

SQA Accreditation

Accredited Qualification Zero Uptake Policy

Policy	<p>SQA's Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG) can remove the accreditation of any qualification that has no uptake for a period of two consecutive years and where there is no clear evidence from the awarding body (AB) of candidate demand for the qualification.</p> <p>As set out within SQA Accreditation's <i>Regulatory Principles</i> guidance, awarding bodies should carry out a regular and systematic review of their qualifications, to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the market.</p>
Why do we need this policy?	<p>This policy will allow SQA Accreditation to ensure that accredited qualifications are in line with current learner and employer demand/needs.</p>
How does the policy apply and to whom/what does it apply?	<p>This policy covers all SQA accredited qualifications and targets qualifications with no uptake. It applies to all awarding bodies approved by SQA Accreditation.</p> <p>Whilst SQA Accreditation expects approved awarding bodies to manage their own portfolio this policy will be applied when no actions for qualifications with zero uptake have been undertaken by awarding bodies.</p>

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1 Status

This policy has been approved by SQA's Accreditation Committee (AC).

AC is authorised by the Scottish Government to delegate authority to the Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG).

The ACG is an internal group made up of members of SQA Accreditation and provides regular updates to the AC.

2 Process

SQA Accreditation review registrations and certifications annually identifying accredited qualifications that have had no candidate uptake for a period of two consecutive years.

Awarding bodies with zero uptake qualifications will be contacted to ascertain their plans for these qualifications and given 20 working days to reply. Their response and plans will be presented to ACG either in the form of a Withdrawal submission or a request with supporting rationale to continue to offer the qualification/s. Requests to continue offering zero uptake qualifications will be considered by ACG with a decision made whether the qualifications are withdrawn or remain available for an agreed further period of time.

3 Details

Once a qualification has been identified for review, SQA Accreditation will contact the relevant awarding body to review the accreditation of the qualification.

The awarding body will be given the opportunity to either confirm withdrawal of the qualification or supply SQA Accreditation with a rationale to support the continuation of the qualification.

When an awarding body confirms acceptance for the qualification to be withdrawn they will be asked to provide a formal AC2 Withdrawal submission.

If continuation of the qualification is requested then SQA Accreditation will consider whether there are mitigating circumstances for no uptake to date and/or if appropriate promotional activities are planned by the awarding body to support uptake in the near future.

Consideration will be given to:

- Information supplied at the point of accreditation
- Evidence of sufficient Unit uptake rather than demand for or activity on the full qualification
- The rationale provided by the awarding body to support the continuation of the accreditation of the qualification

Appendix 1

The awarding body response will be reported to ACG, which will make a decision on whether the information provided justifies the continued accreditation of the qualification or whether it should be subject to withdrawal.

The ACG will inform the relevant awarding body of the decision to either:

- Continue the accreditation of the qualification
- Continue the accreditation of the qualification with a stipulation for further review at another specified point during the period of accreditation
- Withdraw accreditation

In circumstances when an awarding body's request for the continuation of the qualification was not agreed with by ACG the awarding body will be given three months' notice of intention for the qualification to be withdrawn by SQA Accreditation.

The accreditation end date and certification end date of Withdrawals will usually be the same month unless ACG, for any reason, decide otherwise. In such circumstances the dates will be formally communicated by ACG.

Where the ACG decides to allow the accreditation of the qualification to continue, it may be subject to conditions which must be met within set timescales. Failure to meet the conditions within these timescales may result in the application of regulatory sanctions.

Details of the full range of regulatory sanctions which may be applied to awarding bodies in cases where regulatory compliance has not been maintained can be found in our [Regulatory Sanctions Policy](#).

If the awarding body does not respond, confirming their plans, the qualification/s will automatically be withdrawn by ACG three months from the date of SQA Accreditation's inquiry. This potential action will be stipulated in the communication sent to the awarding body.

4 Appeals

All approved awarding bodies have the right to appeal decisions made by ACG. Grounds for appeal will vary depending on a case-by-case basis, therefore, all appeals made are considered in their own right.

Full details of the [process for Appeals and Complaints](#) can be found on the SQA Accreditation website.