies of minutes or meeting notes or analysis of consultation feedback.</p> <p>Please note that where minutes have been provided, please also include outcome/decisions taken.</p> |
| <p><b><i>Specific Issues</i></b><br/> <i>Highlight any specific issues raised by those consulted in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Specific qualification requirements</i></li> <li>• <i>Specific policy requirements</i></li> <li>• <i>Content of NOS</i></li> <li>• <i>Format of NOS</i></li> </ul> | <p>Please highlight all key issues raised, specifying whether any of these relate to Scotland.</p> <p>Identification of Scottish qualification requirements at this stage can be helpful for planning of future project work.</p>   |

## Final NOS

These should only be uploaded when they are fit for publication and have been:

- Approved/signed off by your steering group (or other governance arrangement)
- Quality assured by you (the SSO/Delivery Partner)

You must upload to the NOS Database:

- a *Status of NOS* document
- an updated suite of NOS that conforms to the current NOS template and *Setting the Standard – Principles for Writing NOS* and are ready to be published
- a finalised functional map

This requires sign off by the Accreditation Manager and this is the final stage of development. There is a 10 working day timeline for feedback or approval to be provided.

### Supporting Evidence/Documentation

**Please provide evidence/documentation in support of both your Part A and Part B. Supporting documentation is essential for SQA Accreditation when reviewing your NOS submission. Reference the title of the supporting document within your Part A and Part B submissions and then upload it to the Project Folder.**

In addition, the ***Status of NOS document*** should be uploaded at Draft and Final NOS Stages, failure to upload the status of NOS document at both draft and final NOS stages will result in your submission being rejected.

To create a supporting document you must be logged into the 'NOS Admin' area of the database:

- from your NOS Admin page click into your developer area (by clicking on your organisation name)
- click on the project title to access the project folder you want to create the supporting document for
- from the top left hand side of the screen select 'Items' and click on 'New Item'
- then from the pick list select 'NosSupportingDocuments'
- under the 'Edit' tab at the top of the page select 'Attach File' and then 'Browse' - you can then navigate to the document you want to upload

once you have selected your document click on 'ok' you will then be prompted to input the title of the supporting document and then save.

### Additional NOS Guidance

You should refer to the following guidance

#### ***Setting the Standard – Principles for Writing NOS***

Please also refer to the NOS database which has links to other relevant NOS guidance, including the NOS Database User Guidance.