

## SQA ACCREDITATION



### GUIDANCE NOTE FOR SUBMISSION FORM AC1: AWARDING BODY APPROVAL REQUEST

If you require assistance to complete the form, or require the form in an alternative format, please do not hesitate to contact SQA Accreditation on 0845 213 5249.

In order to make an application to become a SQA approved Awarding Body, you must complete and submit Form AC1 and Form AC2A. The completed forms and, where possible, supporting evidence should be sent electronically to [accredquals@sqa.org.uk](mailto:accredquals@sqa.org.uk). Once the completed forms have been received, an acknowledgement will be sent indicating the date by which the application will be considered. (Please note the customer service timelines are published on our website). A Regulation Manager will be allocated and will contact you to discuss the application and obtain clarification if required.

Please ensure that all relevant sections are completed and that documents appended to this form are clearly identified and referenced.

Any completed forms will not be altered in any way by SQA Accreditation staff. It is, therefore, important that you provide relevant information.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

- ◆ AC1 focuses on Awarding Body systems and procedures and should be completed and submitted at the same time as Form AC2A (Qualification Accreditation).
- ◆ This form must be completed with reference to the Key Goals in SQA Accreditation's **Awarding Body Criteria (2007)**. The Awarding Body Criteria is a useful tool in identifying possible sources of evidence. Refer to Section 5 of the form for minimum requirements in terms of documentation which must be appended to your submission.
- ◆ The purpose of this form is to establish whether the organisation has the necessary systems in place or the potential to implement the appropriate systems to meet SQA Accreditation's **Awarding Body Criteria (2007)**.
- ◆ On approval, each Awarding Body is subject to an audit. The first audit is normally completed within six months of approval. At the first audit the Awarding Body must demonstrate it complies with all relevant criteria. In tandem with the first audit, SQA Accreditation will visit a sample of the Awarding Body's approved centres, where appropriate. Once the first audit and the centre monitoring visit sample have been completed, SQA Accreditation will develop a profile of the Awarding Body and a Quality Enhancement Rating (QER) will be determined. This rating, which is updated on a biannual basis, is used to ascertain the audit activity that will be carried out by SQA Accreditation within a three year cycle. Awarding Body audits will be carried out every year, every two years or every three years dependent on the QER calculated for the Awarding Body. Centre monitoring activity will be carried out annually regardless of the determined QER for any Awarding Body., SQA Accreditation also reserves the right to undertake any other quality assurance activities deemed necessary. Examples of such activity are systems audits, scoped audits and qualification-specific audits. All monitoring

activities result in a written report, a copy of which will be published on the SQA website.

## **ORGANISATION INFORMATION**

### **Full name(s) and preferred abbreviation for the organisation submitting this proposal.**

*Please provide the above details. Please confirm whether you would prefer SQA Accreditation to refer to you using your full name or acronym.*

### **Organisation address (including postcode).**

*The address will be used for all correspondence.*

### **Organisation's representative's contact details.**

*The organisation's representative will be the person to which all queries relating to the submission will be directed.*

### **Authorised signatory and date signed.**

*Please scan the signature and include the date the submission is signed. If this is not possible, please include an e-mail stating that the submission is approved by the organisation's authorised representative. The authorised signatory may not necessarily be the person listed under the previous section.*

### **Is the organisation an Ofqual recognised Awarding Organisation?**

*If your organisation already has Ofqual approval, please check box.*

### **Is the organisation accredited with quality standards or charter marks?**

*Quality standards or charter marks could include ISO9000 or Investors in People (IIP).*

### **Which SSC/SSBs and other stakeholders does the organisation regularly liaise with?**

*Please provide the name of any Sector Skills Councils, Standard Setting Bodies or other stakeholders that your organisation is in regular contact with regarding your qualification provision (examples of other stakeholders includes colleges, training providers, trade bodies etc).*

### **Which sectors does the current qualification provision of the organisation cover?**

*e.g. Construction, Health and Safety, Engineering, Customer Service.*

### **What qualification(s) do(es) the organisation plan to seek accreditation for and when?**

*Please provide the title, level (where appropriate) and type of any qualification that your organisation is intending to seek accreditation for upon confirmation of approved Awarding Body status.*

*NB: Organisations applying to become a SQA approved Awarding Body must submit completed Forms AC1 (Awarding Body approval request) and AC2A (Qualification Accreditation) simultaneously.*

## **SECTION 1: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP (Statement of Excellence 1)**

**1.1 Please provide an overview of your organisation's governance arrangements. Please attach supporting evidence.**

**(Key Goal 1 – the Awarding Body has robust and transparent governance arrangements).**

*Criterion 1.1 (1.1.1 & 1.1.2) applies.*

*You should provide details of your organisation's governance arrangements. A copy of an organisation chart showing the key functions carried out by your organisation must be included as supporting evidence. Details of your organisation's committee structures must also be provided.*

**1.2 Please provide an overview of your organisation's business planning process. Please attach supporting evidence.**

**(Key Goal 3 – the Awarding Body has an effective business planning process.)**

*A copy of your organisation's business plan must be included as supporting evidence. Your business plan or overview of the process should address Criterion 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.5. A copy of your organisation's marketing plan/strategy may also be appropriate.*

## **SECTION 2: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT (Statement of Excellence 2)**

**2.1 Please provide an overview of your organisation's continuous improvement processes. Please attach supporting evidence.**

**(Key Goal 4 – the Awarding Body has a culture of continuous quality improvement)**

*If your organisation does not yet have a clearly defined process then please tell us how compliance with this Key Goal will be addressed and the associated timescales for completion of this work.*

## **SECTION 3: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT (Statement of Excellence 3)**

**3.1 Please provide an overview of your organisation's system for managing the design and delivery of qualifications. Please attach supporting evidence.**

**(Key Goal 5 – the Awarding Body has robust systems in place for the management of the service it offers)**

*Specifically Criterion 5.1 – 5.4 which relate to the design and delivery of qualifications.*

*A copy of your organisation's qualification design and delivery policies and procedures must be included as supporting evidence. Evidence should also be included to demonstrate how the organisation involves Scottish employers in the qualification design process with a view to satisfying the requirements of the Scottish Government's – Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Learning Skills Strategy.*

*There is no need to address Criterion 5.5 - 5.7 at this stage as this will be reviewed at audit.*

**3.2 Please provide an overview of how your organisation communicates with internal and external stakeholders regarding the qualifications it delivers and any associated activities. Please attach supporting evidence.**

***(Key Goal 6 – the Awarding Body has a communication strategy that supports its Awarding Body activities).***

Please specifically refer to Criterion 6.1 - 6.3 and 6.6.

There is no need to address Criterion 6.4 and 6.5 at this stage as this will be reviewed at audit.

*If your organisation has a communications strategy, please include this as evidence. If not, please tell us how your organisation intends to communicate with all your internal and external stakeholders, including SQA Accreditation. This information should include reference to the different types of communication your organisation intends to use (e.g. e-mail, website, mailshots etc).*

**3.3 Please provide an overview of your organisation's systems and procedures for centre approval. Please attach supporting evidence (if applicable).**

***(Key Goal 7 – the Awarding Body has systems and procedures for the approval of centres)***

*Please also refer to **Appendix B – Centre Approval Criteria (2005)**. You must have systems and procedures for the approval of centres even if you expect to have only one centre. You must include your centre approval procedures as supporting evidence.*

***If your organisation is not intent on approving any centres to offer its qualification provision, then please state this here. Details on how your organisation plans to support qualification delivery in this instance should be included in Section 3.1.***

**3.4 Has your organisation approved any centre to deliver its qualification provision outside of the UK?**

*Please provide a list of any centre(s) approved by your organisation to deliver qualifications outside of the UK. Currently, SQA Accreditation can only quality assure centres located in the UK. However, this information would be beneficial to our understanding of the geographical scope of your organisation.*

**3.5 Please provide a copy of your organisation's customer service statement and outline how it is made available to all.**

***(Key Goal 8 – the Awarding Body has a customer service statement and identified service levels)***

*Please refer to Criterion 8.2 - 8.7 for our requirements of the content of your organisation's customer service statement. You must include a copy of your organisation's customer service statement as supporting evidence.*

**3.6 Please provide a copy of your organisation's complaints and appeals policy**

**(Key Goal 9 – the Awarding Body has open and transparent procedures for complaints and appeals)**

See Criterion 9.1 for our requirements of the content of your organisation's complaints and appeals policy. You must include a copy of your organisation's complaints and appeals policy as supporting evidence and highlight how you communicate the policy to your stakeholders/customers.

**3.7 Please provide an overview of your organisation's system for the registration and certification of candidates. Please attach supporting evidence, including a copy of a sample certificate for approval by SQA Accreditation.**

**(Key Goal 10 – the Awarding Body has an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates)**

Your organisation must have a system that supports the certification of individual Units and qualifications/group awards. A copy of your organisation's registration and certification procedures must be included as supporting evidence. The details provided should indicate when candidates are registered.

**3.8 Please provide a copy of your organisation's diversity and equality policy and details of how your organisation monitors against the policy.**

**(Key Goal 11 – The Awarding Body has implemented a diversity and equality strategy)**

This must include a policy and procedure for special assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments. A copy of your organisation's diversity and equality policy must be provided and details of how your organisation monitors adherence to the policy. Implementation of these policies and procedures will be reviewed at audit.

**3.9 Please provide a copy of your organisation's malpractice and/or maladministration policy and procedure.**

**(Key Goal 12 – the Awarding Body has a policy and procedure for malpractice and/or maladministration)**

A copy of your organisation's policy and procedure for malpractice and/or maladministration must be included as supporting evidence. Malpractice is a deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process, and/or the validity of certificates. Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the centre or the awarding body not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications and/or Units.

**There are no questions relating to Key Goal 13 as these aspects are already covered by other Key Goals.**

**3.10 Please provide a copy of your record retention policy.**

**(Key Goal 14 – the Awarding Body has a record retention policy that takes into account any regulatory or statutory requirements.)**

This specifically relates to retention of sufficient assessment and verification records to allow for the review of assessment over time (Criterion 14.1). You must include a copy of your organisation's record retention policy as supporting evidence. You must

also stipulate the minimum time requirement for centre record retention (Criterion 14.4)

**Statement of Excellence 4 – Qualification Development and Design – no questions have been asked as it has been covered by other Key Goals or in Submission Form AC2A (Qualification Accreditation).**

#### **SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION (Statement of Excellence 5)**

**4.1 Please provide an overview of your organisation’s systems and procedures for monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment provided at any location. Please attach supporting evidence.**

**(Key Goal 21 – the Awarding Body has systems and procedures for monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment provided at any location. These systems must ensure that assessment is uniformly systematic, valid and to the defined standards)**

**The following Key Goals may also apply:**

**(Key Goal 19 – the Awarding Body ensures its approved centres have access to appropriately qualified personnel for the range of qualifications they are approved to deliver)**

**Key Goal 20 – the Awarding Body’s systems and procedures for the appointment, training, registration, deployment and monitoring of verification staff are effective and robust)**

*Traditionally the quality assurance procedures for SVQs take the form of external verification activity, however, for other types of qualification there may be alternative methods of monitoring quality and consistency of assessment.*

*Although the criteria mainly refer to external verification visits, different terminology may be used and there may be alternative systems for ensuring consistency.*

*Where this is the case, please provide details of the system your organisation has in place. You must include a copy of your organisation’s quality assurance procedures/Quality Manual as supporting evidence.*

*It would be useful to provide an outline of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in your organisation’s quality assurance process. It would also be useful to include details of your organisation’s appointment and training processes.*

#### **SECTION 5: DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST**

**Checklist: The following documents must be supplied with your organisation’s submission.**

*The documents listed in this section must be provided with your organisation’s submission. They can be attached to the submission with a reference number, eg Appendix 1, Appendix 2 etc, or if they are contained within other documents already provided you may signpost these other documents and provide the appropriate reference number.*

*Any other documentation appended to the submission should be listed in the space provided.*