



Audit Report

**Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
(ACCA)**

18 March 2021

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1 Background

This was the fourth audit of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation on 11 January 2012. ACCA is a globally recognised awarding body, dealing with accountancy qualifications. ACCA is a designated professional body under the Financial Services and Markets Act. ACCA's headquarters are in London with the principal administrative office in Glasgow.

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 full audit of ACCA, all regulatory requirements 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 ACCA complies with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements, namely:

- ◆ *SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles* (2014)
- ◆ all *Regulatory Principles* Directives
- ◆ the awarding body's Accreditation Licence

Awarding body documentation considered for review by the Audit Team includes all documents banked on ACCA's 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

ACCA audit date: 18 March 2021

Audit Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 7 April 2021

Audit Report to be signed by ACCA: 20 May 2021

Action Plan to be emailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by ACCA: No Action Plan required

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 ACCA 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, zero Issues have been recorded and two Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
No Issues recorded	N/A	N/A

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. Principles 2, 4 and 5	It was recommended that the awarding body reviews the guidance on ' <i>Using online and remote technology for delivery, assessment and quality assurance</i> ' with a view to including the necessary information to ensure its contracts and agreements with third parties meet regulatory requirements.
2. Principle 10	It was recommended that the awarding body formalises a risk-based process around post-assessment video reviews to include ratios for the appropriate amount of reviewed footage for both on-demand and session-based exams.

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 ACCA's 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

No Issues were recorded.

2.2 Recommendations

Regulatory Principle 2. The awarding body shall ensure it has the necessary resources to effectively carry out its operational functions to meet regulatory requirements.

and

Regulatory Principle 4. The awarding body shall continually review the effectiveness of its business services, systems, policies and processes.

and

Regulatory Principle 5. The awarding body shall provide clear information on its procedures, products and services and ensure that they are accurate and appropriate to SQA accredited qualifications.

ACCA has worked closely with SQA Accreditation since the beginning of COVID-19 to put arrangements in place for online assessment and remote invigilation. Contracts and agreements with ACCA's third party suppliers were reviewed prior to the audit and it was noted that these do not contain reference to the functions undertaken by SQA Accreditation.

At the time of the audit, SQA Accreditation had not produced guidance to awarding bodies, however, during the audit, the Lead Auditor informed ACCA that this was imminent and has now subsequently been published. ACCA intimated that it was currently reviewing its contractual arrangements and that it would be a good opportunity to include required information.

It was recommended that the awarding body reviews the guidance on '*Using online and remote technology for delivery, assessment and quality assurance*' with a view to including the necessary information to ensure its contracts and agreements with third parties meet regulatory requirements. This has been noted as **Recommendation 1**.

Regulatory Principle 10. The awarding body shall ensure that it has the necessary arrangements and resources for the effective delivery, assessment and quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.

The Audit Team discussed the current arrangements by ACCA to review video footage of assessments and understand the process that the awarding body uses to ensure its third parties are invigilating exams correctly. Although it was clear that ACCA undertakes reviews of recorded assessments there was no formal process for this. It was recommended that the awarding body formalises a risk-based process around post-assessment video reviews to include ratios for the appropriate amount of reviewed footage for both on-demand and session-based exams. This has been noted as **Recommendation 2**.

3 Acceptance of Audit Findings