

Script of Introduction to 2007/8 Annual Review

I'm really pleased to be able to introduce our Annual Review. 2007 was our tenth anniversary year. Ten remarkable years that have seen us develop and refine the qualifications and services we offer to Scotland. Over that time we have constantly sought to develop our partnerships, performance and our people.

Being involved in the SQA, one is immediately struck by the passion and commitment of SQA staff for the work they do. In our annual staff survey 80% of our full time staff said they were proud to work for the SQA. Our success is built on the professionalism and dedication of all our staff including the many teaching professionals and others who support and assist our operations.

We are very aware that the work we do for Scotland is not done in isolation. We work in close partnership with the Scottish Government and with schools, colleges, employers and training providers across the public and private sectors to deliver success for Scotland.

It is a powerful motivator to know that the work of the SQA touches every family across Scotland and is contributing significantly to our nation's success.

The Scottish Government's Skills for Scotland, a Life Long Learning Strategy is a plan that we enthusiastically welcome. Through the provision of a wide range of qualifications, the SQA will continue to promote the benefits of skills acquisition both to individuals throughout their lives and to the Scottish economy. We are committed to the continued development of the skills roadmap - the SCQF, which enables both individuals and businesses to progress through acquiring and utilising skills.

We will continue to ensure that SQA Accreditation sets and maintains consistent standards for awarding bodies and accredited qualifications in Scotland, in line with the principles of good regulation.

The work reforming Higher National qualifications, significant involvement with the Curriculum for Excellence, progress with Adult Literacy and Numeracy and the development of new qualifications across economically important sectors, such as oil and gas, underline SQA commitment to Scotland's skills revolution.

As well as our awarding function, we have also had a busy year in our Accreditation work; ensuring awarding bodies deliver consistent standards in SVQs and other accredited vocational qualifications offered across Scotland.

As a public sector body we are committed to ensuring that our operations are fit for purpose and that we provide best value for the public money spent. Continuous improvement activities over the past year have allowed us to re-assess our processes and procedures to look at ways in which we can improve our working practices, including advances in e-assessment and e-marking. We have also been able to invest additional resources into delivering for the people and economy of Scotland through the funds generated from our commercial activities.

Of course, supporting our customers in Scotland and also those internationally and being responsive to their needs is of paramount importance. Engaging in productive two way dialogue is invaluable. Our Customer Conference in June 2007 gave us a superb opportunity to develop that dialogue with customers and identify areas where we rightly need to improve. That is what will help drive our continuous improvement activities into the future.

Promoting the achievements of Scotland's learners is also extremely important to us. In 2007 we recognised these through the publication of the *Write Times* anthology, the *Art Exhibition* staged at the National Gallery of Scotland and through the SQA star awards celebrating student success across the range of our qualifications.

I do hope you enjoy reading our review of 2007. It has been a successful year for SQA - A year that has consolidated a number of significant achievements on which we can build for SQA and Scotland's future success.