



SQA Corporate Plan 2017–20

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Section 1: Strategic intent

Strategic context and drivers

SQA's future activities will be shaped by a number of broad strategic drivers that will have an impact on all nations and economies. These are:

- ◆ The need for skilled, diverse workforces, recognising that in all areas of the world, skills, training and qualifications remain engines for economic growth.
- ◆ Globalisation of industry, business, trade and education, leading to increased interdependence and interconnectedness of economies and nations.
- ◆ The need to develop knowledge societies to support sustainable economic growth.
- ◆ The need to improve the health and wellbeing of all people to ensure they have the best start in life and realise their potential.
- ◆ Increased availability and application of technology and digital skills in education and skills development.
- ◆ The need for learners to acquire and apply literacy and numeracy skills.
- ◆ The recognition that all countries need to develop global citizens with appropriate skills, knowledge, ways of learning, and ways of doing business that enable them to live, work and study within a range of localities and international contexts.

SQA is a non-departmental public body and in this role it remains fully committed to working with other organisations, agencies and institutions in the Scottish family to help meet Scottish Government's National Outcomes, strategies, policies and priorities — both at home and abroad.

As such, there are some specific strategic drivers that steer SQA's public body responsibilities in Scotland and further afield during the period covered by this plan. These are:

- ◆ The Education (Scotland) Act 1996 and other relevant legislation.
- ◆ Embedding Curriculum for Excellence including the new National Qualifications that will support the senior phase in schools. Actions from Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland, including recommendations from the Assessment and National Qualifications Group, will be monitored and delivered through a programme of revisions to National Courses.
- ◆ Supporting the Skills for Scotland Strategy and Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy. This will drive activity across the education and skills system in Scotland, removing barriers to open up opportunities for all young people to access training and employment programmes, in particular providing more Scottish learners with vocational pathways including Modern Apprenticeships.
- ◆ Recommendations from the National Youth Work Strategy.
- ◆ Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and corporate parenting.
- ◆ Scottish Government refreshed Digital Strategy and recommendations from the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- ◆ The STEM education and training strategy for Scotland which is currently out to consultation and which sets out high-level aims and priorities for all STEM education and training.
- ◆ Scottish Government's Programme for Government. This includes the priorities of an education system providing opportunities for all, an economy with more jobs and fair

work, and public services fit for the future as set out in Scotland's Labour Market Strategy and in particular, the outcome of producing a skilled, productive and engaged workforce capable of meeting the needs of employers.

- ◆ The recommendations in the Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access.
- ◆ Scotland's International Framework, which outlines Scotland's internationalisation agenda to: create an environment within Scotland that supports a better understanding of international opportunities; to influence the world around us on the issues that matter most in helping Scotland flourish; and to identify potential priority countries.
- ◆ Maximising income-generation opportunities to reduce SQA's dependency on the public purse.
- ◆ Consideration of the changing political, economic and social environment.

These drivers demonstrate that the skills, training and qualifications landscape has never been more important and this affords SQA opportunities and challenges to provide products and services as both a public body and as an income-generating organisation.

Values

Three values — trusted, enabling, and progressive — underpin the way SQA works with learners, customers, partners, stakeholders, the wider public, and within the organisation itself.

We seek to be trusted by government and stakeholders to deliver on our statutory responsibilities. Our customers and users trust us to 'get it right' for them. We seek to be trusted by partners who know from experience that we deliver.

By providing high-quality qualifications, services, expertise, experience and support, we enable learners, customers and centres to achieve their goals; we enable employers, businesses and industry to recruit and develop skilled workforces with recognised qualifications; and we enable communities and societies to work towards productivity and growth.

We are continuing to develop progressive approaches to qualification development, assessment practice and service delivery by using innovation and technology thus ensuring: greater speed in turnaround and delivery; flexible products and approaches that retain rigour in quality; and value for money.

Approach

Through its awarding and accreditation responsibilities, working with partners, SQA will ensure that the high standards in education, skills and training for which Scotland is renowned will continue to be maintained — whatever qualifications or services SQA delivers and wherever these are delivered.

SQA will continue to deliver a comprehensive and high-quality qualifications system in Scotland which includes a range of qualifications to support the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence and Developing the Young Workforce. SQA will also continue to serve, support and evolve the wider education and training system in Scotland, working closely with schools, colleges, universities, training providers, employers, and other public bodies (including Skills Development Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and Education Scotland), to provide qualifications that prepare young people for work in a global economy;

help people make career changes; provide second chances for learners; assist business to upskill and reskill their workforces; enable learners to access and progress within further and higher education; and develop the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

To ensure that SQA's valuable resources (its products and services, expertise and experience) are maintained and used to their full advantage, SQA will expand into wider markets through careful prioritisation planning and appropriate investment. This will enable SQA to operate to the benefit of others, whether that is the development of the individual learner, capacity building in a community, or economic growth for a nation. This will also generate income for SQA, which supports the achievement of the goal to reduce SQA's dependency on the public purse.

SQA is committed to supporting individual development and sustainable economic growth through its:

- ◆ products, such as through development of qualifications and assessment and support materials
- ◆ services through capacity building and credit rating
- ◆ contracts — funded by, and carried out on behalf of, other agencies/companies
- ◆ international consultancy projects — funded by, and carried out on behalf of, international governments, agencies and organisations

SQA operates throughout Scotland and in other selected geographical areas based on:

- ◆ public body/statutory responsibilities
- ◆ capacity to deliver
- ◆ social responsibilities
- ◆ sound business cases that balance resources and potential income
- ◆ income-generating opportunities
- ◆ market intelligence
- ◆ existing expertise and track record
- ◆ partnership leverage

SQA works to ensure that all products and services it delivers provide good value for money.

Responsive delivery

SQA's approach to delivery of products and services is flexible, pragmatic and responsive to customer and stakeholder needs and wishes. SQA will work to achieve its purpose by continuing its commitment to public service combined with business acumen and integrity. It will be responsive to emerging needs and customer focused — delivering excellent products, exceptional service, and value for money to all its users and customers.

SQA will continue to work in partnership with others to fulfil its public body responsibilities, in relation to:

- ◆ public service reform and community planning
- ◆ alignment to the National Performance Framework
- ◆ consideration of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education

- ◆ youth employment
- ◆ corporate parenting
- ◆ spending review priorities
- ◆ fraud prevention
- ◆ procurement
- ◆ shared services
- ◆ human resources, specifically the five dimensions of the Fair Work Framework — security, respect, opportunity, effective voice and fulfilment
- ◆ transparency

SQA is committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference.

It will also work in partnership on other activities where this has advantages for customers and users and where it is practicable to do so.

Section 2: SQA's purpose and strategic goals

Purpose

SQA's purpose is to provide products and services in skills, training and education which positively impact on individuals, organisations and society.

Strategic goals

The strategic goals which have been mapped to the Scottish Government National Outcomes are as follows:

- 1 Develop and deliver high-quality qualifications, products and services for the benefit of learners and of Scotland.
- 2 Provide leadership and expertise in a range of areas including assessment, qualification development and quality enhancement.
- 3 Support the Scottish Government's internationalisation agenda to maximise the benefits of international engagement and co-operation.
- 4 Ensure our culture and values support the engagement and wellbeing of our staff and foster their commitment to the success of SQA.
- 5 Deliver high-quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive services to our customers.
- 6 Continue to develop SQA as a leading public body and key player in the skills, training and education landscape.
- 7 Continue to pursue a longer-term business model that would enable SQA to reduce its dependency on the public purse, and invest in and improve the education and skills system.
- 8 Independently accredit, quality assure and regulate approved awarding bodies and qualifications thereby safeguarding the interests of learners, employers, parents, funding bodies, providers and the Scottish Government.

Performance monitoring

Directorate strategy maps and detailed business plans will be prepared as a basis for monitoring progress via the Quarterly Performance Review.

Risk will be managed on an ongoing basis via the Corporate Risk Register.

Section 3: Mapping of goals to National Outcomes

National Outcomes	
We live in Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	1
We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	2
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	3
Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	4
Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	5
We live longer healthier lives	6
We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	7
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	8
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	
We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	
We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	
We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	12
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	13
We reduce the local and global environmental impact of consumption and production	14
Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it	15
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	16

2017-20 SQA Strategic Goals
Develop and deliver high quality qualifications, products and services for the benefit of learners and of Scotland. 1 2 3 4 5 7 8 13 15
Provide leadership and expertise in a range of areas including assessment, qualification development and quality enhancement. 3 4 5 8 13
Support the Scottish Government's internationalisation agenda to maximise the benefits of international engagement and co-operation. 1 2 3 13
Ensure our culture and values support the engagement and wellbeing of our staff and foster their commitment to the success of SQA. 2 3 6
Deliver high-quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive services to our customers. 16
Continue to develop SQA as a leading public body and key player in the skills, training and education landscape. 1 2 3 4 7 12 14 16
Continue to pursue a longer-term business model that would enable SQA to reduce its dependency on the public purse, and invest in and improve the Education and Skills system. 2 16
Independently accredit, quality assure and regulate approved Awarding Bodies and qualifications thereby safeguarding the interests of learners, employers, parents, funding bodies, providers and the Scottish Government. 1 3

Section 4: 2017–18 income and expenditure budget

	£m
Qualifications Entry Income	41.9
Other Income	8.3
Grant Funding	4.4
Additional Grant Funding ¹	19.6
Programme Grant Funding ²	6.5
Total Income	80.7
Staff	30.8
Appointees	18.9
Other Operating Costs	24.5
Programme Grant Expenditure	6.5
Total Expenditure	80.7
Income and Expenditure Surplus (Deficit)	0

Notes

- 1 Scottish Government recognises that, as was the case for 2016–17, SQA will require further Grant in Aid to meet operational and Programme Grant costs that are beyond those covered within current SG budgets. The additional Grant in Aid requirement will be updated in line with scheduled reforecasting exercises.
- 2 Programme Grant Funding is funding received from bodies such as the Scottish Government to fund specific activity such as revisions to National Qualifications.