



# Handbook for Qualification Development Specialists

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# About this handbook

A Qualification Development Specialist (QDS) is someone who is contracted to SQA to help with the development of a specific SQA qualification or suite of qualifications in a specific area. The work contracted can include review and revision of an existing qualification, including:

- ◆ design of a new qualification
- ◆ vetting and validation of the qualification
- ◆ making adjustments to a validated qualification
- ◆ activities in the marketing and promotion of the qualifications, eg launch, presentation or the understanding of standards

This person will be someone who is employed or has been employed within the last **three** years in a role which involves/has involved the delivery, assessment or quality assurance of the qualification, or has subject expertise as an end user of the qualification (such as an employer, employer representative, professional body representative).

A Qualification Development Specialist normally carries out the contracted work in his or her own time and is paid a fee.

This handbook is only issued to individuals who meet the above criteria.

***This handbook is not intended for those individuals who have been nominated by their employer to undertake work which their employer has been contracted by SQA to provide. In this case the employer should invoice SQA for payment as outlined in their contract and PO form.***

# A Information about your Appointment

## A1 Introduction

This handbook, together with your appointment letter and its appendix, sets out the terms on which you will be required to provide services to SQA as a QDS. The appendix to your appointment letter will contain additional details or clarification of the services you are required to undertake.

## A2 Duration of Appointment

The duration of your appointment will normally be task-specific, and will have a stated deadline. Your appointment period relates only to the task and/or deadline date specified and there is no obligation on us to renew or extend any contract.

## A3 Declaration and Contract Acceptance

On accepting appointment as a QDS you are required to sign and return a Declaration and Contract Acceptance form confirming to SQA that (i) you accept appointment as a QDS and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of contract, (ii) you have read and understood fully the QDS handbook, (iii) you have fulfilled your obligation to your employer by informing them of the contracted work *or* you have confirmed that you have been employed by an SQA approved centre within the last 3 years, and (iv) you have given details of any crime, suspensions or disciplinary actions against you.

## A4 Disclosure Scotland

You may be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check if your role requires you to work with children. Where this is necessary, a Disclosure application form will be sent to you along with your appointment letter. The form should be completed and returned to us along with one legal form of identification which includes birth certificate, passport, driver's licence, or previous disclosure certificate. We will deal with processing and payment.

As a registered body, SQA receives a copy of all Standard and Enhanced Disclosures. You would receive your own copy.

We will ensure, under the Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice, that all information will be treated confidentially, sensitively and fairly. Further, as this information would be categorised as 'sensitive personal data' under the Data Protection Act 1998, we are obliged to process the information fairly, and to obtain your written consent to carry out the

## Section A Information about your appointment

necessary Enhanced Disclosure check. Please note that SQA does not retain any information not required for an appointment or contract.

### A5 Fees

Fees are specific to each role. Please refer to your appointment letter for details of the fee for your contracted work. Fees are paid only on successful completion of the contracted work or tasks by the stated deadline. All claims for fees and expenses should be made within one month of completion.

Fees (net of tax — see below) will be paid direct to your bank/building society account via BACS (Bank Automated Clearing Services). Please note that:

- ◆ payments will not be made by cheque, and
- ◆ we will only pay fees and expenses into one bank account for each QDS

#### A5.1 Income tax

As instructed by the HM Revenue & Customs, Income Tax is deducted at source from fee payments made to all fee earners, and we have been instructed to operate code BR (Basic Rate) in all cases where there is a liability for tax.

Note: the standard application of Basic Rate will result in an underpayment of tax for those fee earners who have a liability for tax at the higher rate. Any enquiries in this regard should be addressed to HM Inspector of Taxes.

If you are retired you may be entitled to receive your fees paid gross if your aggregate taxable income (including fees from SQA and your retirement pension) is expected to fall short of the tax-free allowances you are entitled to in the tax year. If this applies to you, please contact the Named Responsible Officer, who will send you a Non-Liability Declaration form.

Expenses payments (reimbursement of actual expenses incurred on SQA business) are covered by an Inland Revenue dispensation and are not taxable.

- ◆ A Payment Advice (P60 Substitute) will be issued with each net fee payment, setting out the gross fee and the income tax deduction. You should retain your Payment Advice for tax purposes as duplicate copies cannot be issued.
- ◆ The Inland Revenue has asked SQA to record each fee earner's National Insurance number for computer identification purposes. The NI number must be entered on every fees and expenses claim form submitted.

## A5.2 National Insurance

National Insurance is covered by the terms of the Social Security (Categorisation of Earners) Regulations 1978 (SI 1978/1689). SQA does not operate Class 1 National Insurance on fees.

## A6 Expenses

Expenses are paid in accordance with SQA's expenses policy. Where expenses are payable in relation to your contracted work, this information will be included in your appointment letter.

Please note that you may be required to attend meetings in relation to your contracted work (see paragraph B1.3). No separate fee will be paid for attending meetings<sup>1</sup> as this is included in the overall fee for the contracted work.

We reserve the right to adjust expense claims which are not in accordance with our expenses policy (see reverse of QDS fees & expenses claim form). Where attendance at meetings is part of your contracted work, travel claims in respect of journeys of a distance greater than that from your usual address will not be met unless **prior** notice is given and our approval is obtained **in advance**. Overnight subsistence claims will only be paid where restricted transport services (eg Northern and Western Isles) prevent you from returning home on the same day.

## A7 Equipment and materials

Unless specifically stated in your appointment letter, you are responsible for providing all equipment and materials required to undertake your contract. We will not reimburse you for consumable materials (eg paper, printer ink).

## A8 Training

Occasionally, you may be asked to attend a training session related to a specified task. Attendance at training is normally covered by the contracted fee, but you are entitled to claim reimbursement of travel expenses and subsistence in accordance with our expenses policy.

## A9 Location

You are not permitted to be based on SQA premises although you may, of course, attend meetings or training held on our premises in relation to your contracted work.

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<sup>1</sup> Compensation release payments may be available to local authorities who wish to claim for any local authority employee's attendance at meetings held during working hours. Contact the named responsible officer for a TR2 form.

## **A10 Performance Management**

The named responsible officer for your subject area is responsible for ensuring that all tasks submitted by Qualification Development Specialists are completed to the required standard. Your letter of appointment will contain a breakdown of the milestones to be achieved and dates for completion of each milestone.

Your fee may be broken down against each milestone and cannot be claimed until the work submitted meets the required standard and is submitted by the deadline stated in the appointment letter.

### **A10.1 Unsatisfactory or Late Work**

If the work submitted for a task or milestone fails to meet the required standard, or does not meet the stated deadline, the named responsible officer will meet with you to

- ◆ Confirm the areas of the contract which are not being met.
- ◆ Ask you to explain the reasons for failing to meet the standard or for missing the stated deadline.
- ◆ Where possible, provide further guidance material.
- ◆ Where possible, agree a revised timescale for submission.

If the work still fails to meet the required standard, or is not submitted by the revised submission date, the named responsible officer will discuss the next step with the Business Manager. The Business Manager will decide whether further remedial action is appropriate or your contract for that particular task should be terminated at that point, in accordance with section C6 of this handbook. You would only be entitled to payment for work that met the required standard and the stated deadline.

# **B Your Role and Responsibilities**

## **B1 General Issues**

### **B1.1 Confidentiality**

In addition to the confidentiality obligations described in paragraph C1, please note that you are not permitted to produce your contracted work on school, college or other public premises, nor on public transport. If you use a notebook computer to produce your contracted work, or a memory pen or other removable data storage device to store your contracted work, you must not take the computer or device to school, college or other public premises, or leave it in your car. It is your responsibility to ensure that all SQA material related to your contracted work is secure at all times.

### **B1.2 Personal Responsibility for Writing**

Writing of Units or Graded Units must be undertaken personally by the contracted QDS. No part of the work may be delegated to others, however competent.

### **B1.3 Additional Duties**

You may be required to attend meetings in relation to your contracted work. You must attend these meetings in person. Where attendance at meetings is relevant to your contracted work, details will be provided in your letter of appointment. No separate fee will be paid to attend meetings as this is included in the overall fee for the contracted work. Expenses will be payable in accordance with SQA's expenses policy.

Meetings are normally held in relation to the writing of Units, Graded Units, Course or Group Award Arrangements Documents, NABs and Assessments. Meetings are normally conducted by the named responsible officer. The purpose of these meetings is as follows:

- ◆ provide an opportunity for critical consideration of your work
- ◆ deal with points of difficulty arising from the proposed content
- ◆ determine any amendments to be made
- ◆ emphasise procedural processes and timelines

If you are unable to attend the required meeting, you will automatically be deemed to be in breach of contract, unless prior agreement has been obtained from SQA, and no payment will be made for any work undertaken prior to the meeting.

## **B2 QDS Roles Defined**

### **B2.1 Unit and Graded Unit Writers**

Produce Units or Graded Units which meet SQA's technical criteria for Units or Graded Units, in accordance with specified remit and agreed timescales.

- 1 Attend Unit or Graded Unit writing training and editing events.
- 2 Meet the dates for completion of interim drafts and final draft.
- 3 Incorporate any changes to the Unit(s) or Graded Units required by editing, Core Skills validation or Unit validation.

### **B2.2 Course or Group Award Arrangements Document Writer**

Produce a Course or Group Award Arrangements Document which meets SQA's technical criteria for Course or Group Award Arrangements Documents (including Signposting of Core Skills, National Occupational Standards and other skills), in accordance with specified remit and agreed timescales.

- 1 Attend Course or Group Award Arrangements Document writing training and editing events and validation events.
- 2 Meet the dates for completion of interim drafts and final draft.
- 3 Incorporate any changes to the Course or Group Award Arrangements Document required by editing, Core Skills validation or Course or Group Award validation.

### **B2.3 NAB Writer**

Produce NABs which meet SQA's technical criteria for NABs, in accordance with specified remit and agreed timescales.

- 1 Attend NAB writing training and editing events.
- 2 Meet the dates for completion of interim drafts and final draft.
- 3 Incorporate any changes to the NABs Units required by editing, Core Skills validation or Unit validation.

### **B2.4 Assessment Writer**

Produce Assessments which meet SQA's technical criteria for assessments in accordance with specified remit and agreed timescales.

- 1 Attend Assessment writing training and editing events.
- 2 Meet the dates for completion of interim drafts and final draft.
- 3 Incorporate any changes to the Assessment required by editing, Core Skills validation or Unit validation if these should be required.

### **B2.5 Vetter**

Vetters are used to ensure that the content of the Units, Course or group arrangements, coursework material and/or internal assessment materials are fit for purpose.

The role of the Vetter therefore comprises of:

- 1 checking for accuracy, clarity and fitness for purpose of marking scheme to ensure compliance
- 2 reviewing internal assessments to ensure compliance with national standards and providing comment
- 3 participating in Vetting Meetings to review internal assessments, if applicable
- 4 participating in postal vetting, if applicable
- 5 ensuring there is compliance with SQA guidelines with regard to age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, religion, sexual orientation and child protection

### **B2.6 Validator**

Consider and make recommendations in connection with Units, Courses and Group Awards.

- 1 Work through Unit Specifications, Course Arrangements Documents or Group Award Arrangements Documents prior to validation meeting/event.
- 2 Review Specifications or Arrangements Documents to ensure compliance with national standards, and provide written comment.
- 3 Review Specification or Arrangements Documents to ensure compliance with SQA's criteria.
- 4 Participate in validation meetings.
- 5 Participate in postal validation (if applicable).
- 6 Ensure that the Specifications and Arrangements Documents meet with SQA guidelines with regard to age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, religion, sexual orientation and child protection.
- 7 Participate in the processes leading to the lifting of any conditions imposed at validation.

### **B2.7 Presenter at an Event**

Deliver workshops to teachers/lecturers/assessors on issues affecting performance of candidates only.

- 1 Attend planning meetings for professional development workshops.
- 2 Act as Lead Facilitator or Support Facilitator as necessary.
- 3 Lead or attend briefing meetings as required.
- 4 Develop or assist in the development of workshop material.
- 5 Prepare presentations as required.
- 6 Oversee the selection of material where required.

### **B2.8 SVQ Assessor's Guidelines**

Produce guidelines which meet SQA's technical criteria in accordance with specified remit and agreed timescales.

- 1 Meet the dates for completion of interim drafts and final draft.
- 2 Incorporate any changes required by editing.

### **B2.9 Item Bank Writer**

An Item Bank writer will be required to:

- 1 Attend training (as appropriate)
- 2 Produce a set number of Item Bank questions for specified SQA qualifications as determined in the specification for each item (provided by the Item Bank Manager) and submit to SQA by a given deadline.
- 3 Develop a candidate booklet where required (Higher Maths only).

### **B2.10 Item Bank Manager**

Responsible for managing all tasks associated with development and maintenance of the databases and item banks of multiple choice questions.

- 1 Oversee validation of data held in databases.
- 2 Formulate proposals for commissioning and producing items.
- 3 Assist with the identification, recruitment and training of item writers and vetters.
- 4 Lead vetting of items.
- 5 Compile vetted items into papers for pre-testing against given specifications.
- 6 Arrange for inclusion of tested items in bank.
- 7 Advise PAs/Setters on use of multiple choice items in operational examination papers.
- 8 Formulate proposals for the future development of item banks.

### **B2.11 Item Bank Vetter**

An Item Bank Vetter will be required to:

- 1 attend Item Vetting Meetings
- 2 prepare for Item Vetting Meetings by considering Items submitted by writers
- 3 assist with identification, recruitment and training of Item writers

### **B2.12 Monitoring of Standards**

A member of the Monitoring Standards team will be required to:

- 1 Compare Syllabuses/Qualification Standards, Question Papers/Assessment Instruments and Marking Instructions for selected qualifications.
- 2 Scrutinise and compare candidate evidence for selected qualifications
- 3 Produce or assist in producing report on findings relating to standards.

### **B2.13 Qualification Support Material**

Activities which support the development of learning and teaching.

# **C Standard Terms and Conditions of your Appointment**

## **C1 Confidentiality**

In providing services to SQA, the QDS may obtain information about SQA, its candidates, employees, assessments, and systems, and other information which is confidential ('Confidential Information'). SQA expects you to maintain the highest levels of discretion in dealing with Confidential Information. The QDS must also undertake the following:

- 1.1 Not to divulge any Confidential Information to any third party without the express written authority of SQA.
- 1.2 To keep all Confidential Information secure at all times, and not allow it to be placed in such a way as may give rise to inadvertent disclosure.
- 1.3 To use Confidential Information solely for the purpose of providing services to SQA, and not for the benefit of the QDS or for the benefit of or detriment to any third party.
- 1.4 Not to make or retain copies of any Confidential Information other than as required for the provision of services as a QDS; and to return or to destroy any or all Confidential Information and copies or duplicates in any medium thereof upon instruction from SQA upon termination of the Contract to ensure no breach of this clause.
- 1.5 Not to express opinions on behalf of SQA, or purport to do so, without the prior written approval of SQA.
- 1.6 Not to make any comments, publicly or which may become public, which are disparaging of SQA or which could cause damage to the reputation of SQA.

## **C2 Intellectual Property Rights**

- 2.1 Intellectual Property Rights means copyright in intellectual property, together with any other similar rights, in all territories of the world (including but not limited to the United Kingdom). These intellectual property rights also include patents, trademarks, design rights (whether registerable or not), and include applications to register such rights.
- 2.2 By signing the acceptance of your appointment, you agree that all Intellectual Property Rights in any reports, materials, documents or works that you produce (including future updates) under this Contract shall be assigned to and become vested in SQA as soon as the reports, materials, documents or works come into existence. SQA shall then be free to make whatever use it requires of this assigned material, including publishing it in any form or medium, specifically in print, digital or

electronic form, whether on CD, or online, and by placing such material on the SQA website. You furthermore waive the right irrevocably any moral rights you have in the material, including the right of paternity (to be identified as the author of the work) and the right of integrity (the right not to have your work subjected to derogatory treatment).

2.3 You must guarantee that you are the author of the materials produced for the contract, and that no Intellectual Property Rights have been infringed in producing the reports, materials, documents or works. This specifically includes all Intellectual Property Rights in material owned by third parties that you wish to include in your project.

2.4 Where you do not own the Intellectual Property Rights before handing the work over to us, you must notify us of such material and provide us, where possible, with information on:

- ◆ nature of material (text, photograph, artwork, diagram, map, website image or design)
- ◆ name of author (or creator), and/or name of rights owner
- ◆ name of publisher (if material is published)
- ◆ date and place of publication
- ◆ any other relevant information to help identify the rights owner(s)

SQA will endeavour to obtain copyright clearance for all such items, but can do so only if you provide full details of the source of the item(s). Please keep track of the origins of any third-party material you want to include in your project. Copyright exists in all literary, artistic, musical and dramatic works where the creator has been dead for less than 70 years. Failure to identify and secure complete and correct permissions can have serious legal consequences for both you and SQA.

## **C3 Data Protection**

SQA holds records of Qualification Development Specialists' personal and appointment details on a computer database. Personal data held for appointment purposes will not be used or disclosed in any manner incompatible with that purpose.

SQA is registered with the Information Commissioner, and details of the entry (No. 5781759) can be viewed on the Information Commissioner's website: **[www.dataprotection.gov.uk](http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk)**.

Signing your contract will imply your express permission for SQA to hold your data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **C4 Declaration of Interests**

When you are appointed, and at any time during your appointment, you must advise SQA in writing of your involvement in any current or future commercial activity and/or any other interests whatsoever that may bear upon SQA's work and operation.

You must also advise SQA in writing of any other contracts that you will undertake simultaneously which may bear upon the work and operation of SQA.

## **C5 Crime, Suspension and Disciplinary Actions**

You must declare in writing to SQA if you have any criminal charges or convictions — including spent convictions and/or any suspensions or disciplinary actions against you. The related section in the Declaration and Contract Acceptance Form must be completed on acceptance of the contract.

If any such charges outlined above are made against you during the term of the contract you must notify SQA in writing at the time of such a charge. Failure to disclose such a charge will be regarded by SQA as a material breach of contract and may lead to termination of the contract.

Your letter should be sent to the named responsible officer in the letter and marked 'private and confidential'.

## **C6 Termination**

The appointment will terminate at the end of the agreed period or on completion of the services, whichever is the earliest. In addition, SQA reserves the right to terminate the appointment, with immediate effect, in the following circumstances:

- ◆ where the work continues to fail the required standard or is not submitted by the revised submission date after the process described in A10.1 has been completed
- ◆ you commit any material breach of the terms of your appointment
- ◆ you fail to notify SQA of any criminal convictions which are relevant to your SQA duties as a Qualification Development Specialist, or you fail to notify SQA that you are the subject of an investigation which may affect your position as a Qualification Development Specialist
- ◆ you are unable to perform your obligations due to ill health or injury or for any other reason
- ◆ a corporate decision alters service requirements

## **C7 Improper Activity**

If you believe you are being required to act in a way which: is illegal, improper, or unethical; may involve possible maladministration; or is otherwise inconsistent with these Terms and Conditions; you should report the matter to the relevant Business Manager who has overall responsibility for the work being undertaken.

Similarly, if you observe inappropriate activity or behaviour in the normal course of your duties, you should discuss the matter with the same Business Manager