

**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

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

**ACTION GRID – MEETING 16 HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 MAY 2013**

**Present:** Marian Forgan, Lynne Gorman, Alison Hamilton, Catherine Mancini, John Ogden, Tony Hamilton, Linda Meikle, Sharon O'Neil

**Apologies:** Moira Winning

| <b>Ref</b> | <b>Agenda/Minute Title</b>  | <b>Agreed Action</b>   | <b>Action to be taken by</b> | <b>Target Date</b> |
|------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 16/1       | Welcome and Introduction    | Tony Hamilton, Qualifications Officer, welcomed everyone to the meeting.   |                              |                    |
| 16/2       | Action Grid from Meeting 15 | <p>The group agreed that the Action Grid for meeting 15 held in October 2012 was accurate. An update was given on actions taken:</p> <p>HN Accounting – meeting to review error tolerance for 2<sup>nd</sup> year Mandatory Units would take place on 13 June to enable amendments to be made prior to start of academic session 2013/2014.</p> <p>HN Unit <i>Business Culture and Strategy</i> – guidance on word count had been amended.</p> <p>HN Unit Payroll – the content of this Unit is being amended to address the introduction of Real Time PAYE and the issue of forms, tax tables, etc no longer being available for use.</p> |                              |                    |
| 16/3       | HN Surveys                  | A communication regarding the 2012/2013 HN Surveys had been sent to centres in April. To date the surveys have been accessed by a higher number of centres and candidates than for 2011/2012. Figures at 1 May 2013 <sup>1</sup> are:  |                              |                    |

<sup>1</sup> 2011/2012 total figures given in brackets

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|      |                              | <p><u>HN Accounting</u><br/>Centres – 12 (14)<br/>Candidates – 58 (13)</p> <p><u>HN Administration and Information Technology</u><br/>Centres – 29 (19)<br/>Candidates – 71 (37)</p> <p><u>HN Business</u><br/>Centres – 40 (16)<br/>Candidates – 126 (5)</p> <p>It should be noted that all lecturers within centres can respond to the survey and figures will include multiple returns from some centres.</p>   |   |                                       |
| 16/4 | Feedback from Network Events | <p>Network Event evaluations had been very positive with delegates enjoying the format taken.</p> <p>The Accounting Network discussion sessions took place around Error Tolerance and the Units <i>Payroll</i> and <i>Accounting for Specialised Transactions</i>. Error tolerance feedback will assist group meeting on 13 June to amend error tolerance within 2<sup>nd</sup> year HN Accounting mandatory Units if necessary. Payroll specification and Assessment Support Pack are currently being amended. A decision to postpone work on Accounting for Specialised Transactions has been taken so that an EV can look at impact any change would have on Accounting: Graded Unit 3 and exemption arrangements with professional bodies.</p> <p>The AIT discussion session focused on integration of assessments – the delegates highlighted the possibility of integrating assessment of ICT and Presentation Skills. The Event delegates also discussed the use of software (such as Notepad or via Blackboard) to answer extended response questions in Graded Unit 2. Delegates were concerned that if candidates use WORD to produce their response</p> | <p>Error tolerance group</p> <p>SQA</p> | <p>August 2013</p> <p>August 2013</p> |

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|      |   | <p>there was a risk of plagiarism through the use of the help function. The QST felt that although this was a valid concern, it is a centre issue in terms of ensuring the integrity of assessment and would be inappropriate for SQA to dictate to centres what software is permitted. EVs will discuss this at central verification. Budget dependent an EV will be commissioned to write an Assessment Support Pack showing an integrated assessment.</p> <p>The HN Business Network discussion session also focused on integration of assessment such as Research Skills and GU2, and the Marketing Units. Some of the integration opportunities may be addressed by the HN Articulation Enhancement Project – see item 16/5 below.</p>   |                       |             |
| 16/5 | HN Articulation Enhancement Project (HN Business) | <p>The QM updated the meeting on the project which is funded by the Scottish Funding Council. Universities had raised concerns that candidates articulating from FE had found it difficult to cope with HE. The project focused on four HNDs – Business, Social Science, Computing and Engineering.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to alternative assessment approaches and to academic competences profile.</p> <p>The alternative assessment approaches had been put into four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Examination-based. Assessment of a sample of content from more than one HN Unit in one exam event. Each Unit assessed within the exam will be assessed discretely on questions relating solely to that Unit.</li> <li>◆ Examination-based (combined). Combined assessment of a sample of content from more than one HN Unit in one exam event. Content of the Units will be sufficiently related.</li> </ul> |                       |             |

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|      |                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Combined assessment. Combined assessment of a sample of content from more than one HN Unit through an investigation, research activity or similar assessment.</li> <li>◆ Reduced assessment. A reduced assessment load in one HN Unit through the use of sampling.</li> </ul> <p>Combined, reduced and exam-based assessments are being looked at for Economic Issues: An Introduction; Business Law; Research Skills and GU2; Business Culture and Strategy and Behavioural Skills for Business; and Communication and Business Accounting.</p> <p>The meeting discussed other alternatives for combined assessments. Any model developed as part of the HN Articulation Enhancement Project will be evaluated within the context of the project and will inform future developments in this area.</p> <p>Pilot is scheduled to start in August 2013 although centres undertaking the pilot had not yet been identified. Alternative Assessment specifications to be available by August 2013.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that some students would thrive if assessed using some of the above methods and these methods would also suit poor attenders. It was not known if students taking part in the pilot would be tracked. However, the members of the QST did not agree that FE students were ill-prepared for university – some students coped very well.</p> <p>Academic competence related to referencing and research skills. It was hoped that students would be able to take a profile to university with them.</p> |                       |             |
| 16/6 | 2010 Frameworks - Unit Comments | <i>Recording Financial Information</i> – while the QST agreed with the comments, ie RFI difficult to deliver within a single credit timeframe and  |                       |             |

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|      | received             | <p>that some topics such as control accounts, double entry book-keeping for depreciation, prepayments and accruals should be included to better prepare learners for the HND, they acknowledged any change to Unit content would require a revalidation of the Group Awards. It was acknowledged that some centres were only coming to the end of the first cycle of delivering the full HND and that it was too early to have a full review of the qualification. Sharon agreed that this could be looked at in the longer term cycle of reviews.</p> <p><i>ICT in Business</i> – one centre expressed concern regarding the time required for learners to master Microsoft Project. Members of the QST had not experienced issues with this and stated that learners should also be practising the use of Microsoft Project within their self-directed study time.</p> <p><i>Office Technologies</i> – a comment had been received about the increasing use of social software such as Facebook and Twitter in business and about the need to refresh what could be classified as emerging technologies within this Unit. The QST agreed that the term ‘emerging technologies’ covered social software, etc. Should the centre wish to include named technologies they could submit an ASP for prior verification to ensure it met the Evidence Requirements of the Unit.</p> <p>The QST noted that the comments had been received from single centres only.</p> <p>It was agreed that Tony and Linda check the HN Surveys to ensure all comments relating to Units were noted.</p> | QOs                   | August/September 2013 |
| 16/7 | Graded Unit Projects | The QM informed the meeting that it had become apparent, from the Network Events, that slightly different approaches to remediation/re-   |                       |                       |

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|       |                                    | <p>assessment within the project Graded Units was taking place across the 3 subject areas.</p> <p>To address this issue QM will meet with the Senior EVs for the three subject areas to ensure consistency across the subject areas. The content of the project Graded Units will also be transferred to the new Unit shell which gives clearer advice on remediation/re-assessment.</p>   | EVs                   | August 2013 |
| 16/8  | Entry and Certification Statistics | <p>Entry and certification statistics for the HN qualifications were distributed. These show that the HNC in Accounting, Administration and Information Technology and Business are within the top 6 awards for entries and certification. The HNDs are within the top 11 awards for entries and certification.</p> <p>HND Financial Services and HND Business have the highest entry and certification figures for awards offered outwith Scotland.</p> <p>The statistics are available to download from SQA's website.</p> |                       |             |
| 16/9  | Any Other Business                 | The QO informed the meeting that all material for HN Business Graded Unit 2 was now available on the Understanding Standards website.  |                       |             |
| 16/10 | Date of Next Meeting               | The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 October 2013 at 1300 hours.  |                       |             |