

## PRACTICE LEARNING QUALIFICATION

Minutes of QDT meeting 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007, 11:00 – 15:00, SQA Optima Building

### Present

Kathleen Allison	West of Scotland Learning Network
Gail Gillespie	Renfrewshire Council Social Work Department
Tony Hamilton	SQA (minutes)
John Lewis	SQA
Sheila Lockhart	SSSC
Carole MacGregor	Crossroads Youth and Community Association
Karen O'Donnell	Tayforth Learning Network
Eleanor Ramsay	SQA (Chair)

### Apologies

Anne Gibb	AGBA
Tim Kelly	Glasgow Caledonian University
Alyson Steel	SQA
Senga Nicol	Glasgow City Council
Linda Walker	SIESWE
Val Williams	Dumfries & Galloway Council
John Anderson	Barnardos
Celia Rothero	West of Scotland Learning Network

## 2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Page 2 para. 2 "... SSSC would only **approve** the PLQ (SS)". Change from "recognise".

## 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

### VALIDATION CONDITIONS

The level 10 Stage 3 award is now fully validated. SQA processes are now underway to get codes and framework available for centres to start coming forward for Approval. This process will be complete very soon.

### APPROVAL

Kathleen informed the group that West of Scotland Learning Network have recently become an SQA Approved centre. SSSC approval will be sought in September. Kathleen advised that the differences between the two approval processes are not great so much of the same information can be used by centres for both.

### LAUNCH EVENT

A launch event is being considered and will take place following the validation of stage 1 and 2.

## 4. DISCUSSION ON STAGE 2 (LEVEL 9)

### VALIDATION

The same Validation Panel and SQA Officer can be used for validation of Stages 1 and 2. This would be desirable as the panel will be aware of the common themes and issues throughout the three awards, preventing the likelihood of having to go over the same ground again.

### RGU

Eleanor met with the consultant developing the PLQ award on behalf of RGU who advised that they would refer to the SQA development to ensure consistency. However anecdotally Eleanor feels that the RGU development sounds quite different in terms of delivery.

## APPROVAL

UHI may come forward for SQA approval for all 3 stages. This provides good national coverage. A possible gap in terms of the delivery of stage 1 and 2 in Aberdeenshire was identified by the group however no contact has been made to any of the QDT from this area. It was felt by the group that possibly they are simply waiting to observe the outcome of delivery on other areas, especially if their resources are limited.

## CONTENT PROPOSAL

The writing group chaired by Anne Gibb had a weekend writing event over 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of June. The content of the units under review by the group today came out of these meetings.

## ACCESS TO THE AWARD

The group discussed who would access the level 9 award. Eleanor brought the group's attention to a bullet point within The SQA document "[A Guide to Professional Development Awards: from inception to implementation](#)" p. 8 section 4, Development "- carrying out further consultation with stakeholders where a PDA is designed to enhance articulation or contribute towards professional body status"

The group agreed that anecdotally there is a high demand for an award at level 9. The question was raised as to whether centres would offer the level 9 PDA in preference to Link Worker Training. There was concern that some centres may choose to continue with Link Worker Training on the grounds of cost i.e. 2 days training for Link Worker Training as opposed to the ongoing greater commitment to the PDA.

Other potential candidates mentioned were first-line managers, in-house trainers and Assessors and Verifiers.

**Action:** *Anne to look at this for validation document along with market research information provided by SSSC for stage 3 validation document. Tony can provide this information if needed.*

## MAPPING OF AWARDS TO PLQ FOR RPL

David Pirnie has completed this work however it is not yet published but needs to be included in the validation proposal document.

**Action:** *SQA to send electronic version to Anne Gibb*

## SSSC PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY FOR AWARDS

Sheila raised this and it was agreed that co-operation will be needed between SSSC and SQA to avoid duplication and get best value from available resources. A partnership approach between SQA and SSSC adds more weight and credibility to the award. However Sheila added that SSSC would have to be careful not to be seen to favour the SQA award over other Awarding Bodies, however the same activity can be taken with RGU etc.

Sheila provided contact details for John to contact SSSC re marketing of the award.

**ACTION:** *John Lewis to contact Rebecca Somers at SSSC*

## KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Knowledge and skills should be written as widely as possible to encompass roles other than link workers. Sheila also advised that Job title descriptions should not be too narrow and should be described in wider terminology.

## MARKET RESEARCH

The recent Executive led Review of Early Years Workforce was focused mainly on leaders, managers and standards developed at SCQF 9 and are keen to incorporate a PDA within this. Reference will have to be made to this in the Validation document.

No issues regarding Market Research were raised at the first validation meeting. SSSC are represented and this encompasses employer representation and the regulatory body.

John suggested that extensive Market Research would not be necessary at this point but that an exercise that identifies job roles, perhaps with simple “yes”, “no” and “don’t know” responses would be adequate.

Market Research is less of a concern at Level 7 because of FE interest and colleges will be identifying markets.

## 5. DISCUSSION ON STAGE 1 (LEVEL 7)

### ACCESS TO LEVEL 7 AWARD

Eleanor recently had a discussion with Learning Network South East manager, Wendy Paterson re a link up with Early Years workers. Wendy is also leading consultation work with service users and carers. The group discussed some concerns regarding access to the award in relation to funding and lack of academic achievement prior to undertaking the award. However Eleanor pointed out that these are challenges that FE centres face regularly and the onus would be to assess the candidate’s suitability for entry to the award. FE centres also have support mechanisms e.g. additional classes to develop core skills, to assist candidates. However a balance must be struck between facilitating access and rigorous assessment.

### CORE SKILLS

An award at level 7 should focus on the development of core skills. For validation it will be essential to signpost and/or embed core skills. The assumption would be candidates at level 9 or 10 would already have adequate core skills. The highest level of core skill available is SCQF 6.

## 6. DRAFT UNITS

Carole advised the group that unit titles are working versions and subject to amendment. John confirmed that units may only have the same title if they are at different levels e.g. English Higher, English Intermediate 2 etc.

Carole and Gail told the group that the units have not yet been peer reviewed.

Some typos were identified by the group, however it was agreed that these would be picked up as a matter of course through peer review.

### LEVEL 9 UNITS

An error was identified in all three level 9 units – the two bullet points under “**Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**” should read “PDA..... at **SCQF 9**” not SCQF 7.

#### *Support Learning Environments*

The group agreed that the reference to “Kolb’s learning cycle” should be moved from Knowledge and Skills in Outcome 3, to Guidance. This statement could be change to “Learning Theories” or similar generic wording.

Sheila suggested the inclusion of an outcome specific to supervisory processes as this would match point 1 in the standards. The group felt that this might not be included in the level 9 units but standard 1 is referenced against *Facilitate Learning in the Learning Environment* unit.

The following amendments were agreed by the group:

Outcome 1 – Remove “learner’s” from statement “Contribute to the identification of learner’s learning needs”

Outcome 3 – Remove “learners” from statement “Select learning opportunities appropriate to learners stage of learning”

There followed some discussion on whether to have evidence requirements for all outcomes listed together in one place (as at present) or listed separately under each outcome. Although listing under each outcome may be easier for validation, the group felt that listing on one page gives greater flexibility and is also consistent with the format of the level 10 units.

### *Assess and Evaluate Learning*

The group agreed that Outcome 1 is large. It was then agreed that this outcome should split, with the bottom four bullets forming a new outcome “• *Issues of equity, fairness and ethical practice* • *Accountability for standards of practice* • *Responsibility for safeguarding rights of service users* • *Principles of giving and receiving feedback*”. This would result in separate outcomes for the monitoring and feedback aspects of the present outcome. Given that this is a two credit unit, four outcomes is well within the number usually expected.

The group decided that reference should be made to “Contribute to Overall Assessment” in the Evidence Requirements under 1<sup>st</sup> bullet point, and a further reference in the Guidance notes.

Some discussion took place over the wording of the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph on page 6 with reference to the job roles and titles of potential candidates. One other suggestion was made – “link supervisors for social work students”. The group felt that perhaps the job roles referred to were too specific but after some suggestions it was acknowledged the being too generic doesn't then provide enough guidance to centres.

### LEVEL 7 UNITS

Issues were identified with the language. It was agreed that it needs to be simplified for level 7 whilst still maintaining the balance between accessibility and meeting standards.

### *Learning and the Learning Environment*

Remove the term “basic” from reference to “support worker” in the Unit Purpose statement on page 1.

Eleanor asked the group if they thought that the requirement for direct observation could be a barrier to entry given that the term ‘direct observation’ has a specific meaning in qualification terminology.

The group did not believe that this would be a significant barrier to entry. It was also suggested that the requirement for direct observation in creating the necessity of an assessor could in fact help secure this resource for candidates.

Sheila said that this would be essential for SSSC.

### *Quality of learning and responsibility in learning environment*

John identified typo in the title – ‘a’ or ‘the’ should be precede ‘environment’.

The group agreed that Higher English should not be stipulated under recommended prior knowledge and skills, and a statement to the effect that entry is at the discretion of the centre should be included.

Under bullet 1 of the Unit Purpose, it was decided that a more specific, quantifiable statement should be included to replace the word “demonstrate”.

This should be reinforced in the Evidence Requirements with the use of quantifiable but non-restrictive language e.g. “Provide two learning activities/situations...”

The group decided that bullet 2 should be amended to “Share responsibility...” from “take responsibility”.

All references to “codes of practice” will be changed to “SSSC codes of practice2 in all of the SS specific units.

## **7. NEXT MEETING**

SQA will contact all members of the group to arrange the next meeting which will take place in early September.