

Awarding Body Criteria (2007)

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1 Introduction

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)¹ work together as regulatory bodies. As part of their regulatory role SQA and QCA accredit qualifications that are based on National Occupational Standards.

SQA derives its authority to carry out this function from the Education (Scotland) Act (1996).

This publication details the criteria that SQA's Accrediting Body will use to accredit qualifications and to approve and monitor Awarding Bodies. These criteria replace those set out in the *SVQ Criteria and Guidance for Awarding Bodies (April 1999)*.

SQA and QCA continually strive to reduce the audit burden on awarding bodies. These criteria are presented differently from QCA's criteria. However, they have been developed in consultation with QCA and as a result remain aligned.

SQA is committed to meeting the United Kingdom Government's five key principles of good regulation (see Better Regulation Task Force, 2005: *Better regulation from design to delivery*, Annual report). The five principles are:

- ◆ transparency
- ◆ accountability
- ◆ proportionality
- ◆ consistency
- ◆ targeting

The five principles were considered by SQA during the development of its methodology for quality assuring accredited qualifications. SQA monitors and evaluates approved awarding bodies via a quality assurance system that is supported by a number of related processes. These include: system audits of awarding bodies, desk audits, self-assessment by awarding bodies, and centre monitoring. These processes are underpinned by our risk assessment system for awarding bodies.

All SQA audit activities result in a formal report being presented to our Accreditation Committee. The Accreditation Committee evaluates the findings from each report, and then makes a judgement on the suitability of the organisation concerned to retain its status as an SQA-approved

¹ QCA carries out this function on behalf of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Northern Ireland and the Department for Education Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLs) Wales.

awarding body (ie whether it is able to submit future accreditation and re-accreditation submissions).

This publication is intended to be read in conjunction with SQA's publication *Guidance on the interpretation of SQA's Awarding Body Criteria (2007)*.

Roles and responsibilities of an awarding body

The role of an awarding body is to develop qualifications based on approved National Occupational Standards and qualification structures defined by Sector Skills Councils, Standards Setting Bodies and Industry Regulatory Bodies².

The responsibilities of an SQA-approved awarding body include:

- ◆ Developing qualifications based on National Occupational Standards which have been defined by Sector Skills Councils or Standards Setting Bodies and approved by the National Occupational Standards Board.
- ◆ In some cases, developing qualifications required for regulatory purposes by Industry Regulating Bodies.
- ◆ Developing detailed assessment methodology, instruments of assessment and documentation to be used for assessment.

An SQA approved awarding body must:

- ◆ Adopt the general principles for assessment specified by the Sector Skills Council, Standards Setting Body or the relevant Regulatory Authorities.
- ◆ Maintain and monitor the quality and consistency of assessment of accredited qualifications and units.
- ◆ Ensure rigorous external verification of assessment decisions.
- ◆ Ensure rigorous recruitment and monitoring of External Verifiers for accredited qualifications.
- ◆ Advise on the occupational expertise required by trainers, assessors and verifiers based on the general principles specified by the Sector Skills Council, Standards Setting Body or the relevant Regulatory Authorities.
- ◆ Administer accredited qualifications, including approving and monitoring centres, and issuing certificates.
- ◆ Provide appropriate advice and guidance on the implementation of qualifications for customers.
- ◆ Market the accredited qualifications to ensure optimum uptake.

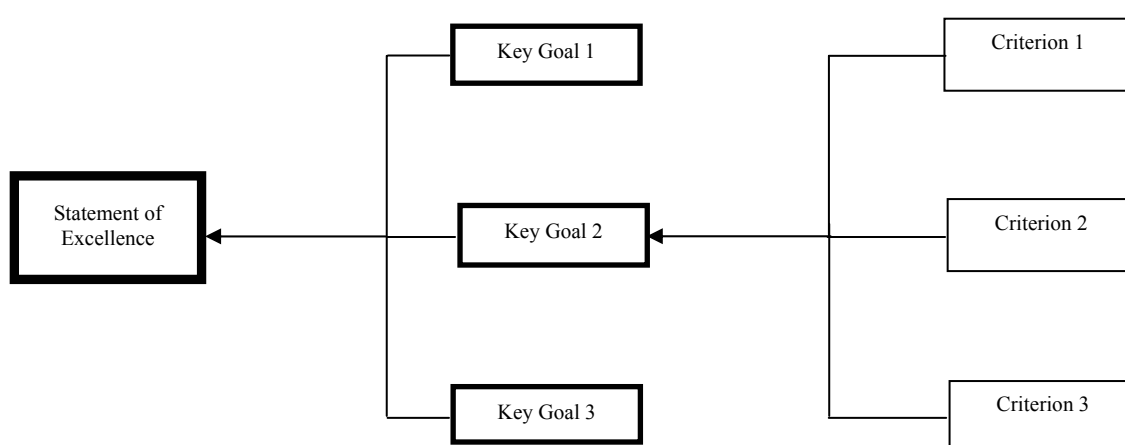
² In this context the term ‘Regulatory Authorities’ refers to independent bodies reporting to Government, such as the Security Industry Authority — not SQA, QCA, DELs or CCEA.

2 The criteria

SQA's Awarding Body Criteria (2007) is made up of a number of statements of excellence, key goals and underpinning criteria.

Each key goal is made up of a number of related criteria: SQA will monitor the awarding body's ability to meet each of these criteria. To achieve a key goal the awarding body must firstly provide robust and relevant evidence that it meets all the related criteria.

There are five statements of excellence. The awarding body should continually strive to meet all five statements of excellence.



If the awarding body is judged by SQA to have met all the key goals that make up a Statement of Excellence, it will be able to state, publicly, that it meets SQA's Statement of Excellence 1, and so on for the other four statements.

To assist you, we have included a list of possible sources of evidence with the statements. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, and awarding bodies can supply alternative evidence if they feel this is appropriate.

The five statements of excellence are:

- 1 The awarding body has effective governance, leadership and management, which support the delivery of SQA-accredited qualifications. The awarding body's strategic aims, objectives and policies are appropriate and are understood by all who refer to them.
- 2 The awarding body has developed and implemented a robust quality framework that ensures a quality product is delivered to the candidate. The awarding body and its staff are committed to a quality culture of continuous improvement through review and evaluation.

- 3 The awarding body's administrative and support arrangements have been designed to reduce bureaucracy, are responsive to stakeholders needs, and are cost effective. The awarding body continually reviews its qualification provision to ensure it has, and deploys, sufficient resources to administer and support its qualification provision.
- 4 The awarding body has demonstrated that it has the appropriate experience and ability to design, develop and deliver qualifications. The awarding body's assessment methods are rigorous but have sufficient flexibility to ensure that their requirements can be met cost-effectively and in a variety of different circumstances. Copies of the awarding body's assessment methodology and guidance are made available to all those who may wish to use them.
- 5 The awarding body's methodology for verification is rigorous and has been designed to ensure that only those candidates who have shown competence are awarded a certificate. The awarding body only deploys personnel who are qualified and competent.

This set of Awarding Body Criteria (2007) is meant to be a base line. If an awarding body wishes to add requirements — for example, a set of centre sanctions — it is allowed to do so.

Statement of Excellence 1 — Governance and Leadership

The awarding body has effective governance, leadership and management, which support the delivery of SQA-accredited qualifications. The awarding body's strategic aims, objectives and policies are appropriate and are understood by all who refer to them.

Key Goal 1	The awarding body has robust and transparent governance arrangements
Criteria	<p>Governance arrangements must include:</p> <p>1.1 A clear distinction between the organisation's role as an awarding body and any other function ensuring that:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">1.1.1 Multiple roles do not constitute a barrier to access or restrictive practice.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">1.1.2 Effective measures have been taken to manage the potential for conflicts of interest.</p> <p>1.2 A clear written agreement between any partners to a joint awarding arrangement which sets out:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">1.2.1 The roles and responsibilities of all parties to any partnership or consortium arrangement.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">1.2.2 The name of the person(s) who will co-ordinate and take responsibility for all partnership activities.</p> <p>1.3 A mechanism to notify SQA Accreditation Body, in writing, of any change to:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">1.3.1 The awarding body's governance arrangements.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">1.3.2 Any partnership arrangements and associated partnership agreement.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Organisational chart(s) illustrating independence and separation between awarding body and other functions. ◆ Written agreements or company details showing separate accounting for awarding body finances. ◆ Terms of reference for committees and boards showing an independent element on board and/or the most senior committee. ◆ Job descriptions illustrating reporting lines, roles and responsibilities. ◆ Written agreements, memoranda of understanding, franchise arrangements etc to illustrate areas of responsibility and indicate review of, and changes to, responsibilities. ◆ Documentation that demonstrates that adequate measures have been put in place to ensure that any conflicts of interest are suitably managed.

Key Goal 2	The awarding body's leadership is effective
Criteria	<p>The awarding body's leadership must ensure that:</p> <p>2.1 The management of the organisation is defined by evidence-based decision making.</p> <p>2.2 The organisation has a clear strategic vision for the future that is based upon the needs of its stakeholders.</p> <p>2.3 Employees and customers are aware of the strategic vision for the organisation's future.</p> <p>2.4 The organisation's leadership encourages continuous improvement to meet customer needs.</p> <p>2.5 Staff, at all levels, are encouraged to maintain and enhance levels of professional competence.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documentation that illustrates that the organisation actively seeks feedback from others, eg staff opinion surveys, customer surveys, complaints procedure etc. ◆ The organisation's published strategic or mission statement. ◆ Notes of meetings with customers and staff where the strategic vision has been discussed. ◆ Policy for continual professional development of staff. ◆ Performance management and training records. ◆ Action resulting from internal reviews of key performance indicators.

Key Goal 3	The awarding body has an effective business planning process
Criteria	<p>3.1 The awarding body records and documents the outcome of its business planning process. The awarding body’s business plan:</p> <p>3.1.1 Includes provision for all of its SQA accredited qualifications.</p> <p>3.1.2 Is communicated to all internal and external stakeholders that have a legitimate interest in it.</p> <p>3.1.3 Contains aims (goals) and objectives, which relate to the current and future needs of the awarding body, its stakeholders and SQA accredited qualifications.</p> <p>3.1.4 Is formally evaluated, at least, on an annual basis with a view to improvement.</p> <p>3.1.5 Includes a policy for marketing its SQA accredited qualifications that is effective and takes into account the present and future needs of the awarding body and its stakeholders.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Procedure for business planning. ◆ Copies of agendas and minutes from planning meetings. ◆ Policies register showing the marketing policy. ◆ Market research materials. ◆ Website containing marketing information and business plan that is regularly updated. ◆ Business plan document. ◆ Copies of reviews of the effectiveness of the organisation’s policy, standards and quality. ◆ Action plan linked to the evaluation of the business plan. ◆ Analysis of centre approval rates, qualification uptake etc. ◆ Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. ◆ A customer profile. ◆ Evidence that the business plan has been agreed to and signed off by the main board or Chief Executive.

Statement of Excellence 2 — Quality Enhancement

The awarding body has developed and implemented a robust quality framework that ensures a quality product is delivered to the candidate. The awarding body and its staff are committed to a quality culture of continuous improvement through review and evaluation.

Key Goal 4	The awarding body has a culture of continuous quality improvement
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>4.1 Have procedures for acquiring and analysing feedback on the effectiveness of the awarding body service from key stakeholders and customers against the awarding body’s key performance indicators.</p> <p>4.2 Conduct a review at least once per year which covers the following systems as a minimum:</p> <p>4.2.1 Administrative arrangements.</p> <p>4.2.2 Registration and certification.</p> <p>4.2.3 Appeals, complaints and equal opportunities policies.</p> <p>4.2.4 Quality assurance of SQA accredited qualifications.</p> <p>4.2.5 Provision of data required by SQA.</p> <p>4.2.6 Customer service statement against its key performance indicators.</p> <p>4.2.7 Staffing levels.</p> <p>4.2.8 Competence and deployment of external verifiers.</p> <p>4.2.9 Risk assessment process.</p> <p>4.3 Implement improvements as a result of the review which ensure that:</p> <p>4.3.1 Bureaucracy is kept to a minimum.</p> <p>4.3.2 The allocation of resources is sufficient to meet the needs of the organisation and its customers.</p> <p>4.3.3 The service for the design and delivery of accredited qualifications is responsive to the needs of customers.</p> <p>4.3.4 Costs associated with the delivery of accredited qualifications are minimised.</p> <p>4.3.5 The systems and procedures in place meet the criteria of SQA Accrediting Body.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Customer feedback forms, surveys etc that seek the views of customers and other stakeholders. ◆ Evidence that the organisation, on a regular basis, evaluates its performance against the customer service statement and where necessary takes improvement action. ◆ SWOT and/or PEST analyses. ◆ Evaluation of the awarding body’s key performance indicators.

Statement of Excellence 2 — Quality Enhancement

Possible sources of evidence cont	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Self-assessment report, iIP report, ISO9000 etc.◆ Report detailing the outcomes of the review of systems and procedures and identifying key target areas for improvement and development.◆ Analysis of resource levels against current and projected workload.◆ Pricing policy and structures and a rationale for any changes made to the pricing structure.◆ Analysis of the costs associated with the delivery of the qualifications.◆ Analysis of external verifier reports, identifying issues across centres and action taken due to analysis.
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Statement of Excellence 3 — Administration and Support

The awarding body's administrative and support arrangements have been designed to reduce bureaucracy, are responsive to stakeholders needs, and are cost effective. The awarding body continually reviews its qualification provision to ensure it has, and deploys, sufficient resources to administer and support its qualification provision.

Key Goal 5	The awarding body has robust systems in place for the management of the service it offers
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must have systems in place to:</p> <p>5.1 Support the design and delivery of qualifications.</p> <p>5.2 Ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to support the organisation's activities in the design and delivery of qualifications.</p> <p>5.3 Ensure that staff are trained to support the organisation's activities in the design and delivery of qualifications.</p> <p>5.4 Deploy sufficient resources to administer and support the design and delivery of qualifications.</p> <p>The awarding body's management information system(s) must have:</p> <p>5.5 Security measures in place to prevent unauthorised use.</p> <p>5.6 Controls in place to ensure that unauthorised certificate printing cannot take place.</p> <p>5.7 Been designed to meet the requirements of all relevant legislation.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reports and/or evidence of review by management on the effectiveness of resources such as Information Technology (IT), staffing levels etc. ◆ Action plan detailing improvements to systems. ◆ Analysis of resource levels against current and projected workload. ◆ Training needs analysis. ◆ Job specifications and recruitment policy and procedure. ◆ Organisational chart. ◆ Evidence of compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland). ◆ Evidence of compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Key Goal 6	The awarding body has an effective communications strategy that supports its awarding body activities
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>6.1 Work collaboratively with the relevant Sector Skills Councils, Standards Setting Bodies, and Regulatory Authorities including SQA’s Accrediting Body to ensure ongoing development, currency and credibility of the qualifications.</p> <p>6.2 Communicate to its approved centres, External Verifiers and other key stakeholders, any pertinent information in connection with SQA accredited qualifications and the awarding body activities.</p> <p>6.3 Ensure that internal communication systems allow for the dissemination of information relating to the awarding body’s activities or the accreditation of qualifications.</p> <p>6.4 Ensure that SQA Accrediting Body is granted access to the following from awarding body and approved centres: assessment locations, candidates, premises, meetings, documents, data, analysis and evaluations on request.</p> <p>6.5 Support SQA Accrediting Body’s monitoring activities.</p> <p>6.6 Have processes in place to ensure SQA is sent data in the agreed format and by agreed timescales.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Minutes of awarding body forum. ◆ Communications between centres and the awarding body. ◆ Communications between Regulatory Authorities, Standard Setting Bodies and the awarding body. ◆ Evidence of attendance at regulatory authorities, Standard Setting Bodies or SQA Accrediting Body meetings or events. ◆ Internal newsletters, flyers etc. ◆ Notes/agenda for internal and/or external training events. ◆ Quarterly registration and certification returns are sent to SQA by agreed timescales. ◆ Data requested for audit and centre monitoring purposes is sent to SQA by the agreed time.

Key Goal 7	The awarding body has systems and procedures for the approval of centres
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>7.1 Ensure that all centres within which assessment will take place are capable of meeting the full requirements of SQA Accrediting Body's centre approval criteria prior to any candidates being assessed or certificated for an accredited qualification.</p> <p>7.2 Seek SQA Accrediting Body's written approval for any amendments to the centre approval criteria prior to their implementation. The awarding body may, however, change the way SQA's centre approval criteria are presented.</p> <p>7.3 Ensure that each centre identifies a single named point of accountability.</p> <p>7.4 Require all potential centres to make a formal approval application that demonstrates the centres compliance with SQA's centre approval criteria.</p> <p>7.5 Ensure that where a partnership or consortium is seeking centre approval that the roles and responsibilities in relation to the linked centres are clearly set out in a written agreement.</p> <p>7.6 Require a centre to declare, in its centre approval application, if it has had approval refused, suspended or withdrawn by any other awarding body.</p> <p>7.7 Inform a centre that applies for centre or qualification approval of its approval decision in writing.</p> <p>7.8 Inform a centre of its right to appeal an approval decision made by the awarding body.</p> <p>7.9 Ensure that an External Verifier visits approved centres before the first candidate is certificated.</p> <p>7.10 Ensure that centres not previously approved to offer SQA accredited qualifications receive an external verification visit prior to approval.</p> <p>7.11 Provide potential centres with appropriate guidance and support on the awarding body's approval process.</p> <p>7.12 Ensure that a centre provides evidence of approval of assessment/satellite sites and demonstrates that the quality assurance arrangements are consistent with those of the main centre.</p> <p>7.13 Require approved centres to inform it of any key changes.</p> <p>7.14 Retain and make available to SQA Accrediting Body on request:</p> <p>7.14.1 Approval applications.</p> <p>7.14.2 Approvals visit reports.</p> <p>7.14.3 Details of the outcome of such visits.</p> <p>7.15 Have and maintain an accurate register of its approved centres and the qualifications each centre has been approved to offer.</p> <p>7.16 Inform its approved centres that they must provide SQA's Accrediting Body with timely access to locations and records for monitoring purposes.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Published centre approval criteria. ◆ Centre approval applications.

<p>Possible sources of evidence cont</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Approved Centre files. ◆ Reports that illustrate how new centres are being visited prior to approval by an External Verifier. ◆ Awarding body feedback to centres on the outcome of the centre and qualification approval process. ◆ Evidence that any action plan agreed at the time of centre approval has been achieved in full prior to first candidate certification. ◆ Copies of written agreements between linked centres. ◆ Copies of checklists against which assessment locations have been approved. ◆ Evidence of the centre informing the awarding body of changes to its assessors, verifiers and ownership. ◆ Approval guidance documents. ◆ Where appropriate, the awarding body allows credit transfer. ◆ Verifier report illustrating that the awarding body has reviewed the potential centre's assessor and verifiers to ensure occupational competence, experience and that they hold or are registered for the relevant assessor and verifier qualifications. ◆ Evidence of permission being sought before requested changes to SQA's Awarding Body Criteria (2007) are implemented.
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Key Goal 8	The awarding body has a customer service statement and identified service levels
Criteria	<p>8.1 The customer service statement must be freely available to all who may wish to make use of it.</p> <p>The customer service statement must specify:</p> <p>8.2 The quality of service a customer can reasonably expect.</p> <p>8.3 Relevant point(s) of contact and communication mechanisms.</p> <p>8.4 Measurable outcomes, such as timescales and associated performance measures.</p> <p>The customer service statement must specify, or indicate, where information may be found on:</p> <p>8.5 The awarding body fees and charges.</p> <p>8.6 Summary details of the awarding body’s complaints and appeals procedures.</p> <p>8.7 Summary details of the awarding body’s quality assurance mechanisms for centre approval and external verification.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Where the awarding body is part of a partnership or consortium, the customer service statement specifies the main point of contact. ◆ Evidence that the customer service statement is made available freely to customers and prospective customers. ◆ Evidence that the customer service statement is updated as a result of review and customer feedback. ◆ Evidence that the published customer service statement meets current awarding body policies, timescales and procedures. ◆ Details of how the customer may communicate with the provider out of office hours. ◆ Details of e-mail, fax, telephone and communications facilities.

Key Goal 9	The awarding body has open and transparent procedures for complaints and appeals
Criteria	<p>9.1 The awarding body must publish and implement an appeals and a complaints procedure which includes:</p> <p>9.1.1 The system for making a complaint or an appeal.</p> <p>9.1.2 A specified point of contact.</p> <p>9.1.3 The circumstances under which a centre or candidate is entitled to make an appeal or complaint to the awarding body.</p> <p>9.1.4 The circumstances under which a centre or candidate is entitled to make an appeal or complaint to SQA Accrediting Body.</p> <p>9.1.5 Response times and anticipated timescales for dealing with complaints or appeals.</p> <p>9.1.6 Any charge for making a complaint or an appeal.</p> <p>9.2 The appeals procedure must be designed to resolve any disputes arising from assessment or verification decisions, centre approval decisions, and certification claims.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A published appeals procedure. ◆ A published complaints procedure. ◆ Evaluation reports. ◆ Appeals register. ◆ Complaints register. ◆ A fees policy and list of fees charged for making an appeal or a complaint. ◆ Evidence that the awarding body has kept the complainant or appellant informed of the progress of the appeal or complaint. ◆ Evidence that appeals and or complaints are being resolved within specified timescales.

Key Goal 10	The awarding body has an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>10.1 Ensure that all candidates when presenting themselves for assessment are registered with the awarding body.</p> <p>10.2 Make every reasonable effort to collect each candidate's Scottish Candidate Number (where appropriate) at the point of registration.</p> <p>10.3 Ensure that candidates who complete the requirements for a qualification or unit receive a certificate in the format agreed at the time of accreditation and within the awarding body's specified timescales.</p> <p>10.4 Ensure that certificates can only be issued when all the requirements for the qualification have been met and the claim authenticated.</p> <p>10.5 Recognise the previous achievement of any units that may be common to other qualifications and to uphold the principle of credit transfer.</p> <p>10.6 Ensure safeguards are in place to protect against fraudulent, invalid or mistaken claims for certification.</p> <p>10.7 Have a system in place for the issuing of replacement certificates.</p> <p>10.8 Ensure that replacement certificates are clearly marked as such.</p> <p>10.9 Ensure that candidates seeking certification for a full SVQ, a Workplace Core Skill Unit or the Assessor/Verifier Units are registered for at least 10 weeks before a claim for certification is made.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Each qualification certificate must include the agreed title, the level (if applicable), the name of the organisation(s) forming the issuing awarding body, the date of the issue of the certificate, and the agreed SQA logos and SCQF credit points (where applicable). ◆ Each SVQ certificate must also include the designation <i>Scottish Vocational Qualification</i>. ◆ Evidence that the awarding body offers certificates at unit and whole qualification level. ◆ Evidence that the awarding body recognises previous achievement. ◆ Evidence that the candidate, prior to certification, was registered with the awarding body for at least 10 weeks (where applicable). ◆ Evidence that the date of awarding body registration of the candidate is the date that the candidate's details were input to the awarding body's database.

Key Goal 11	The awarding body has implemented a diversity and equality strategy
Criteria	<p>11.1 The awarding body's diversity and equality strategy, related policies and procedures must comply with all current legislation.</p> <p>11.2 The awarding body must have an equal opportunities policy that is freely available to all who may wish to make use of it.</p> <p>11.3 The awarding body must ensure that all relevant awarding body members of staff receive training on the organisations equal opportunities strategy, relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>11.4 The awarding body must have a policy and a procedure for special assessment arrangements, which are freely available to all who may wish to make use of them. The awarding body's policy and procedure for special assessment arrangements must:</p> <p>11.4.1 State the procedure that centres must follow to apply for special assessment arrangements.</p> <p>11.4.2 Ensure that candidates who have taken ill at short notice are given fair access to assessment and verification.</p> <p>11.4.3 Ensure that the qualifications assessment specifications are not invalidated.</p> <p>11.5 The awarding body must have a policy and a procedure for reasonable adjustments, which are freely available to all who may wish to make use of them. The awarding body's policy and procedure for reasonable adjustments must:</p> <p>11.5.1 State the procedure that centres must follow to apply for reasonable adjustments on behalf of a candidate.</p> <p>11.5.2 Ensure that the qualification's assessment specifications are not invalidated.</p> <p>11.5.3 Ensure that the adjustments take into consideration the current needs of the candidate and do not give the candidate an unfair advantage.</p> <p>11.6 Specify the level of delegated authority required by staff to enable them to make reasonable adjustments to the centre.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evidence of monitoring of the awarding body's equal opportunities strategy and related policies and acting on the outcome of such monitoring. ◆ Evidence that external verifiers are monitoring implementation at centre level. ◆ Evidence of training of staff. ◆ Evidence that the awarding body reviews marketing, assessment and guidance materials to ensure they do not reinforce stereotypes. ◆ Evidence that the awarding body has taken all current and relevant legislation (Devolved and UK wide) such as the Equal Opportunities Act and the Age Discrimination Act into consideration when developing its diversity and equality strategy.

Possible sources of evidence cont	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Evidence that the awarding body has made its diversity and equality strategy, related policies and procedures available to candidates and centres.◆ A published equal opportunities policy.◆ Evidence that the equal opportunities policy is available to all who may wish to make use of it.◆ Evidence that the awarding body has considered the use of British Sign Language within its reasonable adjustment policy.
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Key Goal 12	The awarding body has a policy and procedure for malpractice and/or maladministration
Criteria	<p>The awarding body's policy and procedure for malpractice and/or maladministration must:</p> <p>12.1 Ensure that centres inform the awarding body of any cases of suspected or actual malpractice and/or maladministration.</p> <p>12.2 Set out the actions to be taken by the centre and/or the awarding body where cases of malpractice and/or maladministration are suspected.</p> <p>12.3 Require the awarding body to investigate suspected cases of malpractice and/or maladministration.</p> <p>12.4 Ensure that SQA Accrediting Body is notified of the name of any centre that has an allegation of malpractice and/or maladministration made against it.</p> <p>12.5 Ensure that SQA's Accrediting Body is given a copy of the final report into any investigation of malpractice/maladministration.</p> <p>12.6 Ensure that any awarding body personnel selected to carry out a malpractice and/or maladministration investigation is independent of normal working relationships with the centre.</p> <p>12.7 Comply with current legislation in respect of the rights of whistleblowers.</p> <p>12.8 Require the awarding body to maintain a register of all allegations of malpractice and make the register available to SQA Accrediting Body on request.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evidence that the awarding body has received allegations of malpractice or maladministration. ◆ Investigation reports into allegations of malpractice or maladministration. ◆ Changes to systems and procedures as a result of allegations of malpractice or maladministration. ◆ The awarding body's policy on whistleblowers takes into account the rights of whistleblowers. ◆ Malpractice and/or maladministration investigation reports. ◆ UK Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Key Goal 13	The awarding body provides clear written guidance for awarding body representatives and prospective or approved centres and their staff
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must provide guidance to centres on:</p> <p>13.1 Centre approval. 13.2 Assessment location or satellite site approval. 13.3 Malpractice and/or maladministration. 13.4 Record keeping. 13.5 Equality and diversity strategy. 13.6 Complaints and appeals handling. 13.7 Quality assurance arrangements. 13.8 The roles and responsibilities of the centre and its staff for each qualification the centre is approved to deliver. 13.9 The assessment specification for each qualification the centre is approved to deliver.</p> <p>The awarding body must provide guidance to its own staff on:</p> <p>13.10 Work procedures. 13.11 Quality assurance arrangements. 13.12 Continuing professional development. 13.13 Qualification design. 13.14 Conflicts of interest. 13.15 Data protection.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate packs. ◆ Centre approval packs. ◆ Awarding body’s work instructions. ◆ Job specifications. ◆ The awarding body’s assessment methodology. ◆ Freedom of Information Act (Scotland). ◆ Data Protection Act. ◆ Use of plain English in guidance documents. ◆ Use of web based systems (e-portfolios, e-assessment etc) ◆ Customer service statement.

Key Goal 14	The awarding body has a record retention policy that takes into account any regulatory or statutory requirements
Criteria	<p>14.1 The awarding body's record retention policy must ensure that it and its approved centres retain sufficient assessment and verification records to allow for the review of assessment over time.</p> <p>14.2 The awarding body must ensure it and its approved centres retain candidate records detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Last name of candidate. — Full first name of candidate. — Date of birth of candidate. — Gender — Scottish Candidate Number. — Candidate's contact address and telephone number. — Date of registration with awarding body. — Records of certificates claimed (full qualification and unit) listed by the title and the Scottish group award number (4 + 2 code). — Brief details of any reasonable adjustment requirements. <p>14.3 The awarding body must ensure its centres retain candidate records detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — What was assessed, when and by whom? — The assessment methods used. — The assessment decision; the location of evidence. — Internal verification records detailing: who internally verified the candidate, when it was done, as well as details of verifier sample. <p>14.4 The awarding body must provide guidance to its approved centres on its minimum time requirement for record retention by centres.</p> <p>14.5 The awarding body must use the qualification code and qualification title supplied at the time of accreditation when referring to a SQA accredited qualification.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evidence that Scottish funding and statutory requirements have been considered. ◆ Guidance to centres may include: what records need to be retained and for how long; how records of questioning (written and oral) are to be retained, including responses. ◆ Password controls on databases. ◆ Copy of the awarding body's policy on record retention. ◆ Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland). ◆ Evidence of compliance with the Data Protection Act. ◆ Evidence of compliance with the Age Discrimination Act. ◆ Evidence of compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (where appropriate).

Statement of Excellence 4 — Qualification Development and Design

The awarding body has demonstrated that it has the appropriate experience and ability to design, develop and deliver qualifications. The awarding body's assessment methods are rigorous but have sufficient flexibility to ensure that their requirements can be met cost-effectively and in a variety of different circumstances. Copies of the awarding body's assessment methodology and guidance are made available to all those who may wish to use them.

Key Goal 15	The qualification and associated structure has been designed to ensure it is appropriate and meets the needs of the occupational sector
Criteria	<p>15.1 The qualification must be designed to contribute to the overall strategy for the occupational sector.</p> <p>15.2 SVQs and qualifications linked to National Occupational Standards (NOS) must be based on approved NOS defined by recognised Standards Setting Bodies.</p> <p>15.3 Qualifications for regulatory purposes must be as specified by the appropriate Regulatory Authority.</p> <p>15.4 The qualification must be written in the form of units and outcomes.</p> <p>15.5 The qualification must be designed to provide opportunities for progression or to meet a specific need.</p> <p>15.6 The qualification must be assigned a level within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>15.7 SQA's Accrediting Body must approve the format and content of all qualification certificates at the time of accreditation.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Links to the appropriate Sector Qualifications Strategy. ◆ Approved National Occupational Standards. ◆ Mapping to the appropriate Regulatory Body's specification. ◆ Unit and qualification specifications. ◆ Progression routes into and out of the qualification. ◆ Minutes of meetings held between the awarding body and key Scottish interest groups at which the proposal was supported. ◆ The positive outcome of a consultation exercise on the proposal conducted by the awarding body in Scotland. ◆ Letters of endorsement from key Scottish interests for the proposal. ◆ Letter(s) of support from Sector Skills Council(s).

Key Goal 16	The awarding body has designed an assessment methodology that is fit for purpose
Criteria	<p>16.1 The awarding body must design an assessment methodology that:</p> <p>16.1.1 Is fit for purpose, rigorous and reliable.</p> <p>16.1.2 Seeks to encourage simple and practicable assessment and discourage unnecessary bureaucracy.</p> <p>16.1.3 Includes arrangements for candidates who have particular assessment requirements.</p> <p>16.1.4 Is free from barriers, which unnecessarily restrict access to the qualification including in terms of particular assessment requirements for learners with disabilities or learning difficulties.</p> <p>16.1.5 Is compatible with unit accumulation.</p> <p>16.1.6 Ensures the quality and consistency of assessment provided at any location and between locations.</p> <p>16.1.7 Assess the application of skills, knowledge and understanding in a specific occupation to the standard required in the workplace.</p> <p>16.2 The assessment methodology must take account of the principles of assessment specified by the Standards Setting Body and/or Regulatory Body, including:</p> <p>16.2.1 Independent assessment.</p> <p>16.2.2 Aspects of the qualification, which must be assessed through performance in the workplace (where appropriate).</p> <p>16.2.3 Defining what constitutes a realistic working environment (where appropriate).</p> <p>16.2.4 The occupational competence required of trainers, assessors and verifiers.</p> <p>16.3 Assessment carried out in a language other than English must provide clear evidence that the candidate is also competent in English to the standards required for competent performance throughout the United Kingdom.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A document from the Standards Setting Body/Regulatory Authority stating that the awarding body's assessment methodology is acceptable and meets their requirements. ◆ Statutory restraints requiring restrictions to be defined within the qualification. ◆ Policy and/or procedure setting out special assessment arrangements for the qualification(s). ◆ Policy and/or procedure setting out how the awarding body ensures its qualifications are free from barriers. ◆ Assessment methodology showing how it meets the requirement of the assessment strategy/specification developed by the relevant body. ◆ Evidence that the awarding body is meeting any health and safety requirements.

Key Goal 17	The awarding body submits timely and detailed qualification submissions
Criteria	<p>17.1 The awarding body is an SQA approved awarding body.</p> <p>17.2 To accredit, extend, amend or withdraw a qualification the awarding body must submit a submission in the format required by SQA Accrediting Body.</p> <p>17.3 If an accreditation submission is being submitted on behalf of a partnership the lead awarding body within the partnership must provide a signed, written agreement between the partners which:</p> <p>17.3.1 Sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties within the partnership or consortium arrangement.</p> <p>17.3.2 Sets out the name of the person who will assume responsibility for the co-ordination of all partnership activities.</p> <p>17.3.3 Agrees to inform SQA Accrediting Body immediately of any changes to the partnership and if required by SQA's Accrediting Body, submit a new accreditation submission.</p> <p>17.4 Prior to withdrawal of a qualification the awarding body must negotiate, with SQA Accrediting Body, a timescale for withdrawal that will allow, where appropriate, alternative arrangements to be made.</p> <p>17.5 The awarding body must ensure that adequate notice is given to centres so that the interests of candidates will be protected.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The awarding body's approval application, approval contract and any accreditation appendixes attached to the contract. ◆ Partnership agreement. ◆ Accreditation, modification or withdrawal request. ◆ Letters of support for the awarding body to offer proposed qualifications. ◆ Minutes of meetings with key interest groups or professional bodies in the sector that details their support for the awarding body to offer the qualifications. ◆ Evidence that centres and other interested parties (including Sector Skills Councils and Standards Setting Bodies) have been consulted prior to the withdrawal of a qualification.

Key Goal 18	The awarding body's assessment methods produce results that are authentic, reliable and consistent
Criteria	<p>18.1 The awarding body must provide a final draft copy of the candidate, centre and staff assessment guidance for each qualification or unit proposal at the time of the accreditation submission. The awarding body's assessment guidance must:</p> <p>18.1.1 State how independent assessment will be achieved.</p> <p>18.1.2 State the specification of the occupational expertise required of trainers, assessors and verifiers.</p> <p>18.1.3 State (where applicable) the extent to which simulated working conditions may be used to assess competence and any characteristics that simulation should have, including definitions of what would constitute a 'realistic working environment' for the qualification concerned.</p> <p>18.1.4 State (where applicable) which aspects of the qualification must always be assessed through performance in the workplace</p> <p>18.1.5 State (where applicable) how knowledge and understanding, skills and outcomes are to be assessed.</p> <p>18.1.6 State the amount and type of evidence to be collected.</p> <p>18.1.7 Highlight the importance of credit accumulation and transfer.</p> <p>The awarding body must ensure that:</p> <p>18.2 Systems are in place to confirm evidence provided by a candidate is relevant and authentic.</p> <p>18.3 That assessment is, where appropriate, standardised.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Exemplars of assessment forms etc. ◆ Reviews of assessment to ensure clarity and understanding at assessor level. ◆ Appropriate security measures are in place, where appropriate. ◆ Codes of conduct for trainers, assessors and internal verifiers. ◆ Systems for recording assessment and verification.

Statement of Excellence 5 — Assessment and Verification

The awarding body's methodology for verification is rigorous and has been designed to ensure that only those candidates who have shown competence are awarded a certificate. The awarding body only deploys personnel who are qualified and competent.

Key Goal 19	The awarding body ensures its approved centres have access to appropriately qualified personnel for the range of qualifications they are approved to deliver
Criteria	<p>19.1 The awarding body must ensure its approved centres retain evidence of trainers, assessor and internal verifier's occupational competence and relevant qualifications (including any peripatetic trainers, assessors and internal verifiers).</p> <p>The awarding body must ensure that its approved centres assessors and internal verifiers (including any peripatetic trainers, assessors and internal verifiers):</p> <p>19.2 Hold, or are working towards, relevant assessment and/or verification qualifications within an agreed and noted timescale.</p> <p>19.3 Meet the requirements for occupational competence as specified by the relevant Standards Setting Body and/or Regulatory Authority.</p> <p>19.4 Are familiar with the awarding body requirements for recording assessment and/or verification decisions.</p> <p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>19.5 Ensure that each approved centre holds regular standardisation meetings.</p> <p>19.6 Ensure that where internal verifiers are also assessors, they do not internally verify evidence, which they have assessed or countersigned.</p> <p>19.7 Seek approval from SQA Accrediting body prior to offering positions to assessors and/or internal verifiers who hold equivalent or alternative assessor or verification qualifications or exemptions from the assessor and verifier units.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evidence that an external verifier ensures that trainers, assessors and/or internal verifier meetings take place regularly. ◆ Evidence that an external verifier reviews minutes from trainers, assessors and/or internal verifier meetings. ◆ Evidence that meetings between the external verifier and trainers, assessors and/or internal verifiers take place. ◆ Evidence that an external verifier reviews trainers, assessors and/or internal verifier appraisals. ◆ Evidence that an external verifier reviews trainers, assessors and/or internal verifier qualifications and occupational competence. ◆ Evidence that an external verifier reviews and countersigns the record of unqualified assessor and/or internal verifier decisions.

Statement of Excellence 5 — Assessment and Verification

Possible sources of evidence cont	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Evidence that an external verifier has reviewed the training of trainers, assessors and/or internal verifiers.◆ Evidence that an external verifier has increased his/her sampling of centres that do not have qualified assessor and/or internal verifiers.◆ Where an external verifier is acting as an internal verifier (exceptional circumstance) there is evidence that the external verifier meets the Standards Setting Body's requirements for an internal verifier.
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Key Goal 20	The awarding body's systems and procedures for the appointment, training, registration, deployment and monitoring of external verifiers are effective and robust
Criteria	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>20.1 Ensure external verifiers are occupationally competent.</p> <p>20.2 Ensure external verifiers hold, or are working towards, the relevant verifier qualification within an agreed and noted timescale.</p> <p>20.3 Ensure external verifiers are trained in the skills required to carry out verification visits.</p> <p>20.4 Ensure external verifiers are trained in the implementation of the awarding body's quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>20.5 Ensure external verifiers are fully aware of and have access to a copy of SQA Awarding Body Criteria (2007) .</p> <p>20.6 Keep and maintain a register of its external verifiers' qualifications, deployment and continuing professional development activities.</p> <p>20.7 Ensure its external verifiers attend regular standardisation activities.</p> <p>20.8 Ensure that systems are in place to avoid a conflict of interest.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<p>Evidence is available that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ External verifiers have a clear understanding of all the occupational requirements for candidates in the areas they are verifying. ◆ External verifiers are registered for, or hold, the relevant verifier qualification. ◆ External verifiers receive training in the implementation of the awarding body's quality assurance procedures. ◆ External verifiers code of conduct signed by the external verifier. ◆ Where an external verifier is also an assessor or internal verifier to any centre, they may not act as the external verifier of that particular centre. ◆ External verifiers have relevant job descriptions and work instructions. ◆ The awarding body reviews the progress made by its external verifiers towards achievement of the relevant verifier qualification. ◆ The awarding body keeps and maintains external verifier personal files. ◆ The awarding body carries out accompanied external verification visits.

Key Goal 21	<p>The awarding body has systems and procedures for monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment provided at any location.</p> <p>These systems must ensure that assessment is uniformly systematic, valid and to the defined standard.</p>
Criteria	<p>21.1 The awarding body’s external verification system must be designed to verify each centre’s systems and assessment practices consistently and in accordance with SQA’s centre approval criteria.</p> <p>The awarding body must:</p> <p>21.2 Have a policy on the number of external verification visits, which will be undertaken for each qualification.</p> <p>21.3 Have a system for reporting, monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of external verification visits to its approved centres.</p> <p>21.4 Require each centre to nominate a contact to respond to the outcome of external verification visit reports, actioning each of the report headings.</p> <p>21.5 Ensure each action point noted within any agreed action plan is specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time bound.</p> <p>21.6 Have a system for monitoring any action plan agreed as a result of an external verification visit.</p> <p>21.7 Ensure its external verifiers are supplied with sufficient information in order to develop a verification-sampling plan.</p> <p>21.8 Ensure that the appointed external verifier devises a verification-sampling plan.</p> <p>21.9 Ensure that the external verifier gives the centre advance notice of the qualifications, candidates and assessors to be included in the verification sample.</p> <p>The verification sampling plan must be designed to ensure that:</p> <p>21.10 Where a centre has one or more assessment locations or satellite sites an external verifier visits them over a period of time.</p> <p>21.11 Assessment and internal verification decisions made at the centre, assessment locations or satellite sites are reviewed for consistency.</p>
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The awarding body’s policy for external verification visits to centres. ◆ The awarding body’s policy for external verification visits and its reporting process. ◆ Copies of job descriptions/work instructions for external verifiers. ◆ Evidence that the external verifiers take responsibility for monitoring assessment practice and centre systems. ◆ Evidence of advice and support given, by external verifiers, to centre staff. ◆ Awarding body guidance to external verifiers on development of a sampling plan. ◆ Evidence that the external verifier has developed and uses a sampling plan for centres.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Evidence that the external verifier extends the verification sample on occasions and occasionally meets with candidates.◆ Evidence that the external verifier has observed assessment and internal verification practices.◆ Evidence from a centre contact with regard to the action plan.◆ Evidence of any accompanied external verification visits.◆ Evidence that the external verifier has taken part in recent continuing professional development.◆ Evidence that the awarding body gives the external verifier access to sufficient materials and records to develop a sampling plan.
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Appendix A — Data requirements

SQA Accrediting Body has introduced a common data requirement, which supports the objective of adopting a more standardised, customer-orientated approach to qualification implementation.

Common data requirements are applied to candidate registration, certification and centre data.

SQA Accrediting Body collates data for inputting onto every Scottish candidate's Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC); the SQC is a record of a candidate's life long learning achievements. The SQC is linked to the candidate by forename, surname, date of birth and Scottish Candidate Number.

From August 2006 SQA approved awarding bodies will no longer be responsible for assigning each candidate a Scottish Candidate Number where the number is unknown.

However, the requirement for awarding bodies, and their approved centres, to make every reasonable effort to collect each candidate's Scottish Candidate Number where it is known will remain in force.

If, at the point of registration, the candidate does not know his or her Scottish Candidate Number the candidate may contact SQA's Customer Contact Centre directly and ask for assistance. The Customer Contact Centre will be able to confirm whether or not the candidate has an existing Scottish Candidate Number allocated to him or her. If no Scottish Candidate Number has been allocated, SQA awarding bodies send in candidate registration details as usual. A Scottish Candidate Number will be automatically generated for the candidate by the Accreditation Unit's in-house system. The telephone number for the Customer Contact Centre is available on SQA's website.

Centres approved by and delivering only SQA (awarding body) qualifications have direct access to this information so do not require to contact the Customer Contact Centre.

SQA approved awarding bodies must provide SQA Accrediting Body with relevant data on candidate achievements. Failure to supply such data will result in incomplete data on a candidate's SQC and thus disadvantage that candidate.

Registration:

Scottish Candidate Number	9 digits	Mandatory	
Forename	2–30 digits	Mandatory	Must be in full
Last name	2–30 digits	Mandatory	
Date of Birth	dd-mm-yyyy	Mandatory	
Entry code	4 characters	Mandatory	
Entry level	2 digits	Mandatory	
Gender	m/f	Mandatory	
Reg Stage	1-7	Please leave blank	Please leave blank
Registration date	dd-mm-yyyy	Mandatory	
Address1	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
Address2	Up to 30 characters	Optional	
Address3	Up to 30 characters	Optional	
Address4	Up to 30 characters	Optional	
Postcode	UK postcode	Mandatory	
BFPO postcode	BFPO postcode format	Mandatory (if applicable)	
Country		Optional	
Process by exception	True/false	Please leave blank	Please leave blank

Please note that failure to keep to the specified format will result in documents being returned to the awarding body and a delay in registration and/or certification of candidates.

Certification:

Scottish Candidate Number	9 digits	Mandatory	
Forename	2–30 digits	Mandatory	Must be in full
Last name	2–30 digits	Mandatory	
Date of Birth	dd-mm-yyyy	Mandatory	
Entry code	4 characters	Mandatory	
Entry level	2 digits	Mandatory	
Gender	m/f	Mandatory	
Address1	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
Address2	Up to 30 characters	Optional	
Address3	Up to 30 characters	Optional	
Address4	Up to 30 characters	Optional	
Postcode	UK postcode	Mandatory	
BFPO postcode	BFPO postcode format	Mandatory (if applicable)	
Country		Optional	
Certification date	dd-mm-yyyy	Mandatory	
Results	1 character	Please leave blank	Please leave blank
Address amended	1 character	Optional	

Please note that failure to keep to the specified format will result in documents being returned to the awarding body and a delay in registration and/or certification of candidates

Centre data:

Centre name	Up to 100 digits	Mandatory	Must be in full
Previous name of centre	Up to 100 digits	Optional	If known
Centre Coordinator Name	Up to 100 digits	Mandatory	Must be in full
CentreAddress1	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
CentreAddress2	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
CentreAddress3	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
CentreAddress4	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
County	Up to 30 characters	Mandatory	
Contact telephone number	11 digits	Mandatory	
Postcode	UK postcode	Mandatory	

Centre qualifications data:

Centre name	Up to 100 digits	Mandatory	Must be in full
SVQ Title	Up to 100 characters	Mandatory	
Entry code	4 characters	Mandatory	SQA's 4 + 2 code
Entry level	2 digits	Mandatory	
Cumulative total of candidates registered, by qualification and Core Skill unit		Mandatory	
Cumulative total of candidates certificated, by qualification and Core Skill unit		Mandatory	

Appendix B — Centre approval criteria (2005)

Management

- 1 A quality management system must be in place to ensure that client, candidate and staff needs are met.
 - 1.1 There must be a documented quality management system that the centre operates.
 - 1.2 There must be an appropriate system for document control.
 - 1.3 All appropriate teams and people must be kept up to date with quality policy, procedures and standards.
 - 1.4 Up-to-date information on the training performance of the centre and its candidates must be available.
 - 1.5 Responsibilities for the management of the quality management system and all associated areas must be clearly and appropriately allocated.
 - 1.6 The quality management system must be systematically reviewed and findings acted upon.

Resources

- 2 The structure, level and type of staffing must be appropriate to the SVQs provided. Staff development provision meets the needs of both the organisation and the individual.
 - 2.1 There must be a system for ensuring that the structure and level of staffing enables the centre's objectives to be achieved.
 - 2.2 Competent staff who have the necessary qualifications, occupational experience and understanding must be deployed in the support delivery assessment and internal verification of the SVQs being offered by the centre.
 - 2.3 There must be appropriate recruitment, selection and job allocation criteria and procedures and clear job descriptions and remits for all grades of staff.
 - 2.4 All new recruits and post holders must have access to induction.
 - 2.5 There must be a staff development plan and staff must be clear about the kind of support available.
 - 2.6 A system of regular review of staff development needs must be maintained.
 - 2.7 Competences of all staff must be progressively developed in line with the centre's business plan.

Equal opportunities

- 3 Equal opportunities must be ensured for all clients, candidates and staff.
 - 3.1 The centre must have, operate and monitor an equal opportunities policy
 - 3.2 The centre must ensure that everyone eligible has an equal chance of benefiting from the services it provides.
 - 3.3 The centre must promote equal opportunities to all clients, candidates and staff.

Health and Safety

- 4 There must be a safe and healthy environment for all candidates, staff and visitors.
 - 4.1 Premises must be registered as required by the Health and Safety Executive or Local Authority Environmental Health Department.
 - 4.2 The centre must ensure that premises, facilities, equipment and materials are suitable for the range and number of candidates, staff and visitors.
 - 4.3 There must be appropriate access to premises and facilities.

Communications

- 5 Communication and administration arrangements must meet the needs of external bodies, centre staff and candidates.
 - 5.1 The centre must have an effective internal communication system.
 - 5.2 The organisation must have an effective external communications system with the awarding body, clients and candidates.
 - 5.3 There must be appropriate contract arrangements between the centre, assessment sites, clients and candidates.
 - 5.4 There must be an appropriate and effective system for the management of all subcontracted services.
 - 5.5 Record keeping must be appropriate to the delivery of SVQs and units and the management requirements.

Candidate support

- 6 The needs of individual candidates must be identified, action plan or personal training/assessment plans formulated, progress reviewed and support provided where needed.
 - 6.1 Candidates must have the opportunity to discuss their starting points and possible goals and relate these to learning and/or

- assessment opportunities through action plans or personal training plans.
- 6.2 Candidates' prior achievements must be taken into account.
 - 6.3 Induction to the organisation and SVQ or unit must be provided for all candidates.
 - 6.4 All candidates must have regular opportunities during the SVQ and unit to review their individual progress and goals and re-plan where necessary.
 - 6.5 There must be a system for referral of candidates to specialist services if reviews show that this is needed.
 - 6.6 There must be a pre-exit guidance provided to support post-SVQ or unit progression.

Assessment and verification

- 7 Assessment instruments must allow evidence of all candidates' sustained competence to be gathered. The evidence must conform with the standards required by the awarding body for the SVQ or unit. Assessment must be internally verified. Awarding body requirements for external verification must be met. There must be an appeals system.
 - 7.1 The planned assessment instruments for programmes leading to SVQs or units must conform to awarding body arrangements.
 - 7.2 Planned instruments must be appropriately resourced and implemented for all candidates for all Outcomes, elements of competence and Performance Criteria
 - 7.3 The evidence of candidate's work must be accurately judged by assessors against the awarding body required for the SVQ or unit.
 - 7.4 The evidence of candidates' work records of assessors' judgement and records of internal verification must be retained in accordance with awarding body requirements.
 - 7.5 There must be an effective and accessible system of appeals.
 - 7.6 There must be an effective system for candidate registration and certification.

Appendix C — Assessor and verifier qualifications

The following qualifications are suitable for the assessment and verification of SQA accredited qualifications. Awarding Bodies are granted the discretion to use them in place of the Assessor and verifier units without further reference to SQA's Accrediting Body:

Title	Abbreviation	Comments
Assess candidate performance	D32	The A & V units have superseded these qualifications; they do however remain extant.
Assess candidates using differing sources of evidence	D33	
Internally verify the assessment process	D34	
Externally verify the assessment process	D35	
Advise and support candidates to identify prior achievement	D36	
Assess candidates using a range of methods	A1	
Assess candidates' performance through observation	A2	
Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process	V1	
Conduct external quality assurance of the assessment process	V2	
Teacher Qualification (Further Education).	TQFE	
Postgraduate and Professional Graduate Certificate in Education	PGCE	
Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)	PGDE	

Other courses may be accepted. However, all other qualifications must be approved, in writing, by SQA's Accrediting Body prior to their use.