Quality Assuring Internal Assessment: a partnership between SQA and Local Authorities

For National Qualifications:

♦ 2016–17: National 1 to Advanced Higher

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Contents

1: Introduction

This agreement sets out how you will work in partnership with SQA to ensure that adequate resource is in place for verifying internal assessment of National Qualifications, and what we require from your Nominees.

It also describes how SQA will train your Nominees.

The partnership agreement is divided into these sections:

Local authorities: what you commit to

This section explains what you are required to do in your role as a local authority in the internal assessment partnership agreement.

SQA: what we commit to

This section explains what we, SQA, are required to do in our role as national awarding body in the internal assessment partnership agreement.

Nominee Agreement

You should share the information in this section with your prospective Nominees. Everyone you have nominated needs to have read, understood and agreed to this Nominee Agreement first.

Nominee profile and selection criteria (Appendix 1)

You should use the information in this appendix when deciding who to nominate from your authority. It gives details about the role of the Nominee, and lists the criteria that your nominations should meet. Referring carefully to this section will ensure that the individuals you nominate are suitably skilled and competent.

Team Leader Event Profile and selection criteria (Appendix 2)

Team leaders are appointed by SQA. Details of Team Leaders appointed will be sent to local authorities in October each year. This appendix is for information only.

Visiting Verifier Profile and selection criteria (Appendix 3)

Visiting Verifiers are appointed by SQA. Details of Visiting Verifiers appointed will be sent to local authorities in October each year. This appendix is for information only.

Nominee Summary (Appendix 4)

We have created this summary grid for you, highlighting the commitments and requirements of Nominees, and the role they will play in the internal assessment partnership. This grid is intended for your use when sharing information with colleagues and Head Teachers.

2: What you commit to

As a local authority, responsible for a proportion of the schools delivering National Qualifications in Scotland, you will:

♦ Refer to the *Nominee Selection Criteria* when deciding who to nominate from your area.

♦ Comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (part of the Equality Act 2010) when deciding who to nominate from your area.

♦ Consider the most suitable representatives from your area and nominate only those you believe will offer a valuable and effective contribution.

♦ Ensure that your Nominees understand and agree to the *Nominee Agreement* before you submit nominations to SQA.

♦ Provide SQA with all the nominations required from your area. Or, where you are unable to provide the full number required, work with other local authorities to share information and resources. This will ensure that all schools and teachers are supported to build knowledge and understanding of internal assessment requirements.

♦ Allow your Nominees to be released from their workplace for a maximum of two school days per academic year to attend training sessions. These two days **do not include travel time**.

♦ Allow your Nominees to be released from their workplace for a maximum of five school days per academic year to attend internal assessment verification events for SQA. These five days **do not include travel time**.

♦ Allow your Team Leaders to be released from their workplace for a maximum of three school days to attend training sessions. These three days **do not include travel time**. Please note SQA will endeavour to use Team Leaders' own personal time, rather than school days (ie employer time), for training sessions where possible.

♦ Allow your Team Leaders to be released from their workplace for a maximum of five school days per academic year to undertake verification activities for SQA. These five days **do not include travel time**.

♦ Allow your Visiting Verifiers to be released from their workplace for a maximum of three school days to attend training sessions. These three days **do not include travel time**. Please note SQA will endeavour to use Visiting Verifiers' own personal time, rather than school days (ie employer time), for training sessions where possible.

♦ Allow your Visiting Verifiers to be released from their workplace for a maximum of five school days per academic year to undertake verification activities for SQA. These five days **do not include travel time**.

♦ Provide substitute nominations, where applicable. If SQA stops using the services of a Nominee (whether through the choice of the Nominee, SQA or the local authority) a substitute will be needed to fill their position.

3: What we commit to

As the awarding body responsible for Scotland's National Qualifications, SQA will:

♦ Request an adequate number of Nominees from your local authority, to ensure that there is enough resource in place to:
   — quality-assure internal assessment of National Qualifications
   — share knowledge of best practice and national standards with colleagues
♦ Provide the relevant Nominees with guidance and training that will suitably equip them to be able to verify internal assessments.
♦ Provide all Nominees with guidance and training that will suitably equip them to be able to share best practice and national standards with colleagues.
♦ Invite Nominees to attend training sessions a maximum of two school days per academic year. These two days **do not include travel time**.
♦ Quality assure a sample of internal assessment from each school and college delivering National Qualifications to ensure that National Standards are being maintained.
♦ Comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (part of the Equality Act 2010) when working with Nominees.
♦ Operate in accordance with the *Nominee Agreement* at all times (Section 4 of this document).
♦ Invite Nominees to attend internal assessment verification events a maximum of five school days per academic year. These five days **do not include travel time**. Please note SQA will endeavour to use Nominees' own personal time, rather than school days (ie employer time), for training sessions where possible.
♦ Pay Nominees' employers a release fee, per Nominee, per full school day worked. For details of fees, go to www.sqa.org.uk/nominees.
♦ Pay Nominees directly (using the bank details they provide) for any quality assurance training events they attend in their own personal time. This includes travel and subsistence costs (where applicable). For details and rates, go to www.sqa.org.uk/nominees.
♦ Treat Nominees' details as confidential (eg bank details, address etc) and not disclose this information to any other party, in line with our Data Protection Policy, which you can view at www.sqa.org.uk/nominees. However, in line with our Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) with local authorities we will share relevant information with you in relation to their SQA activities.
♦ Ensure that Nominees fulfil the requirements of the role. Where Nominees experience any issues with the requirements of the role, we will offer extra support for the first two years.
♦ Stop using the services of Nominees if they do not fulfil the expectations outlined in this agreement, or at their local authority's request.

4: Nominee Agreement

As a Nominee:

♦ You are employed by your local authority, and have been nominated by them to carry out quality assurance on SQA's behalf. Please note, you are not an SQA employee or appointee.

♦ Please note for some subjects, some or all verification will be undertaken via visits to the centre. This is because the evidence for these subjects cannot be transported to an event (eg the materials are too large or fragile). For these subjects Nominees may be appointed a Visiting Verifier.

♦ You will respect SQA's values, including:
  - Selflessness: make decisions that are in the best interests of SQA and internal assessment standards. Do not make decisions that have financial or personal benefits for you.
  - Honesty: declare any private interests or conflicts that may affect the way you carry out your Nominee duties.
  - Objectivity: base your verification decisions solely on evidence and merit, in accordance with national standards.
  - Openness: be able to justify the verification decisions you make and do not restrict information unless SQA has clearly requested you to.
  - Professionalism: be efficient, consistent and courteous with fellow Nominees, Appointees, SQA staff and centre staff. Refer any concerning matters to your Principal Verifier, or to SQA's Child Protection Officer, where appropriate.
  - Respect: Treat fellow Nominees, Appointees, SQA staff and centre staff with dignity and respect.

♦ You will co-operate with your local authority to share best practice, knowledge and understanding of national standards with teaching colleagues.

♦ You will use the confidential information and materials entrusted to you solely for the purpose of carrying out your Nominee duties, and not for any other reason. You must protect confidential information and not divulge it to third parties. This includes information relating to SQA, SQA employees, assessments, systems or candidates' work.

♦ You will complete SQA quality assurance training both online and by attending training sessions in your own personal time, where required (eg weekends).

♦ If requested by SQA, you will attend training sessions a maximum of two school days per academic year. These two days **do not include travel time**.

♦ If requested by SQA, you will attend internal assessment verification events a maximum of five school days per academic year. These five days **do not include travel time**. Please note not all Nominees will be requested to attend verification events every year. SQA aims to deploy all trained Nominees to verification events within a three year cycle.

♦ You will not bring anyone with you (eg children/dependents) when attending training sessions or verification events.

- If you attend an internal assessment verification event or quality assurance training session held during a school day (ie your employer's time), you will not receive payment for the work you do at the event. SQA will, however, compensate your employer with a release fee for each full school day of service you provide. You will be able to claim travel and subsistence expenses, where applicable. For details and rates, go to www.sqa.org.uk/nominees.
- If you attend an internal assessment verification event or quality assurance training session in your own personal time (eg weekends), SQA will pay you directly. This includes re-imbursement of travel and subsistence expenses (where applicable). For details and rates, go to www.sqa.org.uk/nominees.
- Any fees payable to you will be paid by SQA via Bank Automated Clearing Services (BACS) into the bank or building society account you have told us about.
- It is your responsibility to inform SQA of any changes to your bank details, to ensure that the account details we hold for you are accurate.
- You should follow health and safety guidelines when carrying out your Nominee duties. There is health and safety advice available at www.sqa.org.uk/nominees.
- Where you have to travel to or from a verification event or training session, you should comply with SQA's environmental strategy by using public transport whenever possible. More information is available at www.sqa.org.uk/nominees.
- Operate in accordance with this *Nominee Agreement* at all times.

If you do not fulfil the expectations outlined in this Nominee Agreement, SQA may stop using your services. Similarly, we may stop using your services at the request of your local authority.

Appendix 1: Nominee profile and selection criteria

Using this information

As a local authority, you are required to refer to the information on this page when deciding who to nominate. You should pay careful attention to the Nominee profile and selection criteria, and only put forward those colleagues who you believe will offer a valuable and effective contribution.

Nominee profile

Nominees will work with SQA to quality assure internal assessment of Scotland's National Qualifications and maintain the national standard within their subject. They will gain knowledge and understanding of best practice which they will then share with colleagues to ensure that national standards are being applied consistently.

To do this Nominees will:

♦ Complete the Nominee training as specified by SQA (both face-to-face and online).
♦ Share knowledge and understanding of national standards with the local teaching community.
♦ Work co-operatively under the direction of the Principal Verifier, Depute Principal Verifier, Senior Team Leaders, Team Leaders Event and SQA staff.
♦ Attend and participate in verification events, as requested.
♦ Operate in accordance with SQA's quality assurance processes.
♦ Assist in the identification of materials that could be used as 'exemplification' (highlighting good and bad practice).
♦ Prepare clear and professional verification reports that will be issued to the schools/colleges that the reports relate to.

Selection criteria

To ensure that we only allocate Nominee duties to those who are suitably skilled and competent we have established essential criteria.

All Nominations that you provide **must**:

♦ Be currently assessing or internally verifying a Course or part of a Course in the relevant subject area at one or more levels (eg Higher).
♦ Have an understanding of the requirements across Courses at each level.
♦ Have excellent communication, interpersonal and team-working skills.
♦ Have excellent organisational and administrative skills (including attention to detail).
♦ Have good presenting/training skills (for sharing national standards with colleagues).
♦ Have a home computer or laptop with broadband internet and a private e-mail address.

Before submitting any nominations to SQA you must ensure that your Nominees understand and agree to the *Nominee Agreement* (section 4 of this document).

Appendix 2: Team Leader Event profile and selection criteria

Team Leaders will become Appointees of SQA and should operate in accordance with the Appointee Terms and Conditions which will be issued to them as part of the appointment process.

Team Leader Event profile

A Team Leader Event is responsible for supporting the Principal Verifier in maintaining national standards for the qualifications within their remit. The primary role is to support and quality-assure the work of their team members, in the verification of internal assessments in their subject area(s), to ensure that national standards are being consistently applied and maintained.

These activities will be under the direction of the Principal Verifier and staff from SQA's Operations and Qualification Development directorates, as appropriate.

To do this Team Leaders will:

♦ Support quality assurance processes and ensure that all tasks associated with the quality assurance of internally-assessed Units and components of Course assessments are carried out within the conditions, timescales and arrangements set by SQA.

♦ Provide leadership and support to a team of up to eight Nominees who are involved in verification activities, as required.

♦ Monitor, support and quality-assure the work of the team.

♦ Quality assure reports for centres produced by the team.

♦ Support the Principal Verifier at verification events where required, ensuring all procedures are conducted in line with SQA requirements.

♦ Assist SQA staff with subject specific enquiries, as required.

♦ Support SQA with continuous improvement developments.

♦ Team Leaders may be asked to undertake additional activities. These activities may include:
  - undertaking follow-up quality assurance activity to resolve outstanding issues
  - undertaking Prior Verification activity
  - undertaking in-service training
  - participating in workshops/seminars/networking events

Please note for some subjects, some or all verification will be undertaken via visits to the centre. This is because the evidence for these subjects cannot be transported to an event (eg the materials are too large or fragile). Only Appointees are able to carry out these centre visits.

Key Performance Measures

Each year, on completion of the duties outlined in the Team Leader Event profile, Team Leaders will be measured against the following Key Performance Measures (KPMs);

1. Support and monitor performance of members of the team to meet SQA requirements.
2. Ensure consistency of decisions made by members of the team.
3. Ensure reports meet the required standard within conditions and timescales set by SQA.
4. Positive engagement with all members of the team (through leadership of people) and with members of SQA staff.
5. Positive engagement with SQA's centre personnel.

Selection criteria

To ensure that only suitably qualified and competent teachers are appointed as Team Leaders, we have established essential criteria.

All Team Leaders **must**:

♦ Be currently delivering a Course in the relevant subject area at one or more levels (eg Higher).
♦ Have an understanding of the requirements across Courses at each level.
♦ Have good interpersonal and team-working skills, allowing them to engage positively with all members of their team and provide leadership and support, where required.
♦ Be able to communicate professionally, confidently and effectively.
♦ Be professional and co-operative to ensure an effective working partnership with stakeholders, subject specialists and SQA staff.
♦ Have excellent organisational and administrative skills (including attention to detail).
♦ Have good presenting/training skills (for sharing national standards with colleagues and team-members).
♦ Have a home computer or laptop with broadband internet and a private e-mail address.

Team Leaders will experience the benefits of being an SQA Appointee and will enjoy the rewards and payments associated with this role.

Appendix 3: Visiting Verifier profile and selection criteria

Visiting Verifiers will become Appointees of SQA and should operate in accordance with the Appointee Terms and Conditions which will be issued to them as part of the appointment process.

Visiting Verifier Profile

A Visiting Verifier is responsible for supporting the Principal Verifier in maintaining national standards for the qualifications within their remit. The primary role is to quality assure the work of SQA centres, for qualifications in the subject area(s) concerned, to ensure that national standards are being consistently applied and maintained.

Activities will be under the direction of the Principal Verifier and staff from SQA's Operations and Qualifications Development directorates as appropriate.

To do this Visiting Verifiers will:

♦ Attend appropriate training and standardisation event(s), as required.
♦ Support the quality assurance processes in accordance with SQA policy and specification.
♦ Monitor, support and quality assure the work of allocated centres by undertaking visiting verification activities. Event verification may also be required in subjects with a mixed verification model.
♦ Write and submit quantitative quality assurance reports on centre visits.
♦ Assist SQA in the review of national consistency in relation to internal assessments.
♦ Support SQA's partnership agreement with local authorities/centres by assisting in the development and understanding of national standards in their centre/LA.
♦ Visiting Verifiers may be asked to undertake additional activities. These activities could include the following:
    - undertaking Prior Verification
    - undertaking follow up quality assurance activity to resolve outstanding issues
    - participating in workshops/seminars/networking events

Key Performance Measures

Each year, on completion of the duties outlined in the Visiting Verifier Profile, Visiting Verifiers will be measured against the following Key Performance Measures (KPMs);

1 Complete training and standardisation programmes, as required.
2 Carry out verification visits to SQA centres ensuring accurate and consistent decisions are made within conditions and timescales set by SQA.
3 Write and submit verification reports to meet the required standard within conditions and timescales set by SQA.
4 Where required, carry out central verification activities within conditions and timescales set by SQA.
5 Engage positively with all SQA's centre personnel and with members of SQA staff.

6   Demonstrate behaviours outlined in the Terms and Conditions of Appointment which support SQA's values.

Selection criteria

To ensure that only suitably qualified and competent teachers are appointed as Visiting Verifiers we have established essential criteria.

Visiting Verifiers **must**:

♦ currently be delivering a Course in the subject area at one or more levels
♦ have an in-depth understanding of the requirements across the course/levels in the subject area (which may include Higher and Advanced Higher where appropriate)
♦ be able to communicate professionally, confidently and effectively and work professionally and co-operatively with stakeholders, subject specialists and SQA staff
♦ have excellent organisational and administrative skills and provide attention to detail
♦ have a home computer or laptop with broadband internet connection and a private e-mail address

Visiting Verifiers will experience the benefits of being an SQA Appointee and will enjoy the rewards and payments associated with this role.

Appendix 4: Nominee summary

A Nominee represents their school/college and local authority (where appropriate) in assisting SQA with the maintenance of national standards of the qualifications within their remit. They share their expertise with colleagues and ensure that all tasks associated with quality assuring internal assessment are carried out within the conditions, timescales and arrangements set by SQA, the local authority (as appropriate) and their own school/college.

For SQA the Nominee will:	For the local authority the Nominee will:	For the school/college the Nominee will:
Successfully undertake annual training on understanding national standards and online training via SQA Academy.	Assist in cascading national standards and good practice with colleagues in their local authority.	Assist in cascading national standards and good practice to colleagues.
Champion the qualifications in their subject.	Support in-service, CPD and other local events to ensure that national standards are being consistently applied and maintained within their subject area.	Support centre events/trainings to ensure that national standards are being consistently applied and maintained within their subject area.
Participate in quality assurance events as required.	Champion the qualifications within their subject.	Champion the qualifications within their subject.
Support the quality assurance processes in accordance with SQA policy and specification.		Assist in promoting benefits of the Nominee role to other teachers in their school/college.
Assist in the identification of potential exemplification materials.		Promote understanding of national standards to parents and local employers.
Prepare clear, accurate and professional quality assurance reports for centres.		
Assist SQA in the review of national consistency in relation to internal assessments.		

Realising benefits

In turn, Nominees will gain a valuable experience as they work with SQA to quality assure internal assessment and maintain national standards. The role is an opportunity to develop professionally, gain a greater insight into qualifications and quality assurance, and achieve recognition in their local teaching community.