**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

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

**ACTION GRID – MEETING 18 HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2014  
  
Present:** Qualifications Manager (QM), Accounting and Finance Qualifications Officer (AFQO), Business and AIT QO (BAQO),   
 three centre representatives

**Apologies**: Three centre representatives.

| **Ref** | **Agenda/Minute Title** | **Agreed Action** | **Action to be taken by** | **Target Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 18/1 | Welcome | The QM welcomed everyone to the meeting. |  |  |
| 18/2 | Action Grid from Meeting 16 | The group agreed that the Action Grid for meeting 17 held in October 2013 was accurate. There were no outstanding actions. |  |  |
| 18/3 | HN Networks – Feedback from Evaluations | Experiences from the Network Events in February were discussed. Results from the evaluation forms were distributed and discussed.  All three events – Accounting, Administration and IT and Business – were positively received. Evaluations indicate that delegate expectations and aims were met overall.  A general point arising from all three evaluations was a desire for more networking time among colleagues/delegates from other centres. The possibility of extending tea and coffee breaks to facilitate this will be given consideration for future events.    Other comments include:  Accounting workshops very useful and well received  Business and Administration and IT workshops useful but three combined ASP workshop were a lot to get through in the time available.  HMIE have passed on positive feedback from colleges about the value of these events.  Some issues were discussed arising from individual comments within the evaluations:  Accounting:  Delegates agreed that although candidates make increasing use of IT within their course work they enjoyed using paper and pen. This ensures that candidates are applying their own knowledge to computation and re-enforcing their understanding of the topic. RFI – It can be difficult to cover the Unit content in the time/credit available. This has been discussed on a number of occasions but it is difficult to arrive at a solution which does not require re-validation of the HNC/D Group Awards. The suggestion of writing an Accounting optional Unit containing topics such as Control Accounts was put forward by some delegates. This will be given further consideration.  Administration and IT:  Suggestion of a “speed dating/networking” session to facilitate more networking  It’s important to remember that the Network Events – as the title suggests – are based on a good collaborative approach rather than a Q&A session with SQA staff and EVs providing all the answers. There is also a danger that advice from SQA EVs on delivery methods can be perceived as a directive rather than advice. This has to be handled carefully.  It may be useful to include some information at future Events on the role of EVs in general and the process for production of Assessment Support Packs, both for clarity and to raise awareness of opportunities to be involved in such activity.  Business:  It would be good if centres shared more of their in-house assessments. Although there is a bank of prior-verified assessments on SQA’s secure site which centres can use there are a very limited number covering the HN Business-related subjects. It is hoped that over time this may increase.  The group discussed ways of raising the profile of this facility. It was acknowledged that the protocols within centres can make it difficult to obtain the material as they have to know what is available to request it from SQA co-ordinator. There is a list of available ASPs both SQA produced and locally produced on SQA website  It was agreed that the team will remind centres of the prior verified assessments available across the Accounting, Administration and IT and Business frameworks the next Update Letter. It was agreed a reminder also be sent to EVs who can flag this when undertaking prior verification of assessments. | QM | August 2014 |
| 18/4 | HN Surveys | AFQO and BAQO confirmed that HN surveys for session 2013/14 are available on the subject web pages and an update email had been sent to centres to inform them of the surveys.  AFQO advised that, so far, responses have been slow. The group agreed that Graded Unit delivery was likely to be having an effect and that responses will come in when delivery and marking is complete.  AFQO has circulated the link to the surveys to the Accounting EVs. BAQO to circulate to Business and Administration and IT EVs as soon as possible.  Closing date for the surveys is 27th June.  It was agreed that if survey responses remained low the link to the relevant survey could be sent, via email, to delegates who attended this year’s Network Events. If necessary a further update email can be sent in a few weeks’ time as a reminder. A decision will be made on 27th May as to whether this is necessary. | BAQO  AFQO/BAQO | 8 May 2014  27 May 2014 |
| 18/5 | Annual Statistical Report | Tables were distributed listing the top 50 SQA HNC and HNDs by entry and certification for 2013.  HNC Entries 2013  4th Accounting 1019  5th Administration and IT 964  6th Business 942  HNC Certifications 2013  3rd Administration and IT 722  4th Accounting 720  6th Business 646  HND Entries 2013  2nd Business 1340\*  4th Accounting 746  10th Administration and IT 439  HND Certifications 2013  2nd Business 1048\*  5th Accounting 489  11th Administration and IT 295  \*Includes international entries.  There continues to be strong demand for HNCs and HNDs across the business related subjects. A number of other business-related HNs appear in the top ten for HNDs due to uptake in international centres, including HND Financial Services which has the highest entries and certifications of any SQA HND.  The group found it interesting to note that entry figures are broken down into a percentage by gender.  The Annual Statistical Report is available from the Statistics section of SQA website - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64717.4239.html> |  |  |
| 18/6 | HN Accounting – Accounting Standards | A Qualification Review Team (QRT) has been set up to look at introducing/implementing International Accounting Standards (IAS) within the HNC/D Accounting. The QRT remit will be to establish how this will be done, how it will be communicated to centres and establishing the baseline standards, interpretations and terminology etc.  The first meeting of the QRT is scheduled for 27th May.  Membership of the QRT has been drawn from individuals who have raised queries or shown and interest as well as some EVs.  It is expected that the work will have more of an impact on Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) than the Unit specifications.  Guidance material will be produced to supplement the work. The first meeting of the QRT will scope the work and develop a plan for its completion. |  |  |
| 18/7 | Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) | BAQO gave an update on progress on the Combined ASPs for HN Business and HN Administration and IT.  ITIB Spreadsheets/IT Applications Software 1 is complete and has been published on SQA secure site.  This units concerned are both mandatory within HNC/D Business, however IT Applications Software 1 is not included in HNC/D Administration and IT.  ICT in Business/Presentation Skills – A minor amendment to marking guidance is being processed and this ASP will be available imminently.  The units concerned are both mandatory in HND Administration and IT. ICT in Business is mandatory in HND Business and Presentation Skills is optional.  Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication/Creating a Culture of Customer Care – This has been the most challenging ASP as it is the only one to combine assessment of the entirety of each unit. However good progress has been made and the final draft is with technical edit at present. It is hoped it will be ready for publication within a month but is expected prior to August 2014.  The Communication unit is mandatory in both HNC/D Business and HNC/D Administration and IT and Creating a Culture of Customer Care is optional in both frameworks.  BAQO confirmed that the development of these combined ASPs is completely separate and distinct from the HN Enhancements project and follows the current HN assessment methodology.  HN Accounting  The ‘Matthews Coaches’ ASP for Accounting: Graded Unit 2 will be withdrawn at the end of June due to a security breach. AFQO advised that SQA has commissioned another ASP. This is scheduled to be published by the end of September 2014.  HN Business  The ‘Scotia Airways’ ASP for the unit Managing People and Organisations was withdrawn earlier this year. Centres have been notified and another ASP has been written and published. This means that there are once again two ASPs available for this unit.  HN Administration and IT – HN Business  BAQO advised that there are plans to write new ASPs to support these frameworks. Priority will be given to units which have only one ASP available and that are not included within the HN Enhancements project.  Most of the units in this category are ‘2nd year’ HND units although Office Administration and Office Technologies have only one ASP so are likely to feature. Administration and IT Graded Units 1, 2 and 3 are also strong possibilities for new ASPs.  Altogether between 8 and 10 ASPs are budgeted for, however availability of writers and vetters will be a major determining factor as to what is eventually covered. |  |  |
| 18/8 | Request to alter Group Award Structures – AIT and Business | BAQO summarised a request from a centre to add the unit – Visual Communication: Social Media – as an option within the HNC/D Business and HNC/D Administration and IT frameworks.  The group agreed that the existing alternative – Digital Culture: Online Communication – is dated, very generic and places emphasis on IT/Communication aspects rather than Business use. It was agreed that the proposed unit would fit well with Business-related qualifications.  It was felt that it would not align quite so well for Administration and IT candidates due to the Marketing focus but could still be relevant if delivered alongside the Marketing Introduction unit as an option or if candidates have relevant knowledge or experience. BAQO will check availability of ASP and take forward process of getting the unit added to the relevant frameworks. | BAQO | June 2014 |
| 18/9 | HN Enhancement | QM advised that an Information event was held on 18th March which was well attended by centre representatives.  The availability of Alternative ASPs is crucial and work is still ongoing at present. This is being led by Policy Assessment Statistics and Standards (PASS) team. Four subject areas are involved (Business, Computing, Electrical Engineering and Social Sciences). ASPs are at an advanced stage and current work is focused on trying to standardise across the four areas.  QM confirmed that although the work is focused on the four named subject areas, one or more of the units selected as part of the HN Business are also included as options within HN Administration and IT and HN Accounting, therefore the Alternative ASPs may be used for these awards also. Where this is the case however, centres should notify the SQA PASS team.  There is a dedicated email address for enquiries relating to the project and AFQO agreed to circulate this around the group.  The ASPs being produced to support HN Business cover the following units:  Economic Issues: An Introduction (Reduced assessment)  Business Law: An Introduction (Reduced assessment)  Business: Graded Unit 2 & Research Skills (Integrated assessment)  Behavioural Skills for Business and Business Culture and Strategy (Integrated assessment)  Information regarding this will be included in the next update letter. | AFQO  QM | May 2014  August 2014 |
| 18/10 | AOB | A query was raised regarding delivery of Business: Graded Unit 1. BAQO agreed to check the Unit specification to clarify.  QM advised that one member of the group would be stepping down due to her imminent retirement. The QM thanked her for her service to the group and for the support provided to SQA in appointee roles over several years.  QM advised that SQA will be recruiting new members to the QST over the coming months.  The date of the next meeting was provisionally agreed as either 22nd or 29th October pending confirmation of October holiday. | BAQO  QM | May 2014  October 2014 |