

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

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

ACTION GRID – MEETING 17 HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2013

Present: Qualifications Manager (QM), Accounting and Finance Qualifications Officer (AFQO), Business and AIT QO (BAQO), five centre representatives

Apologies: One centre representative

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17/1	Welcome	The QM welcomed everyone to the meeting.		
17/2	Action Grid from Meeting 16	The group agreed that the Action Grid for meeting 16 held in May 2013 was accurate. There were no outstanding actions.		
17/3	Subject Updates	<p><u>HNC/D Accounting (AFQO)</u></p> <p><i>Payroll H4J9 34</i> – revised to incorporate changes required since the introduction of reporting PAYE information to HMRC in real time. Revised Unit and ASP now available.</p> <p>Error tolerance – minor revision made to some error tolerances within five 2nd year HND Accounting mandatory Units. Unit specifications and Assessment Exemplars all updated.</p> <p><i>Accounting for Specialised Transactions F7R5 35</i> – Consideration given to relevance of content in Outcome 1 but no action this session. Any change would have possible knock-on effect on Graded Units 2 & 3 and also possibly exemptions for professional examinations. To be carried over to next academic session for further consideration.</p> <p><i>Auditing FN11 35</i> – Comment form received from a centre suggesting</p>		

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		<p>use of multiple choice assessment for this unit was discussed. The assessment instrument within the unit is not stated in most cases and centres have the opportunity to devise their own assessment. As such, the centre could opt to develop an assessment in the format, submit to SQA for prior verification and agree to make this available for sharing with other centres. The group was sceptical as to how multiple choice questions could be used appropriately where analysis, explanation and description are required.</p> <p><u>HNC/D Administration & IT (BAQO)</u></p> <p>Now in maintenance phase rather than development. No comment forms received from centres. Activity is focused on Support Materials at the moment.</p> <p>Work on combined Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) to begin mid-November with the aim of publication in April 2014.</p> <p>These ASPs will combine assessment of two Units. Units were selected on the basis of potential for content overlap and best value i.e. mandatory units where possible, units included in both Administration & IT and Business frameworks where possible, as much of each unit combined as possible etc.</p> <p>This work is distinct and separate from the HN Articulation project.</p> <p>The following ASPs will be developed for HNC/D Administration & IT frameworks:</p> <p><i>Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication DE3N 34/Creating a Culture of Customer Care H1F0 34</i></p> <p>This will be in the form of a new ASP combining the entirety of both</p>		

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		<p>units. The process of writing has the added complexity that neither unit is part of Administration & IT verification group so requires subject specialist input from Communication and Customer Service verification groups, and will be subject to External Verification from those areas in centres.</p> <p><i>Presentation Skills F84E 35/ICT in Business F84W 35</i></p> <p>A single ASP combining Outcome 2 of Presentation Skills and Outcome 5 of ICT in Business. The full format of the final ASP is to be confirmed but one possibility is the writing of new material to combine these Outcomes and the use of the existing ASP content for the remaining Outcomes. This would be packaged as one single ASP covering both units.</p> <p>Both of the above ASPs will also be relevant and available to centres delivering HNC/D Business.</p> <p><u>HNC/D Business (BAQO)</u></p> <p>As with Administration & IT, no comment forms were received.</p> <p>A combined ASP for two mandatory HNC/D Business units will be commencing in January. The units are:</p> <p><i>IT in Business: Spreadsheets F84V 34/IT Applications Software 1 D75X 34</i></p> <p>The format of this ASP is still to be confirmed. Aim is for publication in May 2014</p> <p>Between July and September 2013 the unit <i>Managing a Small Business A6HG 35</i> was revised and validated with new title Managing</p>		

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		<p>Information Systems to Develop a Small Business H544 35. The change of title was chosen to better reflect the content of the unit which is very much focused on use of Information Systems to develop a business rather than a rounded approach to all aspects of managing a small business. This unit is optional within HNC/D Business and a number of other non-Business related frameworks. The finish date of the old unit is 31.07.2015.</p>		
17/4	HN Articulation Enhancement Project	<p>The QM recapped the background to the project again explaining that it is being funded by the Scottish Funding Council to improve articulation between HN and degree programmes.</p> <p>HNC/D Business is one of four subjects involved – the others are Computing, Engineering and Social Sciences.</p> <p>Qualification Design Teams (QDTs) for each subject area have been formed to produce four ‘Alternative’ Assessments which will be more aligned to university style assessments. This will involve sampling rather than full coverage of Evidence Requirements within the units.</p> <p>For HNC/D Business ‘Alternative’ assessments will be written for the following units:</p> <p><i>Economic Issues: An Introduction F7J8 34 (Reduced)</i> <i>Business Law: An Introduction F84P 34 (Reduced)</i></p> <p><i>Business Culture and Strategy F7J7 35 / Behavioural Skills for Business F84L 35 (Combined)</i></p> <p><i>Business: Graded Unit 2 F8LE 35 / Research Skills F60A 34 (Combined)</i></p> <p>A Launch Event is scheduled for March 2014 for all four HN Subjects and centres will be invited to participate in a two year pilot of these</p>		

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		<p>assessment approaches from August 2014 to June 2016.</p> <p>There was some discussion among the group regarding issues for centres managing different candidate groups undertaking these units in scenarios where they are being assessed as part of different Group Awards. Guidance on this scenario will be available at the time of the Launch Event.</p>		
17/5	HN Surveys	<p>The BAQO provided a background and summary of the recent HN Surveys. Links to the surveys were circulated around centres in relation to the three subject areas – HNC/D Accounting, HNC/D Administration & IT and HNC/D Business.</p> <p>The aim of the surveys was to acquire some data on centres' and candidates' experiences of the delivery of the qualifications and whether the standards, content and volume and coverage of assessment are appropriate. This could be used to inform future projects and reviews.</p> <p>The response rate was higher than the previous year but was still limited, therefore the information would be more useful for identifying areas for further scrutiny and/or consultation rather than immediate action.</p> <p>The survey established that by and large the standards are at the correct level and there are no gaps in content.</p> <p>There were some units – based on the limited sample – which were identified as being possibly too difficult and one which was felt to be not challenging enough.</p> <p>However, sometimes comments provided suggesting a unit is too difficult/hard/over-assessed were not supported by the ratings given</p>		

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		<p>under the relevant section in the survey.</p> <p>Some comments were ambiguous, particularly from candidates e.g. “I found this unit hard” – therefore it was difficult to take definite conclusions from most comments.</p> <p>There were lots of comments from centres about ASPs and perceived restrictions on assessment that related to ASPs. The group noted that ASPs are not the standard; rather they are one example of assessing. Centres have the option of devising their own assessment and submitting this for prior verification if they choose to do so.</p> <p>The theme of high assessment volume was also identified in the surveys. However, it was not clear what the ranges of issues are, although a number of points related to time constraints within centres.</p> <p>There was some overlap between units that were identified as being possibly over assessed and the units included in the HN Articulation pilot i.e. Economic Issues: An Introduction and Business Culture and Strategy.</p> <p>The group agreed that although responses were limited some useful information was gathered and the process should be repeated next year. The information gathered does provide useful information which can inform future direction for the Group Awards</p>		
17/6	Graded Unit Statistics	<p>Entry and Certification statistics were distributed for the Graded Units across the three Group Awards. Grading across the Business and Administration & IT Graded Units was fairly even in terms of A, B and C grades but more skewed towards A grades in Accounting although less so than in 2012.</p> <p>The group agreed that the computational nature of much of the</p>		

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		Accounting content would explain this difference to a great extent.		
17/7	Regionalisation – centre experiences	<p>The group discussed various issues around Regionalisation of colleges with the potential to impact SQA. Issues identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standardisation and Internal Verification across more disparate campuses which were previously discrete centres - External Verification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in volume of material to be sampled - Ensuring all material is available in one location for sampling - Opportunity to speak to candidates more restricted - Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One SQA co-ordinator for what was previously two, three or four centres raises risk of communication failures - Merging of centres may restrict/delay access to materials stored on SQA secure site <p>The QM advised that there is a group within SQA with remit to explore issues regarding Regionalisation to mitigate this risk. Comments made by the QST will be fed back to the group.</p>	QM	Nov 2013
17/8	Graded Unit Projects - Update	The Graded Unit specifications for Accounting Graded Unit 2, Administration & IT Graded Unit 3 and Business Graded Unit 3 have been amended to harmonise guidance on remediation and re-assessment across the three subjects.		
17/9	MySector	The BAQO gave a demonstration of this new area of the SQA website which has been launched by SQA Marketing Team. It allows users to browse SQA qualifications by industry sector which are also aligned with the various Sector Skills Councils. HN Administration & IT and HN Business are included within Business Skills and HN Accounting with		

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		<p>Finance and Accounting. Qualifications within each sector are arranged by SCQF Level. It is intended that this is a more accessible way for stakeholders to access qualification information, especially those who are unfamiliar with the SQA website or who don't know precisely what they are looking for. The pages themselves contain links to existing subject pages so MySector is an alternative means of navigating the website rather than a new information source.</p>		
17/10	Network Events	<p>The QM advised that dates are not yet finalised for next year's Network Events but 5 day windows have been identified as follows:</p> <p>Administration & IT week commencing 3rd February Accounting week commencing 17th February Business week commencing 24th February</p> <p>There are no firm plans for content at this stage. The possibility of following up some of the issues raised in the HN Survey was discussed. QST members were asked to submit suggestions for topics etc as soon as possible.</p>	QST	Nov 2013
17/11	Feedback from EV meetings	This was incorporated in discussion of items 17/8 and 17/10		
17/12	AOB	<p>No further issues were raised.</p> <p>The date of the next meeting was provisionally agreed as 7^t May 2014.</p>		