**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**QUALIFICATIONS SUPPORT TEAM FOR HN ACCOUNTING, ADMINISTRATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**ACTION GRID – MEETING 24 HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2017  
  
Present:** 6 x centre representatives, 3 x SQA Qualification Officers (QO), SQA Qualification Manager (QM)

**Speaking to 24/7:** Officer from SQA Research and Policy team (RPO)

**Apologies:** None.

| **Ref** | **Agenda/Minute Title** | **Agreed Action** | **Action to be taken by** | **Target Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 24/1 | Welcome | QM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new QO to the group. |  |  |
| 24/2 | Action Grid from Meeting 23 | QO gave an update regarding an action under 23/2. Access codes for HN Accounting practice assessments were circulated to the QST to be shared with colleagues. Three people accessed this material.  Further discussion around the pros and cons of e-assessment took place. QM advised that e-assessment is something that is being promoted corporately across SQA but there is a finite resource available within SQA to develop and support it. This means that a robust and focused case needs to be made for areas where it would be of benefit across the Business-related HNs.  QO spoke to action under 23/2 relating to UShare statistics. Statistics were sourced in May for the meeting that was subsequently cancelled.  Statistics for the year up to May 2017:   * HN Administration and IT – 708 views of links to material (1st of 40 Ushare subjects) * HN Business – 554 views of links to material (4th of 40 Ushare subjects)   Unfortunately data for HN Accounting was not made available at the time. The average number of views across all subjects was 171.  The figures are not for unique visitors so will incorporate repeat views by the same persons.  Further figures were available for organic (i.e. not commissioned by SQA) uploads by users.  HN Accounting – 6; HN Administration and IT – 4; HN Business –13  Again, figures are not for unique visitors.  Re 23/7, the revised Marketing units now live and available  QO spoke to action under 23/9 confirming that NQ qualifications at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 have been updated in line with FRS102. The NC has not; however a review will be getting underway in November and is scheduled to be complete with the new NC available to centres for session 2018/19. Nominations are still being sought for unit and assessment writers and anyone interested should contact QO who will pass on to the relevant colleague.  **Action:** Expressions of interest in NC development sent to QO | All | 22/11/17 |
| 24/3 | HN Networks – Evaluations/Feedback | Feedback from the 2017 Events was discussed, which was positive.  Suggestions for future events included some recurring themes from previous evaluations – e.g. Graded Units, Assessment workshops etc.  New and innovative topics are always welcomed, however, it was suggested that there could be merit in re-visiting previous topics and/or having “back to basics” sessions as there is likely to have been significant turnover in centre staff in recent years.  As ever the Events rely on individuals from the sector stepping forward to present/deliver topics and expectations of what can be done need to be realistic. Discussion of past Event content led to the issue of centres’ over-reliance on ASPs.  **Action:** QO to email centres re experience of centre-devised assessment, if any.  The use of SOLAR with Administration and IT: Graded Unit 1 and Digital Technologies for Administrators was discussed and it was agreed that a demonstration session on the logistics of marking via SOLAR would be useful. Some assessment material would be required to arrange such a session. A QST member agreed to support a session on Digital Technologies for Administrators. QM and QO will follow-up with SOLAR colleagues regarding securing their input.  **Action:** Discuss possibility of session on marking via SOLAR with SQA e-assessment team  Members of the QST were asked to think of possible topics/content for the Network Events in consultation with colleagues.  **Action:** Forward suggestions for Network Event content to QOs | QO  QM/QO  All | 10/11/17  21/11/17  30/11/17 |
| 24/4 | HN Surveys | HN Accounting – Centre responses requested another session on GU2 be included; there was little use of UShare; clarity required over use of spreadsheets in assessment of units; and suggestion about including payment by BACs and transfer in RFI rather than cheques.  Candidate responses indicated that most were full time students who hoped to go on to university. Main comments were on finding GU2 challenging. A few one-off comments mainly relating to centres rather than SQA.  HN Administration and IT – nothing exceptional was noted in the rating of units. As we are entering a transitional period for this qualification next year’s survey should provide an insight into the impact of the changes.  HN Business – Again, nothing exceptional was noted in the data provided re unit content or level. |  |  |
| 24/5 | SQA Statistical Report | Statistics on the grades achieved across the Accounting, Business and Administration and IT Graded Units in sessions 2015/16 and 2016/17 were tabled and discussed. There continues to be a good spread of results across most of these units and the proportion of grades are consistent from year to year (Administration and IT: Graded Unit 3 (F8KY 35) grades were almost identical). This suggests there is good reliability in the assessment of these units. |  |  |
| 24/6 | Subject Updates | **HN Accounting** – information relating to the Units Recording Financial Information (F7JV 34), Management Accounting Using Information Technology (F7JS 34), Business Taxation (F7R6 35), Income Tax (F86X 35) and Payroll (H4J9 34) is contained in the August update letter - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/32117.html>. Sample Marking Guidelines/Schemes for Accounting: Graded Unit 2 are now available to download from the secure website.  **HN Administration and IT** – following the review of the HNC/D qualifications, work has been focused on producing Assessment Support Packs (ASPs). 19 ASPs were produced in the period from January to July 2017 to support delivery.  Office Technologies (F7J9 35) has entered a 2 year lapsing period but been retained in the new framework for transition purposes.  Two units related to events and conferences were added to the optional section of the HNC and HND – Organising an Event (H91J 34) and Managing an Event (H91M 35).  **HN Business** – there has been very little change to the qualification over the past year although the review of HN Administration and IT has a knock-on effect due to the revision of IT in Business: Spreadsheets (HH83 34) and ICT in Business (HH87 35). Centres have a 2 year lapse period in which to transition to the new units.  A comment was made in the HN Survey re the potential impact of Brexit. At present the impact is unknown, although it is possible the unit specifications may not need to change, rather the assessment content. The situation will be monitored.  QO advised that exemption from some of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) professional certificate level examinations has been agreed on the basis of achievement of specific units that are common between HN Accounting and HN Business. The details of this have been included in the Group Award Specification (Arrangements Document) available on SQA website. |  |  |
| 24/7 | HN Next Steps | RPO was introduced to the group as the officer within SQA’s Research, Policy, Standards and Statistics team leading the project reviewing policy and guidance on HN qualifications.  Background to the project was given and recognition that there is some evidence of inconsistent application between subjects. Three documents will be revised and updated – SQA Unit Writing Guide, Graded Unit Writing Guide and Graded Unit Implementation Guide.  In terms of Design Principles there are three main areas for consideration – sampling, use of threshold scores and integration of assessment. The output of the project will be guidance that will sit alongside the Design Principles to help clarify and standardise practice across subjects.  One of the key areas where inconsistency has been identified is around remediation and reassessment. There is evidence of varying approaches across subjects. The intention is to provide greater clarity on how this should be managed.  The group agreed that whilst clarity is needed, there must be flexibility for centres to take all factors into account and make appropriate judgements.  RPO advised that the templates for Graded Unit specifications are part of the review and that any feedback and/or examples of good practice would be welcomed.  **Action:** Send QO examples of integration and sampling of teaching/assessment and/or contacts who can do so  A point was raised about sampling. Whilst it is a useful approach that could be utilised more, it exacerbates the risk of teaching to assessment. Although a sample of the Evidence Requirements would be part of the assessment, all Knowledge and Skills should still be taught. This is something that centres would need to guard against.  The Enhancements Project was raised and those with experience of the alternative assessment approaches (including sampling, threshold scores and integration) spoke very positively of it. A particular benefit has been to make more time available for teaching. | All | 30/11/17 |
| 24/8 | HN Unit and ASP Comments | HN Accounting – Comments received on Management Accounting for Planning and Control (F82H 35) Recording Financial Information (F7JV 34) – QST advised on responses.  HN Administration and IT – Comments received on errors in new ASPs – Recording Financial Transactions (HH81 33) and IT in Business: Advanced Spreadsheets (F849 35).  The RFT ASP has been updated and will be published imminently.  Updates are being made to ITIB Advanced Spreadsheets. Amendments are to correct errors in the solution. The Knowledge and Skills of Outcome 2 will be amended slightly to say “and display information in a pivot table” for clarity.  HN Business – No comments received. |  |  |
| 24/9 | Any Other Business | No other items were raised. |  |  |
| 24/10 | Date of Next Meeting | The date was agreed provisionally as 30/05/2017 |  |  |