



Publication Scheme

**required under section 23 of the Freedom Of
Information (Scotland) Act 2002**

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1 Introduction

1.1 About SQA

SQA is the national body in Scotland responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of qualifications other than degrees.

SQA's functions are to:

- ◆ devise, develop and validate qualifications, and keep them under review
- ◆ accredit qualifications
- ◆ approve education and training establishments as being suitable for entering people for these qualifications
- ◆ arrange for, assist in, and carry out, the assessment of people taking SQA qualifications
- ◆ quality assure education and training establishments which offer SQA qualifications
- ◆ issue certificates to candidates

Qualifications include:

- ◆ National Qualifications (including Standard Grade and National Units and Courses at Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher levels)
- ◆ Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC/HNDs)
- ◆ Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)
- ◆ Customised Awards and Professional Development Awards

SQA is also responsible for National Assessments in conjunction with the Scottish Executive Education Department and Learning Teaching Scotland as part of the Government's 3-14 Programme.

1.2 About this Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 ('the Act') gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by Scottish public authorities, subject to certain exemptions. Under Section 23 of the Act, SQA must adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme setting out the classes of information we publish, or intend to publish, the manner in which we intend to publish the information and whether a charge will be made for the information. In adopting (or reviewing) our Publication Scheme, we are required to have regard to the public interest in:

- ◆ allowing public access to information we hold; and
- ◆ the publication of reasons for the decisions we make

This document sets out the various types of information that SQA holds, and the ways it can be made available. Part 1 of this document gives details of the procedures for requesting information. Part 2 lists seven classes of information that can be obtained from SQA.

SQA is committed to openness, transparency and the public interest in the exercise of its functions. The SQA Publication Scheme is intended to contribute to the spirit of openness and transparency and is a statutory requirement under the Act.

The SQA Publication Scheme will be reviewed at least annually.

1.3 Obtaining the SQA Publication Scheme

The SQA Publication Scheme is available both electronically and as hard copy. The information below sets out the different ways in which you can obtain a copy of the Publication Scheme:

- ◆ **Online** — the Publication Scheme is available on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk)
- ◆ **E-mail** — you can receive a copy of the Publication Scheme either electronically or as hard copy by e-mailing: customer@sqa.org.uk. Please give relevant postal/e-mail addresses in order for SQA to comply with your request.
- ◆ **Hard copy** — to receive a hard copy of the Publication Scheme, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000.

1.4 How the SQA Publication Scheme was formulated

To ensure that SQA fully meets its obligations under Section 23 of the Act to publish a comprehensive Publication Scheme, we undertook two large-scale exercises. The first was to consult with our stakeholders. This consultation took place over a three month period and included the following organisations and individuals:

- ◆ secondary schools
- ◆ further education centres
- ◆ special schools
- ◆ independent secondary schools
- ◆ further education colleges
- ◆ public sector training providers
- ◆ private sector training providers
- ◆ teaching associations
- ◆ Scottish Executive
- ◆ Directors of Education

This consultation enabled SQA to determine what information should be included in the Publication Scheme and how information should be published.

The second exercise was an organisation-wide information audit. The audit involved representatives from each department within SQA collating all recorded information held in their respective areas. This enabled the Publication Scheme to be produced, and assisted in developing a comprehensive records management strategy.

1.5 Responsibility for the SQA Publication Scheme

SQA's Director of Finance and Corporate Performance has overall responsibility for the SQA Publication Scheme. The Business Manager for Legal and Administrative Services has responsibility for the scheme on a daily basis. They can be contacted as follows:

Mr Ron Sylvester
Director of Finance & Corporate Performance
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Hanover House
24 Douglas Street
GLASGOW
G2 7NQ

Ms Vivienne Muir
Business Manager, Legal &
Administrative Services
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Ironmills Road
DALKEITH
EH22 1LE

1.6 Exemptions

SQA's aim is to be as open as possible. However, information may be withheld from any of the classes of information listed in Part 2 where an exemption detailed in the 2002 Act applies. For example, where we consider that disclosure may seriously prejudice law enforcement, legal proceedings or our regulatory activity, or where the disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law. We may also withhold information if its disclosure would breach the law of confidentiality or seriously prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation. We may also withhold personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998, however documentation which quotes personal information in sections may be redacted or edited out.

In these cases, we will withhold the information and indicate why the information is being withheld. If you wish to complain about information which is being withheld from you, please read the 'complaints and feedback' section below.

1.7 Copyright

Information obtained from this Publication Scheme can be copied or reproduced without formal permission provided it is copied or reproduced accurately and is not used in a misleading context, and provided that the source of the material is identified and the copyright status acknowledged. Information must not be reproduced for trade or commercial purposes. If any information requires SQA's formal permission, you will be advised accordingly.

Some material we include in our Publication Scheme may be the copyright of a third party. Our rights to hold and use such material do not extend to others. You must obtain authorisation from the copyright holder(s) concerned if you wish to copy or reproduce such material.

1.8 Accessing information under the Publication Scheme

SQA is committed to supplying information in a number of different formats to assist individuals who may have difficulty in identifying information they require or formulating their request. There are a number of ways you can obtain information:

- ◆ **Online** — the majority of our information is available from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). Appropriate links will take you to the relevant documentation.
- ◆ **By e-mail** — if the information you require is not available from SQA's website, but is listed in the Publication Scheme, we will

ensure that it is sent to you by e-mail wherever this can be accommodated.

- ◆ **By post** — most information is also available as hard copy. See Section 1.9 for details of how you should request information.
- ◆ **Personal visits** — it may be that some information requires an appointment in order to view the information. You will be advised if this is the case and appropriate arrangements will be made.

If you have any difficulty in determining the information you wish to see, please contact SQA's Customer Contact Centre who will be happy to assist. SQA will take all reasonable steps to meet requests to provide information in a particular format, for example, in Braille, on tape or in a language other than English.

1.9 Requesting Information

When requesting information under the SQA Publication Scheme, we need enough details to comply with your request. An 'FOI request form' is available from our website. If not using the form, please make sure that you provide the following details:

- ◆ Your name, address, telephone number(s) and e-mail address.
- ◆ The information or documentation you wish to access.
- ◆ In what format you would like the information sent to you (please refer to Section 1.8 above). Please note that a charge may apply for hard copy information (please see Section 1.10 Charges below).

You should send your request to:

Scottish Qualifications Authority
Customer Contact Centre
Hanover House
24 Douglas Street
GLASGOW
G2 7NQ

or e-mail — customer@sqa.org.uk

or fax — 0141-242 2244

1.10 Charges

SQA will not charge you for information which is available from our website or sent to you by e-mail. However, where a publication is produced by SQA for sale, the cover price will be charged. SQA is committed to provide as much information as possible free of charge, however requests for multiple print-outs of material may attract a charge

for the cost of printing, photocopy, postage etc. Printing and photocopy costs will not exceed £1 per 10 pages.

Should any charge be levied, you will be advised of the total charge which has to be paid, before your request is honoured.

1.11 Complaints and Feedback

SQA is committed to ensuring that all our customers receive the best possible service. However, we recognise that sometimes, some of our customers experience problems.

We also recognise that complaints are a valuable form of feedback on our service delivery. We use this feedback to identify the root causes of complaints and to ensure that improvements are made to our processes for the benefit of both our customers and ourselves. We also welcome positive feedback from customers about our services and staff.

If you have a named contact in SQA, make your initial complaint or give your feedback to them. If you don't have a named contact, our Customer Contact Centre will do their best to resolve your complaint there and then.

If your complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, or if the matter you are concerned about is very serious, you should use our formal complaints procedure.

Formal complaints and feedback can be made in writing, by fax, or by e-mail, to any member of SQA staff. Our staff will make sure that your complaint is entered into our formal complaints process. We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days. Our target will be to provide you with a considered response within 10 working days of receiving your complaint.

If you are unhappy with the response we make to your formal complaint, please write to:

Business Manager, Customer Relations
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Hanover House
24 Douglas Street
GLASGOW
G2 7NQ

If the situation remains unresolved, or you are dissatisfied with SQA's response, you should contact:

The Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
KY16 9DS

Tel: 01334 464610

E-mail: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

From 1 January 2005, when the general right of access comes into force, there will be a formal appeal process where you can request a review of any decision to withhold information. This request must be made within 40 days of the original decision. The decision to withhold information will then be reviewed by a senior official within SQA. Their decision will be sent to you and if you are still dissatisfied, there is a right of appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. Further details on this process is available on the Commissioner's website (www.itspublicknowledge.info)

2 **Classes of information**

This section lists the classes of information which the SQA publishes or intends to publish. Information is categorised in the following general classes, which are further broken down into sub-classes:

- ◆ Class 1 — Governance
- ◆ Class 2 — Products and Services
- ◆ Class 3 — Planning and Performance
- ◆ Class 4 — Finance
- ◆ Class 5 — Human Resources
- ◆ Class 6 — Policies
- ◆ Class 7 — General Information and News

There is further information about each of these classes — a more detailed description of the type of information included, and the formats in which it is available — on the following pages.

2.1 Class 1 — Governance

Definition

General information detailing the structure, key decision making processes within the organisation and members' interests.

Sub-classes

(a) Management Structure

Details of key personnel within the organisation and Register of Directors' Interests.

(b) Board and Committee Information

Board and Committee memberships, Code of Conduct and Register of Members' Interests.

(c) Scheme of Delegation

Detailing processes for expenditure on goods, services and works and outlining all authorisations, Board and Committee standing orders and other decision making processes.

(d) General Governance Documents

Governance documents relating to the functioning powers of SQA.

Format

All of the information contained in this class is available as hard copy. Sub classes (b) and (d) are available on our website (www.sqa.org.uk) and sub-classes (b) and (c) are also available by e-mail.

Charges

This information will generally be free of charge. Any charges will be in line with our general charging policy set out in Section 1.10 of this scheme.

2.2 Class 2 — Products and services

Definition

This class is made up of the sub-classes below. It features a wide range of information detailing the products and services available from SQA.

Sub-classes

(a) General information

Contains general information about the Scottish Qualifications Authority, its qualifications and services. Some information is aimed at particular groups of people such as employers, schools, colleges and other training providers.

(b) Information for centres

Information specifically written for approved centres which includes guides to SQA procedures and quality assurance, centre approval, moderation/verification and validation, assessment and certification.

(c) National Qualifications

Details information regarding SQA's National Qualifications which includes examination booklets, timetables, national Units, specimen question papers, quarterly digests and Scottish Group Awards.

(d) National Unit Assessments

Includes information on National Certificate Modules, Clusters and GSVQs.

(e) Higher National qualifications

Higher National qualifications information, guidance, leaflets and updates.

(f) Higher National Assessments

Subject information for Higher National Assessment Exemplars.

(g) Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Information about Scottish Vocational Qualifications currently offered by SQA. Includes information for candidates and employers and information in relation to Core Skills.

(h) Scottish Progression Awards (SPA)

Information on the current Scottish Progression Awards offered by SQA and SPA portfolios.

(i) Core Skills

Information on the Core Skills framework, bulletins, promotions, updates and Workplace Core Skills.

(j) Care Scotland

Information on SQA's qualifications in the care sector including latest news, studies, assessment guidance and various publications.

(k) HN Review

Guidance documents on group award Graded Units and Higher National Units.

(l) Subject-specific Information

Information in relation to specific subject areas including Principal Assessor Reports, Senior Moderator Reports, Marking Instructions, Investigation Guidance, Arrangements Documents, Subject Review Updates and Reports and Data Booklets.

(m) Dangerous Goods Safety Advisers

Materials for completing the examination syllabus, examination dates, application forms and lists of applicable centres.

(n) Other qualifications

Other qualifications offered by SQA which includes information on Professional Development Awards.

(o) Scottish Credit and National Qualifications Framework

Introduction to the SCQF, updates, publications and reports.

(p) Accreditation

Criteria and guidance documents, updates, re-accreditation and lapsing dates, National Occupational Standards projects and decision lists of the SVQ Accreditation Committee.

(q) Centre Approval

Information on the approval process, application forms, systems verification and upcoming approval seminars.

(r) NQ Appointments

Information on the recruitment of markers and the markers forum facility.

(s) Exam Support

Materials to support centres and teachers throughout examination Diets.

(t) Certification

Information regarding certification for all candidates which includes certification dates and SQA's replacement certificate service.

(u) Appeals

Guidance on appeals which includes information on the appeals process and evidence requirements for Estimates, Absentee consideration and External Assessment Appeals.

Format

All the information contained in this class is available as hard copy or alternatively, on our website.

Charges

A charge may apply to some publications. These will be in line with our charging policy as stipulated in Section 1.10 of this scheme. The majority of documents however, can be downloaded free of charge.

2.3 Class 3 — Planning and performance

Description

Information on SQA's major strategic plans and corporate performance.

Sub-classes

(a) Strategy for Action

Information regarding SQA's general environment in which it operates, identifying key focus areas for the forthcoming five years.

(b) Corporate Planning

Further information identifying in more detail how the corporate goals and objectives will be met in the forthcoming three years.

(c) Annual Reviews

Details of SQA's performance against corporate goals and key objectives as measured by key performance indicators.

(d) Annual Statistics

Annual statistical reports, digests and questionnaires.

Format

All the information contained in this class is available as hard copy. Sub-classes (a), (c) and (d) are also available on our website.

Charges

Information will generally be free of charge. Any charges will be in line with our general charging policy set out in Section 1.10 of this scheme.

2.4 Class 4 — Finance

Definition

This section provides information on SQA's financial regime including procurement.

Sub-classes

(a) Procurement

SQA's internal guidance and procedures on the procurement of goods and services.

(b) Financial Accounts

Yearly financial accounts approved by the Auditor General and financial statements.

(c) Financial Regulations

Governance documents regarding accountability in relation to the use of public resources to include the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

(d) Investment

Summary information on investment income.

Format

All the information contained in this class is available as hard copy and e-mail. Information in sub-class (b) is available on our website.

Charges

Information will generally be free of charge. Any charges will be in line with our general charging policy set out in Section 1.10 of this scheme.

2.5 Class 5 — Human resources

Definition

Strategic, management and policy information on human resources.

Sub-classes

(a) Staffing profile

Statistical information regarding SQA's staff profile.

(b) Recruitment

Details of SQA's recruitment procedures and policies. Information also includes current vacancies.

(c) Employment Terms

SQA's generic terms and conditions of employment together with target salary scales.

(d) Performance Management

Policies, procedures and information regarding the ongoing implementation of effective performance management across SQA.

(e) Pensions

Policies and guidelines on pension schemes and arrangements.

(f) HR Policies

Human Resources policies which are not covered by any other class. Includes information on grievance, disciplinary, equality and diversity policies and procedures.

(g) Employee Relations

Collective bargaining and consultation procedures with SQA's recognised Trade Unions.

(h) Staff Development

Staff development policies and opportunities, induction procedures and guidance.

Format

All the information contained in this class is available as hard copy or by e-mail. Information in sub-classes (b) and (f) are available on our website.

Charges

Information will generally be free of charge. Any charges will be in line with our general charging policy set out in Section 1.10 of this scheme.

2.6 Class 6 — Policies

Definition

SQA has established a rigorous system for generating policy, making such information accessible to staff, and reviewing its effectiveness. The information available includes guidance to staff on legislation, procedures and regulations. It includes all policy information not covered by Class 5 — Human Resources.

Sub-classes

(a) Internal Policy Documents

All internal policy documents to include health and safety, CCTV, environmental, data protection and record retention policies.

(b) Internal Guidance Documents

All internal guidance documents to include IT security and e-mail guidance and general legislative guidance documentation.

Format

All the information contained in this class is available by e-mail or as hard copy.

Charges

Information will generally be free of charge. Any charges will be in line with our general charging policy set out in Section 1.10 of this scheme.

2.7 Class 7 — General information and news

Definition

This class contains general information of interest to the public.

Sub-classes

(a) News

Information regarding recent developments, updates and announcements on general issues.

(b) Media releases

Statements and other information released to the media.

(c) Corporate presentations

Presentation material for SQA's corporate events.

(d) SQA corporate events

Information on forthcoming corporate events.

(e) Awards materials

Information regarding SQA's annual awards ceremony including details on how to enter and judging.

Format

All the information contained in this class is available as hard copy or on our website.

Charges

Information will generally be free of charge. Any charges will be in line with our general charging policy set out in Section 1.10 of this scheme.