

**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**QUALIFICATIONS SUPPORT TEAM FOR HN ACCOUNTING, AIT, BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**ACTION GRID – MEETING 11 HELD ON TUESDAY 20 MAY 2008**

Present: Sue Macfarlane, Linda Meikle, Gillian Lawson, Marian Forgan, Mary McDougall, Catherine Mancini, David McAllister, John Ogden, John McComb

Apologies: Anne Shaw, Moira Winning

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Agenda/Minute Title</b>	<b>Agreed Action</b>	<b>Action to be taken by</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
11/1	Welcome and Introduction	<p>Sue Macfarlane, Qualifications Manager, welcomed everyone to the meeting including Gillian Lawson who is temporarily supporting projects within the HN Business portfolio.</p> <p>As apologies had been received from Anne Shaw and Moira Winning, the two AIT representatives, Marian Forgan and Mary McDougall had been invited to attend to represent this curricula area. Their input was appreciated.</p>		
11/2	Action Grid	<p>Action points under 10/3 had been completed. QST agreed that the information relating to guidance re tax schedules was an improvement. Requests for training on writing Graded Unit questions had been passed to SFEU and the HN Product Team. It was acknowledged that some centres were now doing their own training on Graded Units.</p> <p>Six PDAs had been validated in May 2008:</p> <p>PDA in Office Administration at SCQF level 7                      PDA in Information Technology in Business at SCQF level 7                      PDA in Book –keeping at SCQF level 7                      PDA in Financial Accounting at SCQF level 7                      PDA in Management Accounting at SCQF level 7                      PDA in Administrative Management at SCQF level 8</p> <p>A launch event for these awards is planned for 16 June.</p>		
11/3	Operational Plan	<p>Sue gave a resume on the operational plan for 2008/2009 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ HN Review (priority)</li> <li>◆ Scoping for new PDAs – Environmental Accounting; Accounting for non-profit making organisations; SCQF level 9 award for Executive/Virtual Assistants</li> <li>◆ Development of a new NPA Financial Services award for schools and colleges, jointly certificated by the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland.</li> <li>◆ Continued development of 2 National Progression Awards (NPAs) in Enterprise and at Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 levels.</li> <li>◆ Mapping of SQA qualifications to the RBS Diploma programme for schools</li> </ul>		

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11/3 (cont)	Operational Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ SVQ Accounting at level 3 being put forward for accreditation so that SQA can award at this level.</li> <li>◆ SVQ Accounting at level 2 – from September this will be awarded by SQA only. Agreement with AAT has been terminated. SQA will provide independent assessment via the secure website.</li> <li>◆ Additional Assessment Guidance for SVQs in Business and Administration and new portfolios.</li> </ul> <p><i>Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Approach ACCA re joint certification/articulation opportunities for SVQ level 3 Accounting.</li> <li>◆ QST to identify opportunities for development by August/September 2008.</li> <li>◆ SQA to produce information highlighting PDAs embedded within HN awards</li> </ul>	<p>QM/QO</p> <p>All</p> <p>QM/QO</p>	<p>Aug/Sept 2008</p> <p>June 2008</p> <p>June 2008</p>
11/4	HN Review	<p>Feedback from centres, employers and HEIs confirmed that this should be a ‘limited’ review of the HNC/Ds in Accounting, Business, and Administration and Information Technology. Awards are still fit for purpose. Qualification Review Teams (QRTs) have been set up to look at the different awards. The general remit of the QRTs is to review all mandatory Units within awards to incorporate the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ reduce assessment load</li> <li>◆ better exemplify standards</li> <li>◆ increase flexibility of assessment</li> <li>◆ ensure DDA compliant</li> <li>◆ bring Core Skills in line with refreshed Core Skills</li> <li>◆ improve guidance on Core Skills</li> </ul> <p>Award specific issues will also be reviewed.</p> <p>Consultation documents for the awards have been placed on the subject web pages. These were distributed to the meeting for comment.</p> <p>Business representative queried if any feedback had been received re the Marketing unit. AIT representatives did not agree with the proposal to replace DSPE with the PDP unit. Everyone was reminded that they should provide feedback on the consultation document.</p> <p>The meeting was informed for the timelines for each Review, network events in October/November will be used to consult on changes to units.</p>		

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11/5	New Communication Units	<p><b>English: Producing and Presenting Complex Information</b> QST agreed they preferred this generic Unit to <i>English: Presenting Complex Communication for Vocational Purposes</i> as Outcome 2 would allow candidates to present orally in an individual/group situation and that this Outcome basically covered the Knowledge and/or skills of Outcomes 2 and 3 in <i>English: Presenting Complex Communication for Vocational Purposes</i>.</p> <p><b>English: Presenting Complex Communication for Vocational Purposes</b> Heavier Unit but has same credit points.</p> <p>The group gave feedback on the units, which will be passed to the Qualifications Team responsible for this area.</p> <p><i>Action</i> Provide feedback to QM/QO responsible for Communication Units</p>	QO	May 2008
11/6	Comments on Unit: Sociology: Work and Organisations (A58H 34)	<p>This Unit is included within the HND Business optional framework. QST representatives indicated that this Unit was not being used by centres. Only use would be lead into Business Culture and Strategy Unit.</p> <p>(QO checked uptake for this Unit – 35 entries for candidates enrolled on Social Science courses only)</p> <p><i>Action</i> Provide feedback to QM/QO responsible for Sociology Units</p>	QO	May 2008
11/7	Incremental Change	<p>A centre request for inclusion of the Unit <i>Introduction to Operations Management (A6H3 34)</i> to the optional framework for HND Accounting and HND AIT was discussed. The request had been made to enable candidates to articulate to a BA in Management. It was agreed that this should not be added to the frameworks as a Management degree was not regarded as a natural progression from these HNDs and that the potential uptake of this Unit would be negligible.</p> <p>The process of Incremental Change was discussed and it was agreed that centres would be notified of amendments to HN frameworks once a year at the beginning of April. Centres would be informed that requests for amendments should be submitted to SQA by a specific date so that these could be considered by the QST prior to the April update letter.</p> <p><i>Action</i> Inform centre of outcome of request for inclusion of additional optional unit. Centres to be informed of process and timing of incremental change procedure.</p>	QM QM	May 2008 August 2008

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11/8	External Verification Update	<p>The visiting verification of the project Graded Units was discussed. It was recognised that the management of the visits was more difficult and did not provide a full overview of the project GUs. Centres stated that visiting verification had been useful as it provided an opportunity for discussion and guidance.</p> <p>QST members were asked to feedback on exam GUs.</p> <p>Those representing Business stated that the exams were being taken this week so could not comment except it appeared that staff and students were better prepared for these.</p> <p>The centre who had marked the revised HN Accounting Graded Unit 1 indicated that the volume within the first exemplar was too much with candidates taking full time allocation without completing narrative section. Volume could be reduced by removing 'empty' accounts, ie those which did not have new entries. Agreed the paper was the right 'split' and that candidates were in general getting the grade expected of them.</p> <p>Centres who had marked the revised HN AIT Graded Unit 1 indicated that paper did provide the right spread of marks. One member suggested that too much time was given for Paper 1 and insufficient time for Paper 2. Integrative question in Paper 2 had proved easier to mark than anticipated. Paper did reflect SCQF level 7.</p>		
11/9	COLEG Update	<p>Linda updated meeting on COLEG materials.</p> <p>Materials have been or are being prepared to support the HN Accounting Units. The availability of these is:</p> <p>Using Financial Accounting Software – available via BlendEd project  Recording Financial Information – being enhanced and updated – June 2008  Financial Reporting and Analysis – being enhanced and updated – June 2008  Preparing Final Accounts – June 2008  Management Accounting Using Information Technology – June 2008  Cost Accounting – in progress  Payroll – writer required  Accounting: Graded 1 – upgrade – writer required  Management Accounting for Decision Making – writer required  Accounting: Graded Unit 3 - available</p> <p>COLEG are experiencing difficulties in recruiting writers.</p> <p>COLEG will be in attendance at the PDA Launch on 16 June with information on support materials available to support HN Units and PDAs.</p> <p>Information regarding the availability of COLEG material can be located from their <i>Project News</i> publication which can be downloaded from their website.</p>		

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11/10	Role of QST	<p>The QST for the HN Business awards has been in existence for 4 years. It was agreed that this format had been beneficial during the implementation of the awards but that it would be more productive now if the QST was split into the three subject areas. Subject specific QSTs, with a membership of 5-6 practitioners, could provide more guidance on issues relating to the individual awards. A QST remit paper was discussed and amendments/suggestions made. It was agreed that the QSTs should meet twice a year – April and November.</p> <p><i>Action</i> Sue to redraft QST remit and inform centres of revised format of QST. Centres also to be advised of completion of Expression of Interest forms for consideration of QST membership.</p> <p><b>Delegate Update</b></p> <p><b>Business</b> – delegates informed the meeting that although enrolment numbers were fairly static for HN Business, retention was poor. It was suggested that as most of the Units were delivered on a ‘standalone’ basis an earlier integration of Unit material may help to prepare students better for the integrative nature of GUI. The student profile for those undertaking this award had also changed and many were not as focussed on achievement as in the past. Universities were also accepting students who would have formerly enrolled for HN Business.</p> <p><b>AIT</b> – retention and achievement for HND, in particular, causes concern. Again profile of student has changed with individuals presenting with more needs – social and financial – which impacts on attendance.</p> <p><b>Accounting</b> – delegates informed the meeting that awards were working well with enrolments remaining stable. Payroll Unit content was substantial for one credit and queried the need to include manual calculations. It was agreed that manual calculations should be retained to ensure that candidates understand the process involved in the calculation of wages and salaries. Some discussion took place around the level of the Tax unit and GU3.</p>	QM	August 2008
11/11	Any other business	No other matters were raised for discussion.		
11/12	Date of next meeting	<p>This will be dependent on revised format of QST.</p> <p><i>Action</i> November 2008 – dates to be confirmed</p>	QM	August/September 2008