**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

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

**ACTION GRID – MEETING 20 HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2015  
  
Present:** Qualifications Manager (QM), Accounting and Finance Qualification Officer (AFQO), Business and Administration Qualification Officer (BAQO), Centre representatives x 4

**Apologies:** Centre representatives x 2

| **Ref** | **Agenda/Minute Title** | **Agreed Action** | **Action to be taken by** | **Target Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 20/1 | Welcome | QM welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided apologies. |  |  |
| 20/2 | Action Grid from Meeting 19 | There were no issues of accuracy raised with the Action Grid.  In the course of reviewing the actions from the previous meeting the following points were discussed:  AFQO gave an update on the HN Enhancements Pilot Project for HN Business:   * 18 Centres are using pilot assessments although this figure treats the various UHI bodies as individual centres * Economic Issues: An Introduction is the most widely used pilot assessment * Detailed feedback is limited at the present time as delivery is still ongoing particularly with Business Culture and Strategy/Behavioural Skills for Business and Graded Unit 2/Research Skills combined assessments. * There will be formal review of progress at the end of the session   It was suggested that this review would be an opportunity to provide guidance and an incentive for centres not currently using the pilot to get involved.  An action was agreed to follow up with the Policy, Assessment, Statistics and Standards team for a formal update over the summer. | QM | June/July 2015 |
| 20/3 | Network Events | Feedback surveys for the three HN Network Events were presented and discussed. The highlights identified were:  In general the events are well received and it is evident that there continues to be strong demand for them.  A couple of requests for events to be held twice a year, or over two days, were made, however resource not available to do this.  The opportunity to Network with colleagues and EVs is valued.  A couple of requests for more Networking time and/or more structured networking time. There are logistical problems with this, as well as delegates having time and experience to share.  Some feedback indicated that the standardisation presentation was possibly too senior management oriented for the audience.  It was agreed that BAQO and AFQO will follow up with the SOLAR team for a progress update regarding the SOLAR project discussed at the events. | BAQO/AFQO | May 2015 |
| 20/4 | HN Surveys | Surveys for all three HNs are available on the respective SQA webpages and links were sent to centres via the Centre News at the end of April. The response rate for Accounting and Administration and IT has been reasonable but very low for Business.  It was agreed that BAQO and AFQO will send links to the surveys to all members of the QST and the External Verification teams to help promote them. | BAQO/AFQO | May 2015 |
| 20/5 | SQA Statistical Report | The annual SQA statistical report has recently been published which contains entry data for all SQA qualifications. The information for HN entries and certifications was distributed as follows:  HNC Entries (awards in brackets)  4th Administration and IT - 949 (620)  6th Accounting - 883 (665)  7th Business - 839 (656)  HND Entries (awards in brackets)  1st Financial Services (International centres) – 1467 (1088)  2nd Business (Scottish & International centres) – 1451 (934)  3rd Global Trade and Business (International centres) – 890 (571)  4th Accounting (Scottish centres) – 833 (452)  5th Business with Accounting (International centres) – 631 (429)  9th Administration and IT (Scottish centres) – 516 (246)  The Annual SQA Statistical Report is available from the Statistics section of SQA website - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64717.4239.html> |  |  |
| 20/6 | HN Accounting – Accounting Standards FRS1 | AFQO provided an update:  1st phase – year 1 units complete. All units which have been updated are available on the HN Accounting webpage and ASPs available on secure site.  **All revised units and ASPS are for use from session 2015/16 and have been watermarked accordingly.**  From 1st August the unit specifications will be moved to the mainstream HN unit search function.  An action was agreed for this information to be included in the HN Update Letter.  The ASP *Using Financial Accounting Software* has not been updated as Sage have not yet updated the terminology in their software and we have been unable to get any confirmation as to when this is likely to happen.  CM advised that her centre had considered updating the software themselves but this had proven much more difficult than expected and turned out not to be a realistic option.  2nd phase of the work has started.  The SCQF level 8 units have been distributed within the HN Accounting QRT to revise in line with FRS102 requirements. The revision will also incorporate additional changes to Accounting for Specialised Transactions. Comments about content of Outcome 1 have been raised via HN Comment forms and at Networks. Financial Reporting and Analysis will also require some further revision as some content relates to Accounting standards.  Graded Unit 2 – very limited change expected  When the units have been revised there will be a consistency check and a meeting will be held prior to revising the ASPs.  Business: Graded Unit 1 – the implications for this will be looked at as a priority although the impact is expected to be very minor.  Error Tolerance Guidance will have to be updated. This will also impact on International frameworks. | (QM/AFQO) | June/July 2015 |
| 20/7 | Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) Update | New ASPs have been written and are currently available on the SQA secure site for the following Units:  Accounting: Graded Unit 1 ASP004 (Jan 2015)  Accounting: Graded Unit 2 AEX004 (Oct 2014)  Administration and IT: Graded Unit 1 ASP003 (Apr 2015)  Administration and IT: Graded Unit 2 ASP003 (Jan 2015)  Administration and IT: Graded Unit 3 ASP003 (Feb 2015)  ITIB Advanced Spreadsheets ASP002 (Dec 2014)  ITIB Advanced Word Processing ASP002 (Mar 2015)  ITIB Advanced Databases ASP002 (publication pending)  Office Administration ASP002 (Mar 2015)  Office Technologies ASP002 (Nov 2014)  Economics 1: Micro and Macro Theory and Application ASP002 (Apr 2015)  Economics 2: The World Economy ASP002 (Mar 2015)  Developing Entrepreneurial Skills ASP001 (Jan 2015)  Preparing to Start a Business ASP001 (Jan 2015)  Preparing a Formal Business Plan ASP001 (Jan 2015)  MIS to Develop a Small Business ASP001 (Feb 2015) |  |  |
| 20/8 | Unit and ASP Comments | ITIB Advanced Spreadsheets  A query from a centre about ITIB Advanced Spreadsheets ASP001 was discussed. Queries involving ASPs are not routinely raised for discussion with the QST but because it was of a very technical nature the QST were asked for comment.  The query related to the use of pivot tables in Outcome 1 and whether one of the questions provided adequate clarity and information for candidates to provide an acceptable solution.  It was agreed that BAQO would follow up with the original enquirer and another subject specialist to ascertain whether the question should be amended for clarity.  Communication: Business Communication  A centre recently contacted SQA to suggest that this unit should be removed from the mandatory section of the HNC/D Business framework. The justification for the suggestion was that the knowledge and skills are covered elsewhere throughout the Group Awards.  This was discussed with proposal not being agreed by the QST for the following reasons:  - Although there is some coverage in other Units, there is a need for the teaching of communication in its own right  - The teaching of communication skills supports these elements in other units and there is a risk that a problem could develop if this was removed  - Communication skills are a priority for employers    BAQO will respond to the centre who raised the proposal. | BAQO  BAQO | May 2015  May 2015 |
| 20/9 | Security Breaches | HN Unit – Business Taxation  It was recently brought to SQA’s attention that a former candidate has uploaded an essay response for this Unit to a file sharing website. As the material in question is owned by the candidate rather than SQA, it is not clear what action, if any, SQA can take to have this removed. SQA are currently exploring options.  Since the ASP itself has not been compromised it will continue to be available, however centres are asked to be vigilant as ever to the risk of plagiarism.  A letter has been sent to centres via the Centre News bulletin to advise of the issue.  As these kinds of websites are readily available and likely to be so for the foreseeable future, the possibility of developing guidance for candidates on Academic Integrity similar to that which has recently been developed for CfE candidates was discussed. At the very least this would alert students to the fact that centres are aware of these websites thereby acting as a deterrent to their use. |  |  |
| 20/10 | Any Other Business | There was some discussion around the approach to referencing within the HN Business Graded Unit 2. Referencing of the project report is mandatory although no marks are allocated to this. Therefore it effectively constitutes part of the minimum evidence requirements. Referencing also features in other units within the HNC/D Business Group Awards. It was suggested that some guidance be produced in the interest of standardisation and it was agreed this could be considered perhaps as part of a wider scoping exercise.  A query was raised as to the mechanism for providing feedback to SQA about Units. The HN Business subjects QD team will respond to emails sent directly, although it is preferable if the relevant forms are used so that as much relevant information as possible can be captured.  Feedback can be provided via a generic feedback facility on SQA website - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/1711.2581.html> -  or by sending a DAVAL 2 form requesting change(s) to an existing Unit/Group Award - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/65034.html#requesting>  BAQO agreed to circulate links around the QST.  The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Wednesday 28th October 2015** | BAQO | May 2015 |