

Equality Impact Assessment (supporting guidance available)

Action Plan

This section is completed at the end of the Equality Impact Assessment. Due to the importance of embedding equality in SQA through our actions the Action Plan will be the focus and record of ongoing actions.

Agreed Schedule Review Date	30 April 2024	Additional Schedule Review Date	
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Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Actions taken to monitor the implementation of policy and the impact on equality groups (evidence and consultation)			[ONGOING RECORD]
Monitor learner requests for information changes, or certificate changes for any trends that relate to protected characteristics.	Senior Operations Manager	Ongoing	

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
[LIST]	[CROSS REFERENCE]			
None identified				

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	HN and Vocational Qualifications Data Management and Certification
New Policy or Revision	Existing process
Name of Policy Owner	Head of Operations: HN&VQ
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	24 April 2023

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?

SQA is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate. Our statutory functions are set out mainly in the Education (Scotland) Act 1996. These include:

'to determine the entitlement of individuals to SQA qualifications and, where a person is so entitled, to award and record such a qualification.'

This links to the following SQA Governing Principle:

10: ensure that candidates receive accurate results in the stated timeframe.

This process complies with SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles:

9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data

15. The awarding body must have effective, reliable and secure systems for the registration and certification of learners

It is also consistent with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition and Qualifications Wales's Standard Conditions of Recognition.

Certification is also a function of the NQ Assessment and Data Services team.

It is also linked to processes conducted in the Qualifications Development Directorate (particularly Qualifications Portfolio Management).

What evidence is there to support the implementation or development of this policy or practice?

This process has to adhere to all requirements under legislation and policy for data management, including:

United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation
Data Protection Act 2018
EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679)
Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

SQA's policies, including:
Data Protection Policy
Information Security Policy
Freedom of Information Policy

Evidence about effectiveness would be through candidates receiving accurate certificates on the set Results Date (for National Courses) or within set timescales for other qualifications. All enquiries or complaints about certification are logged and addressed. Often, this will require referral to the entering centre to resolve the issues for data that they have submitted.

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

To process candidate registrations, unit and group award entries and results (all submitted by their centres to SQA) and issue accurate and timely certification to the candidates.

How is the content of these aims relevant to equality groups?

The process directly affects learners, and the certification is the proof of the SQA qualifications they have attained.

However, the data about the candidates in terms of personal details for registration, entries and results of internally assessed units and components are all obtained and submitted to the SQA by centres, and SQA does not have direct engagement with the candidates for this.

SQA provides the results for externally assessed NQ coursework and examinations.

SQA only has direct contact with the candidate for enquiries about certificates and the replacement certificate service, which they can access from the online MySQA service or on the SQA website.

Candidates can request that their centre update their personal details or contact SQA to do that on their behalf.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?
<p>Evidence about effectiveness would be through candidates receiving accurate certificates on the set Results Date (for National Courses) or within set timescales for other qualifications. All enquiries or complaints about certification are logged and addressed. Often, this will require referral to the entering centre to resolve the issues for data that they have submitted.</p> <p>No formal consultation has been conducted with learners regarding the format and wording of the certificate or the certificate replacement service. Some of the content of the certificate is to meet the requirements of regulators. Any common themes from the many calls received from learners are used to inform continuous improvement actions on the certification replacement service.</p>

What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?	
Overall	<p>This process affects all learners undertaking SQA qualifications and is based entirely on information provided by candidates themselves, approved centres and from SQA external marking.</p> <p>SQA only holds the following information about candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name (as provided by the candidate and can be updated directly by them) • Date of birth • Current address (for certification to be sent to or if we require to contact the candidate) • Email (in some cases, where a home address is not available for contact purposes) • Sex <p>No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.</p>
Age	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Disability	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Race	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Religion or Belief	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.

Sex	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Sexual Orientation	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Pregnancy / Maternity	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.
Care experience (where relevant)	No other information about protected characteristics is sought or held in relation to certification.

Impact and Opportunities for Action

The impact that a policy or practice has on an equality group may be different and this requires to be recorded. The impact may not always be negative. Actions are taken to address any differential impact, and include actions to mitigate against any negative impact, to advance equality and to foster good relations between groups.

Each section contains questions for each equality group. These questions are here to support consideration; however, you can provide further detail. Focus initially on the equality groups that would be affected by this policy. If you do not consider that certain equality groups would be affected by this policy, you may leave these sections.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification processes should have a neutral impact.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty. No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Candidates with a disability should not be disadvantaged by the certification process. Certificates can be made available in Braille on request.

	The only barrier might be access to information about certification and the Replacement Certification Service on the website (eg due to sight impairment), which would be a wider issue than just access to this specific information.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification processes should have a neutral impact.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Religion or Belief	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification processes should have a neutral impact.

	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification processes should have a neutral impact.
	Candidates can request a change to their recorded sex. SQA will change this to the legal sex of the candidate.
	The certificates show only the name of the candidate, with no sex indicated.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification processes should have a neutral impact.

	No actions have been identified against this specific duty
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification process should have a neutral impact.
	Candidates can request a change to their recorded sex. SQA will change this to the legal sex of the candidate, but this does not allow recording of all candidates' gender identity.
	However, the certificates show only the name of the candidate, with no gender indicated.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification process should have a neutral impact.

	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification process should have a neutral impact.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
Considered by SQA	General Equality Duty
Care experience (where relevant)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The aims of the certification process should have a neutral impact.
	The replacement certificate service is free for care experienced learners: ‘SQA is a proud Corporate Parent and is pleased to be able to offer a replacement certificate without charge for any care experienced learner aged 26 years and under.

	This service applies to any learner who has been or is currently in care or from a looked after background, at any stage of their life. This care may have been provided in one of many different settings, such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care or looked after at home with a supervision requirement. The replacement certificate order must be certified by a professional person who can confirm your care status.'
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.
	Foster good relations
	No impacts have been identified against this specific duty.
	No actions have been identified against this specific duty.

Rationale

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.
Not applicable