



Audit Report

GQA Qualifications Limited

4 February 2021

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1 Background

This was the eleventh audit of GQA Qualifications Limited (GQA) since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation in 1993. GQA is a nationally-recognised awarding body providing specialist qualifications for the glass, construction, coating and print industries. GQA's headquarters are in Sheffield, however, the audit was conducted remotely due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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 GQA, 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 GQA 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 GQA'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

GQA: audit date: 4 February 2021

Audit Report approved by
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 10 March 2021

Audit Report to be signed by GQA: 23 April 2021

Action Plan to be emailed
to regulation@sqa.org.uk by GQA: 23 April 2021

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 GQA 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, two Issues have been recorded and no Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principles 3, 5, 7, and 10	The awarding body has not yet delivered training on GQA Online to a number of providers.	Medium
2. Principles 5 and 7	The awarding body has not received signed centre agreements from legacy PAA providers.	Medium

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
N/A	No Recommendations were noted.

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 GQA'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 3. The awarding body shall have clearly defined business planning processes which show evidence of management commitment, decision making and ongoing review.

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.

and

Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body shall have effective arrangements for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

and

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.

Since the last audit, the awarding body has made progress towards integrating and combining the business operations of Process Awards Authority (PAA), however, there are still a number of providers who have yet to receive training on GQA Online. The awarding body is confident that the remaining providers will have received the training by 31 March 2021. This has been recorded as **Issue 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.

and

Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body shall have effective arrangements for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

The awarding body has not yet received five signed centre agreements from legacy PAA providers and, as such, they are unaware of and have not agreed to GQA's terms and conditions of approval. The awarding body is confident that the remaining providers will have signed the centre agreement by 31 March 2021. Where providers have not signed the agreement by this date, GQA has indicated that it would move to withdraw centre approval status. This has been recorded as **Issue 2**.

2.2 Recommendations

No Recommendations were noted.

3 Acceptance of Audit Findings