

23 September, 2014

To: SQA Co-coordinator

Action by Recipient
Response required
√ Note and pass on
None — update/information only

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Dear colleague

ADVANCED VOCATIONAL AWARDS IN COMPUTING

I am writing about a number of developments relating to vocational Computing qualifications at SCQF Level 7 and above. Separate letters provide similar information about non-advanced awards (SCQF Level 6 and below) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

This letter contains important information about the following topics:

- 1. New Higher National Units**
- 2. Additional Graded Units**
- 3. Review of HNC/D Interactive Media**
- 4. Review of HNC/D Information Technology**
- 5. Review of HNC/D Computer Games Development**
- 6. Qualifications Support Teams**
- 7. Local options within HN awards**
- 8. Heads of Computing event**
- 9. Regional college lead person**

I would be grateful if the appropriate staff are made aware of the contents of this letter.

1. New Higher National Units

A number of new Units are now available or under development. These are:

- H6D0 34 Bring Your Own Device: Introduction (SCQF Level 7) (available now)
- XXXX 34 Cloud Virtualisation (SCQF Level 7) (available from January 2015)
- XXXX 34 Big Data (SCQF Level 7) (available from January 2015)
- XXXX 35 Data Science (SCQF Level 8) (available from January 2015).

These Units will be added to appropriate awards. Please contact Caroline Douglas (caroline.douglas@sqa.org.uk) for further information about these Units.

2. Additional Graded Units ASPs

Two additional Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) for H1J8 34 Computing: Graded Unit 1 are about to be commissioned. These will sit alongside the two versions already available on the SQA secure site (<https://secure.sqa.org.uk/login.html>). The additional packs will be available from **January 2015**.

3. Review of HNC/D Interactive Media

This award was first introduced in 2007/2008 and is now being reviewed. We are currently seeking members for the Qualifications Design Team (QDT). The revised award will be available to centres from **January 2016**. The existing award will continue to be certificated until January 2018. Please contact Caroline Douglas (caroline.douglas@sqa.org.uk) for further information about this development or to volunteer to serve on the QDT.

4. Review of HNC/D Information Technology

This award was first introduced in 2007 and is now being reviewed. We are currently seeking members for the Qualifications Design Team (QDT). The revised award will be available to centres from **January 2016**. The existing award will continue to be certificated until January 2018. Please contact Caroline Douglas (caroline.douglas@sqa.org.uk) for further information about this development or to volunteer to serve on the QDT.

5. Review of HNC/D Computer Games Technology

This award was first introduced in 2007 and is now being reviewed. During the current academic session (2014-15) we will “scope” the required changes with a view to forming a Qualification Design Team (QDT) in August 2015. Further details will be provided at that time. Please contact Caroline Douglas (caroline.douglas@sqa.org.uk) for further information about this qualification.

6. Qualifications Support Teams

We are currently seeking members for the Qualifications Support Team (QST). The QST is responsible for ensuring that qualifications are properly supported in terms of teaching, learning and assessment materials. The QST is also responsible for the on-going maintenance of awards. The Team meets once per year, with on-going online communications between meetings. Please contact Hilary Weir (hilary.weir@sqa.org.uk) if you would like more information or request to join the QST.

7. Local options

We have reviewed the inclusion of local options within HN awards. At present a number of HNC and HND awards include a local option section in their frameworks (two or four credits respectively). These are included to permit centres to (optionally) customise their awards to the local environment (in terms of vocational skills). However, due to the volume and variability of requests received from centres, as indicated in my update letter last year, all future requests will be referred to the Qualification Support Team (see above), which would decide what requests to accept based on defined criteria, and update the associated frameworks **annually**, in time for each new session.

8. Heads of Computing event

This session’s annual event will take place **January 2015** (actual date to be confirmed). Further information will be supplied through the lead person network (see below).

9. Regional college lead person

As a result of college re-organisation, I am seeking to identify a lead person for each college. This person would be the subject contact for the college (for advanced and non-advanced provision). I would anticipate that this person would cascade information within their regional centre. Please note that this communication channel would not replace any of the existing means of communication with centres of lecturing staff. **I would appreciate if you would let me know the designated person for your college (by e-mail).**

The Computing team maintains a blog where you can keep up-to-date with the latest developments relating to vocational Computing qualifications. The URL is:

<http://sqacomputing.blogspot.com>.

You can also follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/sqacomputing>.

Thank you for your continued support for SQA awards.

Yours faithfully



Robert Elliott
Qualifications Manager