

SQA Accreditation Summary Annual Report 2010–11

Operational activity 2010–11

This section gives an overview of significant developments that occurred throughout the year, and shows how we met our operational objectives.

Significant developments

To help with our aim of continually improving our services, we commissioned Ashbrook Research to evaluate our marketing and communication campaign of the previous year. The report showed improvement in the areas where we were already strong: support for SQA Accreditation staff, their knowledge, willingness to help and integrity was made clear by stakeholders; the thoroughness of SQA Accreditation's services was appreciated; and each stakeholder group expressed its willingness to continue working with SQA Accreditation.

For the areas for potential improvements that were identified, we drew up a plan for external communication. To address the areas for improvement in our processes we reported them to internal project groups, as part of our efforts to address concerns about what is perceived as unnecessary bureaucracy.

It was also clear from the research that our stakeholders want to use the SQA Accreditation web pages as a source of information, and we have taken this on board.

Update from project groups

To ensure that the objectives identified in our operational plan could be realised, we established a series of internal project groups. This section summarises their objectives and findings.

Quality enhancement

The quality enhancement project group reviewed SQA Accreditation's system and processes for quality enhancement rating of awarding bodies. The review found that awarding bodies were content with the current process.

Streamlined approach to accreditation

SQA Accreditation began developing a streamlined approach to accreditation in 2009. The project group is currently finalising the operating procedures, documentation and processes. Once these are approved, Streamlined Accreditation will be rolled out to all SQA Accreditation approved awarding bodies.

Progression pathways

The progression pathways project group works with Sector Skills Councils and Skills Development Scotland to help awarding bodies identify and promote progression pathways for accredited qualifications. The project group developed a report, and in 2011–12 will be working on producing a finalised list of recommendations that can be posted on the SQA Accreditation website.

Audit and self-assessment

This project group was set up to review and revise the self-assessment process, but its work was unavoidably delayed to allow for the finalisation of the Common Conditions for Recognition being developed by the four-nation Qualification Regulators. It is currently envisaged that we will develop a set of high level Regulatory Principles which will encompass most of the Recognition Conditions.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit rating of SQA accredited qualifications

The SCQF project group was asked to examine processes and develop a policy to support the SCQF credit rating of all SQA accredited qualifications. The Group focused on: reviewing the Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) Credit Rating processes to reduce perceived bureaucracy; and introducing a revised SCQF Credit Rating process for use in credit rating all qualifications that are suitable for accreditation. The group will produce a final recommendation in September 2011.

Revision of Assessment Strategy Criteria and SVQ Criteria

This project group was tasked with reviewing the SVQ Criteria and Assessment Strategy Criteria to improve flexibility and innovation in SVQs.

Our analysis found that the current assessment strategy criteria were still fit for purpose for SVQs and that non-SVQ assessment principles already generally adhere to the design principles. We also found that awarding bodies think that having criteria results in higher standards of delivery, which increases the reputation of SVQs.

The outcomes from this report will be used to redraft the SVQ criteria.

Audit activity 2010–11

The monitoring we carry out on all SQA-approved awarding bodies consists of either an audit by us or a self-assessment report. This is followed by monitoring visits to a sample of the awarding body's approved centres. During 2010–11 we approved 10 audits and 17 centre monitoring reports (49 centre monitoring visits).

Newly approved awarding bodies

The following organisations gained awarding body approval in 2010–11:

- ◆ Highfield awarding body for Compliance (HABC)
- ◆ Active IQ (AIQ)

- ◆ Central YMCA Qualifications (CYQ)
- ◆ The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM)
- ◆ First Aid Awards Limited (FAAL)
- ◆ Rockschoool Ltd

Twelve organisations contacted us about becoming an approved awarding body, and six were granted approval.

Analysis of non-compliances and observations

Non-compliances

Table 1 shows the non-compliances with SQA Accreditation's Awarding Body Criteria (April 2007) we recorded during awarding body audits and centre monitoring visits.

Statement of excellence (SoE)	Total non-compliances
Governance and leadership	0
Quality enhancement	0
Administration and support	23
Qualification development and design	3
Assessment and verification	10
Total	36

Table 1: non-compliances, by SoE

The majority of non-compliances were recorded against the administration and support SoE, and this is mainly due to SQA Accreditation not being referenced in complaints and appeals processes. [You can read the full audit reports here.](#)

Observations

An observation will be noted where an awarding body's processes meet the criteria but there is a weakness that may eventually result in a non-compliance. Awarding bodies tend to take some form of action on observations, and it is rare for an observation to become non-compliance in the following audit.

Table 2 shows observations made, against Statements of Excellence.

Statement of excellence (SoE)	Total observations recorded, by SoE
Governance and leadership	3
Quality enhancement	1
Administration and support	34
Qualification development and design	2
Assessment and verification	15
Total	55

Table 2: observations, by SoE

Accreditation activity 2010–11

Our core functions include approving awarding bodies, approving qualification products and accrediting qualifications.

Qualifications accredited

There are currently 885 accredited qualifications¹:

SVQs	773
Other qualifications (such as competence-based qualifications)	77
Regulatory and Licensing qualifications	35

Accredited SVQs

We accredited 773 SVQs (up by 5.1% from last year). There were increases from City and Guilds, EDI, EAL and VTCT. Almost all new SVQs we accredited this year were in the providing goods and services area, (eg beauty therapy, customer service and hospitality).

The SVQs were accredited according to five levels:

SVQ level 1	47
SVQ level 2	354
SVQ level 3	312
SVQ level 4	51
SVQ level 5	9

Forty-six SVQs were withdrawn, commonly because of low or zero uptake of the qualification.

Regulatory and licensing qualifications accredited

We accredited 35 regulatory and licensing qualifications (up by 6%). This increase has come from First Aid Awards Limited and the Scottish Qualifications Authority, who were both accredited to offer the Emergency First Aid at Work qualifications.

Other qualifications accredited

We accredited 77 other qualifications (up by 71%). This increase is directly related to the approval of new awarding bodies (see 'Newly approved awarding bodies').

Market performance

Table 3 shows SVQ market performance during 2010–11.

¹ Please note, these qualifications, or a variation of the qualification, can be offered by more than one awarding body simultaneously.

Year	Registrations	+/- %	Certifications	+/- %
2007–08	48,761	n/a	29,357	n/a
2008–09	39,879	-18%	31,206	+6%
2009–10	45,155	+13%	35,066	+12%
2010–11	47,405	+5%	36,713	+4%

Table 3: SVQ market performance

Table 4 shows the total registrations and certifications for all regulatory and licensing qualifications from April 2010.

Year	Registrations	+/-%	Certifications	+/-%
2010–11	19,264	n/a	17,756	n/a

Table 4: regulatory and other qualifications market performance

Plan for 2011–12

These project groups carried over into the next operational:

- ◆ Progression pathways
- ◆ SVQ Assessment Strategy and SVQ Criteria
- ◆ Streamlined Accreditation
- ◆ SCQF Credit Rating of SQA Accredited Qualifications

In addition, we set up new groups to tackle emerging issues, including:

- ◆ Accreditation Co-ordination Group review
- ◆ Alternative models of regulation

The budget is reduced for this year. This will require an evaluation of our current working practices to establish cost-saving measures while still offering the high quality service that was highlighted in the Ashbrook research.