



Corporate Plan 2010–13

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Corporate Plan 2010–13 sets SQA's strategic direction for the next three years, covering both SQA's accreditation and awarding functions. The plan has built on the approach taken last year, ensuring that the organisation's strategic goals support the Scottish Government's National Outcomes.

A number of strategic drivers were identified when developing the 2010–13 Corporate Plan. These include:

- ◆ SQA's vision and values
- ◆ Ministerial guidance on SQA's contribution to development and implementation of Scottish Government policy
- ◆ Public sector efficiency and partnership

Each of these drivers is explained further in Section 1.

Context

SQA has been charged by the Scottish Government to develop and operationally deliver major qualification changes to support the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. Over the duration of this Corporate Plan 2010–13, SQA will continue to develop these qualifications and to respond to the challenges outlined in *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*.

SQA must maintain the successful delivery of existing qualifications and activities, and ensure that the organisation plays its part in supporting the Scottish Government's Economic Recovery Programme.

The period of the plan will also see a significant challenge in overall public sector funding levels and changes to fee income brought about by the economic environment, demographic changes, and by the flexibility of qualification choice offered by Curriculum for Excellence.

SQA is committed to delivering high quality qualifications and services to Scotland, both now and over the longer term. In order to achieve this, it is essential that appropriate resources, expertise and tools are available. The organisation has restructured and reviewed key business processes to drive efficiency. However, the commitment to continuous improvement of delivery standards and efficiency of processes, along with meeting the increasing demand for 'online', 'on-demand' and 'at a distant' services, must be supported by a long term plan for, and investment in, information technology.

It is therefore essential that SQA identifies additional revenue opportunities and maintains strong engagement in external markets to be able to generate annual sustainable commercial surpluses which can be reinvested in the products and services provided for Scotland.

The involvement of SQA in UK and international markets enables the organisation to work with partners across governments to support the Scottish Government's broader international agenda.

Corporate Plan

SQA's strategic goals are:

- 1 Develop, deliver and maintain a portfolio of qualifications and services to support the needs and aspirations of Scotland and its people
- 2 Be regarded as a leader in assessment and quality enhancement of learning in Scotland, and recognised worldwide
- 3 Ensure SQA activities support the Scottish Government's agenda to maximise the benefits to Scotland of international engagement
- 4 Enhance the role of qualifications and services in recognising the skills of individuals across the education and training system
- 5 Subject to demand and statutory requirement, accredit and assure quality of qualifications, delivered in Scotland, other than those conferred by higher education institutions
- 6 Ensure high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive service delivery
- 7 Continue to develop and establish SQA as a leading public body
- 8 Develop a business model that maximises funding and efficiency to allow SQA to meet its statutory obligations in the changing economic and public sector environment

Corporate actions for 2010–13 to support these strategic goals are set out in Section 2. For each goal, the National Outcomes (see Appendix 1) which relate to it are identified together with the performance measures (see Section 4) which apply to it.

Budget

SQA's budget is set out in Section 3. This outlines the range of sources from which SQA will generate funds and illustrates how these funds will be used to achieve the organisation's goals.

Performance measures

The performance indicators SQA will use to measure its successes are set out in Section 4. These measures will allow the organisation to monitor and report on how successful the corporate actions have been in achieving the strategic goals.

Section 1: Strategic drivers

Vision and values

The Corporate Plan 2010–13 is underpinned by SQA's vision, mission and values.

SQA's vision is to be 'recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in qualifications and assessment', and the mission is 'to work in partnership to provide high quality, recognised and relevant qualifications and assessment'.

Five values define the way SQA staff will work with each other, customers and partners in delivering services for Scotland's learners:

- ◆ Quality
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ Service

Scottish Government policy

The Scottish Government published its Economic Strategy in November 2007, building on its Programme for Scotland to provide more information to explain how public services will contribute to the delivery of the five strategic objectives:

- ◆ Wealthier and Fairer Scotland
- ◆ Smarter Scotland
- ◆ Healthier Scotland
- ◆ Safer and Stronger Scotland
- ◆ Greener Scotland

SQA's unique position means that the organisation has an opportunity and responsibility to contribute to all of these objectives, principally supporting economic and individual development through lifelong learning.

As a non-departmental public body, Ministers provide guidance to SQA on the policies and priorities the organisation is expected to pursue, and this guidance drives the development of the Corporate Plan. Current guidance encourages the organisation to contribute to the development and implementation of economic and skills policies, particularly aligning SQA activities to other bodies and developing collaborative working. The organisation is also expected to continue to increase the level of access to our qualifications by learners with different needs, situations and goals.

Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy

The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy highlighted the importance of Learning, Skills and Wellbeing as a strategic priority for promoting sustainable economic growth, and reinforced the need for SQA and partners to review all of their activities for alignment with *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*.

SQA is engaged in responding to *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* and its emphasis on a lifelong learning system that is centred on individuals and is responsive to the needs of the economy. SQA agrees that partnership between the Scottish Government and all public and private sector players is the key to success of the strategy and achieving the vision set out for Scotland.

SQA is actively working to deliver the commitments within *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*. These are to:

- ◆ develop and embed essential skills in learning to underpin individuals' personal, social and economic futures
- ◆ promote parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications
- ◆ promote progression pathways that are facilitated through the SCQF
- ◆ continue to develop a qualifications system that recognises a broader range of skills and achievements than at present
- ◆ ensure that individuals receive appropriate credit for their achievements and see clear routes to other learning opportunities, creating More Choices, More Chances
- ◆ have a learning and qualifications system that supports the needs of the individual and the needs of employers

SQA's strategic goals for 2010–13 also commit the organisation to working with partners across both the public and private sectors to identify more flexible and inclusive ways of recognising individuals' learning, skills and experience. This work will build on engagement to date in the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, and learning gained from the implementation of Skills for Work qualifications, to provide more choices and more chances for all learners.

Curriculum for Excellence

Implementation of Curriculum for Excellence across Scotland will begin in the academic year 2010–11 and will fundamentally transform learning and teaching. In a parliamentary announcement in June 2009, the Scottish Government committed to the development of the next generation of National Qualifications, which alongside other parts of the SQA portfolio will support the aims, values and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence. A timetable has been set for implementation of the new qualifications, in line with the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

SQA welcomes the opportunity to work with the Scottish Government and other partners to develop the next generation of National Qualifications to meet the needs of Scotland and its people in the 21st century.

SQA especially welcomes the commitments to:

- ◆ develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work within the qualifications and curriculum 3–18
- ◆ develop a coherent and inclusive curriculum and assessment system 3–18, which provides coherence with the rest of the Scottish qualifications system and maximises opportunities for individual learners to fulfil their potential
- ◆ the Scottish Survey of Achievement
- ◆ recognition of achievement

The work to develop and implement the new qualifications will require that significant planning and resources be deployed within SQA in qualifications development, operations and business systems to ensure that SQA plays its part in the successful delivery by the education system as a whole.

The successful introduction of new qualifications will be achieved by ensuring that SQA and our partners understand and manage all key actions that are necessary to contribute to a successful certification for all candidates.

Actions to take forward SQA's continuing contribution to the development and implementation of Scottish Government policy are set out in more detail in Section 2.

Public sector efficiency and partnership

SQA is committed to delivering efficiencies and best use of public resources across all aspects of our business. The Corporate Plan 2010–13 includes actions aimed at generating surpluses from some aspects of SQA's activity — for example, work in international and rest-of-the-UK markets — and using those to reinvest in the products and services provided for Scotland. SQA also aims to make best use of public resources by introducing a demand-driven product development process, to ensure that all our qualifications and services are relevant. The organisation will continue to focus on reviewing its processes to identify opportunities and improve quality and efficiency.

SQA has a strategic approach to partnership working across the education and training sectors, and recognises that the National Performance Framework and *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* will demand an even closer collaboration with colleagues across public services to take forward the five strategic objectives for Scotland.

SQA's key partners include:

- ◆ Alliance of Sector Skills Councils
- ◆ Employers, business groups and professional bodies
- ◆ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
- ◆ Learning and Teaching Scotland

- ◆ Local Authorities
- ◆ Scotland's Colleges
- ◆ Scottish Funding Council
- ◆ Scottish Government
- ◆ Skills Development Scotland
- ◆ Universities Scotland

Section 2: Strategic goals and corporate actions 2010–13

I SQA AWARDING BODY

Strategic goal 1	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Develop, deliver and maintain a portfolio of qualifications and services to support the needs and aspirations of Scotland and its people	A1.1 Ensure robust portfolio management that ensures SQA continues to meet stakeholder needs	1, 2, 3, 4, 13	A, B, D, E
	A1.2 Develop and deliver new qualifications for Curriculum for Excellence		
	A1.3 Develop, maintain and deliver products and services		
	A1.4 Deliver timely and accurate certification for all qualifications		
	A1.5 Increase awareness and understanding of the breadth of SQA's portfolio and expertise		
	A1.6 Promote the benefits of a unified Scottish qualifications system including progression pathways underpinned by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)		
	A1.7 Respond to the on-going activities of the UK VQ Reform Programme to ensure that appropriate products and services are delivered in Scotland		

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Strategic goal 1	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
	A1.8 Implement the agreed approach to communication, stakeholder engagement and partnership	1, 2, 3, 4, 13	A, B, D, E
	A1.9 Maintain national standards of qualifications and assessment		
	A1.10 Scope and implement the preferred technology solution to deliver the qualification record		

Strategic goal 2	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Be regarded as a leader in assessment and quality enhancement of learning in Scotland, and recognised worldwide	A2.1 Work with partners to embed best practice in assessment and quality assurance across education and training	3, 4	D
	A2.2 Develop the capability and capacity of SQA staff, appointees and centres through an integrated continuing professional development plan, working with partners as appropriate		
	A2.3 Develop approaches to assessments that support learning, taking full account of equality and diversity		
	A2.4 Invest in infrastructure to allow more flexible use of assessment and quality assurance. This will include expansion of e-assessment and the establishment of a National Assessment Resource		
	A2.5 Provide the Scottish Government and key stakeholders with independent advice on learning, assessment and quality assurance. This will be based on research evidence drawing on UK and international experience and best practice		
	A2.6 Provide advice and guidance to international governments and agencies on learning, assessment and quality assurance based on research evidence and best practice		

Strategic goal 3	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Ensure SQA activities support the Scottish Government's agenda to maximise the benefits to Scotland of international engagement	A3.1 Continue to contribute towards the Scottish Government's international policy, development and engagement	1, 3, 13	A, D
	A3.2 Develop international engagement activities in line with SQA's international strategy		
	A3.3 Implement a partnership model including development of processes for risk-based selection and contingency planning		
	A3.4 Support the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and its relationship with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in increasing recognition, understanding and credit transfer for Scottish qualifications		
	A3.5 Continue to promote SQA, the Scottish education and skills system, and Scotland itself, in international markets		
	A3.6 Establish a trading subsidiary		

Strategic goal 4	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Enhance the role of qualifications and services in recognising the skills of individuals across the education and training system	A4.1 Agree our role in recognising skills through engagement with partners and stakeholders	2, 4	B
	A4.2 Review methodologies for recognising skills to identify innovative, flexible, robust and financially sustainable models		
	A4.3 Working with our partners, develop and implement a plan to extend recognition of skills		

II SQA ACCREDITATION

Strategic goal 5	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Subject to demand and statutory requirement, accredit and assure quality of qualifications, delivered in Scotland, other than those conferred by higher education institutions	A5.1 Increase the number of approved awarding bodies and qualifications that are accredited ensuring that the qualifications are fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of the target market.	2, 15	A, B, C
	A5.2 Ensure accreditation processes remain effective and streamlined		
	A5.3 Work with sector skills councils and Skills Development Scotland to support awarding bodies in identification and promotion of progression pathways for accredited qualifications		
	A5.4 Continue to engage with stakeholders to promote quality enhancement		
	A5.5 Continue to improve customer satisfaction of SQA's accreditation service		

III SQA CORPORATE

Strategic goal 6	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Ensure high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive service delivery	A6.1 Embed a culture that delivers continuous improvement throughout the organisation	15	B, D, E, F, G, H
	A6.2 Implement the agreed approach to communication, stakeholder engagement and partnership		
	A6.3 Implement a skills and competences development plan for staff and appointees to meet business and individual needs		
	A6.4 Implement the information systems strategy		
	A6.5 Work with partners to ensure that there are co-ordinated quality management systems across the education and skills sector		
	A6.6 Implement programme management, including capacity planning and flexible deployment of resources		
	A6.7 Ensure appropriate business continuity arrangements are in place to minimise potential disruption		

Strategic goal 7	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Continue to develop and establish SQA as a leading public body	A7.1 Implement the corporate social responsibility strategy which incorporates environment, community, workplace and marketplace approaches	14, 15	D, F, G, H
	A7.2 Benchmark key business activities with relevant leading organisations, and use results to improve service delivery		
	A7.3 Further develop and embed a quality enhancement approach		
	A7.4 Ensure all activities are cognisant of equality and diversity		

Strategic goal 8	Corporate actions	National Outcomes Reference	Performance Measures Reference
Develop a business model that maximises funding and efficiency to allow SQA to meet its statutory obligations in the changing economic and public sector environment	A8.1 Determine and agree funding sources, processes and timescales for investments to improve services	15	A, B, F
	A8.2 Ensure a sound financial base for the organisation, optimising income, making efficiency savings, reducing operating costs, and reviewing funding and pricing models		
	A8.3 Implement the SQA business development strategy		
	A8.4 Capture and realise the benefits from continuous improvement		

Section 3: Budget

2010–11 Budget	
	£m
Qualifications entry income	36.4
Other income	10.6
Grant funding	20.0
Total income	67.0
Staff	26.3
Appointees	17.2
Other operating costs	23.5
Total expenditure	67.0
Cash Surplus/(Deficit)	–

Section 4: Performance measures

Measures
<p>A Achieve uptake targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Targets reflect market dynamics and product trends ◆ For key qualifications and services ◆ In target markets — Scotland, UK and international
<p>B Achieve product development plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Selected product developments (CfE, NQGA) ◆ E-assessment ◆ Recognition of achievement ◆ Record of qualifications and achievements
<p>C Achieve target improvements in service levels for SQA Accreditation</p>
<p>D Achieve stakeholder and customer perception targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidates ◆ Users of qualifications — employers and higher education ◆ Scottish and UK Government ◆ Partner organisations ◆ Education and training professionals
<p>E Achieve delivery performance measures, including 2010 diet of certification</p>
<p>F Achieve financial plan, including efficiency savings</p>
<p>G Achieve staff and appointee targets</p>
<p>H Achieve environmental targets</p>

Appendix 1: National Outcomes

National Outcomes
1* We live in Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
2* We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
3* We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
4* Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
5 Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
6 We live longer, and healthier lives
7 We have tackled the significant inequalities of Scottish society
8 We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
9 We live our lives, safe from crime, disorder and danger
10 We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
11 We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
12 We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
13* We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity
14* We reduce the local and global environmental impact of consumption and production
15* Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

*The National Outcomes highlighted are those which SQA contributes towards.