

FEEDBACK FROM REGIONAL SUPPORT EVENTS HELD IN GLASGOW (25 APRIL), EDINBURGH (26 APRIL) AND ABERDEEN (2 MAY).

All events were well attended and delegates found them to be really useful and supportive. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their contribution and hope that the following description of the main issues raised is helpful to you.

Sector Update

Incremental Change

Delegates were advised that SQA had decided to implement incremental changes to the 2005 standards on 1 August 2007. Centres who have candidates registered and undertaking the current units may continue with these units until the units are completed. However, after 1 August 2007, candidates should be registered for the latest incrementally changed units that they require to undertake.

N.B. The new Assessment Strategy, incorporating the requirements of incremental change, will be in place from 1 August, 2007 and centres are expected to adhere to the requirements of the strategy.

Supplementary Assessment Guide

Recently, SQA developed a supplementary Assessment Guide to assist assessors and verifiers with the current awards. A selection of units was chosen that had been identified by assessors and verifiers as requiring further clarification.

Delegates were asked to consider the contents of this document as they progressed with the workshops during the event and asked to highlight whether the document was sufficient, whether additional units should be included and whether it was felt that Evidence Requirements should be produced instead, particularly for the IT units.

SVQ Business and Administration subject web page

Delegates were advised that the subject web page had recently been revised. A description of the sections that are now available was given:

- Standards
- Frameworks
- Assessment Guidance
- Update Letters
- Events

Delegates were advised that all information relating to the awards would be placed on the website regularly and encouraged to visit the site to check for updates.

Roles and Responsibilities of Standards Setting Bodies/ Awarding Bodies

Delegates were advised that it had become apparent that some clarification on these roles and responsibilities was necessary. The clarification was given in the context of CfA as Standards Setting Body (SSB) and SQA as Awarding Body (AB).

SSB

- Works on behalf of employers to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) that reflect the core/ key competences within a sector. The NOS are used to develop training and qualifications.
- SSBS research the labour market
- SSBs may carry out projects on behalf of employers, e.g. benchmark European standards
- May develop standards into Vocational Qualifications in collaboration with Awarding Bodies.
- SSBs devise the Assessment Strategy for these qualifications structures
- SSBs have the responsibility for producing robust and accurate frameworks
- SSBs lead incremental change, e.g. their responsibility is to ensure the standards are current and meet the demands of employers
- Respond to issues raised by ABs on behalf of centres
- Ensure that all 4 nations are consulted with
- SSBs do not have responsibility to state how evidence for qualifications is generated, how the standards are met and how change to qualifications is implemented

ABs

- Decide if there is a market for Vocational Qualifications
- Submit frameworks for accreditation to the regulatory body: in Scotland, this is SQA regulatory arm, for the remainder of the UK it is QCA
- ABs decide which units to include in the optional section, based on the demands of the market
- ABs then have full responsibility for the qualifications once they have been accredited.
- ABs manage the delivery and assessment of the qualifications and centres then communicate directly with the AB on these matters, i.e. the AB 'owns' the qualification
- As an AB, SQA is concerned with managing the incremental change process. Liaising with CfA, communicating with centres, the support and delivery of qualifications and quality assurance of the qualifications.
- Centres should contact SQA with any queries they may have about the qualifications – the AB is the first point of contact
- The role of the EV is not something a SSB can advise on. Centres are aware of the role and remit of SQA EVs
- The Code of Conduct is not an arrangement that is in place in Scotland
- Advice on gathering evidence is something that SQA is responsible for, this is not an issue that should concern a SSB

Feedback from Workshop 1: Gathering evidence from the Optional to the Mandatory units

- This depends very much on the units chosen, some are easier than others
- Some criteria is hard to cover and additional evidence is required
- Preparation is the key: planning towards how evidence can be generated and what evidence best fits, e.g. induction/ assessment planning
- The units 'Specialist or Bespoke Software2' and 'Manage and Evaluate Customer Relations' fit in well to clusters
- The unit 'Develop Productive Working Relationships with Colleagues' went well into the core unit 'Carry out your responsibilities at work'
- Appraisal systems can help with generating evidence for this core unit
- Also, the unit 'Plan, Organise and Support Meetings' fitted relatively well with this core unit
- Diversity within the core unit 'Work within your business environment' could be a problem, but evidence gathering should be creative, e.g. assessing risk, arrangements when off sick, etc
- Several aspects of Best Practice were highlighted: there should be continuous tracking of evidence to the core units, don't wait until the end to address
- More contingencies would be helpful
- Evidence gathering is becoming easier as we become more familiar with the standards
- Make sure that observations are tracked at the time and not retrospectively
- Debate as to the pros and cons of large Vs small organisations and the job role and scope of the candidate

Feedback from Workshop 2: Differentiating levels (IT units)

- Clarification given on what is meant by imported and what should be adhered to: standards/ PIs/ Assessment Strategy from E- Skills
- Supplementary guidance from SQA helpful to illustrate evidence as well as standards
- May be helpful if a glossary of terms could be devised, e.g. what is 'bespoke' and what is meant by 'complex documents'?
- WP units – both levels are correct, but level 3 is all about complexity of the task/product
- Gap between levels 2 and 3 wider than with other units
- The units 'Word Processing Software 3' and 'Spreadsheet Software 3' do not suit the role of administrator, SQA asked to bring this matter to CfA's attention
- Confusion as to the requirements of 'speed' in WP units
- Contingencies required for instant messaging, conflict of interest, using the telephone

In general

- No requirement to produce Evidence Requirements, but to add additional supplementary guidance/ contingencies into the guidance document