



Consultation

Professional Development Awards

- ◆ Classroom Assistants
- ◆ Support for Learning Assistants

Please return this consultation no later than Friday 19 September 2008, to:

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Your name

Position held

Centre

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Part 1: Background to the Portfolio Review

In late 2004, SQA carried out a review and consultation process. The aim of the review was to establish qualification titles and design principles which would fit together into a system of qualifications that is:

- ◆ fit for purpose and up to date
- ◆ simple to understand
- ◆ straightforward and cost-effective for centres and SQA to operate

Additionally, this system of qualifications will enhance progression opportunities for candidates who wish to continue with studying or who wish to move into employment.

Further consultation was carried out in February and March 2005 to clarify the design principles for non-advanced Group Awards (National Certificates, National Progression Awards and Professional Development Awards).

Having confirmed the design principles for these Group Awards, SQA is now in a position to embark upon a project to review its current portfolio with a view to incorporating (if appropriate) a cohesive set of new National Certificates, National Progression Awards and Professional Development Awards.

The aims of this project include the following:

- ◆ develop or revise nationally recognised National Certificates, National Progression Awards and Professional Development Awards
- ◆ review, update, revise and rationalise the NQ Unit Catalogue
- ◆ develop or revise servicing Units
- ◆ develop assessment support materials

Introduction

National Progression Awards (NPA) and Professional Development Awards (PDA)

The design principles for NPAs and PDAs are very flexible and permit awards of varying sizes to suit the purpose for which they are being developed. Within the Scottish Certificate Qualifications Framework (SCQF) NPAs can be developed from level 2 to level 6 while PDAs are developed from level 6 to level 10. The deciding factor as to whether an award at level 6 may be designated as an NPA or a PDA is the links within the award to National Occupational Standards.

Professional Development Awards for Classroom Assistant (CL) and Support for Learning Assistants (SLA)

The current Classroom Assistants and Support for Learning Assistants PDAs are set at SCQF level 5 but were developed prior to the SQA portfolio review. It has been

recognised that these awards need revision and SQA are now in a position to carry out this review and in March 2008 a Review Group was set up to carry out this task. It was important that representatives of FE colleges, local authorities, relevant unions, GTC and the Scottish Social Services Council were involved in the review discussions.

Previous consultations

In 2005 SQA carried out a consultation, the purpose of which was to find out how stakeholders saw the future of these awards. While results showed that change was required respondents did not agree on what the revisions should be. In one sense they mirrored the results of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) consultations (see below), ie that different authorities employed classroom assistants in different ways, but in another way they did give some direction for the future. Two important results were:

- ◆ the two awards should be combined into one
- ◆ the revised award should be at SCQF level 7

In August 2006 a consultation was carried out by the EOC to look at the role of the classroom assistant in different Local Authorities through consulting classroom assistants, head teachers and class teachers. Results showed that classroom assistants were employed in different ways depending not only different authorities' policies but also on the conditions in individual schools within authorities. Of the three authorities in this survey, 'three levels of classroom assistant jobs each with significantly different levels of job demand were identified'. Some were actively involved in learning and assessment activities — in fact, fulfilling the role of the Support for Learning assistants, although the responses of the classroom assistants differed quite substantially in this area from that of the head teachers and classroom teachers. Others appeared to be carrying out tasks more appropriate to the role of a clerical assistant. (Full results of this research can be found at www.eoc.org.uk/valuableassets)

The letter announcing that SQA was now in a position to carry out revisions to these awards also contained a very short questionnaire. While the responses were not unanimous the first of the two results above was repeated while the overall view was that the award should be at SCQF level 6.

When asked about core content, three areas stood out as being essential. These were:

- ◆ Promoting Positive Behaviour
- ◆ Knowledge of Child Development
- ◆ Child Protection

Many Local Authorities currently prefer employees and prospective employees to have completed both awards (currently 9½ credits).

While the information gathered from these consultations was neither unanimous nor did they offer a clear direction for the future, there was enough to give the review group a starting point.

This consultation document is the next stage in the review process and presents the proposals of the Review Group on the changes to both PDAs. SQA considers your views to be important and would welcome your comments on these proposals. The proposed

amendments to the current awards contained in this consultation document represent a major shift in the structure and content of the awards, but a shift which the Review Group undertaking the revisions feels is warranted, as these changes would appear to echo the views of the majority of the sector.

Proposals

Professional Development Awards

Taking on board the information gathered from the previous consultations as well as considering the views of authorities, FE colleges and unions represented on the Review Group, the following decisions were taken:

- ◆ there would be a single combined award
- ◆ the award would be at SCQF level 6

The group also proposes that:

- ◆ candidates would have to gain 8 credits to achieve the award — 6 credits would be mandatory with another 2 chosen from a variety of options
- ◆ a double credit workplace Unit would be included in the mandatory section
- ◆ a further single credit workplace Unit would be included in the optional section
- ◆ the options would contain some SCQF level 5 Units

National Certificate

A further proposal is that on achieving four additional Units taken from a wide selection of optional Units, candidates could achieve a National Certificate. This would provide a progression route for those who may at some stage progress on to further or higher education.

Structure of the award

Mandatory Units

Unit title and value	Status
Development of Children and Young People; Birth – 18 (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	New Unit but based on Child Development: Birth to 12 years DM3X 12
Supporting Children’s Behaviour (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise existing DM5K 12
Supporting Children and Young People in an Educational Setting (SCQF level 6 – 2 credits)	New Unit
Supporting Children and Young People who Require Additional Support for Learning (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise existing DM65 11 Supporting Children with Additional Support Needs
Rights and Entitlements of Children and Young People	Revise existing DM5J 12 Supporting Children’s Rights

(SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	and Entitlements
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Optional Units

Unit title and value	Status
Professional Practice in the Workplace (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	New Unit
ICT (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise existing DM64 12 Supporting ICT in An Early Education and Childcare Setting
Information Technology (SCQF level 5 – 1 credit)	
Play in Early Education and Childcare (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Existing Unit DM41 12
Language, Literacy and Numeracy	Existing Unit DM63 12
First Aid (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit) or First Aid (SCQF level 5 – 1 credit)	Existing Units F19M 12/F19M 11
Working with Children and Young People with Visual Impairments: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P3 12 – to be considered for updating as required.
Working with Children and Young People with Autism: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P4 12 – to be considered for updating as required.
Working with Children and Young People with Physical Impairments: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P5 12 – to be considered for updating as required.
Working with Deaf Children and Young People: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P6 12 – to be considered for updating as required.

Part 2: Consultation questionnaire

Classroom Assistants PDA and Support for Learning Assistants PDA

1. Level of the award

As previously stated, while there is no unanimous view on whether there should be a combined award or two separate awards and at what level the award(s) should be at, there is a strong majority who agree that the award should be:

- ◆ a combination of both current awards
- ◆ set at SCQF level 6
- ◆ linked to the National Occupational Standards and badged as a Professional Development Award

A 'working title' for the revised award is Classroom Support Assistant. If you do not think that this captures the substance of the revised award please suggest an alternative.

2. Size and structure of the award

It is proposed that the award should:

- ◆ be an **eight** credit award
- ◆ have **six** mandatory Units
- ◆ have an optional section with a selection of appropriate Units from which **two** must be chosen
- ◆ contain a double-credit workplace Unit in the mandatory section

I support the proposed size and structure of the award.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments

3. Mandatory section

The following is proposed as mandatory for a combined award:

Unit title and value	Status
Development of Children and Young People; Birth – 18 (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	New Unit but based on Child Development: Birth to 12 years DM3X 12
Supporting Children’s Behaviour (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise Existing DM5K 12
Supporting Children and Young People in an Educational Setting (SCQF level 6 – 2 credits)	New Unit
Supporting Children and Young People who Require Additional Support for Learning (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise existing DM65 11 Supporting Children with Additional Support Needs
Rights and Entitlements of Children and Young People (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise existing DM5J 12 Supporting Children’s Rights and Entitlements

a) Are the number of credits proposed for the mandatory section

- too many?
- about right?
- too few?

b) The Units proposed for the mandatory section are appropriate.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please provide us with any comments you may have on the proposed mandatory section of the award.

4. Optional section

The following is proposed as optional Units for a combined award:

Unit title and value	Status
Professional Practice in the Workplace (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	New Unit
ICT (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	Revise existing DM64 12 Supporting ICT in an Early Education and Childcare Setting
Information Technology (SCQF level 5 – 1 credit)	
Play in Early Education and Childcare (SCQF Level 6 – 1 credit)	Existing Unit DM41 12
Language, Literacy and Numeracy	Existing Unit DM63 12
First Aid (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit) or First Aid (SCQF level 5 – 1 credit)	Existing Units F19M 12/F19M 11
Working with Children and Young People with Visual Impairments: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P3 12 – to be considered for updating as required.
Working with Children and Young People with Autism: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P4 12 – to be considered for updating as required.
Working with Children and Young People with Physical Impairments: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P5 12 – to be considered for updating as required.
Working with Deaf Children and Young People: An Introduction (SCQF level 6 – 1 credit)	D7P6 12 – to be considered for updating as required.

a) The proposed list of optional Units is appropriate.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

b) There should be more placement Units included in this section.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

c) There is enough choice for candidates in this section.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please comment on the proposed list of optional Units. We would particularly appreciate feedback on Units which should be added to or removed from this list.

5. National Certificate

By completing an additional four Units, candidates could gain a National Certificate.

This would be a useful option for some candidates.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please comment and make suggestions, particularly on any other Units you feel should be included in a proposed National Certificate.

Appendix

Summary of content in new Mandatory Units

Development of Children and Young People; Birth - 18 Years (SCQF level 6) 1 credit

Summary

This Unit is designed to develop the candidate's knowledge of the development of children and young people from birth to 18. The candidate will gain knowledge and understanding of general principles of development and ways in which children and young people may learn. They will investigate and report on the influences on their development.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the PDA: Classroom Support Assistants. It is also suitable for candidates who may wish to study the Unit on its own. The Unit is suitable for candidates who may wish to gain employment in the education sector at support worker level or to progress on to appropriate higher level qualifications.

Supporting Children/Young People in a Classroom Setting (SCQF level 6) 2 credits

Summary

This Unit is practice based and designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills working in an educational setting. It will allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of a work setting and to demonstrate their ability to work within the current Scottish legislative framework of policies and procedures whilst maintaining professional standards at all times.

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to work with individuals and groups in a manner that takes account of their needs and stage of development. Candidates are also required to provide appropriate opportunities related to the child/young person whilst maintaining their health, safety and well-being.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the PDA: Classroom Support Assistants and is suitable for candidates who are considering employment in the school sector or wish to progress on to a higher qualification. A workplace practice/placement in an educational setting will be necessary and an adequate number of hours must be allocated to this.

Mandatory section

The remaining three Units in the Mandatory section will be a revised version of the current Units. The summaries for these will be adapted to suit the context of the PDA.