

Audit Report

November 2011

Awarding body: GQA Qualifications Ltd. (GQA)
Date of audit: 24 November 2011



Note

Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation monitoring activities is treated in the strictest confidence. However:

- ◆ The findings of this report will be presented to SQA's Accreditation Committee and made available to colleagues from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), with a view to the contents informing future accreditation and re-accreditation submissions by the awarding body.
- ◆ The report will be published on SQA Accreditation's website.

Please note that SQA Accreditation monitoring activity is conducted on a sampling basis. As a consequence, not all aspects of an awarding body's performance in quality assurance, contract compliance, implementation, awarding of certificates, and fee arrangements have been considered in this report to the same depth.

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Executive summary

Purpose and scope of audit

This was the eighth audit of GQA Qualifications Ltd. since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation. The audit was designed to review, evaluate and document GQA Qualifications Ltd. strategies, policies and procedures and ensure compliance with SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)*.

As this was a full audit of GQA Qualifications Ltd. all criteria were included within the scope of the audit.

Background

GQA Qualifications Ltd. was approved by SQA Accreditation as an awarding body during 1993, initially as Glass Training Limited, before changing name to Glass Qualification Authority and then, latterly, to GQA Qualifications Ltd.. GQA Qualifications Ltd. is a nationally recognised awarding body offering a range of qualifications catering for the Glass and Print industries. GQA Qualifications Ltd. has also achieved BS EN ISO 9001:2008 status.

Audit outcome

As a result of the audit and post audit activities, one non-compliance has been recorded and two observations noted.

The one non-compliance and two observations form the GQA Qualifications Ltd. action plan: 2011.

Awarding body feedback

The awarding body representative was content with the audit discussion and ensured the Accreditation Auditor that any action required to resolve non-compliance would be taken swiftly.

Audit Summary

The following section details the non-compliances assigned and observations noted against SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)* through the course of the awarding body audit.

Key Goal 10: The awarding body has an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates

Findings

GQA Qualifications Ltd. provided the Accreditation Auditor with copies of sample Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) certificates and SVQ unit certificates for audit purposes. The sample SVQ unit certificate provided displayed the correct unit titles and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Credit Rating for those units included, however the certificate also included the SVQ logo, which should not be included in the format of any SVQ unit certificate (**non-compliance 1 refers**). However, despite the fact the format of the certificate provided was identified as non-compliant, the Accreditation Auditor was given assurances that no such certificates had been issued to candidates prior to the time of audit.

Conclusion

The evidence available confirms that GQA Qualifications Ltd. does not meet the requirements of the criteria under Key Goal 10. One non-compliance has been recorded and no observations noted.

Key Goal 15: The qualification and associated structure has been designed to ensure it is appropriate and meets the needs of the occupational sector

and

Key Goal 17: The awarding body submits timely and detailed qualification submissions

Findings

GQA Qualifications Ltd. provided documents outlining the awarding body's qualification design and qualification submission processes for the purposes of audit. The processes provided, although detailed and comprehensive, were found to be largely Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) specific (**observation 1 refers**). The Accreditation Auditor recommended that these processes be generalised to encompass the design of SQA accredited qualifications and the submission processes associated with obtaining SQA accreditation.

Conclusion

The evidence available confirms that GQA Qualifications Ltd. continues to meet the requirements of the criteria under Key Goals 15 and 17. No non-compliances have been recorded and one observation noted.

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 standard**Findings**

The awarding body provided the Accreditation Auditor with sample copies of the *External Verifier Monitoring Report Form (GQA 233)* which outlines the details of the visit and any actions assigned to GQA Qualifications Ltd. approved centres. However, the format of the report does not include any field which allows the clear identification of which qualifications are being inspected through the course of any external verification visit (**observation 2 refers**). It is recommended that such a field be included in the format of the *External Verifier Monitoring Report Form* so that it is clear which qualifications have been under inspection through the course of any visit. Besides clarifying visit detail for external verification and centre staff, this addition would also be beneficial for internal and external audit purposes.

Conclusion

The evidence available confirms that GQA Qualifications Ltd. continues to meet the requirements of the criteria under Key Goal 21. No non-compliances have been recorded and one observation noted.

Conclusion

This was the eighth audit of GQA Qualifications Ltd. and the Accreditation Auditor was provided with all requested documentation by awarding body representatives.

Asides the one non-compliance identified, the Accreditation Auditor was broadly satisfied that the processes and procedures currently operated by GQA Qualifications Ltd. are wholly appropriate to support the delivery of the SQA accredited qualifications that the awarding body is approved to offer. The Accreditation Auditor would particularly like to highlight the quality of the guidance documentation (which is comprehensive and detailed) produced by the awarding body for internal staff, approved centres and candidates.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Current year non-compliances, observations and action plan

Non-compliances

A non-compliance will be recorded where the Lead Accreditation Auditor finds evidence that the awarding body fails to meet any of *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)* or any of the conditions attached to qualification accredited by SQA Accreditation at the time of accreditation. When recording any non-compliance, the Lead Accreditation Auditor will agree the action to be taken by the awarding body and a timetable for resolving the issue.

Non-compliance recorded	Agreed action and date	Key Goal/criterion	Risk rating
1 GQA Qualifications Ltd. provided the Regulation Manager with copies of sample SVQ certificates and SVQ unit certificates for audit purposes. The sample SVQ unit certificate provided displayed the correct unit titles and SCQF Credit Rating for those units included, however the certificate also included the SVQ logo, which should not be included in the format of any SVQ unit certificate.	GQA Qualifications Ltd. must revise the content of the SVQ unit certificate to ensure that the SVQ logo is not included. A revised SVQ unit sample certificate should be provided to SQA Accreditation by 31 January 2012. Closed Out 16 January 2012.	Key Goal 10	1

Observations

An observation will be noted to ensure that any recommendations agreed during the audit are recorded for future reference. As observations are recorded for awarding body consideration only, it is not necessary to agree a timescale to resolve the observation in the awarding body action plan.

Once agreed, the action plan is signed by representatives from both SQA Accreditation and the awarding body and will inform the agenda for the next annual audit meeting.

Observations noted	Action recommended	Key Goal/criterion
1 GQA Qualifications Ltd. provided documents outlining the awarding body's qualification design and qualification submission processes for the purposes of audit. The processes provided, although detailed and comprehensive, were found to be largely QCF specific.	GQA Qualifications Ltd. may wish to generalise the documentation associated with the qualification design and submission processes to encompass the design of SQA accredited qualifications and the submission processes associated with obtaining SQA accreditation.	Key Goal 15 and 17
2 The awarding body provided the Regulation Manager with sample copies of the <i>External Verifier Monitoring Report Form (GQA 233)</i> which outlines the details of the visit and any actions assigned to GQA Qualifications Ltd. approved centres. However, the format of the report does not include any field which allows the clear identification of which qualifications are being inspected through the course of any external verification visit.	GQA Qualifications Ltd. may wish to include a field in the format of the <i>External Verifier Monitoring Report Form</i> so that it is clear which qualifications have been under inspection through the course of any visit.	Key Goal 21

Appendix 2: Risk-rating of non-compliances

SQA Accreditation assigns a risk rating to each non-compliance recorded as a result of an awarding body audit or through our centre monitoring activity. The table below illustrates how the rating for a non-compliance is assigned, and identifies the possible impact of the non-compliance on qualifications and/or the learner.

The assignment of a risk rating allows an awarding body to target their resources to areas that have been identified as having a major impact. The risk rating also allows SQA Accreditation to target its resources to support awarding bodies in improving their performance.

Rating	Risk	Impact of non-compliance
1	Very Low	The non-compliance is likely to cause minimal concern and would not threaten the integrity of the qualification or impact adversely on the learner. Any overall effect is likely to be small scale and/or localised, rather than widespread. The issue identified is unlikely to recur once resolved and no long lasting damage would be anticipated.
2	Low	The non-compliance is of low impact but of sufficient importance to merit intervention, with a low threat to the systems or procedures associated with the qualification and/or impact on the learner. Disruption may not just be localised but more widespread and would possibly cause residual damage; however, this could be easily corrected without further consequence.
3	Medium	The non-compliance could potentially damage the credibility of the qualification and/or be detrimental to the learner. There may be some impact to the systems or procedures that support the qualification or the operational effectiveness of the awarding body.
4	High	The non-compliance could have a high impact on the integrity and reliability of the qualification or the effective operation of awarding body as a whole if corrective action is not quickly taken. There is a high probability that the qualification and/or learner will be negatively affected.
5	Very High	The non-compliance will have a serious impact on the integrity and reliability of the qualification or the effective operation of the awarding body if corrective action is not immediately taken. There is a very high probability that the qualification and/or learner will be negatively affected.

In assigning a risk rating, each non-compliance is considered on its own merit, taking account of the context in which it was identified.

Appendix 3: Table of awards

Accredited qualifications currently offered

Award title	Level	Code	Accreditation date	Re-accreditation date
SVQ 2 in Installing Domestic Fascias, Soffits and Bargeboards at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD36 22	25/06/2008	31/07/2012
SVQ 2 in Automotive Glazing at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD37 22	28/10/2009	31/10/2014
SVQ 2 in Fenestration Installation at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD3A 22	01/01/2010	31/10/2014
SVQ 2 in Glass Manufacturing at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD3C 22	01/01/2010	31/10/2014
SVQ 2 in Glass Processing at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD34 22	01/01/2010	31/10/2014
SVQ 2 in Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD35 22	01/01/2010	31/10/2014
SVQ 3 in Fenestration Installation and Surveying at SCQF Level 6	SCQF Level 6	GD33 23	01/01/2010	31/10/2014
SVQ 3 in Glass Processing at SCQF Level 6	SCQF Level 6	GD38 23	01/01/2010	31/10/2014

Award title	Level	Code	Accreditation date	Re-accreditation date
SVQ 3 in Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications at SCQF Level 6	SCQF Level 6	GD3D 23	01/01/2010	31/10/2014
SVQ 2 in Glazing at SCQF Level 5	SCQF Level 5	GD39 22	01/09/2010	31/08/2015
SVQ 3 in Glazing at SCQF Level 6	SCQF Level 6	GD32 23	01/09/2010	31/08/2015

Appendix 4: Outstanding approval and accreditation conditions

A condition will be recorded at the time of approval of the awarding body or at the time of accreditation for an SQA accredited qualification. A condition is recorded when SQA's Accreditation Co-ordination Group finds evidence that the awarding body does not fully meet SQA's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)*.

Condition	Agreed action and date	Key Goal/criterion
1 n/a		

Appendix 5: List of documents reviewed pre-audit and post-audit

Document title	Date of issue	Version number	Comments
GQA Organisation Chart	Oct 2011		
Person Specifications and Job Roles	Oct 2011		
GQA Qualification Ltd.- Non-executive Director Agreement			
Board Meeting Minutes	26 July 2011		
EV Meeting Minutes	08-09 June 2011		
GQA 414 – Complaints Against GQA			
GQA 22 - Commitment to Staff Policy	2011		
GQA Staff Meeting Minutes	16/06/2011		
GQA Qualifications Ltd. Mission, Strategic Aims, Objectives and Actions 2011 - 14	Sept 2011		
EV Appraisal – Sean Hayes	26/04/2011		
GQA Marketing Plan 2011 - 12			
GQA Terms of Business		V4	
Customer Service Statement	Oct 2011		
GQA 213 – Customer Service Evaluation Feedback Letter			
GQA 234 – Customer Service Evaluation Form			
GQA EV Visit Report Audit 1			Tracking Spreadsheet
GQA Investors in People Report 2011			
GQA Risk Assessment Register Update	Oct 2011		
Data Protection – Letter of Renewal	05 September 2011		

Document title	Date of issue	Version number	Comments
Operations Manual	2011		
Proskills Letter of Support – Glazing SVQs			
GQA E-newsletter	Nov 2011		
GQA EV Training Agenda	21 April 2011		
Notes from AB Forum	25/05/2011		
GQA 228 – Centre recognition Form		V8	
Guide to GQA Qualifications Ltd.			
IWA Centre Visit Folder	25/11/2010		
Complaints and Appeals Procedure			
Complaints Register			
Example SCQF Cert			
Sample SCQF Unit Credit Cert			
GQA 233 – South Lanarkshire College	22/09/2011		
GQA 205 – Special Consideration Request Form		V2	
GQA 231 – Reasonable Adjustment Request Form		V4	
GQA 248 – Reasonable Adjustment Monitoring and Evaluation Form		V2	
GQA 3 – Equal Opportunities Policy			
Reasonable Adjustment Procedure			
Special Considerations Procedure			
GQA Employee Handbook			
Malpractice Procedure 2011			
GQA EV Handbook			
SVQ 2 in Fenestration Installation at SCQF Level 5			
GQA 215 – EV Interim Review	Sept 2011		
GQA 295 – Assessor Observation from Colin Paterson			
GQA 295 – J Tyler IWA	25/11/2010		

Document title	Date of issue	Version number	Comments
Overview of visit to RT Resources	17 May 2011		
GQA 236 – External Verifier Sampling Record – RT Resources	17 May 2011		
GQA 236 – External Verifier Sampling Record – RT Resources	21 Sept 2011		
EV Meeting Agenda	Sept 2011		
EV Minutes	29 – 30 Sept		
EV Person Specification and Job Description			
GQA 296 – Quality Assurance of GQA External Verifiers and EV Process	23 rd September 2011		
GQA EV Training Agenda			
Mick Clayton CPD Record	2011		
Sean Hayes CPD Record	13-09-11		
Standard EV Services Letter	2011		
IWA Visit Agenda	Nov 25 th 2010		
GQA 297 – J Morrissey - IWA	25.11.10		

Appendix 6: Signatures of agreement to action plan

For and on behalf of GQA Qualifications Ltd.

For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation

Signature

Signature

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Designation

Designation

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Date

Date

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