

SQA Accreditation Annual Review 2013–14

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Chief Executive's Statement

Throughout the operating year 2013–14, SQA Accreditation looked to work alongside other stakeholders in a dynamically developing environment to address existing and new challenges, and to identify strategic and operational opportunities.

In Scotland, the college regionalisation work has been firmly embedded. There are now 13 regional boards, with many of Scotland's colleges merged within these regions. The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, chaired by Sir Ian Wood, published its interim findings in September 2013. We look forward to the publication of the next steps and to assisting the Scottish Government with its implementation.

In England, the Apprenticeship reforms and the Adult Review of Vocational Qualifications have been prominent. As many of our stakeholders operate across all four of the UK nations, we need to be mindful of these reforms and ensure that we adequately understand the developing needs, expectations and requirements of awarding bodies and sector skills councils (SSCs). Similarly, there needs to be a reciprocal understanding of the differences in the skills systems and the specific needs, expectations and requirements of Scotland.

A significant activity for SQA Accreditation this past year was the review of our Regulatory Principles. Initially a small-scale internal review based on the first 12 months of operating against the Principles, it was quickly identified that a larger review was needed. A comprehensive consultation with stakeholders was conducted, which resulted in a revised set of Regulatory Principles, launched on 1 April 2014. I am convinced that the flexibility afforded by the revision, and the significant support evident from consultation, mean the revisions made will be beneficial to our approved awarding bodies.

The Universal Services Commissioning processes and associated timescales were challenging. However, strong collaborative working arrangements and collective focus generally delivered very positive results. This is an important area of work for SSCs and for us. As we enter the third and final year of Universal Services, we will continue to feed back potential areas for improvement to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

On a statistical note, over the last year we saw an increase in accredited qualifications, from 940 to 1,008. Of these, 624 accredited qualifications sit within Modern Apprenticeships, compared to 483 last year. What is particularly encouraging is the increase in the number of candidates undertaking an accredited qualification: from 92,243 registrations this time last year, to 114,104 this year; and an increase from 63,958 certifications last year to 86,665. These figures support the notion that business confidence has returned.

Dr Janet Brown
Chief Executive, SQA

Operational activity 2013–14

SQA Accreditation is a small team of 23 which has the responsibility to quality assure qualifications offered in Scotland by approving awarding bodies and accrediting their qualifications. The Accreditation Unit consistently aims to work efficiently and effectively to fulfil its responsibilities and carry out continuous improvement activity in a time of resource restrictions and environmental change. SQA Accreditation's operational activities are driven by the responsive nature of the team and their aim to continually review and improve processes and systems for the benefit of all external and internal customers.

This section summarises SQA Accreditation's annual operational activity for April 2013 to the end of March 2014. It gives an overview of significant developments that occurred throughout the year, and shows how SQA Accreditation met its operational objectives for the year through the implementation of project groups.

Significant developments

Regulatory Principles Review

During 2013–14, SQA Accreditation carried out an internal review of the Regulatory Principles (2011). A revised set of Regulatory Principles was developed as an outcome of this review, which included a formal consultation with stakeholders. A report detailing the findings from the consultation is available online at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46985.html>.

The reviewed regulatory principles were launched at a stakeholder event on 24 March 2014, and feedback was positive.

The Regulatory Principles (2014) went live on 1 April 2014 and can be accessed via the SQA Accreditation website at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42165.2702.html>.

The revised Regulatory Principles (2014) underpin the SQA corporate goal to 'independently accredit, quality assure and regulate approved awarding bodies and qualifications thereby safeguarding the interests, of the quality of the qualification to learners, employers, parents, funding bodies and government.'

Universal Services

During year two of the Universal Services Commissioning process there were once again considerable demands and challenges for all stakeholders involved. However, important lessons from the first year were applied, and there was a more balanced distribution of projects over the operational year, along with improved working arrangements.

Output completion dates were scheduled more evenly over 2013–14. Just over 32% of the total outputs for Scotland, encompassing National Occupational

Standards (NOS), Qualification Products and Modern Apprenticeships were scheduled for completion in February during year two — a significantly positive comparison to the 60% due in the final month of year one.

Operational pressures were sustained for SSCs, and tight timescales brought challenges in consistently ensuring that the best quality consultation was delivered. In addressing this and other issues, important support was provided across SSC consortiums, and organisations looked at alternative ways of working to improve results.

The continuation of close working relationships between SQA Accreditation and SSCs again helped to reap positive results. Support, guidance, collective understanding and flexibility facilitated successful project outputs and outcomes. This meant that the vast majority of submissions achieved first-time approval from Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG). Most projects met their deadlines, with some completed early.

In total there were 388 project outputs of which 371 (96%) were delivered on time. A further 12 were completed in March, closing out 98.7% of 2013–14 projects.

SQA Accreditation again carried out a review to identify stakeholder experiences and confirm successes and opportunities for improvement. It was particularly pleasing to see that there was a strong correlation of views and feedback from all concerned. As we enter the third and final year of Universal Services funding, we will strive to maintain and enhance our collaborative working arrangements with SSCs and to provide the best possible foundation for the future commissioning environment.

UK Reform

The Scottish Government asked Sir Ian Wood to chair the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. It published its interim report in September 2013. This report predominantly focused on the senior phase at secondary schools, and the transition that young people make from school into the workplace or into further education at Scottish colleges. The report recognises that there are clear pathways for young people who wish to progress to university, but says that they are less clear for those who wish to enter employment or attend college.

The interim report makes a number of recommendations, including that there should be pathways in the senior phase that lead to the delivery of recognised industry vocational qualifications alongside the traditional academic qualifications. As the statutory accreditation body for Scotland, we see a clear role for us with regards to this recommendation. Young people in the senior phase, and their parents, need to have confidence in the industry vocational qualifications that may be offered, and to be assured that these qualifications do provide the necessary progression opportunities.

The Commission intends to publish its final report in May 2014, and we look forward to working with and supporting the Scottish Government in taking forward the implementations.

Over the course of 2013–14, we have been monitoring developments in England with regards to the reforms of apprenticeships and vocational qualifications. Whilst we recognise that these are England-only initiatives, there is the possibility that these reforms could have an impact in Scotland, and as the national regulator in Scotland we need to be alert to the potential for unintended consequences for the Scottish vocational education and training (VET) system.

European Initiatives

SQA Accreditation is an active member of the UK Co-ordination Group for VET. We continue to monitor developments across a range of European initiatives, including the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). In addition, our Head of Accreditation, George Brown, acts as Scotland's National Reference Point (NRP) for the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), on behalf of the Scottish VQ Board.

During 2013–14, George represented the UK on one of the two EQAVET working groups. This group was tasked with producing guidance on aligning a quality assurance approach with EQAVET. The group used two common quality assurance models, ISO9001 and the European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM), as the means to produce the guidance. The guidance and the ISO9001 and EFQM mapping tables can be found at <http://www.eqavet.eu/WebBasedQA/GNS/home.aspx>.

SQA Accreditation will map its recently revised Regulatory Principles (2014) against the EQAVET indicators and will publish the mapping on its website.

Awarding body/SSC event

SQA Accreditation holds an annual stakeholder event bringing together SQA Accreditation's approved awarding bodies, SSCs and standards-setting bodies. The event is an opportunity for SQA Accreditation to share information with its stakeholders, reviewing the past year's activities and outlining the plans for the coming year. The event took place at New St Mirren Park, Paisley, on 24 March 2014.

Representatives from 27 awarding bodies and 14 SSCs and standards-setting bodies attended the event. Members of SQA's Accreditation Committee also attended, along with SQA's Chief Executive, Janet Brown.

The morning session consisted of a presentation from Scott Markwick, Senior Regulation Manager, launching SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles (2014). This presentation included an outline of key changes to SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements, and emphasised the support that was

available to awarding bodies. The presentation was followed by workshops for awarding bodies to discuss these changes in more detail and address any concerns or questions they had.

There were also workshops for SSCs and standards-setting bodies during which they reviewed Universal Services 2013–14 and discussed possible improvements for 2014–15.

Last September, the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, chaired by Sir Ian Wood, published its interim findings. The second part of the day consisted of a presentation from Hugh McAloon, Scottish Government, who provided an update on the progress of the Commission and the possible next steps.

The latter part of the afternoon was dedicated to updating stakeholders on the future activity of SQA Accreditation and to gather feedback from stakeholders on potential areas for improvement for SQA Accreditation. George Brown, Head of Accreditation gave an overview of SQA Accreditation's Operational Plan 2014–15, and Andrew Crone, Senior Accreditation Manager, delivered a presentation on SQA Accreditation's Continual Improvement Plans. These presentations were followed by an open floor discussion.

Stakeholders were encouraged throughout the day to ask questions and SQA Accreditation staff were available to respond to any questions from attendees.

Further information on the event is available on SQA Accreditation's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48423.3185.html.

Regulation Policy Review

During 2013–14 the Regulation section undertook a review of all Regulation policies to ensure that they continued to be effective to the objectives of the organisation. The following SQA Accreditation policies were reviewed and updated where required:

- ◆ Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy
- ◆ Awarding Body Approval Policy
- ◆ Awarding Body Sanctions Policy
- ◆ Awarding Body Removal of Approved Awarding Body Status Policy
- ◆ Awarding Body Zero Uptake Policy

All policies are available online at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42389.2735.html>

Accreditation Policy Review

During 2013–14, the Accreditation section undertook a review of all relevant policies, which led to some policies being revised and others replaced:

- ◆ The Criteria for Unit Accreditation and Approval of Qualification Products policies were replaced with work instructions.
- ◆ The Ensuring SVQs Meet Demand policy was replaced by the Zero Uptake policy.
- ◆ The review of the policy Lapsing Period for Accredited Qualifications led to a change to lapsing periods as proposed at our stakeholder event on 24 March 2014.
- ◆ The Embedded SVQs policy is currently under review.

Project groups

To ensure that the objectives identified in the operational plan could be realised, a series of internal project groups were established. These included representatives from each of the SQA Accreditation sections. The key objectives and findings for each project group are summarised here.

Awarding Body Approval

During 2013–14, the Awarding Body Approval Project Group reviewed and evaluated the awarding body approval process with a view to ensuring that an open and transparent application process is available to all prospective and new awarding bodies. A new enquiry form was developed to assist prospective awarding bodies carry out self-appraisal activity prior to making a request for approval.

The reviewed process, with advice and guidance, will be made available to prospective awarding bodies in 2014.

Further information on becoming an SQA approved awarding body is available on SQA Accreditation's website at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48712.html>.

Credit Rating

The key activity for the Credit Rating Group in 2013–14 was to review and revise the Credit Rating guidance document.

Refreshed guidance was shared with awarding bodies and SSCs/Standards Setting Bodies at our event on 24 March 2014.

The guidance was previously specifically for SVQs, but it now applies to all accredited qualifications. It has been re-ordered to flow more sequentially, and to give information on levelling, average candidate guidance, and the credit rating approach and process.

The project group will look at the Approval Process for Credit Rating and Levelling Accredited Qualifications in 2014–15.

De-approval

The De-approval Project Group was tasked with revising the existing Sanctions and Low Uptake Policies, which had been in existence for some time, and for producing a new policy which would allow SQA Accreditation to remove the approved status of an awarding body that failed to meet SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements on a regular basis or which no longer had any SQA accredited qualifications.

The project group's outputs were the following new/revised policies:

- ◆ Sanctions Policy
- ◆ Removal of Approved Awarding Body Status Policy
- ◆ Zero Uptake Policy

E-assessment and e-certification

The E-assessment and E-certification Project Group looked at the range of technology currently employed in the education sector. Its aim was to establish internal guidance on which factors relating to e-systems should be considered when reviewing qualification accreditation submissions and assessing whether or not an awarding body is meeting our regulatory requirements.

The project group produced internal guidance documents for the Accreditation section and the Regulation section on e-assessment and e-certification systems.

Eco Office

The Eco-Office Project Group's remit was to stimulate ideas for the reduction of paperwork and paper waste in the Accreditation team and trial these ideas to see which would work. The group devised several ideas:

- ◆ Weekly Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) paperwork to be reduced by giving members the choice to take their laptops to meetings or share copies of the printed papers.
- ◆ At all meetings, enable the use of electronic resources to prevent many copies of documents being printed.
- ◆ General awareness to all in the Accreditation team of the importance of keeping paper waste low and asking all to carry out a desk clear out.
- ◆ Every 6 months remind team members to keep printing and paper waste to a minimum and to carry out desk clear outs.
- ◆ Trial the use of tablet devices as an alternative to laptops for ease of portability to meetings, external audits and centre visits for the regulation team.

Equality and Diversity

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Regulation section undertook a review of all 39 awarding bodies' policies and procedures to evaluate the level of commitment and due regard to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

SQA Accreditation was satisfied that its approved awarding bodies were able to provide sufficient evidence of action taken to ensure that they were meeting their regulatory duty.

External communications

The External Communications Project Group's activities were largely based on the Operational Plan 2013–14 and findings from the Stakeholder Survey 2012. Other activities being undertaken during the year, such as the review of the website, also informed the group's work.

The project group undertook an audit of SQA Accreditation's current model of communicating externally. This relied on each section responding to specific questions, in addition to making use of documented systems and procedures. The next step was to use the information gathered to create a tool that could initially be used to find gaps in systems and procedures.

From this piece of work, an External Communications Marketing Strategy has been developed. It includes further advancing the usability potential of the External Communications audit tool. This has outlined the aims and objectives of the project group for the forthcoming year (2014–15).

Other Regulators

This project group's activity related to a number of SQA Accreditation's operational objectives. These objectives highlighted the need for SQA Accreditation to work with other regulators and stakeholders in Scotland to minimise potential risks to critical sectors and qualifications.

Formal documents, Memoranda of Understanding, Data Sharing Agreements and Confidentiality Agreements were developed and shared with an initial selection of stakeholders — the Care Inspectorate, Welsh Government, and Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Initial meetings were held, and a revised Data Sharing Agreement has been shared. Once these have been formally agreed with the initial stakeholders, we will aim to establish agreements with further relevant regulators and stakeholders.

Self-assessment

The Self-assessment Group developed a robust system for awarding bodies to demonstrate annually how effective their continuous improvement and internal audit activities are in relation to the recently-updated Regulatory Principles.

Advice and guidance material on self-assessment was included as part of the Regulatory Principles (2014) launch in March, and is available on SQA Accreditation's website at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42165.2702.html>.

Website

The Website Project Group was set up to address feedback from SQA Accreditation's Stakeholder Survey 2012 and make improvements to SQA Accreditation's webpages, particularly regarding ease of navigation and clear distinction between SQA Accreditation and SQA Awarding Body.

The project group gathered further detail from stakeholders via a questionnaire to identify core areas for improvement, and produced a paper outlining the possible options for SQA Accreditation's website. Following this activity, the project group gained approval to create a separate dedicated SQA Accreditation website.

The next stage for the project group will be to confirm the structure and content of the new website. This activity will be undertaken during 2014–15.

Audit Activity 2013–14

SQA Accreditation carries out monitoring of all SQA-approved awarding bodies. In 2013–14, SQA Accreditation's quality assurance processes were based on a range of measures, and compliance was assessed against the Regulatory Principles (2011) and the associated Regulatory Principles Directives. All analysis in this section is based on the audit and centre monitoring activity during this period.

Awarding body audits are based on a three-year cycle, depending on perceived risk. Centre monitoring visits check the effectiveness of the awarding body's systems and enable SQA Accreditation to determine trends to help improve both regulation and learner experience.

The SQA Accreditation audit and centre monitoring reports approved during 2013–14 included 15 audits and 27 centre monitoring reports (67 centre monitoring visits in total). This is an increase in activity from 2012–13, when 11 audits and 25 centre monitoring reports were completed.

Awarding bodies

The following organisations gained SQA-approved awarding body status in 2013–14:

- ◆ Association Sports Qualification (ASQ)
- ◆ Safe Cert Awards Ltd
- ◆ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Throughout the year, 20 organisations contacted SQA Accreditation to explore the possibility of becoming an approved awarding body, and 15 submitted formal requests through the enquiry process. Six of those have decided not to progress to the approval stage.

Two awarding bodies had their approved status withdrawn at their request, due to zero uptake of their accredited qualifications. These were

- ◆ National Open College Network (NOCN)
- ◆ Central YMCA Qualifications (CYQ)

At the end of the operational year 2013–14, there were 39 SQA-approved awarding bodies.

Quality Enhancement Rating

SQA Accreditation's regulatory system uses comprehensive risk assessment to concentrate resources on the areas that need them most. It does this by applying a Quality Enhancement Rating to each approved awarding body. SQA Accreditation applies a three-year cycle of audit: annual monitoring of centres

and/or training providers, compliance investigations, and extraordinary circumstances all determine the frequency of audits so that no inspection ever takes place without reason.

Analysis of recorded Requirements and Recommendations

Requirements 2013–14

Requirements are recorded where there is evidence that there is significant risk to either the learner or the integrity of the qualification and therefore immediate and comprehensive action is required. During audit, one requirement may be raised against multiple principles.

Grouping	Requirements raised
General (1)	4
Governance (2–5)	16
Qualification Design and Development (6–17)	17
Malpractice and Complaints (18–20)	3
Certification (21–22)	6
Appeals (23-25)	0
Total	46

Table 1: Requirements, by grouping

During this audit period, the number of requirements recorded against the grouping ‘Qualification Design and Development’ mirror the volume of detail within the Regulatory Principles, so it is to be expected that a large volume of the requirements align to this principle.

The requirements noted under ‘Governance’ were variable and did not reflect any significant trends.

Recommendations 2013–14

A recommendation may be made if auditors consider that an awarding body’s processes meet the Regulatory Principles but that either improvements could be made, or that current processes, if allowed to embed, may pose a risk to the learner or the integrity of a qualification. During audit, one recommendation may be raised against multiple principles.

Grouping	Recommendations raised
General (1)	2
Governance (2–5)	25
Qualification Design and Development (6–17)	14
Malpractice and Complaints (18–20)	4
Certification (21–22)	2
Appeals (23-25)	4
Total	51

Table 2: Recommendations, by grouping

The principles covered by the Qualification, Design and Development grouping contains a large amount of information, so it is to be expected that the majority of recommendations would align to this grouping.

Various improvements were identified and these were not attributable to one specific area.

Accreditation Activity 2013–14

SQA Accreditation's core functions include the approval of awarding bodies, approval of qualification products, and the accreditation of qualifications. This section provides an overview of accreditation activity for the period 2013–14.

For further detailed information on the performance of our accredited qualifications on a quarterly basis, please see our Quarterly Statistics Reports for 2013–14, which can be accessed online at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42397.html>.

Qualifications accredited

At the end of 2013–14, SQA Accreditation had a total of 1,008 accredited qualifications¹. This is made up of the following qualification types:

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)	708
Regulatory and Licensing qualifications (R&L)	57
Other qualifications (such as competence-based qualifications)	243

SVQs accredited

At the end of 2013–14, there were 708 SVQs accredited, which is an increase of 2% on the previous year. SVQs are offered by 19 different approved awarding bodies, and account for 70% of all accredited qualifications.

Thirty-seven accredited SVQs were withdrawn during 2012–13. The common rationale for awarding bodies withdrawing SVQs was low or zero uptake. In some instances, SVQs were replaced with alternative accredited competence-based qualifications. This has been driven in part by Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks where the SVQ has not been successful and has been replaced with an alternative accredited competence-based qualification. SQA Accreditation will continue to monitor these movements and identify, where possible, the reasons behind these changes.

Accredited SVQs spanned the following levels:

SVQ Level 1	35
SVQ Level 2	318
SVQ Level 3	306
SVQ Level 4	41
SVQ Level 5	8

As in prior years, more SVQ levels 2 and 3 were accredited. This is a result of them being a mandatory qualification in Modern Apprenticeships. Of level 2 and 3

¹ Qualifications that have lapsed are not included.

SVQs, 69% and 81% are present in Modern Apprenticeships respectively. Currently, 25 SVQ 4 qualifications and six SVQ 5 qualifications are part of Apprenticeship frameworks. These numbers may increase as more Technical and Professional Apprenticeships are approved.

Regulatory and Licensing qualifications accredited

At the end of 2013–14, there were 57 Regulatory and Licensing qualifications accredited, which is an increase of 14% on the previous year. Regulatory and Licensing qualifications are offered by 13 different approved awarding bodies, and account for 6% of all currently accredited qualifications.

Other qualifications accredited

At the end of 2013–14, there were 243 ‘Other’ qualifications accredited, which is an increase of 23% on the previous year. ‘Other’ accredited qualifications are currently offered by 25 different approved awarding bodies and account for 24% of all accredited qualifications. This increase is due to existing awarding bodies expanding their provision in ‘Other’ qualifications, particularly City & Guilds and IMI, plus newly-approved awarding body Associated Sports Qualifications (ASQ).

Market Performance

Data on the performance of SQA accredited qualifications is collected from approved awarding bodies on a quarterly basis. The data presented covers SQA accredited qualifications during financial year 2013–14.

SQA Accreditation started collecting candidate data from awarding bodies offering accredited qualifications other than SVQs from April 2010. Table 4 shows the total registrations and certifications for all Regulatory and Licensing qualifications. Table 5 shows market performance for ‘Other’ qualifications from April 2010. Because no historical data is held for these qualification types, this data cannot be compared back any further than 2010.

SVQ market performance

Year	Registrations	+/- %	Certifications	+/- %
2007–08	48,761	n/a	29,357	n/a
2008–09	39,879	-18%	31,206	+6%
2009–10	45,155	+13%	35,066	+12%
2010–11	47,405	+5%	36,713	+4%
2011–12	40,245	-15%	29,945	-18%
2012–13	43,444	+8%	32,397	+8%
2013–14	48,116	+11%	34,362	+6%

Table 3: SVQ market performance

In 2013–14, both registrations and certifications for SVQs increased from the previous year by 11% and 6% respectively. This may be a result of available funding for Modern Apprenticeships which include SVQs in a number of Frameworks.

The level of registrations for SVQs returned to, and exceeded, the high levels seen in 2009–10 and 2010–11, which is a very positive sign that business confidence has returned and also that although there are alternative competence-based qualifications available, the SVQ product is still the preferred qualification type for some sectors.

Regulatory and Licensing Qualifications market performance

Year	Registrations	+/-%	Certifications	+/-%
2010–11	13,880	n/a	13,227	n/a
2011–12	15,192	9%	12,280	-7%
2012–13	17,842	17%	17,166	39%
2013–14	29,830	67%	28,157	64%

Table 4: Regulatory and Licensing qualifications market performance

In 2013–14, there has been a significant increase in uptake of Regulatory and Licensing qualifications on prior year — registrations increased by 67% and certifications by 64%. This in part is a reflection of the number of Regulatory and Licensing qualifications accredited, which has increased once again this year. However, this vast increase in uptake can also be explained by the current popularity of the Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher) at SCQF Level 6. Due to recent changes in legislation, all holders of the Personal Licence Holder qualifications who have held the licence for five years are required to undertake the refresher qualification or latest accredited Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders at SCQF level 6. Scottish Government is monitoring these figures.

Other Qualifications market performance

Year	Registrations	+/-%	Certifications	+/-%
2010–11	5,384	n/a	4,529	n/a
2011–12	25,652	376%	19,281	326%
2012–13	30,957	21%	21,534	12%
2013–14	36,158	17%	24,146	12%

Table 5: Other qualifications market performance

In 2013–14, there was a less significant rise in uptake of 'Other' qualifications than seen in previous years although uptake continues to increase — registrations by 17% and certifications by 12%. This increase in Other

qualifications in particular partly explains the less significant increase in SVQ uptake, with some awarding bodies opting for alternative competence-based qualifications over the traditional SVQ.

Plan for 2014–15

At SQA Accreditation's awarding body/SSC event in March 2014, we shared our Operational Plan for 2014–15. In this forthcoming year, we will be considering the steps that we need to take towards removing the SVQ level from the title of SVQs and to use only the SCQF level to describe the level of qualification.

Currently, credit-rated SVQs follow the titling convention of 'SVQ 3 in Customer Service at SCQF level 6'. Moving forward, the title would be, for example 'SVQ in Customer Service at SCQF level 6'. At the end of 2013–14, there are 473 unique SVQ titles, with 421 SVQs now formally credited, which leaves 52 still to be credit rated.

We are mindful that most users of SVQs will be familiar with the five SVQ levels, although the SCQF level was added to the SVQ title in 2009. Nonetheless, we will be seeking to develop an implementation plan along with a communication strategy.

During 2014–15, we also plan to carry out a scoping exercise for a review of SVQs. SVQs have remained largely unchanged since they were first introduced in 1990. We want to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose given the key role that they play in the Scottish VET system — particularly with regard to the Modern Apprenticeship Programme. The output of this scoping exercise will be a costed proposal for the review, which we will present to Scottish Government.

Looking to the medium and longer term, we want to strengthen our role as the national regulator. We want to develop and strengthen our relationships with other key regulators in Scotland, particularly where these regulators make use of or rely on qualifications within their regulator regime.

We will also conduct our bi-annual stakeholder survey in 2014–15. The results of this will inform future activities and continuous improvement. In addition, we plan to launch a dedicated SQA Accreditation website.

Appendix 1: Summary of Audit Activity 2013–14 against Regulatory Principles (2011)

Key

Reqs	Requirements
Recs	Recommendations

2013–14 Audit Report			
Awarding Body	Audit Date	Reqs	Recs
ITC First Aid	23 Oct 2013	4	1
Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd	29 Jan 2014	2	4
First Aid Awards Limited	20 Feb 2014	5	5
Mineral Products Qualifications Council	31 March 2014	1	4
NEBOSH	4 & 5 Feb 2014	1	1
SQA Awarding Body	30 & 31 July 2013	3	5
Safety Training Awards	15 Jan 2014	3	2
1 st 4sport Qualifications	16 May 2013	1	1
Institute of Revenue, Ratings and Valuation	13 Aug 2014	3	2
Chartered Institute of Housing	20 Nov 2013	5	1
PIABC	24 Sept 2013	4	2
Skills First Awards	19 June 2013	1	1
Scottish Bakers	23 Jan 2014	4	2
Highfield Awarding Body of Compliance	4 July 2013 & 4 Sept 2013	1	4
SFEDI	30 Oct 2013	3	6

Appendix 2: Approved awarding bodies²

Acronym	Awarding body
Not Applicable	1st4sport Qualifications
ASQ	Associated Sports Qualifications
AFS	Alcohol Focus Scotland
AAT	Association of Accounting Technicians
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
Not Applicable	BIIAB
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
Not Applicable	City & Guilds of London Institute
ECITB	Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
EDI	Education Development International plc ³
EQL	Equestrian Qualifications GB Limited
EAL	Excellence, Achievement and Learning Limited
FAAL	First Aid Awards Limited
FAQ	Future (Awards & Qualifications) Limited
GQA	GQA Qualifications Limited
HABC	Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance
IMI	IMI Awards Limited
IQ	Industry Qualifications Limited
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
IRRV	Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation
ITC	ITC First
Not Applicable	Lantra Awards Limited
MPQC	Mineral Products Qualifications Council

² SQA Accreditation approved awarding bodies as at end March 2014.

³ EDI has merged with Pearson Education Limited and has yet to have its approved awarding body status withdrawn.

Acronym	Awarding body
NEBOSH	National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health
Not Applicable	PAA/VQ-SET
Not Applicable	PIABC
Not Applicable	Pearson Education Limited
Not Applicable	Rockschool Limited
RAD	Royal Academy of Dance
Not Applicable	Safe Cert Awards Limited
STA	Safety Training Awards Limited
Not Applicable	SFEDI Awards
Not Applicable	Skillsfirst Awards Limited
Not Applicable	Scottish Bakers
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
VTCT	Vocational Training Charitable Trust
WCSM	Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers