



Introducing SQA's Quality Assurance for Higher National and Vocational Qualifications — highlighting the important changes to the way we will quality-assure centres from August 2013

SQA introduced a new approach to quality assurance three years ago and piloted this in conjunction with a cross-section of centres offering Higher National and Vocational Qualifications (HN/VQs).

As the new approach to quality assurance has evolved, we have been able to evaluate and refine it and are now in a position to roll this out across all centres offering HN/VQs.

So what has changed and what does it mean for centres?

◆ SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria replaces SQA's Quality Framework

We have divided SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria into four distinct processes: Systems Approval, Qualification Approval, Systems Verification and Qualification Verification.

These are measured against a set of clearly defined criteria, with a pre-determined rating of either: low, medium or high impact.

The four processes support SQA centres to ensure the value and integrity of SQA Higher National and Vocational Qualifications.

◆ Introduction of Outcomes

The findings of a systems or qualification verification visit will result in one of five outcome ratings from Significant Strengths to Significant Weaknesses, to each of the six categories of criteria. This will result in an overall outcome rating for the centre.

◆ **Actions and sanctions**

When an approved centre's management and quality assurance systems do not fully comply with the quality assurance criteria, we will agree an action plan with you. Additionally, depending on the nature and level, we may invoke sanctions to protect qualification standards and to encourage compliance.

When will these changes take effect?

These changes will come into effect from **1 August 2013**; however, you will not receive verification under this new approach until after 1 November 2013 at the very earliest.

The centre guidance can be found at: www.sqa.org.uk/qualityassurance. We have also published detailed guidance for our appointees who undertake quality assurance on SQA's behalf and have made this guidance available to centres within the quality assurance website.

We will continue to work in partnership with you, to review and evaluate processes and procedures and to ensure that the quality assurance activities are undertaken where they are most needed.

Contact us

If you have any questions relating to the introduction of SQA's Approach to Quality Assurance, please e-mail us at: asv@sqa.org.uk or call 0345 213 5189/5928.