**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**QUALIFICATIONS SUPPORT TEAM FOR HN ACCOUNTING, ADMINISTRATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**ACTION GRID – MEETING 23 HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2016  
  
Present:** QM,BAQO, AFQO, 5 x centre representatives

**Guest speakers:** SOLAR Co-ordinator (SC), Marketing and Customer Service QO (MCQO)

**Apologies:** 1 x centre representative

| **Ref** | **Agenda/Minute Title** | **Agreed Action** | **Action to be taken by** | **Target Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 23/1 | Welcome | The QM welcomed everyone to the meeting and passed on apologies. |  |  |
| 23/2 | Action Grid from Meeting 22 | There were no points of accuracy and Action Points from the previous meeting were confirmed as closed off.  SC was introduced to the group as SOLAR co-ordinator and gave an update in relation to the Action point from meeting 22.  Development of a dynamically generated SOLAR assessment for Administration and IT Graded Unit 1 has been postponed indefinitely due to technical difficulties relating to the rules governing the structure of the assessment.  SC advised that SOLAR developments are prioritised according to those with strongest evidence of potential uptake and at the moment other projects are taking precedence on this basis.  BAQO stated that there is some anecdotal evidence of demand for Administration and IT SOLAR material from discussion at Network Events and comments in the annual centre surveys, but it is uncertain the extent to which this would translate to actually utilising material should it become available.  There are currently SOLAR assessments for Administration and IT Graded Unit 1 that are used by some centres. The main incentive is access to automatically marked assessments, however this is only possible with the multiple choice paper which constitutes 30% of the total and is already straightforward to mark by conventional means.  SQA’s corporate policy for support material is “digital by default”. The question was mooted; with current Administration and IT Graded Units subject to amendment due to the Review; whether the ASPs for the revised Units should be provided only in SOLAR format. It was agreed that consideration would be given to this but any slippage in production would present a risk.  There was some discussion of SOLAR in relation to HN Accounting. The issues here are the current inability to deal with consequential errors automatically which prevents automatic marking.  **Action:** SC to provide access codes for practice assessments to AFQO for sharing with QST.  **Action:** AFQO to forward HN Accounting Unit specifications to SC so she can advise on viability of proposals for SOLAR material in HN Accounting  Ushare - in relation to the action from meeting 22, BAQO advised the group that there is currently no facility for subscribing to individual subject pages but the SQA Marketing team are exploring the possibility.  The annual surveys suggested there is good awareness among centres of the Ushare facility. According to the surveys, usage is significantly lower and uploading of links lower still, however there is some activity.  **Action:** It was suggested that some statistics could be requested regarding the usage of Ushare for the business-related HNs. | SC/AFQO  SC/AFQO  BAQO | November 2016  November 2016  next meeting  (May 2017) |
| 23/3 | Subject Updates | **HNC/D Accounting**  All eight mandatory units in HNC Accounting have now been updated in line with FRS102.  AFQO advised that CIMA have confirmed the exemptions in place for the 2015-2018 intake of HN Accounting students following the FRS 102 changes to the HN Accounting Units.  Regarding an action point from meeting 22, AFQO provided uptake figures for the NC in Accounting at SCQF Level 5 as follows:  2015 – 114 entries  2014 – 94 entries  **HNC/D Business**  The only change to units is the minor amendment to Outcome 2 of Preparing Financial Forecasts in line with FRS102 terminology.  BAQO advised that a project will be commencing shortly to review the guidance on word counts within the mandatory units in Business verification group 254, including general guidance on how word counts should be managed. The QST agreed that it is appropriate that word counts remain a broad indication of the likely volume of work required rather than something that forms part of marking. However, it is useful to pay it some attention as working to word counts is a useful skill for students who wish to progress to degree programmes. |  |  |
| 23/4 | HN Administration and Information Technology - Review | BAQO provided the group with an update. Progress is a little behind schedule but changes to Units are still on course to be finalised in time for the Network Event in February/March.  A summary of changes to Units was given as follows:  HNC (HND year 1)  Office Technologies – revisions complete. Will be replaced by new unit with title *Digital Technologies for Administrators.* Content includes use of mobile devices in ICT networks, social media, web services, collaborative software and using e-checklists/apps to plan, organise and execute work. A practical approach is encouraged as is holistic assessment whereby the various software and devices covered in Outcomes 1 and 2 are used for the work carried out in Outcome 3.  ITIB Spreadsheets – final draft. Content reduced and requirement to repeat tasks multiple times removed where appropriate. New Unit is more focused on the problem solving element in creating a spreadsheet for a particular purpose rather than a series of discrete tasks.  Recording Financial Transactions – changes ongoing. Requirement to extract data from invoices, vouchers etc. removed. Bank reconciliation introduced in its place. Use of software was considered but not adopted as this would not allow students to develop the required knowledge. Students who complete this Unit will be better equipped than those who undertake only an accounting software Unit, and should be able to adapt to the use of such software easily.  ITIB WPPA – complete. Content streamlined. Repetition of tasks removed where appropriate. Requirement to have evidence of planning and prioritising work, milestones etc. removed as this is a generic skill better assessed in other Units.  HND  Presentation Skills – complete. Content streamlined. Requirement to explain multiple scenarios removed. Outcome 1 deals with preparation and coping techniques.  ITIB Advanced WP – complete. Content streamlined.  ICT in Business – complete. Content streamlined.    ITIB Adv DB – One minor revision to be made.  ITIB Adv SS – Under revision.  Changes are based on feedback from scoping consultation in December 2015 but it is encouraging to see that the changes are by and large consistent with the feedback from the 2016 annual survey.  Once all Unit changes are confirmed, the HN Group Awards will be validated. The Group Award aims are not changing, the purpose of the review is to update existing content in line with technology and streamline content where there are clear opportunities to do so.  Information about the review will be made available to centres in due course, including a slot at the Network Event. |  |  |
| 23/5 | HN Surveys 2015/16 | **HN Accounting**  The response rate to the surveys was the same as 2014/15. Vast majority of candidates are full-time. Preference for optional Units if for Accounting related Units. Majority find GU2 hard. Centre responses did not highlight any specific issue although many stated that a substantial amount of work was involved in updating materials to comply with FRS102.  **HN Administration and IT**  Quantitative feedback was that Units are by and large at the appropriate level, other than Office Technologies.  There were some comments about Office Technologies and ITIB Spreadsheets which will be addressed by the review.  **HN Business**  No significant issues identified by qualitative feedback. Comments were received regarding several units that there is too much assessment. It is apparent that this can be driven by a fear of teaching to assessment. To break the cycle of overassessment, SQA needs to place a level of trust in centres in this regard. This is the approach that has been taken with the HN AIT Review  Some centres have used the Enhancements Pilot assessments and reported that the experience was very positive, particularly in terms of reducing assessment, managing re-assessment and clarity re making an assessment decision. |  |  |
| 23/6 | Graded Unit Statistics | The distribution of marks continues to be evenly spread across A, B and C grades for all three HNs. As in previous years, there are a higher number of A grades for HN Accounting Graded Units 1 and 3 (exam based GUs). This is explained by the computational nature of most of the assessment.  The consistency of grade distribution year on year would tend to support the view that assessment of these Graded Units is reliable. |  |  |
| 23/7 | Review of HN Marketing Servicing Unit | MCQO was introduced to the group as Qualification Officer for HN Marketing. A paper was submitted outlining plans and activity in relation to the revision of HN Marketing Units with a potential impact on HN Business, Accounting and Administration and IT.  The most significant impact would be any revision to *Marketing: An Introduction* (F7BX 34) which is mandatory within HNC/D Business. MCQO advised that the only change is the introduction of digital marketing to modernise the Unit.  The QST were invited to comment. None of the members were familiar with the Unit but offered to seek comments from colleagues in centres.  MCQO guided the QST through proposed changes to other Units that are optional in the various Business-related HNs as follows:  *Marketing: An Introduction* F7BX 34  *Digital Marketing Communications: An Introduction* FK93 34  *Marketing Planning for a Domestic Market* DG6P 35  *Marketing Research Theory* FK8M 34  *Marketing Practice: An Introduction* DG6V 34  *Marketing Skills for the Entrepreneur* DK2L 33  *Principles and Practices of Selling* DG6W 34  **Action:** QST members are asked to invite comments and feedback re the Units above and return to MCQO | All | 25 November 2016 |
| 23/8 | Network Events | The QM gave notice of SQA’s intention host Network Events early in 2017 (late February/March) and requested that QST members consult with colleagues and submit proposals for possible content.  The support of volunteers is vital to the continuation and success of these events, so details of any practitioner colleagues willing to help by presenting or organising activities would be gratefully received.  **Action:** Submit proposals for Network Event and details of any colleagues willing to support by presenting or participating. | All | November 2016 |
| 23/9 | Any Other Business | A query was raised as to whether NQ qualifications have been updated in line with FRS102. AFQO agreed to follow up and report to the QST. | AFQO | November 2016 |
| 21/9 | Next Meeting | The date of the next meeting was provisionally agreed as 31 May 2017 |  |  |