



SQA Corporate Plan 2015–18

Section 1: Strategic Intent

Strategic context and drivers

SQA's future activities will be shaped by a number of broad strategic drivers that will have an impact on all nations and economies. These are:

- ◆ The need for skilled workforces, recognising that in all areas of the world, skills, training and qualifications remain engines for economic growth.
- ◆ Globalisation of industry, business, trade and education, leading to increased interdependence and interconnectedness of economies and nations.
- ◆ The need to develop knowledge societies to support sustainable economic growth.
- ◆ The need to improve the health and wellbeing of all people to ensure they have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- ◆ Increased availability and application of technology in education and skills development.
- ◆ The recognition that all countries need to develop global citizens with appropriate skills, knowledge, ways of learning, and ways of doing business that enable them to live, work and study within a range of localities and international contexts.

SQA is a non-departmental public body and in this role it remains fully committed to working with other organisations, agencies and institutions in the Scottish family to help meet Scottish Government's National Outcomes, strategies, policies and priorities – both at home and abroad.

As such, there are some specific strategic drivers that steer SQA's public body responsibilities in Scotland and further afield during the period covered by this plan. These are:

- ◆ Curriculum for Excellence and the introduction of the new National Qualifications that will support the senior phase of this generational curricular reform in schools.
- ◆ *Developing Scotland's Young Workforce* commission report. This will drive activity across the Education and Skills system in Scotland, in particular in relation to the Modern Apprenticeship programme and new emerging activity such as foundation apprenticeships.
- ◆ Pressures on public sector funding require that SQA maximises its income generation opportunities outwith Scotland.
- ◆ Transformation through technology.
- ◆ Scottish Government strategies and policies on economic growth, skills development, employment and employability. SQA will continue to work with government to support learners, employers, centres, and customers to meet the challenges of the current economic climate and prepare for future recovery.
- ◆ International engagement with regions, nations and governments identified in Scottish Government international engagement strategies and plans.

- ◆ Consideration of the changing political, economic and social environment.

These drivers demonstrate that the skills, training and qualifications landscape has never been more important and this affords SQA opportunities to provide products and services as both a public body and as an income generating organisation.

Values

Three values – trusted, enabling, and progressive – underpin the way SQA works with learners, customers, partners, stakeholders, the wider public, and within the organisation itself.

We seek to be trusted by government and stakeholders to deliver on our statutory responsibilities. Our customers and users trust us to ‘get it right’ for them. We seek to be trusted by partners who know from experience that we deliver.

By providing high quality qualifications, services, expertise, experience and support, we enable learners, customers and centres to achieve their goals; we enable employers, businesses and industry to recruit and develop skilled workforces; and we enable communities and societies to work towards productivity and growth.

We are continuing to develop progressive approaches to qualification development, assessment practice, and service delivery by using innovation and technology thus ensuring greater speed in turnaround and delivery; flexible products and approaches that retain rigour in quality; and value for money.

Approach

Through its awarding and accreditation responsibilities, working with partners, SQA will ensure that the high standards in education, skills and training for which Scotland is renowned will continue to be maintained – whatever qualifications or services SQA delivers and wherever these are delivered.

SQA will continue to deliver a comprehensive and high quality school qualifications system in Scotland, which includes the new qualifications to support the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. SQA will also continue to serve and support the wider education and training system in Scotland, working closely with colleges, universities, training providers and employers to provide qualifications that prepare young people for work; help people make career changes; provide second chances for learners; assist business to upskill and reskill their workforces; enable learners to access and progress within further and higher education; and develop the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

To ensure that SQA’s valuable assets – its products and services, expertise and experience – are maintained and used to their full benefit, expansion into wider markets, careful planning and appropriate investment are required. This will enable what SQA does to be of benefit to others (whether that is the development of the individual learner; capacity building in a community; or economic growth for a nation) and will generate income for SQA, thus helping it to achieve one of its goals to become fully self-financing.

SQA is committed to supporting individual development and sustainable economic growth through its:

- ◆ Products, eg through development of qualifications and assessment and support materials
- ◆ Services, eg through capacity building and credit rating
- ◆ Contracts – funded by, and carried out on behalf of, other agencies/companies
- ◆ International Consultancy Projects – funded by, and carried out on behalf of, international governments, agencies and organisations

SQA operates throughout Scotland and in other selected geographical areas based on:

- ◆ public body/statutory responsibilities
- ◆ income generating opportunities
- ◆ market intelligence
- ◆ capacity to deliver
- ◆ sound business cases that balance resources and potential income
- ◆ existing expertise and track record
- ◆ partnership leverage
- ◆ social responsibilities

SQA is confident that all products and services it delivers provide good value for money.

Responsive delivery

SQA's approach to delivery of products and services is flexible, pragmatic and responsive to customer and stakeholder needs and wishes. SQA will work to achieve its vision by continuing its commitment to public service combined with business acumen and integrity. It will be demand led and customer focused – delivering excellent products, exceptional service, and value for money to all its users and customers.

SQA will continue to work in partnership with others to fulfil its public body responsibilities. These include alignment to the Scottish Government National Outcomes and an appropriate response to the Corporate Expectations set out by Scottish Government in relation to:

- ◆ public service reform and community planning
- ◆ alignment to the National Performance Framework
- ◆ youth employment
- ◆ spending review priorities
- ◆ fraud prevention
- ◆ procurement
- ◆ shared services
- ◆ human resources
- ◆ transparency

SQA is committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference.

It will also work in partnership on other activities where this has advantages for customers and users and where it is practicable to do so.

Section 2: SQA's Mission Statement and Strategic Goals

Mission Statement

- **Purpose**

“SQA's purpose is to provide products and services in skills, training and education which positively impact on individuals, organisations and society.”

- **Vision**

“We will digitally transform our organisation to offer customers better service by delivering efficient, scalable and new enabling approaches.”

Strategic Goals

The strategic goals which have been mapped to the Scottish Government National Outcomes and Public Bodies' Corporate Expectations are as follows:

1. Develop, deliver and maintain a portfolio of qualifications and services to support the needs and aspirations of Scotland, its people and its economy.
2. Provide leadership and expertise in a range of areas including assessment, qualification development and quality enhancement.
3. Support the Scottish Government's agendas to maximise the benefits of international engagement and co-operation.
4. Ensure our culture and values support the engagement and wellbeing of our staff and foster their commitment to the success of SQA.
5. Deliver high-quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive services to our customers.
6. Continue to develop SQA as a leading public body and key player in the skills, training and education landscape.
7. Continue to pursue a business model that would enable SQA to achieve self-financed status, and invest in and improve the Education and Skills system.
8. Independently accredit, quality assure and regulate approved Awarding Bodies and qualifications thereby safeguarding the interests of learners, employers, parents, funding bodies, providers and the Scottish Government.

Performance monitoring

Directorate strategy maps and detailed business plans have been prepared as a basis for monitoring progress via the Quarterly Performance Review.

Section 3: Mapping of goals to National Outcomes and Corporate Expectations

PUBLIC BODIES: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENT OF CORPORATE EXPECTATIONS

The Scottish Ministers expect their public bodies to deliver continuous improvement by acting corporately across the following topics and issues. The table below correlates SQA’s strategic Goals with the appropriate corporate expectation they contribute to.

Delivery Area	Corporate Expectation	SQA’s Strategic Goals
Public Service Reform and Community Planning	Engage with community planning partners to develop, deliver and monitor progress towards local outcomes in Single Outcome Agreements. The scale and nature of engagement will be determined by the purpose and capacity of each public body.	
	Deliver the Scottish Ministers’ expectations on overall efficiency savings and issue a public statement on this.	6 and 7
Alignment to the National Performance Framework	Align operations, business planning and objectives to the Scottish Government’s Purpose and the National Outcomes. Work with the SG to develop a shared understanding of the joint priorities over the medium term to contribute towards delivery of the National Outcomes, and ensure that individual bodies’ corporate communications and engagement strategies fully reflect these.	All goals have been mapped to National Outcomes. See table below.
Youth Employment	Support the Government’s youth employment strategy, providing opportunities for unemployed young people including a job, modern apprenticeship, high quality work experience, mentoring or other work-related support.	1, 5 and 6
Finance	Align activity and strategy with the priorities set by Ministers in the current Spending Review, taking account of the impact of their actions on total public spending. (Note that during the period covered by the 2011 Spending Review, the budget priorities are: economic recovery, low carbon, public sector reform, preventative spend and the social wage.)	6 and 7
Fraud prevention	Adopt proactive counter-fraud policies consistent with SG guidance, including review of current counter-fraud activity and the adoption of robust reporting procedures.	6 and 7

Delivery Area	Corporate Expectation	SQA's Strategic Goals
Procurement	Maintain accurate contracts database and share information on contract performance and anticipated future contracting activity. Maintain levels of procurement capability appropriate to the organisation's spend, working with Scottish Procurement to agree procurement improvement plans.	6
Shared Services	Assess the business case for shared service options before proceeding with plans to invest in corporate systems, and ratify corporate systems proposals through the Strategic Corporate Services Board.	7
HR	Engage with the HR Forum, to support workforce development, talent management and flexible deployment across organisations and to ensure that there is an effective employee engagement process, with measures and reporting to provide update on progress.	4
	Comply with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland, working closely with SG sponsor teams to plan Board succession and public appointments.	6
Transparency	Adopt policies for open and proactive publication of relevant information, consistent with the Scottish Government's transparency agenda.	6

Mapped Strategic Goals and National Outcomes

National Outcomes	
We live in Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	1
We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	2
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	3
Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	4
Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	5
We live longer healthier lives	6
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	7
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	8
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	
We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	12
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	13
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of consumption and production	14
Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it	
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	16

2015-18 SQA Strategic Goals

Develop, deliver and maintain a portfolio of qualifications and services to support the needs and aspirations of Scotland, its people and its economy.

1 2 3 4 5 7 8 13

Provide leadership and expertise in a range of areas including assessment, qualification development and quality enhancement. 3 4 5 8 13

Support the Scottish Government's agendas to maximise the benefits of international engagement and co-operation. 1 2 3 13

Ensure our culture and values support the engagement and wellbeing of our staff and foster their commitment to the success of SQA. 2 3 6

Deliver high-quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive services to our customers. 16

Continue to develop SQA as a leading public body and key player in the skills, training and education landscape 1 2 3 4 7 12 14 16

Continue to pursue a business model that would enable SQA to achieve self-financed status, and invest in and improve the Education and Skills system. 2 16

Independently accredit, quality assure and regulate approved Awarding Bodies and qualifications thereby safeguarding the interests of learners, employers, parents, funding bodies, providers and the Scottish Government.. 1 3

Section 4: 2015-16 Income and Expenditure Budget

	£m
Qualifications Entry Income	42.1
Other Income	10.7
Grant Funding	5.0
Additional Grant Funding ¹	4.9
Programme Grant Funding ²	13.7
Total Income	76.4
Staff	27.3
Appointees	16.1
Other Operating Costs	19.3
Programme Grant Expenditure	13.7
Total Expenditure	76.4
Income and Expenditure Surplus (Deficit)	0

Notes

- 1 Scottish Government recognises that, as was the case for 2014-15, SQA will require further Grant in Aid to meet operational and Programme Grant costs that are beyond those covered within current SG budgets. The additional Grant in Aid requirement will be updated in-line with scheduled reforecasting exercises.

- 2 Programme Grant Funding is funding received from bodies such as the Scottish Government to fund specific activity such as Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).