



# **Transition Frameworks**

## **Guidance for Centres with devolved authority to validate HN Group Awards**

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# Guidance on Transition Frameworks

## Section 1 Background

From January 2008, new/revised Group Awards will use transition frameworks for credit transfer from 1988 design rule HNCs/first year of HNDs to 2003 design principle HNDs. Prior to this, two mechanisms - alternative routes and occasionally transition frameworks – had been used.

An alternative route is when the Group Award code is the same as that for the 'normal' route. Old Units are mapped for credit transfer against revised Units. Candidates who have achieved the old Units are entered for the revised Units, to which they map, together with the remaining Units and the HND Graded Units required to achieve the revised HND Group Award. Alternative routes give alternative recognition for Graded Unit 1. However, alternative routes are not always clear and stay on APS permanently.

Transition frameworks are separate frameworks from the 'normal' framework and have a *different* Group Award code. Old Units are mapped for credit transfer against revised Units and both appear on the framework. This means that candidates who hold existing Units, which have been mapped for credit transfer, do not have to be entered for the corresponding revised Unit. They will be entered for the remaining Units and Graded Units required to achieve the revised HND Group Award. Transition frameworks give alternative recognition for Graded Unit 1.

Transition frameworks have a number of advantages. These include:

- ◆ allowing SQA to put a time span on a framework
- ◆ allowing more flexibility for candidates moving from the first year of HND to second year of HND

Normally there will be no retrospective amendments, ie if an alternative route exists this will remain until the Group Award is revised.

## Section 2 Important points to note when considering transition frameworks

- 2.1 The purpose of transition frameworks is to allow alternative recognition for Graded Unit 1.
- 2.2 Transition frameworks are only suitable for candidates who have completed a whole HNC/1st year of HND of the predecessor award and where all the Units in that award can be credit transferred (see Section 2.3 below for exceptional cases). If candidates have completed only a few Units or it is found that only a small number of Units are suitable for credit transfer, then candidates would be entered on the 'normal' revised framework and credit transfer for individual Units would be given by the centre.
- 2.3 The mandatory section of the transition framework and revised HND must be the same with the exception of Graded Unit 1. This means a candidate must meet the requirements of the mandatory section by either credit transfer or normal study. In cases where no credit transfer can be given for Units from the predecessor HNC/1st year of HND, these Units can be added only to the optional section of a transition framework providing the Validation Panel has agreed that these Units contribute to the aims and purpose of the revised HND. If a transition framework is constructed after validation, the full Validation Panel would need to be consulted on the inclusion of a Unit in the optional section that has no credit transfer. It is the responsibility of the centre to check that the transition framework meets the requirements of the revised HND. SQA can only give advice from a technical point of view.
- 2.4 Transition frameworks need to be constructed *before* candidates transfer from a 1988/pilot rules HNC/1<sup>st</sup> year of HND to a revised HND. This will ensure that candidates undertake the appropriate Units and achieve sufficient credits to gain the revised HND. For this reason, transition frameworks should be constructed prior to the validation of the 'normal' revised HND or before the start of the second year of the HND.
- 2.5 Candidates entered on the transition framework will receive a Scottish Qualification Certificate (SQC), which will show the HND Group Award, Units already achieved in the predecessor HNC/1st year of HND (for which credit transfer has been given), and any revised Units/Graded Units achieved. If a candidate requests a replacement certificate, the old Units will appear under the predecessor HNC/1st year of HND *and* in the revised HND.
- 2.6 Old Units will appear on the SQC under the '04' code. These Units have not been given levels or credit points in the SCQF.
- 2.7 Transition frameworks are not 'new' frameworks as such but are there only to facilitate credit transfer. For this reason unlevelled Units from the predecessor HNC/1<sup>st</sup> year of HND that are credit transferred can be included in the transition framework. The SQC shows levelled and unlevelled Units. Unlevelled Units will be lapsed but will remain on the system for certification purposes.
- 2.8 Credit transfer can be given for Units irrespective of where they have been placed in the predecessor Group Award. For example a Unit might have been an option in the predecessor HNC but be given credit transfer for a Unit in the mandatory section of the revised HND.

**2.9** If candidates are entered on the revised framework and they are then changed to a transition framework, the centre will be charged two entry fees as no refund can be given. For this reason, it is important that candidates are entered on the right framework.

### Section 3 Transition frameworks and 2003 HN Design Principles

For candidates transferring from 1988 design rule HNCs/first year of HNDs to 2003 design principle HNDs, it has been agreed that:

- ◆ such candidates need only achieve (within the 240 SCQF credit points required for the revised HND) Graded Units of 16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8 (instead of Graded Units of 8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7 and 16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8). However:
  - all candidates should be given opportunities to develop the Core Skills required by end-users of the HN qualification
  - the candidate should be able to be given credit for the Units that she/he previously achieved in the old (1988) design rules HNC and/or HND towards some of the Units in the revised HND

Candidates are still required to meet the conditions of award for the revised HND. This means that a candidate transferring can gain the revised HND by achieving:

- ◆ the mandatory Units (either by credit transfer or normal study) within the revised HND framework
- ◆ a Graded Unit or Graded Units of 16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8
- ◆ the remaining SCQF credit points at the SCQF level required (by either credit transfer, normal study, or Units agreed by the Validation Panel)
- ◆ development of the Core Skills required by the end-users of the Group Award

Although, in principle, candidates can be given credit transfer, specific credit transfer must be given on a Unit-by-Unit basis. Decisions on what credit transfer can be given between Units will be based on the extent of changes to knowledge and skills, the inclusion of opportunities to develop Core Skills or Core Skills components, level of demand, and credit value.

Candidates using credit transfer from a 1988 or pilot-rules HNC (or first year of HND) will achieve Units of 224 SCQF credit points plus Graded Units at SCQF level 8 of 16 SCQF credit points. The Qualification Design Team should have created a transition framework for the HND based on:

- ◆ giving alternative recognition for the Graded Unit of 8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7 (ie the competencies covered by the Graded Unit at SCQF level 7 in the revised award has to be covered by other Units in the 1988/pilot rules award)
- ◆ credit transfer between the candidate's achievements from the 1988 design rules or pilot-rules HNC and/or HND and the requirements of the revised HND

## Section 4 Guidance on specific credit transfer for Units

As stated above, while the principle of general transfer from HNC/1st year HND to revised HND has been established, this is only possible where there is specific credit transfer for old Units and the revised Units in the revised HND.

All decisions on credit transfer must be confirmed by an External Verifier, evidence of which should be confirmed by the Validation Panel, or by the Qualification Manager if credit transfer decisions are made post-validation. This means the decision is looked at once rather than on each occasion or by each centre every time credit transfer needs to be given.

Decisions on specific credit transfer must take into account five inter-related aspects.

### ◆ Credit transfer of Units, combination of Units and Outcomes

- Only whole Units can be credit transferred in transition frameworks. If only Outcomes within Units can be credit transferred then these Units cannot be part of the credit transfer arrangements for transition frameworks.
- Combinations of Units can be credit transferred but this must be shown clearly on the transition framework, eg old Unit ABC and old Unit DEF can be given credit transfer for revised Unit XYZ, ie candidate must do both predecessor Units to gain credit transfer for revised Unit. (See example in Appendix 1).

**NB:** In this situation, care must be taken when setting up the framework to ensure that candidates can meet the requirements of the Group Award.

### ◆ Subject related content

Specific credit transfer can be given where the subject related content, ie knowledge and/or skills, of the Unit has not changed significantly. For example: the new Unit specification shell has been used without significant change to content; slight amendments to update legislative reference; or updated technology.

### ◆ Embedded Core Skills content

If the revised Unit has been validated as embedding a Core Skill or Core Skill component, this would constitute a significant change to content. Therefore, credit transfer can only be given between the old Unit and the revised Unit, if the old Unit has also been validated as embedding the Core Skill or Core Skill component. Where an old Unit has not been validated for the Core Skill or Core Skill component, credit transfer for the revised Unit could only be given on achievement of the old Unit together with evidence of achievement of the Core Skill or Core Skill component.

### ◆ SCQF level

Specific credit transfer can only be given between the old Unit and revised Unit, if the level of demand on the candidate is the same, ie where there has been no significant change to the content of the Unit.

NB The old Unit does not have to be formally levelled against SCQF, ie given a new coding (for example 34, 35, etc).

#### ◆ Credit value

Sometimes in revising a Unit, it is assigned a different credit value from its predecessor. If this is because there has been a significant change to content then no specific credit transfer can be given.

However, if the content has not changed but feedback from centres has indicated that the Unit has been assigned a wrong credit value (either too little or too much) then in this case credit transfer can be given. For example

- If the predecessor Unit has a greater value than the revised Unit, but the content has not changed significantly then credit transfer can be given, eg Unit XYZ is 1.5 credits and predecessor Unit ABC is 2 credits.
- If the predecessor Unit has a smaller credit value than the revised Unit but the content has not changed significantly then credit transfer can be given. Predecessor Unit ABC is 1 credit and revised Unit XYZ is 1.5 credits.

**NB:** If credit value differs between a predecessor Unit and revised Unit, care must be taken when setting up the framework to ensure that candidates can meet the requirements of the Group Award.

## Section 5 Setting up transition frameworks

Once confirmation of specific transfer has been received, a transition framework can be created. The following rules must be applied.

- Transition frameworks must have all the mandatory Units (either by normal study or credit transfer) that are found in the revised HND *including* the Graded Unit(s) worth 16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8 but *excluding* Graded Unit 1 worth 8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7. This means that the mandatory section of the transition framework will have 8 fewer SCQF credit points than the mandatory section of the revised framework. In cases where the HND mandatory section of the revised HND only has 96 SCQF credit points (the minimum required under 2003 design principles) it will be acceptable for the mandatory section of the transition framework to have only 88 SCQF credit points.
- There must be alternative recognition of Graded Unit 1. This will be through one or more Units from the predecessor award. This will not show as a specific credit transfer on the framework/Awards Processing System but Qualification Design Teams/Qualification Managers and Validation Panel members must be satisfied that the competencies covered in Graded Unit 1 have been covered elsewhere in the framework. It is best to look for alternative recognition in the mandatory Units of the predecessor award. If optional Units are considered, then there would have to be a guarantee that all potential candidates entered on the transition framework had covered these optional Units
- The remaining SCQF credits at the appropriate SCQF level required by the award must be achieved to gain the Group Award (eg for an HND, candidates will need 240 SCQF points in total, at least 64 SCQF credit points must be at SCQF level 8).
- Any mandatory Core Skill requirements have been met. It is important to check that where embedded Core Skills are a requirement of the revised HND, candidates on transition frameworks are able to achieve these Core Skills. This could be through subject Units or by undertaking additional Core Skill Units if required. This needs to be made clear on information on the transition framework and it is the responsibility of centres to ensure candidates achieve embedded Core Skills to meet the requirements of the Group Award.

The transition framework is entered on SQA's Awards Processing System and must be included in the Arrangements Document or as a separate download on the relevant subject page on SQA's website. (Further guidance on this can be found in Appendix 2)

The Arrangements Document should also clearly state that this transition framework is only to be made available to candidates using credit transfer from a 1988/pilot rules HNC or first part of an HND and should not be offered to any new candidates.

Transition frameworks will have clear lapse and finish dates. This will be the same for all awards. The finish date for transition frameworks will be one year after the finish date for the predecessor award. For HNDs, the finish date is four years so the lapse date would be four years prior to the finish date. For HNC, the finish date is three years. Candidates seeking credit transfer after the transition framework has lapsed/finished will need to go through individual Unit credit transfer and be entered on the normal revised framework.

Centres approved to offer a revised HND, will receive new-for-old approval to offer the transition framework, since they will not be offering any Units not already on the revised framework. This will be the default position unless specifically stated otherwise. However, it should be remembered that once an award has entered its lapsing period, no centres can be given approval to offer that award. It is therefore advisable that automatic approval is given.

If the revised HND is part of a joint agreement, then the transition framework would have to be included in the agreement.

## Section 6 Arrangements for centres with devolved authority

- ◆ Qualifications Design Team/centre will make decision on credit transfer, ie whether individual Units only and/or create a transition framework.
- ◆ In both cases, an External Verifier will vet decisions on which Units are suitable for credit transfer. It is strongly recommended that transition frameworks are set up prior to validation. During the modernisation period, the centre will liaise with a Development Manager from the Partnership Team, who will arrange for an External Verifier to vet the decision on Units for credit transfer. If, in exceptional circumstances, a transition framework is proposed after the modernisation period, then centres will submit proposals for credit transfer to the relevant Qualification Manager who will arrange for vetting by an External Verifier.
- ◆ If only one or two Units are suitable for credit transfer then the Validation Proposal Document and subsequent Arrangements Document should give this information and make it clear that no transition framework is available for the revised HND.
- ◆ Where full credit transfer can be given, a transition framework will be constructed by the centre. The centre will send the proposed transition framework on SQA Form 9 to HN Co-ordinator at [hn.product@sqa.org.uk](mailto:hn.product@sqa.org.uk) (See Appendix 1 for example)
- ◆ HN Co-ordinator will send HN Group Award Transition template and SQA Form 9 to Qualification Manager for completion and final check. (See Appendix 1 for example)
- ◆ Qualification Manager will pass completed Group Award Transition template to Reference section for input into the Awards Processing System.
- ◆ If transition frameworks have been constructed prior to validation, these will be included in the Arrangements Document. If transition frameworks are constructed after the Arrangements Document has been published, the transition framework will be published on the subject page immediately beneath the relevant Arrangements Document. (See Appendix 2 for further guidance)
- ◆ Centres will ensure that candidates transferring from HNC/1<sup>st</sup> year HND to revised HND are entered on transition framework code.

Forms are available from the HN Toolkit Download Section on the HN page of SQA's website.

## Appendix 1: SQA Form 9



### SQA Form 9 Transition Framework

Centre name		Centre contact	
Telephone number		E-mail address	
Qualification Manager		Date sent to QM	
Revised Group Award Title			
Revised Group Award Code			
<b>Please read the guidance note at the bottom of this form, prior to completing this section</b>			
<b>Transition Framework Purpose:</b>			
This framework can be used for candidates wishing to progress to or complete their study of an HND in [ <i>insert Group Award Name</i> ].			
The framework can only be used when candidates have previously completed either one of the following HNCs or the first year of HND:			
	<b>Group Award Title</b>	<b>Group Award Code</b>	

<b>Framework Availability:</b>			
The finish date for this framework is <i>[insert finish date]</i>			

**Mandatory Units**

Candidates must complete either the new Unit(s) **or** the old Unit(s) shown in italics. All candidates must complete Graded Unit 2 and, if appropriate, Graded Unit 3.

4+2 Code	Unit title	SQA credit value NEW Unit	SQA credit value OLD Unit	SCQF credit value	SCQF level
	<i>[title]:Graded Unit 2</i>				
	<i>[title]:Graded Unit 3</i>				
	New Unit				
	<i>Old Unit</i>				







## **Appendix 2: Transition Framework Presentation and Publication**

Transition frameworks should be published in the Arrangements Document for the revised HND and/or as a separate appendix on the subject page.

If included in the Arrangements Document, the transition framework should be inserted in Section 5.2 with the heading 'Transition Framework for Candidates transferring from predecessor HNC/first year HND to second part of revised HND'.

If the information and framework is being published on the web as an appendix to the Arrangements Document it should be posted below the Arrangements Document and headed 'HND (*insert name of Group Award*), Transition Framework'.

There should then be further information, which falls into four sections. The sections and suggested wording are as follows:

### **Transition Framework Purpose**

This framework can be used for candidates wishing to progress or complete their study of HND (*insert name of Group Award*).

The framework can only be used where candidates have previously completed the following HNC/first year of HND (*if more than one Group Award, then adapt text to reflect this*)  
(*Insert name of Group Award and code*)

### **Design Principles**

Alternative recognition of Graded Unit 1 has been given in this Group Award in that the competencies covered in Graded Unit 1 have been covered elsewhere in the transition framework.

All other aspects of the design principles - 240 SCQF credit points, 64 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8, Graded Unit(s) worth 16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8, and any mandatory Core Skill requirements – are met by this framework.

### **Framework Availability**

The finish date for this framework is (insert finish date)

### **Framework**

*Insert table, which should list the Units in the framework of the revised HND, and those Units from the predecessor HNC and/or HND for which credit has been given. It should also clearly show what the requirements for the award of HND are by the transition framework ie Mandatory Section, Optional Units, Units of 224 SCQF credit points, plus Graded Units at SCQF level 8 of 16 SCQF credit points.*