Audit Report

September 2011

Awarding body: PAA\VQ-SET

Date of audit: 28 February 2012

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 Welsh Government, 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.

Contents

Executive summary

Purpose and scope of audit

This was the eleventh audit of PAA\VQ-SET since it was approved as an awarding body by SQA Accreditation. The audit was designed to review, evaluate and document PAA\VQ-SET's strategies, policies and procedures and ensure compliance with SQA Accreditation's *Awarding Body Criteria (2007*).

As this was a full audit of PAA\VQ-SET, all criteria were included in the scope of the audit.

Background

PAA\VQ-SET was approved by SQA Accreditation as an awarding body during 1998. PAA\VQ-SET is a nationally recognised awarding body dealing with qualifications spanning the following industries: Laboratory Operations, Polymers and Composites, Process Manufacturing and Signmaking.

Audit outcome

As a result of the audit and post audit activities, no non-compliances have been recorded and one observation has been noted.

The one observation forms the PAA\VQ-SET action plan: February 2012.

Statement of Excellence 4: Qualification Development and Design

'The awarding body has demonstrated that is has appropriate experience and ability to design, develop and deliver qualifications. The awarding body assessment methods are rigorous but have sufficient flexibility to ensure that their requirements can be met cost-effectively and in a variety of different circumstances. Copies of the awarding body's assessment methodology and guidance are made available to all those who may wish to use them.'

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

Findings

PAA\VQ-SET made two SVQ submissions at the end of 2011. In both cases, the Accreditation Manager for the sector received the awarding body's paperwork late on in the process, and decisions had to be backdated by ACG. The Lead Auditor discussed SQA Accreditation timescales with PAA\VQ-SET and advised them to build these into their own planning so that this is issue does not re-occur future.

Conclusion

The evidence available confirms that PAA\VQ-SET continues to meet the requirements of the criteria under Key Goal 17. One observation has been noted.

Observation 1: PAA\VQ-SET is not taking account of SQA Accreditation's six week timescale when making qualification submissions.

Conclusion

This was the eleventh audit of PAA\VQ-SET and the audit team was provided with full access to the awarding body's documentation.

PAA\VQ-SET has banked relevant documentation with SQA Accreditation, and the Lead Auditor is satisfied that they continue to meet the *Awarding Body Criteria (2007).* As discussed at the meeting, the Lead Auditor would like to see PAA\VQ-SET raise its profile in Scotland and will offer assistance to facilitate matters where appropriate.

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
No non-compliances were raised.			

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. PAA\VQ-SET is not taking account of SQA Accreditation's six week timescale when making qualification submissions.	PAA\VQ-SET should ensure that their internal planning systems take account of SQA Accreditation's six week timescale for processing accreditation submissions.	Key Goal 17.2

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 Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Education Science)	GE4D	22	23.11.2011	30.11.2016
SVQ 2 Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Industrial Science)	GE4F	22	23.11.2011	30.11.2016
SVQ 2 Process Engineering Maintenance (Electrical)	GD12	22	27.07.2011	31.07.2016
SVQ 2 Process Engineering Maintenance (Instrument and Control)	GD14	22	27.07.2011	31.07.2016
SVQ 2 Process Engineering Maintenance (Mechanical)	GD16	22	27.07.2011	31.07.2016
SVQ 2 Processing Industries Operations Process Operations	G9NE	22	31.03.2010	31.03.2015
SVQ 3 Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Education Science)	GE4E	23	23.11.2011	30.11.2016
SVQ 3 Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (Industrial Science)	GE4G	23	23.11.2011	30.11.2016
SVQ 3 Process Engineering Maintenance (Electrical)	GD13	23	27.07.2011	31.07.2016
SVQ 3 Process Engineering Maintenance (Instrument and Control)	GD15	23	27.07.2011	31.07.2016
SVQ 3 Process Engineering Maintenance (Mechanical)	GD11	23	27.07.2011	31.07.2016

Award title	Level	Code	Accreditation date	Re-accreditation date
SVQ 3 Processing Industries Operations Controlling Process Operations	G9NF	23	31.03.2010	31.03.2015
SVQ 4 Processing Industries Operations Technical Support	G9NG	24	31.03.2010	31.03.2015
Signmaking	G822	22	04.10.2005	31.12.2012
Signmaking	G821	23	04.10.2005	31.12.2012

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
No outstanding conditions		

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

Document title	Date of issue	Version number	Comments
Action Plan for Submission of SVQs	November 2011		
Agenda for Operations			
Application Form for Centre Approval			
Centre Approval Visit Report			
Centre Portfolio SVQs			November 2011
Complaints/Appeals Procedures SQA			November 2011
Conflict of Interest			
Continual Improvement Flowchart			
Customer Satisfaction Surveys			
Customer Service Statement			November 2011
Data Protection Policy			November 2008
Equality and Diversity Policy			November 2011
EV Visit Report Form SVQs			
Example Qualification Handbook - SVQ 2 PIO			
Example SVQ Candidate Certificate Guide for Centres SVQ			
Malpractice/Maladministration Policy			November 2011
Marketing Plan			Viewed at audit
Minutes of Ops and SMT meetings			
Operational Plan 2012			Viewed at audit
Organisational Structure			November 2011
PAAVQ-SET website			
Procedure 4.2 - Control of Records			November 2011
Procedure 6.1 – Competence, Awareness and Training			November 2011
Procedure 7.3 - Design and Development			November 2011
Procedure 8.1 - Internal Audit			November 2011
Procedure 8.2 – Control of a Nonconforming Product			November 2011
Procedure 8.3 - Corrective Action			November 2011
Procedure 8.4 – Preventive Action			November 2011

Document title	Date of issue	Version number	Comments
Process Flow Chart - Centre Approval			November 2011
Process Flow Chart - Centre Upgrade			November 2011
Process Flow Chart – Certification			November 2011
Process Flow Chart - External Verification			November 2011
Process Flow Chart - Malpractice/Maladministration			November 2011
Process Flow Chart - Reasonable Adjustments			November 2011
Process Flow Chart – Registration			November 2011
Process Flow Chart - Replacement Certification			November 2011
Process Flow Chart - Special Considerations			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual		Issue 2	November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 1 - Job Descriptions			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 2 - Distribution List			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 3 – Log of Forms			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 4 - Register of Records			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 5 - External Standards			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 6 – Interaction			November 2011
Quality Policy Manual Appendix 7 - Approved Suppliers List			November 2011
Risk Assessment and Management - Scoring Guidance			September 2008
Strategic Business Plan 2011-14			Viewed at audit

Appendix 6: Signatures of agreement to action plan

For and on behalf of PAA\VQ-SET	For and on behalf of SQA Accreditation
Signature	**Signature**
.....	.....
Designation	**Designation**
.....	.....
Date	**Date**
.....	.....

