



INSIDE ISSUE 10

5 Degree to Higher
National articulation

6 Careers Scotland
update

11 World perspective

SCQF UPDATE

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scottish credit and
qualifications framework

A message from the SCQF
Chief Executive, Aileen Ponton

WELCOME TO THE SCQF UPDATE FOR AUTUMN 2008



As you will see from this edition of SCQF Update we continue to make considerable progress with the help of stakeholders across Scotland. We have tried to both update you on work being taken forward by the SCQF Partnership and also to showcase some of the innovative ways that SCQF is being used across sectors.

We have extended the credit rating pilot as you will see and will present the findings of this key activity to the SCQF Board in December 2008. This extension was to allow the SCQF Quality Committee to consider in great detail all of the pilot activities and to ensure that we took the widest view possible on all of the related issues.

You will also be aware that we have started two major consultations. The first on the referencing of the SCQF to the European Qualifications Framework — something which we are often asked about. The second

consultation is on the SCQF Handbook where we are seeking views on its usefulness, its completeness and its format. In both cases we really do want to receive responses from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, and I would urge you to visit our website and respond.

Finally we have increased the SCQFP staffing complement as we indicated in our last edition. In the first instalment of a new regular feature for Update, we profile two of the Executive Team, with the rest to follow in future issues of Update. We would welcome comment from all of you on Update itself, the SCQF website or where you think you could help embed SCQF even more fully within your sector. We are very keen to continue working with a wide range of partners so if you have a good idea for taking forward work on the SCQF or would like us to attend or contribute to an SCQF-related event, please do get in touch.

By the next edition we will be able to update you on:

- the outcome of the pilot to extend credit rating
- the work of the SCQF Forum in developing our work on communications and marketing, wider achievement and employer engagement
- the establishment of an RPL network
- the implementation of the SCQF database linked to the National Learning Opportunities Database (NLOD)
- the outcomes of the SCQF Handbook Review and the EQF referencing activity

Until next time,

Aileen M Ponton

Aileen Ponton



SCQF PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

The SCQF Partnership's very first Annual Report for the year 2007~2008 has been published and distributed to our partners and stakeholders. The document is also available in pdf format at www.scqf.org.uk.

We feel that we have made significant progress towards achieving our three strategic objectives and the report highlights some of the more significant projects undertaken by the Partnership over the last year. We hope that you enjoy reading the report and we look forward to an even more productive year in 2009~2010.

The popular A6 postcard version of the SCQF Framework diagram has been revamped and copies are available from the SCQF Executive Team upon request. The diagram is also still available in A3 poster format which is ideal for wall display.

The Achievement Counts leaflet, which has been prepared especially for younger learners, has been reprinted for 2008~2009. It will be distributed to all schools in Scotland in February 2009.

If your organisation would like copies of this leaflet, please contact the SCQF Executive Team on **0845 270 7371**.

SCQF FORUM ACTIVITY NEWS



Since its inception in 2007, the SCQF Forum has been particularly active in its support of the SCQF Partnership and three workshops were held at the last Forum meeting in June 2008 focusing on developing plans in the following areas:

- Employer Engagement
- Recognition of Wider Achievement
- Communications and Marketing

Subsequently, three short-life working groups were established to take forward these areas of key importance.

Employer Engagement

The Employer Engagement working group met in August to discuss some of the main priorities in this area, particularly around messaging. The Executive Team is now in the process of developing a strategy and action plan which will be ready in Autumn 2008.

Recognition of Wider Achievement

The group focusing on Recognition of Wider Achievement met in September to discuss a number of ideas for progressing this area of work. Members highlighted various different projects already taking place and it was agreed that the group would meet again to review the progress of these projects and look at where the SCQF could support and add value.

Communications

The Communications working group has been helping the Executive Team develop a strategy and plan which is now in the process of being approved by the Board of Directors.

The aim of the strategy is to *'communicate the Framework effectively to ensure the SCQF becomes the national language of lifelong learning in Scotland'* and both the strategy and plan are linked closely to the SCQF strategic objectives and operational plan. The key theme is about communicating the Framework through clear, consistent and focused messaging to our audiences and the plan is structured around the various methods of communication. Both the strategy and plan will take the SCQFP through to March 2010 when there will be a review to ascertain its effectiveness in achieving objectives.

Forum Activity Plan

The Forum activity plan is progressing well with all 28 stakeholders contributing to activity in some way. Much work has taken place to populate the plan and a number of key activities are now underway. There will be an update and review of the plan in time for the next Forum meeting on 23rd October 2008.

STOP PRESS SCQF International Conference '09

Dates for the SCQF Partnership International Conference have now been confirmed as **23-24 March 2009** and the event will take place in the Radisson SAS Hotel in Glasgow's city centre.

The theme of the event is **Breaking Barriers and Crossing Boundaries: the role of NQFs in promoting learner mobility.**

We would encourage you to register your interest in attending the conference via our website. Keep an eye on the website for further information as plans progress in the coming months.

www.scqf.org.uk



EXTENDING THE FACILITY TO CREDIT RATE UPDATE

As reported in the last edition of Update, we have been implementing a pilot to look at extending credit rating authority to professional bodies, statutory bodies and awarding bodies. The organisations which have been assisting us are:

- Chartered Institute of Bankers (Scotland)
- City and Guilds Group
- Scottish Police College

Our original intention was to complete the pilot and report to the SCQF Partnership Board in September. The amount of work involved in the pilot has, however, been considerable and the independent evaluation was not completed until August.

The SCQFP Quality Committee is now working through all of the issues and recommendations and has agreed an extension with the Board. Decisions will now be taken in December with dissemination of the outcomes to be made public early in 2009.



SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT VOCATIONAL LEARNING

Introducing the NES/SQA 'Enhancing Access' Project

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in learning in the workplace – but the qualification and credit systems for supporting and recognising that learning can be confusing. Now a new partnership project between NES and SQA aims to help individuals and employers in NHSScotland make the most of vocational qualifications and the SCQF.

In the past three years, the SCQF has become an important feature of Scotland's learning landscape. Providing a common language to describe achievement in learning in terms of level and credit, the Framework is now becoming deeply embedded in learning programmes across Scotland. This, in turn, has important implications for learning in the workplace.

SCQF credit and vocational qualifications provide formal recognition of achievement in learning, and this has a range of benefits both for individuals and for their employers. It provides evidence of the individual's newly-acquired knowledge and skills, and supports progression into more advanced learning programmes. Since the launch of the SCQF, NES has worked with partners across NHSScotland to help raise awareness and deepen understanding of the usefulness of the Framework in supporting effective learning in the workplace.

At the same time, a number of NES-supported projects have focused on the development of appropriate vocational qualifications for a range of healthcare staff, enabling recognition of workplace skills.

However, the size of the NHSScotland workforce and the diversity of learning needs represented within it have created challenges in helping employees understand how vocational qualifications and the SCQF relate to

their individual situation. Now a new initiative aims to help NHSScotland make the most of the opportunities offered by formally-recognised work-based learning.

In Spring 2008, a joint initiative between NES and SQA was launched to bring together a range of work in the area of support for vocational learning. Developed from the NES SCQF project, the 'Enhancing Access' project aims to provide a range of support so that employers and staff across NHSScotland can make best use of vocational qualifications and the SCQF. The project covers a range of activities, including:

- the development of a vocational qualifications 'map', identifying qualifications which might be relevant to different staff groups, and pathways of progression between those qualifications
- workshops for NHSScotland staff involved in designing and delivering in-house learning programmes, aimed at helping them use the SCQF to enhance programme design
- exploration of how the SCQF might articulate to the NHS Knowledge & Skills Framework
- the provision of advice and guidance on how best to achieve formal recognition for learning taking place in the workplace.

To support the project, a new joint post of NES/SQA Project Development Officer was created. Funded by NES and housed in the SQA offices, this post is managed within Care Scotland, the section of SQA responsible for developing qualifications (Higher National, Professional Development Awards and SVQs) in health and related professions.

The new postholder, appointed in August 2008, is Alyson Barrie. In addition to her extensive experience in the Further Education sector and in the delivery and assessment of Scottish qualifications, Alyson brings an in-depth knowledge of the SCQF to the project. In her view, the SCQF has a great deal to offer NHSScotland.

"The Framework is a really important tool for learning in Scotland. Perhaps its most obvious benefit is that it allows us to describe learning in terms of its level – that is, how complex it is – and in terms of how much learning has taken place, regardless of how it was undertaken. As a result, for the first time, we have a unified system for describing all learning – work-based and academic, formal and informal. However, perhaps an even more important benefit in NHSScotland is for those designing in-house learning programmes. The SCQF has huge potential as a tool to help improve the design process, bring consistency across programmes and relate learning in the workplace to nationally-recognised qualifications. By using SCQF principles, you can identify exactly what needs to be learned, and the level at which it is being learned. The result is that it can be far easier to compare in-house programmes, and to identify how they might build on one another to demonstrate clear progression in learning."

A new area has been created on the NES website to house information about the NES/SQA Enhancing Access project and other information related to vocational learning. Visit www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/lifelonglearning to find out more, or contact scqf@nes.scot.nhs.uk. If you would like to discuss the project and how you can participate, contact Alyson at Alyson.Barrie@sqa.org.uk

DRIVING SUCCESS AT SCOTTISH POLICE COLLEGE

Since its inception in 1963 the Traffic Training Division, now the Road Policing Division, of the Scottish Police College, has been the Scottish Police Service's centre of excellence in the delivery of driver and Driving Instructor training at Advanced level, to Police Officers from all Scottish Police forces

Throughout the last 45 years, the courses have been updated and refined to meet demand, and have also kept pace with new vehicle technology and road designs, while encompassing changes to Road Traffic legislation and the demands of the modern Police Service.

One of the most challenging courses delivered by Road Policing Division is the Police Driving Instructors Course. Successful completion of this course gives students some of the highest levels of driving and tuitional skills available in the UK.

The course is designed to take suitably qualified Advanced Police drivers and train them to cope with the demands of on-road instructional techniques and classroom presentational skills. It also equips officers with the skills necessary to train students in the art of driving a police vehicle under all conditions, and in a safe systematic fashion while taking account of and dealing with all hazards.

The course runs over a demanding 8-week period, where students are trained and assessed in the disciplines of Demonstration Driving, Basic, Standard and Advanced levels of driving instruction. Their instructional and presentational qualities and skills are further assessed in a series of self-prepared test lectures over 10 and 20 minutes, prior to a final 30-minute test lecture.

On successful conclusion of this part of the course, learners are expected to undertake training and successfully pass assessments in the additional disciplines of Emergency Response Driving and Instruction, Skid Recognition and Instruction and Manoeuvrability Instruction.

The course is mentally and physically demanding, and it is not uncommon for students to comment that they



find out more about themselves while undertaking the course, than in any other field of endeavour they have undertaken. However, despite being one of the most difficult courses in the Police Service which tests learners' preparedness, commitment and self belief, success is achievable.

This programme has been considered as part of the continuing credit rating pilot which the college has participated in during 2008.

The Road Policing Division has welcomed the credit rating process which the course has undergone, and with a number of other Divisional courses already credit rated, was delighted with the recommendation that the course be rated at Level 10 on the Framework. The proposed rating demonstrates that completion of the course requires significant input by learners and acknowledges their considerable achievement, which will guarantee national recognition to all officers who successfully undertake and complete the course.

The proposed rating demonstrates that completion of the course requires significant input by learners and acknowledges their considerable achievement

Once fully approved, this programme will sit with other credit rated and accredited programmes that form part of the Scottish Police Service Qualifications Framework, offering officers pathways through a Professional Development Programme which exploits the full potential of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.



ARTICULATING THE HIGHER NATIONAL MESSAGE

The concept of Higher National (HN) to degree articulation is a familiar one and a great deal of work has been done in the past to help higher education institutions and Scotland's colleges work together to develop articulation agreements

In contrast, degree to Higher National articulation is a much less commonly known and used way of engaging the SCQF to help meet the needs of learners.

In 2006-07 the Scottish Advisory Committee for Credit and Access (SACCA) identified degree to HN articulation as being an important area to support progression and transfer across the SCQF. SACCA thought it was vital to support those learners who for perhaps the best possible reasons are no longer able to continue with their degree studies and for whom progression to an HN award might be an appropriate and valuable option.

As a result, some initial exploratory work was commissioned to get a general picture of the extent of current practice in Scotland. The work also sought to determine what barriers existed to prevent degree to HN articulation and the opportunities for extending degree to HN transition. Follow-up work involved pilot studies with four HEIs and their

partner colleges in order to identify and share best practice and identify ways to support learners undergoing or about to undergo degree to HN transition. Both reports are available to download on the SACCA website at www.sacca.ac.uk

The main message emerging from both reports is that degree to HN articulation should not be seen as a 'backward step'; in fact for students it is an important pathway through the learning opportunities positioned on the SCQF and a valuable step in their career and educational development.

The reports also suggest that work should be done to ensure that the language of credit and levels of the SCQF should be better understood by learners, parents, school guidance staff, employers and college and HEI staff.

The work points to a need to further investigate the demand for degree to HN articulation in all of Scotland's higher education institutions and colleges. Similarly, there could be

value in encouraging HEIs and colleges to consider offering degree to HN articulation.

One scenario to emerge from the work to date, for example, is to develop reciprocal degree to HN articulation where existing HN to degree articulation arrangements already operate. An important message to communicate to students, parents and careers staff will be that degree to HN articulation is a forward step not a backward one. Promotion of the SCQF as a framework where articulation in all directions is possible will be important, tied with the continued emphasis that all qualifications at the same level on the SCQF will have parity of esteem.

Higher education institutions and colleges who might wish to explore degree to HN articulation or who have been already working together on this type of activity are invited to contact QAA Scotland at SACCA@qaa.ac.uk

CAREERS SCOTLAND UPDATE

Lynda Irvine, Team Leader with Careers Scotland, has been appointed as a secondee to the SCQFP until March 2009 to take forward agreed areas of joint working and an action plan which has been developed to address the following areas:

- to lead on a way forward to assess and benchmark skills, knowledge and competencies within the SCQF, in support of Careers Scotland career planning services;
- to devise a methodology to enable Careers Advisers to link the assessment to the Careers Scotland Needs Led Model, identify the individual's career guidance needs and identify the learning routes and pathways that will enable them to develop their career;
- to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the SCQF within Careers Scotland and with client groups.

Lynda has also been tasked with evaluating current understanding of the SCQF for specific groups of CS staff with a view to addressing any gaps in knowledge. These groups are:

- Parents Champions;
- Careers Advisers working in schools, colleges and centres;
- School-College Collaboration staff;
- Staff working with adults and migrant workers;
- Redundancy support staff;
- Customer Contact Centre staff.

In order to establish their level of understanding and knowledge of the Framework and how it can be used with clients, the above groups of CS staff were invited to participate in a survey in June/July 2008. Results indicated that, across all groups, staff are aware of and using the Framework, but need further guidance on how to use it effectively to assist with clients' career planning and development goals. The information collected during the surveys has been analysed and will be used to inform



planning and delivery of SCQF workshops to CS staff. A pilot session with the Careers Scotland Customer Contact Centre team has already taken place and was well received by all staff at the Centre.

Lynda has liaised with the marketing team at CS to produce a joint leaflet for all learners. This publication will demonstrate the joint-goals of the two organisations and highlight how Careers Scotland can use the Framework to work with clients. A number of Help Guides have also been updated to include brief information on the SCQF, and this activity should help to signpost Careers Scotland users and staff to further resources and information on the SCQF website. Web resources such as Careers Box FE are also being updated to reflect recent changes to the Framework. A dedicated page for SCQF information will also be available on the Careers Scotland website in the near future.

Lynda is intending to work with Careers Scotland colleagues to develop a number of case studies on usage of the Framework within careers guidance, which will help to bring the benefits of the SCQF to life for both staff and clients. She plans to hold focus groups with Careers Scotland staff to take this activity forward and is particularly interested in targeting learners at FE colleges, schools, post-school learners of all

“I see the SCQF as a tool which Careers Scotland staff can use to engage with clients and help move them forward in their career development and lifelong learning.”

ages, career changers and individuals facing redundancy.

With regard to Recognition of Prior Learning, Lynda has visited a number of organisations to gather information on the use of RPL in learning and development with both employees and learners. Further activity in this area is planned for the coming months.

On her work to date with SCQF, Lynda commented, “I see the SCQF as a tool which Careers Scotland staff can use to engage with clients and help move them forward in their career development and lifelong learning.”

Further information on Lynda's progress with the Careers Scotland action plan will be reported in future issues of SCQF Update.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A practical example of using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework



As the name suggests, learning is at the heart of Community Learning and Development. How that learning takes place depends on what people want to achieve, what their starting point is and the context in which the learning happens.

That variability means that CLD needs to be flexible in the approach to helping people recognise the value of what they have learned.

The SCQF is a tool that can be used to help people recognise and value their learning. The following case study demonstrates how the SCQF can be practically applied.

CASE STUDY – COMMUNITY ACTIVIST TRAINING

Organisations

- Angus Council
- Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum
- Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Scottish Borders Council

What was the project all about?

The aim of the project was to raise the profile of community activists through the implementation of a recognised programme of training that is SCQF levelled and credit rated.

It was agreed that the target group for the course would be individuals who are active in their community. The key areas of learning agreed for



DEVELOPMENT OF AN RPL NETWORK

Interest in the recognition of prior learning (RPL) to contribute to the retraining, upskilling and mobility of the workforce is increasing throughout Europe and beyond...

A recent study undertaken by the SCQFP showed that stakeholders in Scotland have a strong desire to see a greater provision and take-up of RPL which will contribute to the development of individuals' skills, meet the needs of the labour market and contribute to the lifelong learning, employability and social inclusion agendas.

However the study also identified a number of barriers:

- lack of a common understanding across all stakeholders;

the training programme by the partners are:

- How do you get involved in your community?
- Gaining a knowledge and understanding of your community
- Getting organised
- Making the change happen

Who was involved?

The programme has been developed through a collaborative partnership involving Angus Council, Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum, Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services, Perth and Kinross Council (lead partner) and Scottish Borders Council. Community activists were involved in the initial decision-making stages about target groups for the course and appropriate content based on their own experience.

It is one of the national collaborative projects supported by the Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS) Group.

All partners have been involved in the design and development of the training programme.

What were the results?

Key workers from each partner were identified to lead on the design and development of materials and SCQF levelling for each section of the training programme. All partners were involved in agreeing the design,

content and delivery approach of the course with SQA as the credit rating body. Perth and Kinross Council was the lead partner and coordinated the partnership working.

The partners also valued the advice and support offered by SQA staff during all stages of the credit rating process and procedures.

The initial stages involved mapping the learning outcomes of the programme to an appropriate level using the SCQF Level Descriptors and completing a “scorecard” to explain the rationale for the suggested levels and credit rating for the programme.

The programme is being submitted to SQA for credit rating. The programme consists of 4 Units and it is proposed that it will sit at SCQF Level 5 with a credit rating of 24 SCQF Credit Points.

EXPERIENCE OF USING THE SCQF

Benefits of using the SCQF

The process is straightforward but requires a disciplined approach and familiarity with the Framework. The partners found that the existing guidelines produced by SCQF and the ongoing advice from SQA staff were helpful sources of information and advice.

The project benefited from the collaborative approach of involving partners who collectively had a range of knowledge and experience

of the programme aims, the SCQF and credit rating learning programmes.

Challenges of using the SCQF

It is important to recognise the time requirements for the process, both in time commitment for the activities to design and develop the learning programme and materials, and in completing the analysis and documentation required for credit rating.

Within the timeframe of the project funding it was not possible to pilot the delivery of the programme with community activists prior to submitting the programme for credit rating. The project did however draw on the extensive experience and expertise of partners to ensure that the programme responded to the needs of the target group and included effective learning and teaching approaches.

Ongoing developments

When credit rated, the training programme and pack will be available for other areas to use, but there may be a need to produce support materials for trainers.

Further Information

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- lack of awareness by both providers and learners;
- lack of consistent policies and practices across providers;
- lack of transparency;
- use of language and terminology.

Staff development was also seen as a key issue that needed to be addressed.

The SCQF Partnership is therefore in the process of setting up an RPL Network which will help to address the barriers on both the demand and supply sides.

The objectives of the network will be to:

- develop targeted materials to promote RPL to stakeholders and learners;
- share good practice of RPL amongst providers;
- learn from the experience of learners through the development of case studies;
- develop standard, generic policy and procedures that can be adjusted to sectoral and institutional needs (i.e. toolkit);

- provide support to institutions and guidance providers.

A number of key stakeholders will be invited to join the network but we would be keen to hear from anyone with an interest in RPL who would like to become involved. The date of the first meeting is yet to be confirmed but will take place in November.

For further information contact Julie Cavanagh, Manager at j.cavanagh@scqf.org.uk or by calling 0141 225 2925



THE TUC, THE NATIONAL OPEN COLLEGE NETWORK AND THE SCQF

Following the credit rating and mapping of the TUC Education Programme to the SCQF by Glasgow Caledonian University for the TUC and the National Open College Network (NOCN), the organisation was keen to build on momentum by adding the already highly successful workplace representatives and trade union officers' education programme to the Framework. This activity further enhances learning opportunities for trade union learners as well as facilitating progression into other educational opportunities throughout Scotland.

TUC Education and Training

TUC Education offers an extensive programme of training for union representatives and officers. The programme has been accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN) since 1996, with new units being added as the programme has developed.

“We believe that relating the programme to the SCQF is good for everyone – reps, unions, employers, the Scottish Government and the world of work.”

Currently, the TUC Education Programme throughout the UK trains over 52,000 union representatives each year and has a reputation for quality and innovation across the world of adult learning. The programme is offered through dedicated TUC Trade Union Studies Units in partnership with over 70 FE colleges. Currently 8 colleges in Scotland deliver the programme, ranging from Dumfries, through the central belt, to Thurso in Caithness.

Reasons for Developing the Programme

The basis for the present programme dates back to 1963, since which time it has been amended and built upon to meet changing demands. Following extensive consultation and discussion of trade union interest in accreditation in the 1990s, the TUC General Council decided to seek accreditation for its representatives' programme through the NOCN. Open College accreditation was chosen because of its connection and experience with adult learners.

OCN accreditation, like similar accreditation systems, is designed to enable learners to accumulate recognition of achievement for relatively small chunks (units) of learning. These can be organised in such a way that learners gain an award, a certificate or a diploma, or learners may combine units in a way that suits their particular interests or workplace/union circumstances.

An evaluation showed that the vast majority of reps were keen to take up

the option of claiming OCN credits for their work. Nearly 40% of those surveyed had no previous qualifications, and were proud to have gained TUC/Open College credits. Even where reps had advanced qualifications, they valued the formal recognition of their achievements in trade union work.

The ethos of Open College accreditation is to make learning outcomes open and clear to learners. In this way reps can feel secure that there is no hidden agenda in the award of credit, and they have a clear record of what they have achieved.

Accreditation was a risk for unions. There were concerns that it would undermine the real purpose of trade union education: interfere with the relationship between the workplace rep and tutor and individualise what was always a collective endeavour. When the TUC and NOCN initiated their partnership in 1996, there was much apprehension about how this would turn out.

Twelve years on, the results speak for themselves: more than 350,000 learners achieving more than a million credits at VQ levels 1 to 3; reps, safety reps and learning reps who voted with their feet as soon as the option to achieve credit was made available - a take-up rate of between 85-90%, all volunteering with no compulsion to register for credit and assessment. This has opened up the option of qualifications and progression to learners and accreditation has proved to be immensely popular with the learners themselves.

An important consequence of accreditation is that the quality of reps' work is also recognised, not just as individuals but as a key part of the employment relationship. Reps' skills are at the same level as manager and team leader skills and this has been emphasised by using credits to build parity as, for example, with the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), where union reps achieve membership at the same grade as safety managers through their TUC training and workplace activities.

Success with Adults and Workplace Learners

TUC Education has a long and successful record in attracting adults back into learning and has a key role to play in contributing to Government priorities in delivering a new agenda of lifelong learning, partnership, health and safety, and fairness at work. The programme has grown at a rate of 28 per cent over the past 3 years - 108% since 1997. And the quality is higher than ever: the last 13 Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) reports on TUC Education units have all been awarded Grade 1 status, a curriculum area unparalleled in Further Education.

This year, the organisation is undergoing a real step change in how the accreditation process relates to learners who will study on the TUC Education programme in Scotland. TUC Education in Scotland will be conducting a series of activities that will highlight the importance of the SCQF to learners and each learner will be informed as to what SCQF level they have successfully achieved.

We believe that relating the programme to the SCQF is good for everyone – reps, unions, employers, the Scottish Government and the world of work.

So here's to the next phase in developing the TUC Education programme, especially with the raised emphasis in Scotland on introducing and involving trade union learners with the SCQF.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL STUDIES

"I always wanted to study to be a Doctor but nobody I knew ever thought about going to medical school."

"It was only when I started working in the health service that I realised I had the skills to progress further. The chance to study for a degree will see me finally realise the potential I know I have."

These are only some of the comments made by adults seeking to apply to the Access to Medical Studies programme. SWAPWest (Scottish Wider Access Programme) developed the programme to encourage adults to return to education to pursue degrees in the medical-related professions.

As with all SWAP programmes, designing and delivering the programme has been a collaborative process. At a very early stage of development it was decided that the programme should include diverse progression routes related to medicine in order to provide as many opportunities for adults as possible and to raise awareness of the many diverse occupations available in the modern health service.

Stow College provided their considerable expertise in delivering access programmes in science and specialist health care subjects. The Faculty of Medicine at University of Glasgow has been supportive throughout the process. In addition to medicine, progression routes from the programme are available for degrees in Pharmacy at University of Strathclyde, Medical Physics at the University of West of Scotland and Biomedical Sciences at Glasgow Caledonian University. From this year a progression route to the Dentistry degree at University of Glasgow has also been included.

The programme jointly agreed with all partners includes a range of SQA units. The programme of 21 credits ensures that students have an underpinning knowledge in the sciences as well as the core skills essential for degree study.

The SCQF framework is particularly useful in designing SWAP programmes. By creating a programme from SQA units, the partners have confidence that the programme is levelled at SCQF Level

6 and is appropriate for progression to University study. In particular, during the three-year pilot period, changes could be made to the curriculum to ensure that the academic content of the programme matched the needs of the partners while guaranteeing the overall quality and academic level.

In addition to the academic content, students undertake SWAP "Preparation for Higher Education" throughout the programme which includes a problem-based learning approach to assist students progressing to medicine. The success of the programme has been due to the dedication of the learners involved and what is particularly encouraging in such a competitive area is the peer support that students provide one another in the average SWAP class.

Success has been proven by the progression of the students: each year students have progressed onto medicine and related degrees. This year five students were offered places in Medicine at University of Glasgow, with the other students progressing onto pharmacy and biomedicine.

The programme, which has been running since 2004, is now well established within the portfolio of access programmes available from SWAPWest.

SWAPWest are proud of all students who progress onto Higher education but it would be fair to say that the model developed on the Access to Medical Studies has been particularly useful in providing diversity and widening participation to the medical professions.

For further information please contact Kenny Anderson, SWAPWest 300 Cathedral Street, Glasgow G1 2TA. 0141 553 2471, swapwest@btconnect.com

Summer holidays may be over and suntans might be fading fast, but that doesn't stop us casting a beady eye towards Europe and beyond – and, although budget flights might be few and far between, there's no shortage of hot topics in framework development to keep us all warm on cold winter nights

FRAMEWORK HOT TOPICS



DUBAI

THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – JUST THE KIND OF UMBRELLA WE NEED?

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) is a common European reference framework which enables Member States to compare their national qualifications systems to one another. We've been very busy recently taking steps towards meeting our commitment to reference the SCQF to the EQF by March 2009. Identifying and making clear how the 12 levels of the SCQF relate to the 8 levels of the EQF provides a number of benefits: easier comparison of individual qualifications from different countries and education and training systems, broader recognition of learning, and a more mobile, flexible and truly European workforce to name a few.

EQF NETWORK TESTING! WHAT?

A strange name admittedly, but a good Leonardo-funded project which enables us to work together with a variety of partners from across the UK and Europe to test and develop aspects of the EQF. Its main aim is to investigate how different qualifications and qualifications systems/frameworks may relate to each other and to the EQF levels and descriptors. The project is now drawing to a close and the results and findings will be disseminated at a conference to be held in Paris in December 2008.

SCQF PARTNERSHIP AND STUDY VISITS

We are very pleased to be hosting a study visit of 14 delegates from Morocco and Tunisia from 27~29 October. The visit is sponsored by the European Training Foundation as part of a wider NQF development project in the MEDA region and its main aim is to familiarise delegates with the development, aims and impact of the SCQF to inform developments in their own countries. A programme for the visit involving a range of SCQFP partners and stakeholders has been agreed and we look forward to welcoming our guests to Scotland.

We have also been approached to host a joint visit of Hewlett Packard and the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic. Hewlett Packard is currently working closely with the Czech Government to develop a national credit system and we are currently in dialogue with them to develop a suitable programme for their visit.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION – WE NEED YOUR VIEWS!

The national consultation on the referencing work we have already carried out is now open. The consultation will run from September through to 28th November and we would very much encourage and welcome your participation. For full details of the consultation, including all the information you need to contribute, visit our website: www.scqf.org.uk/consultation/consult1.aspx

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

In July we were asked by the UAE to respond to their consultation on the development of a qualifications framework. This followed up a meeting which took place in October 2007 and they have also indicated that they would like us to take part in their consultation conference planned for later this year.

PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY

The SCQF Partnership, together with our colleagues at the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, will be supporting the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in a Peer Learning Activity (PLA), which is to be held in London on 20 and 21 October. This London PLA brings together approximately 40 representatives from across the EU to share experiences and discuss issues and challenges faced by different countries in building and developing national qualification frameworks. This event, which builds on the work of previous PLAs, will centre on the added value of the NQF to the individual. The SCQF Partnership has been asked to provide four speakers to present on the Framework and the SCQF Executive Team will also be representing the Partnership at the event.

For more details of any of the work outlined above, or for any other matters relating to SCQF Partnership European and international activity, please contact Mike Hewett, SCQF European and International Officer at m.hewett@scqf.org.uk or by calling 0141 225 2923.

MEET THE SCQF EXECUTIVE TEAM

PART ONE



AUDREY McCLEMENTS

QUALITY OFFICER

Tell us a bit about your career to date

I have worked within administrative roles in the education sector for 11 years; 3 years with Ayr College and 8 years with the University of Glasgow. In addition, over the past 3 years I have been working as a part-time business studies lecturer with Ayr College. In August 2008, I was seconded to the SCQFP.

What is your role within the SCQF Partnership?

I am the Quality Officer for the SCQFP and responsible for supporting the quality function, maintaining existing activity related to the quality standards and developing capacity in this area.

Tell us something interesting about yourself!

I am the proud owner of a 2-seater sports car... and a caravan – obviously I don't tow the van anywhere!



MARGARET CAMERON

MANAGER

Tell us a bit about your career to date

I was a Careers Guidance Adviser at Greenock Careers Office and was assigned to Greenock High School. I then worked at the University of Paisley as an education guidance advisor providing advice on how to develop programmes of study, Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education, degrees and post graduate awards. I was also the employer representative there and worked with large employers to promote the use of credit for individuals' CPD in their organisations e.g. Daily Record and BAA. I then moved to the University of Central Lancashire in Preston to manage Aim Higher Lancashire which involved working in partnership with the 4 Higher Education Institutions, 13 Colleges, Connexions service and the Learning and Skills Council. I stayed there for 2 years and returned to Scotland in 2005 as the SCQF project manager.

What is your role within the SCQF Partnership?

I'm responsible for activities relating to the quality and integrity of the Framework and UK and European developments. I also support the CEO with internal processes including risk management and budget.

Tell us something interesting about yourself!

I got locked in a Clydesdale Electrical store when it closed one Saturday evening!

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SQA)

Credit Rating of SVQs funded via UK National Occupational Standards Board (UKNOS Board)

SQA Accreditation has recently completed a three-year project where the key aim of the project was to work with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs) and Awarding Bodies (ABs) to determine SCQF credit and SCQF level for approximately 2000 SVQ units (130 SVQs) within the project specification.

As the Qualifications Regulator for Scotland, SQA Accreditation requires SSCs, SSBs and ABs to work in partnership with them to allocate the SCQF credit and level for the SVQs. Guidance has been produced to assist with this work. The guidance document, entitled *Credit Rating of SVQs for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*, highlights best practice and builds on the work of the pilot and participants' understanding of the process.

The UKNOS Board has confirmed that a contribution from the NOS funds can be allocated for collaborative working between Sector Skills Councils, Standard Setting Bodies and Awarding Bodies for allocating SCQF level and credit to SVQs. The UK Coordinating Group has issued guidance on how this funding can be accessed and will approve the final allocation of level and credit of qualifications and/or units. This will then be confirmed by SQA at the point of SVQ accreditation.

Both sets of guidance have been posted on SQA Accreditation's website:

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/33678.html

If you require further information, please contact the relevant SQA Accreditation Manager or Carole Brown, Senior Accreditation Manager on SQA Accreditation on 0845 213 5252 or email accreditation@sqa.org.uk

SQA Accreditation Delegated Credit Rating Pilot

Delegated Credit Rating allows SQA approved awarding bodies to credit rate SQA accredited qualifications (excluding SVQs) within their own portfolio. The credit rating is then confirmed by SQA's Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG).

The pilot is now coming to a close and the revised forms guidance and criteria will shortly be uploaded onto the website:

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/33235.html

You can also view here the qualifications that have been credit rated as a result of the pilot.

Two of the awarding bodies involved in the pilot now have Delegated Credit Rating status. It is SQA Accreditation's intention that Delegated Credit Rating will be available to awarding bodies which satisfy the criteria and processes from late September 2008.

If you require further information, please contact Dennis.Dunne@sqa.org.uk

LATE-BREAKING ANNOUNCEMENT
SQA Awarding Body has now produced its first SVQ certificates to include the SCQF level and credit information for candidates

Future of Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs) and National Certificate Group Awards (NCGAs)

One of the main aims of the National Qualification Group Award development programme is to provide an up-to-date and rationalised catalogue for non-advanced provision, and as a result SPAs and NCGAs are being superseded by National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates where appropriate.

See the link at:

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/21687.html

For those SPAs and NCGAs with lapsing and finish dates, withdrawal of the qualifications will be in relation to those dates. For those with no lapsing dates set, a phased approach to withdrawal will be undertaken. SQA's work to develop National Certificates and National Progression Awards is well underway and this will result in the implementation of Group Awards which are up to date.

For more information, see the Development Schedule which is published on SQA's website:

www.sqa.org.uk/nqga

National Certificates and National Progression Awards are vocational qualifications designed to prepare people for employment, for career development or for progression to further study. These are available at SCQF levels 2-6 and can be delivered in colleges or through partnerships between colleges, schools and employers.

For more information contact Hilary Rutherford, Project Manager, at hilary.rutherford@sqa.org.uk

SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

Refreshed Core Skills framework, qualifications and assessments from SQA

As a result of a recent review, the Core Skills framework, qualifications and associated assessment approaches have been updated. The new Units and Assessment Support Packs were ready for first candidate entry in August 2008 with certification available from October 2008.

Core Skills form a critical part of the essential skills outlined in Scotland's Skills Strategy and developing these skills is vital to Scotland's economic prosperity within an increasingly challenging global economy. The format of the refreshed Core Skills Units and the flexibility of their assessment approaches will allow learners to focus on areas of Core Skills development that employers have advised that they need in order to meet the demands of a smarter Scotland.

SQA has introduced smaller Core Skills Units in Communication and Numeracy at SCQF levels 2 and 3 to offer less confident learners the opportunity to undertake smaller programmes of certificated learning, which over time can lead to the achievement of a Core Skill component or the full Core Skill. This will allow learners to embark on their journey through lifelong learning in smaller, more manageable blocks of learning, allowing them to develop skills and build up confidence in their abilities.

The refreshed Core Skills Units and the Assessment Support Packs for each Core Skill Unit are available on the website at www.sqa.org.uk.

Further information on the Core Skills for the Future development is available on:

www.sqaacademy.org.uk

Scotland's Colleges SCQF Advisory Group promote extension of credit rating and recognition of prior learning in colleges

The Scotland's Colleges Advisory Group was established in March 2008 to support Scotland's Colleges in embedding the use of SCQF to credit rate provision, place more learning on the framework and give recognition of prior learning. The group is made up of quality managers representing Scotland's Colleges, Lead Specialists from SFEU, the SCQFP's Quality Manager and a representative from HMIe.

The remit of the group is to:

- Promote the extension of credit rating and recognition of prior learning provision in colleges
- Share examples of effective practice
- Investigate opportunities for developing consortia with other colleges or external partners
- Support the credit rating of professional learning opportunities for staff in Scotland's colleges
- Work in partnership with SCQF and other stakeholders.

Despite only being in existence for a short period of time, the group has

agreed on a series of events throughout 2008-09 to illustrate the credit rating process for colleges who wish to embed and extend the facility to credit rate. The first event took place on 25 September at Central College in Glasgow, and was well-attended by delegates who found the themes of recognising potential, building systems and developing staff to be a good launch-pad to build upon moving forward.

Future events will have a focus on credit rating Third Party Provision using the recommended Good Practice Guide produced by SCQF and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in relation to SCQF. Further events will be planned in response to college needs and requirements, so keep an eye on the website at:

www.sfeu.ac.uk/events

If you are interested in the work of the Advisory Group, contact:

Garry Cameron, Lead Specialist, Professional Learning

Scottish Further Education Unit at garry.cameron@sfeu.ac.uk or by calling 01786 892 115

SCQF DATABASE UPDATE

We have almost completed work with Skills Development Scotland to develop an SCQF Database to hold information on SCQF credit and level for qualifications and learning programmes. A portal on the SCQF website has been developed, and the goal is for all credit rating bodies to access this directly to indicate any newly credit rated or recently reviewed programmes.

From discussions with credit rating bodies over the last few months, we are aware of increased activity in

credit rating of "third party provision". We would like to be able to share this information more widely as we estimate that, in addition to all of the mainstream qualifications such as Highers, HNC/HND and Degrees, around 80-100 learning programmes have been credit rated across Scotland.

We hope to have the database up and running before Christmas 2008 and a second phase linking this to the National Learning Opportunities Database will follow.

WE WANT YOUR COMMENTS

In order to improve our service to you, our partners and stakeholders, we would welcome your feedback on the format of the SCQF Update. Would you prefer to continue receiving a hardcopy of the Update, or would you rather it was provided electronically via an e-zine or our website?

Please get in touch to let us know your thoughts by contacting Sam Houten Feeley at samantha@scqf.org.uk

We would also like to remind you to contact us if you have any interesting features or stories for the next edition of Update. All contributions gratefully received!

www.scqf.org.uk

samantha@scqf.org.uk

