



Annual Equality Review 2011



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Contents

Foreword	1
Equality in SQA	2
Governance and responsibilities	
Monitoring legislation and best practice	
Equality Action Plan	
Equality Impact Assessment	
Progress in 2011	6
Equality Review of Qualifications	
Assessment Arrangements	
Building awareness and understanding	
SQA as an employer	
Further information and contacts	16
Appendix A: Governance and responsibilities in relation to equality	17

Foreword

I am pleased to present SQA's Annual Equality Review for 2011.

SQA and its predecessor bodies share a long history of commitment to fairness for all, including candidates, and of considering carefully how best to ensure that it is made a reality. As both a regulator and awarding body, SQA is committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference. We believe that, as an employer and public body, we can play a leading part in the promotion of equality and diversity more widely. We recognise that equality of access to education is crucial in unlocking many significant opportunities in life, and we are acutely aware of our responsibility to uphold both fairness for candidates and the credibility of Scotland's qualifications system.

We have embraced the changes brought by the Equality Act 2010, and this report and our single equality action plan set out our commitment to meeting and going beyond our statutory obligations under the new Act.

The Act introduces a new definition of protected characteristics. I greatly appreciate the support of a number of organisations who contributed thought-provoking presentations as part of our Equality Week to help us better understand the needs of any staff, appointees, and candidates who are affected by these characteristics. I'd like to express my thanks for their valuable help in 2011, and my hopes for a continuing productive relationship to Acas, Beattie Resources for Inclusive Technology in Education (BRITE), Communication Forum Scotland, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, See Me Scotland, Show Racism the Red Card, the Scottish Inter Faith Council, the Scottish Sensory Centre at Edinburgh University, and Stonewall Scotland.

Dr Janet Brown

Chief Executive

Equality in SQA

SQA is the national body in Scotland responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of qualifications (other than degrees). Our main functions are set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1996. We are a non-departmental public body, and are sponsored by the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate.

The core purpose of SQA is to set and maintain standards in education and training through the qualifications and assessment which are delivered in schools, in colleges, and in workplace learning. In addition, our accreditation function sets and maintains standards for awarding bodies and accredited qualifications in Scotland, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

Governance and responsibilities

As illustrated in appendix A, a structure is in place to support SQA in meeting its equality duties. This structure was reviewed in 2011 to ensure that it continues to apply in relation to the new Equality Act 2010.

SQA's Board of Management exercises its duty to ensure compliance, and governs the implementation of the Equality Framework, Strategies and action plans. SQA's Audit Committee oversees the fulfilment of our equality duties on behalf of the Board. SQA's Chief Executive is accountable for the fulfilment of SQA's equality duties, and is supported in this by SQA's Equality Steering Group. Its key responsibilities include:

- ◆ Considering implications for SQA of relevant legislative developments.
- ◆ Approving ongoing development of SQA's Equality Framework and Policy.
- ◆ Promoting and advocate increased organisational understanding of SQA's equality obligations.
- ◆ Ensuring consistency across the organisation in SQA's approach to fulfilling these obligations.

The Steering Group has met twice over this reporting period.

There are Equality sub-groups for each of SQA's Directorates, and these report to the Equality Steering Group. These sub-groups provide guidance and support for meeting the equality duties, as well as sharing good practice and solutions to common issues across business teams. The sub-groups have met three times over the reporting period. The Steering Group and sub-groups are supported in their responsibilities by SQA's Equalities Officer.

Equality and Inclusion Key Partners Group

In light of the new duties under the Equality Act 2010, it was agreed that the existing SQA Inclusion Group be reconstituted as the Equality and Inclusion Key

Partners' Group. The re-formed group, which met for the first time in November 2011, brings together some of the existing Inclusion Group members with those who have a wider range of experiences (for example disability and wider equality expertise). This enables SQA to call on the specific expertise and experiences of members and provides a forum to explore practical issues of access to SQA qualifications for learners from all equality groups. The next meeting of the Group will be held in April 2012.

Monitoring legislation and best practice

We continue to monitor changes in legislation in relation to equality, and good practice in other organisations, to ensure that our processes and policies keep pace with developments.

We have representation on the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Forum. This is a Scotland-wide group which meets three times a year to discuss equality issues and to share experience and good practice in the workplace and in service delivery.

In 2011, the majority of provisions in the Equality Act 2010 came into force. SQA is now subject to the new general duty in the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:

- 1 Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 gives powers to Scottish Ministers to impose specific public sector equality duties on public authorities. The draft regulations for Scotland were withdrawn in March 2011 by the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee, which meant SQA was not subject to specific duties from April 2011.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published three volumes of guidance to assist delivery of the general duty. SQA adopted the Commission's recommended approach during the reporting period.

Recognising the importance of equality legislation to our core focus on ensuring fairness for candidates, SQA continued to take opportunities to inform the development of legislation in this area. In August 2011, we contributed to Ofqual's Consultation on Specifications in relation to the Reasonable Adjustments of General Qualifications. In November, we contributed to the

Scottish Government Consultation on the Public Sector Equality Duty Revised Draft Regulations.

Equality Action Plan

During 2011, we continued to monitor and measure progress against SQA's single Equality Action Plan, which includes the actions identified in Equality Schemes developed in compliance with previous legislation:

- ◆ Disability Equality Scheme 2010-13
- ◆ Race Equality Scheme 2007-10
- ◆ Gender Equality Scheme 2010-13

In each case, many actions have been updated to apply across all of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. Additional actions continue to be identified as we carry out Equality Impact Assessments across our policies and functions.

We plan to review our equality framework and strategy in 2012. The work will include the development of equality outcomes and supporting action plans to meet the requirements of the specific duties for Scotland, when these are published.

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

Equality impact assessments provide an opportunity for us to consider the impact our policies, processes, strategies, activities and functions may have on different groups, both internally and externally.

During 2011, SQA's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) templates were updated to include consideration of the requirements for all the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

We had previously completed Equality screening or Impact Assessment for all SQA policies. We continue to monitor the impact of our policies to ensure that careful consideration is given to the general equality duty, and that our policies represent good practice. We also continue to ensure that the EqIA is considered as part of our policy review process.

In 2011, we initiated Phase 2 of our EqIA work. This will extend assessment beyond policies to identify, prioritise and consider the full range of decision reference points in SQA, where these have not already been assessed.

We aim to ensure all SQA policies and procedures promote equality and that our staff, when using our procedures and policies, embed consideration of equality into their decision-making.

Our Equality Sub Groups continue to timetable their activities to be prioritised for equality impact assessment in 2012 and beyond.

Progress in 2011

SQA Equality Review of Qualifications

SQA's Equality Review of Qualifications process has been developed as a robust and transparent way of ensuring that:

- i) Qualifications are reviewed to ensure that they are not discriminatory for any learner on grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- ii) Due consideration is given to the reasonable adjustments that SQA can make to provide access to the qualifications for disabled learners.

To ensure that the new and revised National Qualifications being developed under Curriculum for Excellence are as accessible as possible to all learners, guidance and training on this process have been provided to qualification development teams.

As part of the development process, each new qualification has been reviewed to identify barriers for any learner on grounds of any of the protected characteristics of disability, race, age, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation. Where such barriers have been identified, consideration has been given as to whether they can be removed or their adverse impact mitigated.

All considerations given to any barriers that have been identified, the conclusions that have been arrived at, and the reasons for those conclusions, are recorded on an Equality Review Form. SQA's Qualifications Directorate Management Team (QDMT) then decides whether further action and consideration is necessary to address any issues identified. Equality Review Forms for 11 new National 4 and National 5 Qualifications were considered by QDMT in December 2011.

Equality Review Forms for current National Qualifications in Graphic Communication, Hospitality, Religious, Moral and Philosophical Education (RMPS), History, Modern Studies, Geology and Biology were also considered by QDMT at a series of meetings (between July – October 2011), as part of a rolling programme of review of National Qualifications.

In November 2011, training was provided for members of SQA's Qualifications Committee and Qualifications Directorate staff on the implications of the Equality Act for Qualifications.

Assessment Arrangements

SQA has a strong record in providing assessment arrangements (AA) for candidates in National Qualifications. Only arrangements that do not compromise the knowledge skills and understanding which the candidate must demonstrate are allowed. We work in partnership with centres to identify and deliver assessment arrangements for candidates who need them. We carry out a strategic review of AA provision each year to identify lessons learned and any recommendations for improvement.

We have also published two new case studies: one on the provision of adapted digital question papers for candidates who use ICT to access SQA external examinations, and one on alternative approaches to assessment in PE for disabled candidates. These have been welcomed by centres and parents, and are available on the Assessment Arrangements web pages on the SQA website.

The total number of AA requests for the 2011 NQ examination diet was 53,634, submitted on behalf of 15,435 candidates. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the large number of requests that we receive for assessment arrangements across a wide range of qualifications. Tables 3, 4 and 5 illustrate the different types of difficulties that candidates have, and the variety of assessment arrangements that can be made to meet these difficulties.

Table 1: Requests for assessment arrangements by level, 2008–11

Level	Requests by level as % of all AA Requests							
	2008		2009		2010		2011	
Standard Grade	23,945	54.0%	23,770	49.0%	23,770	49.0%	25,411	47.4%
Intermediate 1	5,010	11.3%	6,015	12.4%	6,015	12.4%	6,992	13.0%
Intermediate 2	6,481	14.6%	8,068	16.6%	8,068	16.6%	9,261	17.3%
Higher	8,098	18.3%	9,669	19.9%	9,669	19.9%	11,007	20.5%
Advanced Higher	822	1.9%	894	1.8%	894	1.8%	963	1.8%
Total	44,356	100%	45,612	100%	48,416	100%	53,634	100%

The profile of AA requests by level is broadly the same as for previous years. Just under half of the requests were submitted on behalf of candidates

undertaking Standard Grade courses. However, this proportion has continued to drop over the past few years. On the other hand, requests submitted on behalf of candidates undertaking Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 courses, as a proportion of all requests, have increased. This mirrors the changing profile of overall entry numbers.

Table 2: Assessment Arrangements requests as a percentage of total entries, 2008-11

Level	AA Requests as % of all entries			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Standard Grade	6.1%	6.5%	6.9%	7.6%
Intermediate 1	8.2%	8.2%	9.0%	10.4%
Intermediate 2	5.6%	5.9%	6.1%	6.9%
Higher	4.9%	5.2%	5.3%	6.2%
Advanced Higher	4.3%	4.1%	4.2%	4.5%

Table 3: Requests for assessment arrangements by difficulty, 2008–11

Arrangement	Number of AA Requests			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Dyslexia	19 097	20 062	20 577	22157
Other Specific Learning Difficulty	8404	7364	8186	8949
Physical Health Problems	2653	2807	3018	3353
Physical or Motor Impairment	2556	2918	3153	3480
Learning Disability	2398	1517	1509	1615
Autistic Spectrum Condition	2049	2431	2912	3635
Other Moderate Learning Difficulty	1974	2521	2921	3288
Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulty	1850	2144	2288	2943
Visual Impairment	1495	1856	1775	2002
Language or Speech Disorder	700	765	720	819
Mental Health Problems	546	564	641	721
Hearing Impairment	410	505	537	554
Deaf	146	119	103	75
Blind	57	30	64	25
Deaf & Blind	-	-	12	20
Total	44,356	45,612	48,416	53, 634

Table 4: Requests for assessment arrangements by type, 2008–11

Arrangement	No of AA Requests per arrangement			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Adapted Certificate	181	119	139	91
Braille Question Papers	57	31	59	35
Calculator	556	660	684	653
Candidate Signs Responses	40	42	38	23
Coloured Paper	1523	2050	1964	2713
Digital Question Papers	514	1167	2001	2839
Enlarged Print Question Papers	1056	1305	1209	1305
Extra Time	34 530	35 636	36 962	40 800
Modified Format Question Papers	202	277	267	316
PA Referral	781	540	465	398
Prompter	1879	2099	2404	2622
Question Paper signed to candidate	43	57	52	43
Reader	16 936	16 554	16 863	18 032
Rest Period	1517	1434	1636	1664
Scribe	14 811	14 197	14 313	14 962
Separate Accommodation	25 793	26 381	28 689	31 950
Transcription with correction	1215	1179	1110	1255
Transcription without correction	751	626	590	721
Use of ICT	4741	6253	7622	9135
Use of tape recorder for responses	30	37	36	40

In 2011 SQA provided adapted format question papers in the following formats.

Table 5: Adapted format question papers supplied

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Braille	58	31	59	35
Large print	399	279	287	180
Colour copies	536	1346	964	1352
A4 on white	662	707	828	1135
Adapted print	637	1028	893	1128
Digital	514	1167	2001	2841
Total	2805	4558	5032	6671

Building awareness and understanding

In October 2011, we held our first Equality and Diversity week for staff in Glasgow. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the Equality Act 2010, the implications of the legislation for staff, and SQA's responsibilities as an employer and service provider.

As part of the event we invited a number of expert speakers to hold a variety of seminars and presentations, as well as creating a resource room with additional information.

The Week was well supported by staff, with over 100 of approximately 400 possible Glasgow-based staff attending workshops. Planning is well in hand for a second event for SQA's Dalkeith staff early in 2012, and the organisation has been approached by a number of other public bodies looking to organise similar themed events.

Equality and Diversity Week programme

Day 1 focused on employee and employer responsibilities. We held 2 workshops facilitated by Acas, which included a presentation to raise awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and its impact on SQA as an employer and staff as employees, and another covering the withdrawal of the default retirement age.

On Day 2 our theme was disability. Each of our presenters gave staff the opportunity to learn more about some of the barriers people with disabilities face. Staff listened enthralled as one of the 'see me' campaign's speakers bravely shared their experience of mental ill-health and provided information about Scotland's 'see me' campaign.

BRITE (Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology and Education) delivered 2 interactive and very interesting workshops to raise awareness of the resources available to support visually impaired people and those affected with dyslexia. Colleagues from the University of Edinburgh explained the issues behind developing a signed exam paper, and gave staff an opportunity to learn about the trial carried out on behalf of SQA to assess the feasibility of using digitised British Sign Language examination papers for deaf candidates. Communication Forum Scotland held an interesting workshop to raise understanding and awareness of a range of communication support needs and provide information on the Talk for Scotland Tool-kit.

On Day 3, Stonewall Scotland facilitated an awareness-raising workshop on issues for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) staff and service users. The workshop included a short presentation and provided information from Stonewall's recent research on the effects of homophobic bullying and harassment in education.

On Day 4, The EHRC presented SQA's legal obligations in relation to service delivery and the requirements of the public sector equality duty. Staff also learned more about the key responsibilities and powers of the EHRC in supporting and enforcing implementation of the Equality Act.

On the final day we held a workshop facilitated by Show Racism the Red Card to provide information about their campaign, which SQA has supported since 2003, and gave staff the chance to explore stereotypes and race discrimination issues. The Scottish Inter Faith Council also gave a presentation on religious equality and opportunity for staff to explore the faith communities present in Scotland today.

Delegates completing a feedback survey provided good feedback and a number of suggestions and ideas for future events. The survey found that only 10% of people who didn't attend weren't interested or didn't see the relevance — most would have liked to attend but were based in another office or had diary commitments that prevented them attending. Of those who attended an event, 92% learned something new about equality and 79% felt they could apply this in their role.

Some of the comments we received from staff following the week included:

'It was very good and very informative, especially the Scottish Interfaith Council and See me Campaign session. Thank you for organising it.'

'I thought the sessions with people speaking about their real life experiences educate people about what life is like for them. I attended the See Me and thought it was fantastic. As mental health is a more confusing condition (due to people not understanding enough about mental health and putting this down to behaviours rather than an illness) it might be helpful to roll out training on mental

health for line managers and as a step up from the OD training, focused more on recognising signs of mental health, as a manager how to approach/support staff who you suspect may have mental health issues.'

'The sessions I attended were both interesting and useful - I would (and did!) recommend these to anyone.'

'It was great to be given an insight into the experience of someone with a sensory impairment and how they use technology to facilitate learning.'

Stonewall Scotland

The new public sector equality duty requires SQA to proactively consider the needs of LGBT staff and service users, and to support our work and meet our responsibilities.

SQA submitted its application to Stonewall Scotland's Good Practice Programme in March 2011. We were one of 40 public sector organisations in Scotland selected to benefit from a year's free expert advice and guidance around sexual orientation and gender identity issues. During 2011, we were invited to attend a number of Stonewall's Good Practice seminars. These have increased our awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBT employees and candidates.

We have also benefited from Stonewall's resource library, including leaflets and posters promoting to staff the importance of volunteering their personal information to support SQA in monitoring the effectiveness of our policies in supporting equality groups.

Show Racism the Red Card

SQA was the main supporter of the 2011 creative competition run by Show Racism the Red Card. The competition invited students from across Scotland to design a piece of creative work that would clearly promote an anti-racism message. A total of 1851 students took part from across Scotland, representing special schools, primary schools, secondary schools, and FE colleges. The winning entries were used in a marketing campaign to consolidate the anti-racism message through Scotland's education and public sector organisations.

SQA was responsible for planning and administering the competition and awards ceremony, which successfully brought together a number of organisations to promote the message that racism is not welcome in Scotland.

Stonewall Scotland and Show Racism the Red Card kindly offered their support as part of our Equality and Diversity Week, facilitating workshops with staff and providing leaflets and information for the event.

SQA as an employer

SQA expects all members of SQA staff to practice our core values and principles, to be treated fairly and treat others with respect and without bias. Five values define the way SQA staff work with each other, customers, and partners in delivering services for Scotland's learners:

- ◆ Quality
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ Service

Equal pay update

SQA's Equal Pay Audit will be completed in spring 2012. This later date reflects the agreement and implementation date of the 2011 pay deal.

Workforce equality monitoring

As of 31 March 2011, SQA's workforce consisted of 64% female staff and 36% male staff. During the financial year April 2010 to March 2011, 1686 applicants for vacancies were received. Of these, 60.1% were from females. Of our current staff and applicants for employment, the majority preferred not to disclose their ethnicity.

Improving our diversity data

We took the opportunity, as part of our Equality and Diversity week, to encourage our current employees to update their equality and diversity data, so that reporting and analysis could be improved. Staff received information on SQA's employment monitoring responsibilities through our *Inform* e-zine, and a copy of Stonewall's helpful guide 'What's it got to do with you'. We also made additional information available in our equality resource room.

Our new Employee Self Service HR system gives staff the opportunity to manage and update their personal information. We have given reassurances to staff that this information will be held confidentially, and only used for the purposes of monitoring, statutory reporting and policy improvement. We will also provide further reassurance as part of our next Equality and Diversity event for Dalkeith-based staff in 2012.

Partnership Group and policy improvements

Our Head of Human Resources chairs the SQA Partnership Group. This brings together SQA management and trade union representatives from Unite (T&G),

Unite (Amicus) and Unison on questions relating to staff matters, policies, and to consult on collective bargaining agreements. The Partnership Policy Working Sub-Group has reviewed a number of staff policies, taking into account feedback from interested parties.

In line with the Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provision) Regulations 2011, SQA has removed the default retirement age to allow employees to continue working beyond the age 65.

To enable us to identify absence trends and to help us to put in place targeted Occupational Health activities, our HR system has been updated in line with guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) absence reporting categories.

Equality Training

We reviewed our training in this area and developed an e-learning training module on Equality Awareness. The aim of the module was to raise awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and SQA's responsibilities as an employer, and to promote to our staff their obligations to observe SQA's equality policies and code of conduct. All staff were encouraged to complete the module.

Mental health awareness

The Make a Change (MAC) group, established in 2002 to promote health and well-being issues, consists of staff volunteers at different grades from across SQA, supported by the Chief Executive and Directors. The group supports Key Healthy Living Campaigns every month to raise awareness to staff. The MAC Group has maintained the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award for a further year.

SQA achieved the Scotland's Health at Work Award in 2008, achieving the broader Healthy Working Lives Gold Award in 2010. For both of these awards, raising awareness of mental health issues is a key criterion, and SQA's online Mental Health Awareness training was developed in response to recommendations from the MAC Group. We launched this training for line managers, but gave all staff the opportunity to complete the module.

Haven

In November, we employed four people with learning difficulties from Haven Training Provider to support relocation of our office in Dalkeith to new premises at Shawfair Business Park. The young people worked extremely hard and really enjoyed their work experience. One member of the group gained an interview with a local supermarket, which he said he would never have done before, as he had never had the opportunity to get work experience.

Further information and contacts

The SQA website at www.sqa.org.uk includes information about our commitment to equality, including previous annual equality reports.

We welcome your feedback and would be happy to receive your thoughts and comments.

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Appendix A: Governance and responsibilities in relation to equality

