

Scottish Progression Awards:
another step on the career
development path



Scottish Progression Awards: another step on the career development path

Introducing SPAs

SQA is pleased to announce the development of a new suite of qualifications – Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs). These are coming out at a time when there is a demand, and a need, for greater access to vocational and enterprise programmes for young people, unemployed people, and those who have not been able to benefit from traditional qualifications.

SQA's developing suite of Scottish Progression Awards introduce another way for people to access qualifications that will provide a structure for vocational learning. The qualifications will, of course, also give them full recognition for their achievements.

SPAs will provide structured opportunities for candidates to experience the world of work and enterprise activity while still enjoying the benefits of close contact with their training provider.

How SPAs work

SPAs are vocational qualifications which provide practical opportunities for developing real skills that are valid and relevant to the world of work.

SPAs will, initially, be located at levels 4 and 5 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This means they are comparable with Standard Grade in terms of the demand they make on candidates and the effort required to achieve them. It also means that activity and attainment outwith traditional qualifications can now be recorded and reported.

The SPAs that SQA is currently developing for use in some areas — initially Building Craft, Vehicle Maintenance and Repair, and Sport and Recreation — are made up of National Units (although other types of Unit can be used if appropriate), and take about 240 hours of work.

Benefits and features of SPAs

One key feature of SPAs is their flexibility – where it is appropriate, the number of credits may vary (as it does in the Vehicle Maintenance SPA); or they can be made up of different types of Unit (as is the case in the Hospitality and Aquaculture SPAs).

One of the major attractions to using a progression award is that assessments can be tailored to the needs and circumstances of the candidates. The assessments being written for the SPAs that are already available are challenging and meaningful, but still achievable in a training centre setting. They are designed to get candidates acclimatised to a culture of attainment where assessments will challenge them but do not put unreasonable obstacles between them and real achievement.

SPAs also have links to the world of work and can provide good skills training in an occupational area. This will be of benefit to the candidate when seeking work. Progression awards are smaller than the related SVOs, and do not have the same assessment demands.

Progression awards are not designed to train people to full industrial competence. Instead, they are designed to provide basic skills which will be attractive to employers, and which candidates can build on when working towards achieving an SVQ.

Summary

In summary, SPAs:

- can offer progression to full SVQs
- meet the needs of occupational sectors
- help develop skills to demonstrate potential to prospective employers



SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY



Hanover House Ironmills Road
24 Douglas Street Dalkeith
Glasgow Midlothian
G2 7NQ EH22 1LE

Customer Contact Centre
tel: 0845 279 1000
fax: 0141-242 2244
e-mail: customer@sqa.org.uk

website: www.sqa.org.uk

DD2004

March 2004