TH welcomed everyone acknowledging and thanking all centres, EVs, and teaching staff for the work they have been doing to support students in this unprecedented time.

He explained the event was intended to be less formal than usual the main purpose being an informal discussion and opportunity for centres and SQA to demonstrate and share ideas and good practice to meet the challenges facing everyone from the major disruption in both their personal and professional lives.

This was as much an opportunity for SQA to gain insight into the challenges facing centres as it was for centres themselves.

Centres were reminded of the existing SQA Guidance in place and the activity still taking place:

* guidance issued in September 2020 by SQA aimed at reducing assessment. This involved allowing all unit assessments to be completed under open-book conditions
* SQA have provided a free pre-verification service similar to prior-verification with an accelerated turnaround time whereby centres can propose alternative ways of assessment including content. The link for the free pre-verification service is: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74665.html>
* In October 2020 it was confirmed centres would not have to deliver Graded Units by conventional means in order to free up time for other learning and assessment
* SQA recently consulted with centres regarding possible further guidance. This has mainly been driven by issues in the assessment of more practical subjects. This would result in centres being allowed to move to a Group Award Aims holistic model of assessment, however where any critical competences were/are identified, these would have to be evidenced in addition to the holistic model. This consultation concluded on 1st February 2021 and is currently being worked through

An update was given on the revision of Accounting units in HNC/D Business as Accounting teaching staff are likely to be involved in delivering them:

* The unit Business Accounting was reviewed as part of the HN Business Review with contributions from both Business and Accounting EVs
* As a result of the demand for a more entrepreneurial focus from the Business sector, the content of the new unit (Accounting for Business: An Introduction) varies significantly from the existing Business Accounting unit
* The new unit focuses on basic book-keeping, basic financial statements, the factors involved in setting price levels, and inventory control
* Accounting for Business: An Introduction will replace the existing Business Accounting in the mandatory section of HNC and HND in Business
* Business Accounting will continue as an optional unit in HNC and HND Business and other frameworks
* A significant change in the new unit is the use of threshold scores to assist assessment judgements. This was agreed via the Review Team and those directly involved in the review of the unit. This varies from the existing vocational competence-based model of assessment, however for many years since this initial directive, SQA changed to a guidance and principles model giving design teams more flexibility to design assessment standards
* The effect of threshold scores on level of assessment depends critically on the design of the unit assessment standard. The new unit is intended for non-accounting specialists who may benefit from a different approach. It also helps reduce assessment volume by reducing instances of multiple submissions and marking micro-assessments where small parts of units have not reached a 100% standard of competence

,

HN Accounting Review

* The decision to use threshold scores does not represent a decision to use this wholesale across the entire HNC and HND Accounting Group Awards. Threshold scores were used sparingly across the HNC/D Business Awards and the Qualification Review Team for Accounting will make the final decisions on unit standards
* At this point, the review of HN Accounting has not commenced as intended given the current constraints related to the pandemic
* This, however, is likely to be advantageous in that we will be afforded the opportunity to reflect on the adaptations taken to deliver and assess at this time, to have insight into what the “new normal” may look like and the progress/impact of current HN Next Generation work being undertaken in SQA to inform decisions on how to best review and future proof the awards
* Some information gathered at last year’s event may still be relevant, but some things are likely to have changed. When everything is more settled, we will approach the network for feedback to inform the review