

# Ensuring SVQs meet demand

<p><b>Policy</b></p>	<p>This policy will cover all accredited SVQs and will target qualifications with a demonstrably low or no take-up.</p> <p>SQA's Accreditation Unit will remove the accreditation of any Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) demonstrating very low or no take-up where there is no clear, justifiable evidence for this to be the case after a specific period of time.</p>
<p><b>Why do we need this policy?</b></p>	<p>This policy will allow SQA Accreditation to rationalise the SVQ catalogue, and to ensure that SVQs are relevant to market needs.</p>
<p><b>How does the principle apply and what does it apply to?</b></p>	<p>This policy applies to accredited qualifications.</p>
<p><b>Which parts of SQA are affected?</b></p>	<p>This policy is owned by the Accreditation Unit.</p>
<p><b>What support is available to help SQA implement this policy?</b></p>	<p>The Research and Information section of the Accreditation Unit can provide additional support to approved awarding bodies.</p> <p>Please see the appendix for the procedures for implementing this policy.</p>

## Admin details

Policy owner	George Brown
Policy author	Sian O'Hare
Category (if known)	Accreditation
Document version no. eg 1.1	2.0
Revisions approved by	
Date revisions approved	
Review date	
Is/should this be on SQA's website?	This will be published in the Accreditation section of SQA's website.
Are any forms on Find a Form linked to this document? Please list here.	

# Appendix: Procedural rules

## Time periods that will lead to investigation

Every quarter, SQA's Accreditation Unit will review information on registrations and certifications, and will identify those SVQs that have very low or no take-up.

Low or no-uptake SVQs at Level 1 and Level 2 that have been accredited for two years or longer will be targeted for investigation into possible withdrawal from the framework.

Low or no-uptake SVQs at Levels 3, 4 or 5 that have been accredited for three years or longer will also be targeted for investigation.

## Research

Once an SVQ has been identified for investigation, SQA's Accreditation Unit will then research whether or not there are justifiable reasons for the take-up figures. The research will take into consideration existing knowledge of the qualification, which will include:

- ◆ information supplied at the point of accreditation, eg
  - original estimates for qualification take-up
  - whether or not the qualification is part of an identified progression route
  - whether or not there is a political, spiritual, moral, ethical, social or cultural reason for the qualification retaining accreditation
- ◆ specific sector, economic or employment reasons that may have had a bearing on the figure for take-up, eg specialist qualifications in a small sector where demand is nationally low
- ◆ whether or not there is adequate provision elsewhere within the SVQ framework in the given area
- ◆ whether there is evidence of sufficient Unit demand rather than demand for the full qualification

If the results of the research indicate that low or no take-up is justified for the SVQ, SQA's Accreditation Unit will not proceed with the removal of the accreditation.

However, if there is no discernable reason for low or no take-up, SQA's Accreditation Unit will inform the relevant awarding bodies (in writing) of the decision to remove accreditation, giving a notice period of three months and, where possible, indicating alternative arrangements for existing candidates.

## **Awarding body response**

The awarding bodies will be invited to respond to the Accreditation Unit's letter, indicating whether they accept the decision to remove accreditation, or whether they wish to contest the decision.

If an awarding body wishes to contest the decision, its Chief Executive should respond, displaying clear evidence of why accreditation should remain in place. The reasons for such a request may include clear evidence:

- ◆ of future demand
- ◆ that the qualification in question is part of a progression route
- ◆ that the qualification in question is the focus of an emerging sectoral requirement

SQA's Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) will review the awarding body's response and will make one of the following three decisions:

- 1 Decide not to remove accreditation. The awarding body will then be notified in writing within 15 working days of receipt of their letter.
- 2 Decide that the evidence cited does not support accreditation being retained. In this case, the awarding body will be informed, with clear reasoning, within 15 days of receipt of their letter. The awarding body will be invited to respond to the Accreditation Unit's letter, indicating its acceptance of the decision or its wish to contest the decision further. Where the awarding body agrees with the decision, a submission will be made to the Accreditation Committee requesting that the relevant SVQ be withdrawn.

Where the awarding body disagrees with the decision, it must submit a response stating the reasons why the SVQ should not be withdrawn. The awarding body's response will be submitted to the Accreditation Committee, along with the findings of the Accreditation Unit's research. The Accreditation Committee will consider whether or not the SVQ should be withdrawn.

In addition to writing to the awarding body, the Accreditation Unit will also write to the sector body that developed the National Occupational Standards the SVQ is based on. The sector body will be asked to submit a response either agreeing to the withdrawal or providing a rationale for why the SVQ should not be withdrawn. This will also be presented to the Accreditation Committee.

- 3 Decide that accreditation should not be removed immediately. The awarding body will be notified in writing, within 15 working days of receipt of their letter, that SQA's Accreditation Unit will review the situation after six months to ensure that candidates have registered for or are working towards the award or have gained certification. SQA's Accreditation Unit will then decide on the strength of the case for retaining accreditation. If, after reviewing the situation, SQA's Accreditation Unit decides that accreditation should be removed, the

awarding body will be provided in writing with clear reasoning for this and will be required to indicate its acceptance or otherwise of this decision.

Where the awarding body agrees with the decision, a submission will be made to the Accreditation Committee requesting that the SVQ be withdrawn. Where the awarding body disagrees with the decision, it must submit a response stating the reasons why the SVQ should not be withdrawn. The awarding body's response will be submitted to the Accreditation Committee along with the findings of SQA's Accreditation Unit's research. The Accreditation Committee will consider whether or not the SVQ should be withdrawn.

In addition to writing to the awarding body, the Accreditation Unit will also write to the sector body that developed the National Occupational Standards the SVQ is based on. The sector body will be asked to submit a response either agreeing to the withdrawal or providing a rationale as to why the SVQ should not be withdrawn. This will also be presented to the Accreditation Committee.