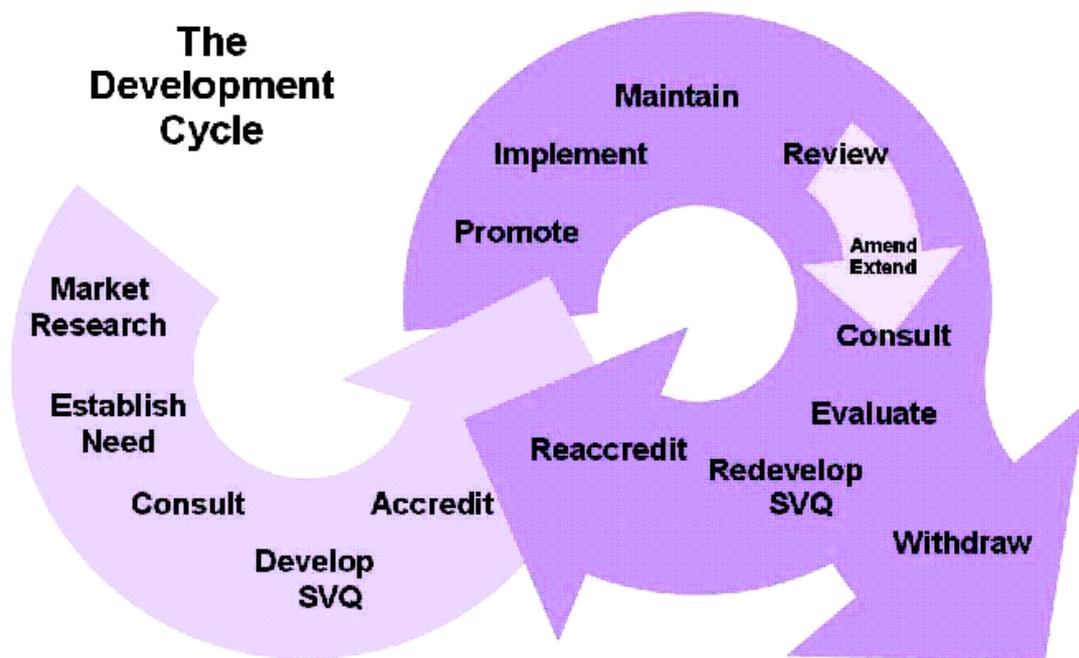


Developing, Maintaining and Reviewing Scottish Vocational Qualifications

The roles of awarding bodies, Sector Skills Councils and Standards Setting Bodies.





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1 Background and Introduction

This guidance document has been designed for Sector Skills Councils and Standards Setting Bodies (SSC/Bs) and awarding bodies, to clarify the SQA Accreditation requirements for qualification design and development. It is also a useful guide for SSC/Bs and awarding bodies to ensure that they are aware of, and involved at, the various stages in the development, design and review processes. The guidance states the minimum features and components that qualifications should possess in terms of structures and component units derived from National Occupational Standards (NOS), and is supplemented by a series of bulleted lists of actions expected of SSC/Bs and awarding bodies.

Of course, not all NOS developments will lead to the development of SVQs. In such projects, there will be no expectation that the outputs will include qualification-related products, but the NOS must still be made freely available as awarding bodies may use the NOS as the basis of development of other qualification types.

1.1 What are SVQs?

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work related, competence-based qualifications based on National Occupational Standards (NOS). As such they reflect the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively. A candidate achieves a qualification by providing evidence that they can meet the standards competently and consistently in all aspects required. SQA Accreditation is responsible for determining and setting the criteria relating to approval of awarding bodies and accreditation of SVQs.

SVQs are the Scottish Government's preferred competence based qualifications for Scotland and the preferred choice of qualification as the main component of a Scottish Modern Apprenticeship.

Should an SSC/B wish to develop an alternative competence based qualification which would replace the SVQ in Scotland, a strong rationale would need to be provided to SQA Accreditation. This would require the SSC/B demonstrating the need for the alternative competence based qualification based on the sector's Labour Market Intelligence (LMI), linked to the SSC/Bs SQS or QS, and providing evidence of Scottish employer and awarding body support for such a qualification. The evidence will need to demonstrate the added value which the alternative competence based qualification will bring, which the SVQ would not.

1.2 What are Qualification Products?

There are four qualification products which must be approved by SQA Accreditation for use in Scotland.

- i) **SVQ structures** are developed by SSC/Bs in collaboration with awarding bodies, industry and employers, usually through steering or working groups and wider consultation
- ii) **Assessment strategies** are developed by SSC/Bs to give guidance to those who will deliver, assess and award the qualifications

- iii) **Core Skills Signposting** is produced by SSC/Bs to indicate opportunities for assessment of Core Skills in the assessment of the qualification.
- iv) **Credit Rating for the SCQF** is carried out by SSC/Bs in conjunction with awarding bodies.

As SQA Accreditation is the credit rating body for SVQs, all such credit rating work overseen by SSC/Bs must be submitted to SQA Accreditation for approval. Please refer to the guidance document “SCQF Credit Rating Approval Process for Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)”.

For further guidance on the approval process for qualification products, please refer to the document “SQA Accreditation Qualification Products Approval Process”.

2 Qualification Products for SVQs

This section gives a more detailed description of the required content of the Qualification Products for SVQs.

2.1 SVQ Structure Document

When creating SVQ structures the SSC/B should always consult awarding bodies to ensure that the proposed structures can be assessed and certificated. SSC/Bs should also consult industry representatives to ensure that functions are recognised properly in the award titles and any pathways.

The structure document must give the following information:

2.1.1 SVQ Title

The title of the SVQ should reflect the function of the qualification and not the job role or occupation. In many cases the function will be taken directly from the title of the suite of NOS from which it is derived. The title of each individual NOS should explicitly indicate the content, and where appropriate, the context of the unit. NOS titles should be meaningful in their own right and must not indicate level.

2.1.2 Level

All SVQs are given a level which reflects the complexity, responsibility and autonomy of the job. SVQs currently range from level 1 to level 5. When SVQs are credit rated for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) they will also be given levels which reflect their position in the 12 levels of the SCQF. Please refer to the website www.scqf.org.uk for information on the notional place for each SVQ level in the SCQF.

2.1.3 Structure

A summary of the structure must be produced which shows the number and combination of mandatory and optional units. In some structures additional freestanding units are included, but these do not contribute to achievement of the SVQ. The structures must indicate any prescribed pathways for sub-functions (see below), and identify imported units and their originating SSC/B.

In some circumstances, structures may consist of mandatory units only. This should be the exception rather than the rule, because we encourage flexibility and choice. Therefore, if there are no optional units the SSC/B rationale for the qualification should explain why.

Awarding bodies will eventually submit SVQs for accreditation using the unit titles as shown on the structure document. Therefore, any differences between the NOS title(s) and SVQ unit title(s) must be supported by a strong rationale which can be communicated clearly to awarding bodies for dissemination to their centres and candidates.

2.1.4 Pathways

Pathways can be contained within the structure and normally indicate mandatory and optional units for sub-functions within the SVQ for example Construction Site Supervision Level 3 has several pathways including ‘Demolition’, ‘Conservation’ and ‘Residential Development’.

Any pathways should be named in the qualification structure summary and should be comparable in terms of the level of demand. It is possible for the same unit to appear in different pathways.

It is an awarding body responsibility to be able to certificate the pathways separately or endorse these on certificates.

2.1.5 Other Considerations

i) Flexibility, Overlap and Progression

Where possible, SSC/Bs should try to ensure that the learner has access to an appropriate choice of units within the qualification structure, that they are able to count relevant prior achievement from units and that there are progression opportunities from lower level SVQs to higher ones.

By ensuring that the qualification structures reflect industry needs, SSC/Bs will also ensure that the learner’s opportunities are maximised.

ii) Nesting

When trying to produce a structure that offers flexibility and progression, SSC/Bs may consider using units at a higher or lower level within the structure. The use of different mandatory units in different levels of SVQ within the same discipline is encouraged. Where possible, the mandatory section of any SVQ should be technical in nature and reflect the technical competences required to achieve the function(s) described in the qualification title.

In the exceptional circumstances where an entire qualification is embedded within another qualification structure, the higher level qualification must have substantial additional demand.

iii) SCQF Credit Rating and Levelling of SVQs

When developing a qualification structure, SSC/Bs should consider the implications of the structure design on SCQF credit rating. The SCQF level for the SVQ will be determined by the level of the mandatory units. Therefore, if the mandatory units are non-technical, this can result in the SCQF level for the SVQ being lower than the expected or notional SCQF level. For example, non-technical units in a level 3 SVQ could result in the qualification being allocated SCQF level 5 rather than the expected or notional SCQF level of 6 or 7.

2.2 Assessment Strategy

2.2.1 What is an assessment strategy?

Introduced to define enhancements to assessment, the assessment strategy should define the principles which ensure that SVQs are assessed according to the needs of the industry sector.

SSC/Bs are responsible for determining an assessment strategy which is appropriate for the sector and can be implemented by the Awarding Bodies active in that sector.

In defining the assessment strategy, the SSC/B must:

- a) **recommend** how external quality control of assessment will be achieved. It is the role of the SSC/B, in conjunction with awarding bodies, to determine the most appropriate form of external quality control;
- b) **define** which aspects of the national occupational standards must always be assessed through performance in the workplace;
- c) **define** the extent to which simulated working conditions may be used to assess competence and any characteristics that simulation should have, including definitions of what would constitute a 'realistic working environment' for the qualifications concerned;
- d) **define** the occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers in consultation with awarding bodies.

An assessment strategy can apply to a particular SVQ or group of SVQs. It is perfectly possible to have different assessment strategies for SVQs at different levels in the same sector. It is also possible to define a single strategy with an appendix covering specific aspects for each occupational group within a common framework. It is also acceptable for one strategy to cover a number of SVQs.

The important criterion is that the strategy is appropriate to each and all of the SVQs to which it applies.

The assessment strategy will usually be submitted at or around the same time as submission of SVQ structures to SQA Accreditation for approval. When providing support for the assessment strategy, awarding bodies should confirm their ability to implement its requirements and that they believe the strategy is appropriate for the qualification.

When a new or revised SVQ structure is developed the SSC/B should ensure that even where an existing or overarching strategy is to be used, awarding bodies can still implement the strategy. Awarding body support should, therefore, be included when the new or revised structure is submitted for approval by SQA Accreditation.

2.2.2 Implementing an assessment strategy

Awarding bodies which seek to offer the SVQ(s) to which a strategy applies must comply with its principles. Where an assessment strategy has been approved any new awarding body must be able to implement the strategy, even if they were not party to its development. The awarding body implements the strategy by designing an assessment methodology which complies with the recommendations for each component. While awarding bodies must all comply with the strategy, each may

design a different approach, which will be documented in the awarding body's assessment methodology.

For more information on assessment methodologies, see *Section 4.3.2, How Will the Evidence be Assessed?*

2.3 Core Skills Signposting

SSC/Bs are required to produce a Core Skills Signposting when SVQ structures are produced and submitted for approval. The signposting document should indicate where each of the units provides the opportunity for each or any of the Core Skills to be developed, and at what level on the SCQF. For this purpose, the Core Skills should be signposted against the Workplace Core Skills Units approved in June 2008. The unit descriptors can be found on the SQA website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/470.html

The five Core Skills are:

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Information Communication Technology
- Problem Solving
- Working with Others

The signposting indicates where there is potential to generate evidence for a Core Skill. It does not necessarily mean that evidence generated when undertaking the unit will guarantee full achievement of that Core Skill. It is a useful tool when planning assessments to see if a candidate could possibly achieve a Core Skill when undertaking a unit. However, it must be stressed that the candidate must be assessed against the full Core Skill unit specification before achievement of that Core Skill can be certificated.

Where Core Skills Signposting exists and the SSC/B changes the content of related NOS, a revised signposting must be carried out and resubmitted.

3 Approval of Qualification Products for SVQs

The UK NOS Panel (UKNP) has the remit of approving NOS Action Plans and the resultant NOS. As of 1 April 2009 Qualification Products intended for use in Scottish qualifications, and SCQF Credit Rating of SVQs, are subject to approval by SQA Accreditation via its Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG). This group also considers and approves qualification accreditation submissions from awarding bodies.

3.1 Approval of Interim Milestones

Milestone evidence for qualification-related projects should be submitted to SQA Accreditation using the dedicated mailbox qualifications@sqa.org.uk.

Milestone evidence will be considered by Accreditation Managers without the need for ACG approval. When SSC/Bs are notified of milestone approval, UKCES will also be notified by the Accreditation Manager to allow related payments.

3.2 Approval of Final Outputs

Qualification products should be sent directly to SQA Accreditation using the dedicated mailbox qualifications@sqa.org.uk together with supporting evidence which shows that these products are appropriate for use in Scotland. This evidence will include some or all of the following:

- NOS on which the qualifications will be based
- Support from the originating body for use of imported or tailored units
- Support from awarding bodies for the assessment strategy. This is required where the submission includes new or amended qualification structures, even if the assessment strategy remains unchanged or an overarching assessment strategy is being used
- Support from awarding bodies which confirms the qualification structures, including any proposed pathways and endorsements, can be implemented, and intention to offer the SVQ.
- Project report showing engagement with Scottish stakeholders, including SQA Approved Awarding Bodies
- Implementation plan for amendments to qualifications
- Tracking documents which show changes to previously approved versions

Accreditation Managers will assess submissions and liaise directly with SSC/Bs for any clarification or further information, and will personally present submissions to ACG. As ACG meets weekly, Accreditation Managers aim to take submissions to the group within 15 working days of receipt of the required information.

SQA Accreditation will notify UKCES of receipt of submissions, the date of the ACG meeting which will consider the submissions and ACG approval. Approval will allow payments to be made by UKCES.

4 SVQs: Stages of Development

4.1 The need for an SVQ is established

When seeking accreditation of SVQs, awarding bodies must demonstrate that there is a need for the qualifications in Scotland.

The SSC/B's development of the Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) or the SSB Qualification Strategy (QS) should identify industry qualification needs. Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) gathered and analysed in these processes should indicate skills needs and skills gaps which may be addressed by qualifications. This process will involve discussion and consultation with Scottish employers, government departments and agencies and other members of the Skills for Business Network as well as awarding bodies for their knowledge of the qualifications landscape.

The research involved in these processes will also involve gathering information about qualification provision in the area(s) covered by the SSC/B, and, therefore, may also indicate gaps in provision.

It is likely, then, that the need for an SVQ was identified before the NOS were developed. However, it is also possible that demand for an SVQ arises only after NOS have been made available. This need may be suggested by one or more of the SSC/B's stakeholders. This information may be discussed at awarding body forum meetings convened by the SSC/B, thereby encouraging awarding bodies to consider the case for developing an SVQ. To enable the qualification development process, dialogue between SSC/Bs and awarding bodies should begin at the earliest possible point.

It may be that the market is insufficient to justify more than one awarding body offering the SVQ. Factors which will affect an awarding body's business case will also include other qualifications in their portfolio and the political importance attached to certain subjects. Local needs may be more easily identified by awarding bodies whose assessment centres have strong links with local employers. It is important that awarding bodies liaise with the SSC/B to ensure these needs are recognised. SQA Accreditation requires that awarding bodies provide evidence of support for qualifications from Scottish employers, not just in principle but also as intended users of the qualifications.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop functional and occupational maps • Map existing qualification provision to functional and occupational maps • Identify gaps in provision of NOS and qualifications • Develop NOS • Develop qualification products in response to industry needs, reflecting functional and occupational maps • Obtain awarding body support for SVQ structures and assessment strategies • Encourage awarding bodies to develop SVQs • Supply supporting evidence of need for the SVQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the SQS processes, identifying provision of qualifications in the footprint of SSC/Bs • Identify the need for qualifications • Ensure they are represented in, and contribute to, the development process by Officers and/or External Verifiers attending steering and/or working group meetings • Comment on whether proposed structures are appropriate for qualification purposes and the needs of users • Refer to the SSC/B's published LMI to help confirm that a market exists • Identify business case for qualifications according to its own criteria • Develop marketing plan for the new SVQ

4.2 Qualification Products are Sourced

It is normal for SSC/Bs to develop SVQ structures, Core Skills Signposting and assessment strategies as part of the project to develop the NOS because the project identified a need for the SVQ. It is also possible that the SSC will have carried out a credit rating exercise for the SCQF, the outcome of which would be submitted to SQA Accreditation for approval.

When awarding bodies come to develop SVQs, therefore, the qualification products should already exist. Awarding bodies must source these from the SSC/B. Awarding bodies should ensure they have the SQA Accreditation approved versions of these documents and that the qualification content reflects the final NOS. Submissions for accreditation of SVQs should, where available, include the approved SCQF levels and credits.

NOS are hosted on the NOS Directory website, www.ukstandards.org. Also, SSC/Bs may have uploaded them to their own websites along with the qualification products, but whether they make them available as downloads or by request, SSC/Bs must ensure these documents are freely available. This is a contractual requirement of receiving public funding.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure copies of NOS, SVQ structures, Core Skills Signposting and assessment strategies are freely available• Make available the approved SCQF Credit Ratings for the SVQ and units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain NOS from the NOS Directory website• Obtain SVQ structures, Core Skills Signposting, assessment strategies and SCQF Credit Ratings from the SSC/SSB

4.3 The SVQ is developed

Development of qualifications is in the remit of awarding bodies. However, awarding bodies need not work alone in this development; they may work in partnership with other awarding bodies and this work may be facilitated by the SSC/B. It has been recognised that partnership working can help to establish a uniformity of approach, especially in the development of evidence requirements.

4.3.1 What is to be Assessed?

Units are the building blocks which make up a qualification and which prescribe the competences required for a given function. Units are divided into elements (single element units are permitted) which describe specific components of a function.

The number of units required to achieve the qualification will vary in accordance with the level and complexity of the function. Units can be separately certificated.

Units will also include a summary or overview of the standard required to help the candidate judge whether a particular unit is appropriate for them.

SVQs comprise the following features, the last of which is the material developed by the awarding body to turn the NOS into the SVQ unit:

a) Units

Unit titles should be as shown in the SSC/B structure document and are normally taken directly from the NOS, titles of which must not indicate level. The title of a unit should explicitly indicate the content, and where appropriate, the context of the unit. Unit titles should be meaningful in their own right, as candidates may achieve, and receive certificates, for individual units. Units may be broken down into elements.

b) Performance Criteria (PCs)

These are taken directly from the NOS and define what is expected of the candidate. They state the outcomes that the candidate must demonstrate in order to be deemed competent in the unit. The candidate is assessed against the performance criteria.

c) Knowledge and Understanding

The NOS should state what the candidate needs to know and/or understand in order to consistently meet the performance criteria. A candidate must demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge and understanding to carry out the function.

d) Values and Behaviours

Some SVQ units also have additional requirements for candidates to demonstrate certain personal attributes, in order for the candidate to demonstrate competent performance. These will be contained within the NOS.

e) Evidence Requirements

The evidence requirements specify the type and amount of evidence that an individual should produce in order to demonstrate competence. Evidence requirements may also include the range or scope of circumstances in which performance, knowledge and/or understanding must be demonstrated. They are produced by awarding bodies after the development of the NOS and are submitted along with an accreditation submission. As already stated, the production of evidence requirements is not an SSC/B role although they may play a role in enabling development of evidence requirements for use by a group of awarding bodies.

Evidence requirements complete the SVQ units, and should be considered when credit rating for the SCQF, to help determine the number of hours required to achieve each unit.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a reference point for the development of the SVQ and if necessary, help awarding bodies develop common evidence requirements and supporting documentation • Recommend or supply subject specialists for writing or vetting of written material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On its own or with other awarding bodies, develop evidence requirements and supporting documentation for centres, candidates and awarding body staff using the SVQ

4.3.2 How Will the Evidence be Assessed?

In addition to development of evidence requirements, awarding bodies must define how these requirements will be assessed. This ‘assessment methodology’ will vary according to sector and in response to differences in assessment strategies. Some SVQs are assessed entirely in the workplace, but some have components which are assessed through simulation in realistic working environments, and there is variation in how external quality control is specified in assessment strategies. The awarding body should define its assessment methodology. This should describe :

1. how external quality control of assessment will be conducted;
2. how the awarding body will ensure assessment of candidates through performance in the workplace;
3. how the awarding body will monitor any use of simulation;
4. how the awarding body will ensure the defined occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers are recognised;

to meet the essential requirements of the assessment strategy.

Where an SVQ contains imported units, the methodology may have to reflect the requirements of more than one assessment strategy as appropriate.

Each awarding body may need to use different methodologies across its portfolio of SVQs.

The Core Skill Signposting document should be used by centres when making candidate assessment plans. This will enable the assessment of Core Skills to be integrated in, or aligned with, assessment of the SVQ.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the suitability of the awarding body to offer the qualification to the sector • Confirm the suitability of the awarding body’s proposed assessment methodology • May suggest appropriate experts for awarding bodies to appoint as External Verifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop assessment methodology in response to sector needs and the requirements of the assessment strategy • Confirm suitability of assessment with the SSC/B • Develop supporting material for the qualification • Assess staffing needs for the new qualification and identify potential External Verifiers

5 An awarding body submits a request for accreditation

SQA Accreditation approves awarding bodies and only those approved bodies may make submissions for accreditation of their qualifications.

As mentioned already, Core Skills Signposting, assessment strategies and SVQ structures are not hosted on the NOS Directory, so the awarding body must source these from the SSC/B. These documents must be included in the SVQ submission, and will be checked for accuracy against those held by SQA Accreditation.

The awarding body's submission should have the support of the relevant SSC/B. This should indicate that SSC/B staff have been made aware of how the awarding body intends to meet all requirements of the assessment strategy, and can confirm they are satisfied with the awarding body's approach.

The submission must also have support from Scottish employers. Note that employer support for the development of NOS will not be accepted as support for the qualification. SQA Accreditation requires that support from Scottish employers should be specifically for the qualification and awarding body under consideration, and should demonstrate a need for the specific qualification.

The Accreditation Manager will assess the submission and liaise with the awarding body until a decision can be made on whether the SVQ can be accredited. The submission will be taken by the Accreditation Manager to a meeting of ACG, and this group will decide either to:

- a) accredit the SVQ
- b) accredit with conditions
- c) defer accreditation

A decision to accredit subject to conditions allows the SVQ to go live but requires some action which the awarding body must complete by a given date. A decision to defer accreditation puts the submission back in the hands of the awarding body, to be resubmitted once identified issues have been addressed.

When making a submission for accreditation, an awarding body will need supporting information, some of which must come from SSC/Bs.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply the following to awarding bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification purpose and aim • Scottish Industry employment figures • Assessment strategy • Core Skills Signposting • SVQ structure • Support for submission, including support for assessment methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and include the following information in a submission for accreditation, some of which must come from the SSC/SSB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification rationale/ purpose and aim • Progression opportunities • Correct details of qualification content (NOS, structure, assessment strategy, Core Skills Signposting) • Assessment methodology • Support from the SSC/SSB • Guidance and support materials, including evidence requirements • Marketing plan and material • Support from Scottish employers

The above lists are indicative of information required. Awarding bodies are advised to refer to the SQA Accreditation guidance on completing the SVQ submission forms for more detail.

6 SQA Accreditation accredits the SVQ

The SVQ will be accredited for a fixed period. This will vary according to the age of NOS available and any plan for review of NOS, or where there is a particular qualification-related issue such as projected low uptake or growth of qualification market.

See also: Appendix 2: Types of Qualification Submission

and [The SQA Accreditation Website: www.sqa.org.uk/accreditation](http://www.sqa.org.uk/accreditation)

When an SVQ is accredited, SQA Accreditation will inform the awarding body of the decision, including any conditions and the date by which they conditions must be met.

SQA Accreditation will also inform the SSC/B which specified the structure on which the SVQ is based.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compile a record of which awarding bodies are accredited for which SVQs• Record which other SSC/SSBs have imported units• Show evidence of dialogue with originators of any imported units when either party reviews performance of NOS• Take part in any launch or other promotional activities agreed with the awarding body• Update, where required, any promotional or recording processes to recognise availability of the new qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure any conditions are met within the agreed timescales• Update certification processes to ensure the new SVQ can be certificated• Ensure that processes and staff are in place to carry out approval of any centres wishing to offer the new qualification• Where appropriate, hold a launch event, or take other steps to promote the qualification

7 The SVQ is reviewed

During the life of the qualification, the awarding body should monitor the suitability of NOS and performance of the SVQ, gathering feedback from centres and awarding body staff, candidates and employers. Where appropriate this should be passed to the originating SSC/B, which should actively seek feedback from awarding bodies. This could be through an awarding body forum or in writing, and should be collated by the SSC/B for use when reviewing the NOS and qualification-related products.

Changes to NOS may be required as a result if changes in the functions covered, changes in policy or changes in legislation. Although it is good practice to avoid reference to specific legislation in NOS, changes in law or new legislation can have an effect.

If NOS have been imported from any other SSC/B, the feedback should be passed to them as appropriate. SSC/Bs must keep records of importation of units by others. This will allow them to inform those other SSC/Bs of changes and include them in any review.

Awarding bodies should be informed of, and invited to participate in, any review. The outcomes of NOS reviews may or may not require alteration of the SVQ before the accreditation period is over, or there may be grounds for a new version of the SVQ.

Historically, NOS have been reviewed either by periodic or incremental review. Each review can have a range of outputs, and it is more useful to describe the changes in terms of how these impact on qualifications. Minor changes may only require an advice note from awarding bodies to assessment centres. Substantial change and development of new suites of NOS, qualification structures and/or assessment strategies will normally require a review by awarding bodies of existing qualifications for reaccreditation. There is a range of other actions which may be appropriate

Awarding bodies should track the accreditation dates of SVQs. They should also check for any NOS reviews which are complete, in progress or planned, before considering what action needs to be taken in anticipation of end dates. Likewise, SSC/Bs should track the accreditation dates of SVQs to inform reviews and implementation plans for change.

SSC/B	Awarding Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information on the performance of NOS and SVQs from Scottish stakeholders, including awarding bodies, as a matter of routine • Track the accreditation periods of SVQs and the awarding bodies accredited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information on the performance of SVQs as a matter of routine • Contribute to the process of NOS and SVQ review by SSC/SSBs • Track the accreditation periods of SVQs and liaise with SSC/SSBs • Maintain SVQs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure currency of standards • align accreditation periods to availability of new NOS • review and seek reaccreditation when new NOS are available • Submit registration and certification figures to SQA Accreditation

7.1 Outcomes of NOS Review

Following a review there are various options open to awarding bodies, depending on the outcome of the review. Awarding bodies may choose to accredit and reaccredit SVQs or not, according to their own policies and business procedures. However, if an SSC/B alters the NOS on which an SVQ is based, the approved awarding bodies have certain duties and responsibilities. Depending on the change, they may have to decide whether they will continue offering the SVQ in its current form, alter the existing qualification or request reaccreditation of a replacement qualification. These decisions must be made through dialogue with the SSC/B, who will advise on the nature and extent of the change to NOS and the urgency of updating the SVQ in accordance with any agreed implementation plan prepared during the review. It is important to note that not all changes to NOS will require a change to the SVQ.

Where an organisation is unsure about the individual impact of change they should seek guidance from their SQA Accreditation Manager. SSC/Bs will help awarding bodies to judge the impact of change by producing a summary of change report as the basis of their advice on implementing the changes.

SSC/Bs may review NOS continually, to ensure they remain appropriate. Users other than awarding bodies can keep up-to-date with developments by ensuring they hold or refer to the most recent versions. Awarding bodies, however, will probably prefer not to change qualifications during the accreditation period, and will wish to avoid making changes during the first and last year of the accreditation period.

SSC/Bs must ensure that all awarding bodies with qualifications based on the NOS being reviewed are kept informed. It is important to have a communication plan which ensures that interested stakeholders are informed of timescales and warned of the likely extent of change during a review, as well as details of final project outputs at the end. This will allow awarding bodies to plan for amendment or reaccreditation

of qualifications, and to extend existing accreditation periods where the project end date does not allow enough lead-in time for completion of qualification work.

SSC/Bs will be expected to communicate with:

- Scottish employers and any relevant industry representatives
- Professional institutions
- Awarding bodies
- Other SSC/Bs
- SQA Accreditation and UKCES

As an output of any review, SSC/Bs must produce an implementation plan for each individual project. Where more than one suite of NOS, units or qualifications is to be reviewed, each suite must be treated as a separate project. The implementation plan should include the following as appropriate:

- information on changes to NOS, units and qualification structures
- changes made to assessment strategies
- amendments to Core skills
- a list of qualifications and awarding bodies that will be affected
- evidence of communication across sectors where other SSC/B are importers of existing NOS
- information and agreement on timescales for implementation by awarding bodies

SSC/Bs must also keep other SSC/Bs informed of changes to NOS which have been imported into other qualification structures. The importing SSC/Bs can then make decisions to update their imported NOS and units as appropriate. They must give due consideration to any guidance from the originating SSC/B contained in the implementation plan.

Awarding bodies should consider the impact of the changes and implement these in line with the SSC/B implementation plan where appropriate. This may be agreed at SSC/B awarding body forum meetings where awarding bodies will consider the impact of the changes and agree mutual or individual dates for changes to their accredited qualifications. If the review results in a change which is fundamental to the competence of the candidate, or is related to activities which pose risks to the candidate, the SSC/B may feel that change to the qualification is essential. This must be communicated clearly to awarding bodies in the implementation plan.

Where an assessment strategy is being changed, SSC/Bs should ensure an early dialogue with awarding bodies, particularly where requirements will affect assessment or delivery of the units or qualification.

Awarding bodies must communicate any changes to their centres in order that they have time to make the necessary arrangements and inform Assessors and Internal Verifiers.

External Verifiers should also be familiar with any changes and be updated on a regular basis via awarding body training events and as part of ongoing CPD.

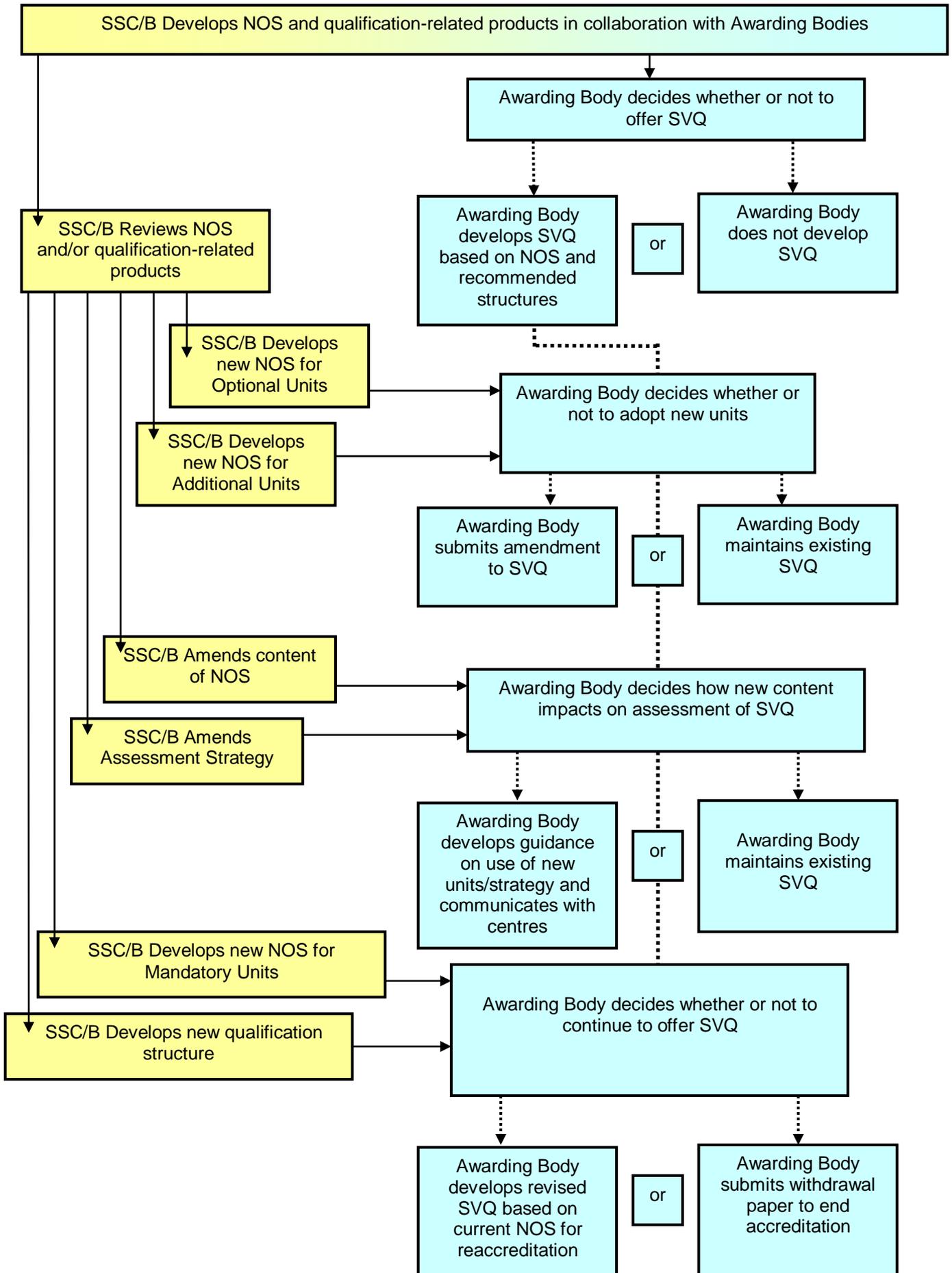
Guidance documents produced by the awarding bodies must be updated to reflect any changes.

Any changes to units or qualification structures which decrease or increase the level of demand on the end user or qualification structure *may* require an awarding body to make a submission to SQA Accreditation. It should be noted that changes can, in some instances, be made to NOS without affecting units or qualifications. Where necessary, awarding bodies should seek guidance on individual submissions from the SQA Accreditation Managers.

SSC/B Responsibilities	Awarding Body Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place an overall communication plan to ensure engagement with organisations, groups and networks. • Develop an implementation plan for dissemination of review outcomes for the sector for <u>each</u> suite of NOS under review. • Inform other SSC/Bs of changes to NOS and units which they have imported into qualification structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep abreast of reviews which affect accredited qualifications. • Consider the impact of the changes and implement these in line with the SSC/B implementation plan where appropriate. • Communicate any changes to their centres in order that they have time to make the necessary arrangements and inform Assessors and Internal Verifiers. • Update External Verifiers of changes via awarding body training events and as part of ongoing CPD. • Update guidance documents. • Make amendment or recaccreditation submissions as appropriate to implement changes resulting from reviews.

Appendix 1: Diagram

The diagram opposite shows different outcomes of NOS projects and potential actions for awarding bodies resulting from these, starting from initial development of NOS.



Appendix 2: Types of Qualification Submission

It is recommended that awarding bodies liaise with SQA Accreditation when determining the type of submission required.

There are five types of accreditation submission:

1 Accreditation (Form AC2 refers)

This is a submission for accreditation to award an SVQ which has not been accredited before. It should also be used for an SVQ which has expired or was withdrawn.

2 Amendment (Form AC4 refers)

This is a submission to amend the content of an existing SVQ. An amendment submission is required in each of the following situations:

- a) Where there has been a change to a unit, or a number of units, held within the structure of an existing qualification
- b) Where there has been a change to the Assessment Strategy
- c) Where there has been a change to the awarding partnership or awarding arrangements
- d) Where additional contexts/pathways have been added to award structure(s).

Note: Amendments to NOS may not always require amendments to SVQs. Certain changes in response to legislation or health and safety issues may be critical, but otherwise the decision to amend a qualification during its accreditation period remains with the awarding body.

3 Extension (Form AC3 Refers)

This is a submission to extend the accreditation period of an existing SVQ during a period where the existing NOS are under revision, where planned revision is pending or where a period of continued provision is required while an awarding body is considering whether or not they still wish to offer the qualification. Awarding bodies are asked to keep the number of extensions to a minimum.

4 Reaccreditation (Form AC2 refers)

This is a submission for accreditation to award a new qualification which will directly replace an existing qualification which is currently accredited. A reaccreditation occurs where the accreditation period is ending and new NOS are available.

5 Withdrawal (Form AC5 refers)

This is a submission to withdraw an SVQ either during or at the end of its accreditation period, where the awarding body has decided it no longer wishes to offer the qualification. This may be because of low or no uptake, or because it no longer has the resources or staff to support the qualification.

For the relevant forms and guidance on their completion, go to the SQA Accreditation web page at www.sqa.org.uk/accreditation and click on the link to Forms and Guidance.