



# **Audit Report**

**Future (Awards and Qualifications)  
Limited**

**(FutureQuals)**

**7 November 2018**

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# **1 Background**

This was the third audit of Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd (FutureQuals) since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation in 2012.

FutureQuals is a private limited company offering niche health care qualifications and first aid qualifications. The company also offers qualifications outside of Scotland.

## **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 FutureQuals, 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 FutureQuals 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 Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd'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**

FutureQuals audit date:	7 November 2018
Audit Report approved by Accreditation Co-ordination Group on:	19 December 2018
Audit Report to be signed by FutureQuals:	11 February 2019
Action Plan to be e-mailed to <a href="mailto:regulation@sqa.org.uk">regulation@sqa.org.uk</a> by FutureQuals:	11 February 2019

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

- ◆ The awarding body will be sent two signed copies of the Audit Report by post.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign both copies of the Audit Report and return one by post to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.
- ◆ The awarding body will also be e-mailed a copy of the Audit Report (for information only) and an electronic copy of the Action Plan.
- ◆ The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and e-mail this in Microsoft Word format to [regulation@sqa.org.uk](mailto: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 two signed copies of the approved Action Plan by post.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign both copies of the Action Plan and return one by post 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 e-mailed to FutureQuals 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, three Issues have been recorded and two Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 9	The awarding body appears not to have given consideration to SQA Accreditation's 'Accredited Zero Uptake Policy'. The 'Qualification Review and Evaluation' policy reviewed did not provide a detailed process or procedure for conducting interim or full reviews of qualifications. Additionally, there was no auditable evidence of an interim review having taken place, which would have informed a rationale for supporting qualifications with zero uptake.	Low
2. Principle 14	The awarding body 'Malpractice and Maladministration Policy — Sept 2017' was reviewed and considered insufficient as it did not state that the awarding body should contact the regulator where there were suspected cases. Additionally, a case that was determined as malpractice was not reported to SQA Accreditation as it was determined that it did not fall within the list of those cases requiring to be reported.	Medium
3. Principle 15	The awarding body does not capture candidate contact details.	Medium

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

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Detail of Recommendation noted</b>
1. Principle 1	The awarding body should be mindful that they are required to disclose anything that SQA Accreditation would reasonably expect to be made aware of.
2. Principle 5	When undertaking the review of the awarding body website, erroneous hyperlinks should be amended and appropriate hyperlinks to SQA Accreditation should be included.

## **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 FutureQual'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

**Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body shall ensure that it has robust systems and processes for the identification, design, development, implementation and review of qualifications, which meet the needs of users.**

The Accreditation Auditors reviewed the awarding body policy: 'Qualification Review and Evaluation', and discussed the awarding body's process for qualification review with awarding body representatives. It was identified that the awarding body reviews qualifications at set times: within the first twelve months of a qualification going live, then not formally again until shortly before the end of the five year accreditation period. Therefore, by only conducting reviews at these set times, the awarding body appears not to have given consideration to SQA Accreditation's 'Accredited Zero Uptake Policy', which requires the awarding body — after two years of zero uptake — to supply a comprehensive rationale to support the continuation of the qualification if and when SQA Accreditation contact the awarding body in this regard. Furthermore, when asked if a review had been conducted for the two qualifications that had been identified as having no uptake, there was no auditable evidence of an interim review having taken place, although the Accreditation Auditors acknowledged that there was work ongoing in this regard, and did view a draft interim review document that was due to be rolled out in the near future. Additionally, the policy reviewed did not provide a detailed process or procedure for conducting interim or full reviews of qualifications.

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

**Regulatory Principle 14. The awarding body and its providers shall ensure that it has safeguards to prevent and manage cases of malpractice and maladministration.**

The awarding body's 'Malpractice and Maladministration Policy — Sept 2017' was reviewed and considered insufficient in terms of SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements, as it did not state that the awarding body should contact the regulator when there are suspected cases of malpractice or maladministration. Awarding bodies must inform SQA Accreditation when any cases — including suspected cases — of malpractice or maladministration are discovered, as stated in the Regulatory Principles. Additionally, the awarding body recently discovered and determined a case of candidate malpractice at a provider delivering SQA accredited qualifications and failed to report this to SQA Accreditation. The awarding body representative stated that they believed that the case did not constitute a reportable incident based on their interpretation of the guidance note, as they did not think that it fell within the list of situations given. However, it must be emphasised that the guidance note is just for general guidance, and the information in the Regulatory Principles take precedence. Additionally, the list within the guidance note is, as stated within, not exhaustive, and therefore this matter and any future matters of this nature must be reported, even where malpractice or maladministration is only suspected. As a minimum, these cases should be discussed with the awarding body's assigned regulation manager.

This has been recorded as **Issue 2**.

**Regulatory Principle 15. The awarding body and its providers shall have effective, reliable and secure systems for the registration and certification of learners.**

The Accreditation Auditors reviewed the awarding body's system for registering candidates and identified that the awarding body captured candidate's name and date of birth but did not capture contact details for candidates such as email address or phone number. This information is necessary in order that an awarding body can contact candidates in situations such as certification recall. It was understood by the awarding body that providers collected this contact information, but this is not sufficient because cases can arise whereby providers are not contactable due to closure, or are no longer an approved provider with the awarding body and therefore aren't permitted to disclose a candidate's personal information due to data protection legislation. It is therefore imperative that the awarding body be responsible for capturing this data.

This has been recorded as **Issue 3**.

## **2.2 Recommendations**

### **Regulatory Principle 1. The awarding body shall have clearly defined and effective governance arrangements.**

The awarding body's Accountable Officer recently contacted SQA Accreditation to inform of a change of Accountable Officer. However, it was not communicated that the new Accountable Officer was now also the new Chief Executive Officer. It is recommended that the awarding body be mindful of the requirement under Principle 1: that they are required to disclose anything which SQA Accreditation would reasonably be expected to be made aware of, and this would include organisational structure and key personnel.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 1**.

### **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.**

Awarding body representatives and Accreditation Auditors discussed the awarding body's new website and the aspects that needed to be amended, including some erroneous hyperlinks that should direct to SQA Accreditation, but which currently direct elsewhere. It is recommended that when undertaking the review of the website, these hyperlinks are amended.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 2**.

### **3 Acceptance of Audit Findings**

For and on behalf of FutureQual's:

For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation:

**Print name**

**Print name**

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**Signature**

**Signature**

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