

# Core Skills Bulletin

May 2004



## Introduction

The team responsible for Core Skills has some new faces – Margaret Tierney is now the Project Manager and Annette Foulcer the Project Officer, and they work within the remit of Qualifications, Research and Development. Margaret and Annette are happy to hear from you and answer queries on Core Skills, their contact details are listed at the back.

## Core Skills Consultation

In October last year, SOA decided to defer the proposed consultation on Core Skills until the emerging outcomes of planned national initiatives become available. In researching and reviewing the options for addressing Core Skills issues it became clear that a number of national initiatives – such as the Review of the 3–18 Curriculum and development of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs), Progress File and Personal Lifelong Learning Plans – place the development of Core Skills in a much broader context and lead logically to deferment of the work planned in this area.

SOA therefore feels it is better to ensure that all the options for change are fully considered in the light of the emerging outcomes of the initiatives referred to above. The first phase of the Review of the Curriculum is scheduled to be completed next summer. The National Agencies, the National Qualifications Steering Group and the Scottish Executive are aware of, and are in agreement with, the decision to defer consultation.

SOA will keep you informed of the consultation plans for Core Skills through our website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

## Results of NQ Audits 2003

A two day event was held in November to carry out the audit of Core Skills for the revised National Qualifications which will go live from June 2004.

The Courses include Geography (Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher), Physical Education (Intermediate 1 and 2 and Higher), Media Studies (Intermediate 1 and 2 and Higher), Biotechnology (Intermediate 1 and Higher) and Mathematics (Advanced Higher). The validation of embedded Core Skills will be completed for this session early in 2004 and will be published on our website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

# Refreshing of Core Skills Units

In December 2003, most of the current NQ Core Skills Units were refreshed by the Senior Moderator for that area. These adjustments were designed to take away false barriers to candidate achievement and to make language easier and more accessible for users. These refreshments did not include any revisions to Communication Core Skills Units. Units which have minor changes at most levels are Numeracy, Using IT, Problem Solving and Working with Others. These will be available for use from August 2004 as version 2 specifications and will carry the same code number as before.

# Rebadging of Workplace Core Skills Assessment Pack

The Workplace Core Skills Assessment Packs have been very well received by centres offering workplace provision.

A similar package is currently being written for schools and colleges to accompany NQ provision. This will offer centres the benefits of giving realistic situations in which Core Skills are evidenced, less paperwork, opportunities for candidates to collect evidence through folio and less duplication of assessment.

# Catalogue for Automatic Certification of Core Skills

A new catalogue is currently under review. This will include all amendments and all Core Skills details of the revised National Qualifications. It will also include HN qualifications which have been successfully audited against Core Skill components. At present only the HN Group Awards included in the pilot (Communication with Media, Horticulture, Computing and Social Science) carry certificated Core Skills.

The new catalogue showing Units and Courses with Automatic Certification of Core Skills is scheduled for publication by June and will appear on the website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

In the meantime, please contact Margaret or Annette for any clarification of embedded Core Skills.

# Core and Key Skills – Equivalences

SQA and QCA have established the following tables of equivalent development in respect of the Core Skills and Key Skills. A FAQ sheet for more information is included here – this should give more portable qualifications to Scottish candidates who wish to progress with their learning and give SQA centres a 'currency converter' for applicants with Key Skills certificates.

Table of Equivalences – SQA Core Skills, QCA/CCEA/ACCAC Key Skills

Table 1: Areas covered by Core Skills, and the similar areas covered by Key Skills

Key Skills	Core Skills
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Oral Communication</li> <li>◆ Written Communication</li> <li>◆ Reading</li> </ul>	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Oral Communication</li> <li>◆ Written Communication</li> </ul>
Application of Number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Interpreting Information</li> <li>◆ Carrying Out Calculations</li> <li>◆ Interpreting Results and Presenting Findings</li> </ul>	Numeracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Using Graphical Information</li> <li>◆ Using Number Skills</li> </ul>
Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Finding and Selecting Information</li> <li>◆ Developing Information</li> <li>◆ Presenting Information</li> </ul>	Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Operate the Computer</li> <li>◆ Find Information</li> <li>◆ Use Software to Develop Information</li> </ul>
Problem Solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identify Problems</li> <li>◆ Considering Solutions</li> <li>◆ Reviewing and Evaluating Outcomes</li> </ul>	Problem Solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Critical Thinking</li> <li>◆ Planning and Organising</li> <li>◆ Reviewing and Evaluating</li> </ul>
Working with Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Planning the Work</li> <li>◆ Working to Identified Objectives</li> <li>◆ Reviewing Progress</li> </ul>	Working with Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Analysing and Preparing</li> <li>◆ Planning and Negotiating</li> <li>◆ Working Together</li> <li>◆ Checking and Evaluating</li> </ul>
Improving Own Learning and Performance	Achievement of both Working with Others and Problem Solving, at lower level should they differ.
Personal Skills Development level 5	Under development

(Table 2 shows the level of achievement equivalence.)

Achievement in the Key Skill listed on the left-hand side of the following table can be taken to show equivalent development of the Core Skill on the right-hand side of the table and vice versa.

Table 2: Level of development of Key Skill compared to Core Skills

Key Skills	Core Skills
Level 3	Higher (SCQF Level 6)
Level 2	Intermediate 2 (SCQF Level 5)
Level 1	Intermediate 1 (SCQF Level 4)
Adult basic skills entry level 3	Access 3 (SCQF Level 3)
Adult basic skills entry level 2	Access 2 (SCQF Level 2)
Adult basic skills entry level 1	There is currently no match at this level

Table 2 has been produced to assist those who need to evaluate prior achievement of Core Skills, and how this relates to Key Skills or prior achievement of Key Skills and how this relates to Core Skills. This is for use only to show where candidates registered on a programme that requires Core or Key Skills achievement have already covered development that therefore does not need to be covered again. It does not provide a means of providing certificates for these equivalent qualifications, nor does it provide a choice of qualifications to aim for in programmes where specific certification in Core or Key Skills is a requirement.

# Adult context support

SQA are working with colleagues in Learning Connections and in the Further Education sector to provide more support materials for those working with adult learners in literacy programmes. This will include guidance on how to build a portfolio of evidence from the work that is being generated and examples of differences in level for targeted Units in Communication and Numeracy.

# Prior moderation

This service, currently provided free of charge, is to encourage you to adapt/redesign NABs to suit your local needs. It gives the safeguard of having a moderator scrutinise and feed back on the assessment instruments that you want to use for one of our Units. Approved centres can submit assessment materials directly to Moderation Section for Core Skills Units. We hope that this will add to the bank of materials that can be shared too!

# Contacts

Please feel free to contact either Margaret or Annette on issues or queries on Core Skills:

## Margaret Tierney

tel: 0141-242 2319

e-mail: [margaret.tierney@sqa.org.uk](mailto:margaret.tierney@sqa.org.uk)

## Annette Foulcer

tel: 0141-242 2075

e-mail: [annette.foulcer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:annette.foulcer@sqa.org.uk)

To download Unit specifications, Core Skills catalogue, Core Skills framework, Workplace Core Skills etc, please visit our website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

To order an SQA publication

tel: 0845 279 1000

fax: 0141-242 2244

e-mail: [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)



Hanover House  
24 Douglas Street  
Glasgow  
G2 7NQ

Ironmills Road  
Dalkeith  
Midlothian  
EH22 1LE

Customer Contact Centre  
tel: 0845 279 1000  
fax: 0141-242 2244  
e-mail: [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)

website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

BD1556

May 2004