

Scottish Qualifications Authority

Oil and Gas sector meeting between SQA and Scottish FE Colleges

Friday 11 March 2005, 11:00 in Perth at the Royal George Hotel

1 Present

Derek Landells	Jewel & Esk Valley College
Dr David Aftill	Fife College
David Adcock	James Watt College
Dr Wendy Livingstone	Falkirk College
Elaine Moffett	Reid Kerr College
Rob Wallen	Aberdeen College
Graham Beattie	ASET - Aberdeen College
George Reid	ASET - Aberdeen College
Neil Robertson	SQA
Diane Anderson	SQA
Gordon Rodgers	SQA

2 Introduction and purpose of meeting

The group was welcomed and introductions were exchanged.

The background to the meeting was SQA's portfolio review which will modernise and update many qualifications, providing opportunities to represent and realign products according to sectoral needs. Part of SQA's development strategy is to review two key sectoral areas each year. Oil & Gas and Financial Services have been chosen for this year. The purpose of the meeting, therefore, was exploratory giving SQA and colleges involved in oil and gas the opportunity to discuss common themes to see where there was scope for collaboration and partnership in this sector.

3 Main points discussed

The group covered a number of areas in its main discussion. It was proposed that chemicals be included within the purview of the group. This is an increasingly important area. It was also felt that other related areas such as renewable energy should be considered.

NR indicated that the intention was to consider current delivery in Scotland, current delivery overseas and potential new markets. SQA is already working on an international strategy which will look at international consultancy, product development, marketing and promoting. A timescale is required for this. There is also a need for a long term strategy for building overseas partnerships. The group agreed that this was important as a lack of this was holding back progress. Examples were given of other countries such as Ireland which was able to present a united front when marketing its educational products.

This led to the observation that Scotland would benefit from a national strategy for development of products. It was felt that SDI could take a lead with this along with identifying needs from overseas and how Scotland could capitalise on these. It was suggested that for most benefit a 5 year and a 10 year plan should be considered.

There was a further suggestion that Scottish Enterprise should be encouraged to consider chemicals as part of the oil and gas cluster. There would be advantages in

this approach for funding. It was suggested that Brian Wilson from the Energy Team input to the next meeting GB to speak to initially but SQA to follow up with a letter of explanation and invitation.

The need for a coherent pricing policy was also discussed. This is necessary if Scotland wants to have a reliable, credible strategy for selling its products and services. Continuing on from this was how Scotland could be presented as an entity which included the colleges and universities within a coherent system. The view was expressed that we need to sell the system as well as the products. This coherence should not be at the expense of individuality. In order to promote the flexibility of the Scottish system it was suggested that a promotional booklet be produced.

The quality of the product is also important. There is a need to ensure currency and review at strategic intervals. It was suggested that a useful starting point would be to look at the frameworks and identify a core of, say, six credits around which qualifications could be built.

In order to take this forward it was proposed that SQA's Partnership Team should contact colleges working on single centre reviews with a view to opening up discussions to identify a common core. WL agreed to e-mail DA a copy of the C&G 0603 Scheme details which have been recently validated and not as yet on the C&G website.

The group was then updated on the Scottish Colleges Biotechnology Consortium. This was given as a good example of a group of colleges working together to promote their product and secure access to resources that could be difficult to achieve individually. In one of the key suggestions of the meeting the idea of this group forming a consortium was floated.

The importance of the ESOL units to the HN frameworks was raised.

4 Other points raised

WL indicated that Robert Quinn from SQA would be meeting with her on 17 March 2005 to discuss level 9 qualifications. The rationale for and use of level 9 qualifications was discussed and it was felt that they would be an extremely valuable addition to the portfolio. It was suggested that other colleges from this group be invited to the meeting. WL agreed to co-ordinate this.

5 Action points

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| (i) | Caroline Strain from Scottish Enterprise to be contacted re her research into chemicals. | WL |
| (ii) | Prepare request for SE to facilitate oil, gas & chemicals group. | NR |
| (iii) | SQA Partnership Team to contact centres to look at identify core grouping of six units. | GR |
| (iv) | Prepare promotional booklet on flexibility of Scottish system. | NR |
| (v) | Source information on Scottish Colleges Biotechnology Consortium. | WL |
| (vi) | Provide update on ESOL units. | GR |
| (vii) | Investigate possibility of website for group | NR |
| (viii) | Agenda items for next meeting to be sent to GR. | All |
| (ix) | Invite COGENT to do presentation at next meeting. | GB |

- (x) copy of the C&G 0603 Scheme details to be sent to DA WA
- (xi) Brian Wilson from the Energy Team to be invited to next meeting GB & SQA

6 Date of next meeting

Monday 25 April 2005 in Aberdeen. Time 10:30 for 11:00. Venue to be confirmed.