



Candidate data management and certification

This document will help explain Candidate Data Management with SQA.

SQA Connect

All training providers and Scottish colleges have access to SQA Connect – Candidate Services to create and maintain candidate records and submit results.

They also have access to SQA Connect – Navigator to help manage centre, qualifications, and candidate data.

Scottish colleges will normally use their own management information (MI) systems to create files and upload them to SQA for processing.

To get access to SQA Connect please visit [Log in to SQA Connect - Support for centres - SQA.](#)

The importance of candidate data

As part of your systems verification with SQA, it is important that your candidates' personal and qualification data accurately reflects their current status.

SQA holds personal data on candidates to identify and certificate them. We may have to contact candidates directly, so we need to have their home addresses, telephone number or email address.

Entering candidates for qualifications

Your centre must notify us of candidates undertaking units and awards as soon as possible after they have enrolled on their programme of study. This is to ensure that:

Learners undertaking SQA qualifications are entered as SQA candidates, with the associated responsibilities and entitlements.

We can plan qualification verification visits effectively.

We can certificate candidates accurately and on time when you submit their results.

Entry information must be kept up to date to avoid delays in the release of certificates.

You can find more detail on our Systems Verification Criteria in: [SQA Systems Verification Criteria - Guidance for centre](#)

Registrations

Scottish candidate number

Registering a candidate creates a record for them with SQA and creates a Scottish Candidate Number (SCN). The SCN is made up of nine digits. SCNs are allocated to everyone who goes through the Scottish school system from primary age but are not usually activated until the candidates are ready to sit their exams.

If the candidate hasn't been to a Scottish school, you can create an SCN on SQA Connect.

Candidates should only have one record (and one SCN). SQA certificates are cumulative and should therefore show all SQA qualifications that the candidate has achieved throughout their education pathway. (Certificates for qualifications regulated by Ofqual are not cumulative.)

Once a record has been created it cannot be deleted. If two SCNs have been created for a candidate, you must request a Merge Request via SQA Connect – Useful Links

Registering a candidate

To register a learner as a candidate, the delivering centre needs to provide the learner's name, address, date of birth and gender. You should use these details to check whether a record already exists for the candidate.

The address provided on the candidate record is the address that the certificate will go to. As far as possible, we expect candidates' home addresses to be used. We understand that in some cases you may wish the certificate to come to your centre's address, but it is essential that you either reinstate the candidates address to their home address immediately after certification or provide the candidates telephone number or email address.

If the certificate is being sent to your centre or a third party, it is a requirement that the candidate has provided consent for to this.

These are all essential requirements for centres to comply with SQA Systems Verification Criterion 6.1.

Entries and qualifications

An entry is when a qualification that your candidate is doing is added to their record — by submitting the entry, you're telling us that the candidate is doing the qualification. To submit an entry, the following candidate details are required:

- ◆ Scottish Candidate Number (9 digits)
- ◆ Qualification code (4 characters)
- ◆ Qualification level (2 digits)
- ◆ Estimated completion date (month and year)

If adding a group award to the candidate's record, for example an SVQ or HNC/D qualification (any award that is made up of one or more units), it is important that you add the group award code (beginning with a G) and the units that make up the qualification. Not adding the group award will result in the candidate not receiving a commemorative certificate showing achievement of the overall award.

An estimated completion date must be entered at this stage. This is the date when the candidate is expected to complete the course. The completion date can be extended multiple times throughout the candidate's learning but must not exceed the lifespan of the qualification. It is important that completion dates are kept up to date because the Quality Assurance and Verification team use completion dates to allocate visits to External Verifiers (part of compliance with Category 6.2 of SQA's systems verification criteria).

Qualifications should be added to the candidate's record at the beginning of the course or session). Entry information must be kept up to date and must reflect the status of the candidate and their qualifications (part of Category 6.2 SQA Systems Verification Criteria).

SQA runs a data cleanse annually. As part of this, entries with completion dates in the past will be withdrawn, so it is very important that these are maintained. SQA Connect will notify you if any candidates have passed the completion date in the Alerts section of Candidate Services.

Qualifications have a lifespan — entries cannot be accepted for qualifications where the qualification is finished or in its lapsing period.

In exceptional circumstances, a request can be made to add a finished or lapsed qualification to a candidate's record by completing the EC02 form Entry Creation by Exemption from the SQA Connect Useful links page. **Please note that if the qualification is an SVQ or a National Workplace (NW) Accredited qualification, the request will be sent to SQA Accreditation to authorise.**

Results

SQA centres can only result units. SQA results the Group Award once the candidate meets the framework combination requirements.

It is important to submit results at the appropriate time so that candidates receive their certificate timeously. This also allows SQA to carry out quality assurance processes. Keeping candidate data up to date meets SQA Systems Verification Criteria 6.

SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements specify that centres must ensure that candidates seeking certification for a full SVQ, a Workplace Core Skill Unit or the Assessor/Verifier Units are registered for at least 10 weeks before a claim for certification is made. This rule is in place to allow awarding bodies sufficient time to carry out quality assurance. It cannot be bypassed.

The Quality Assurance and Verification Team (QAV) may place a Provisional Hold on a qualification that your centre is approved to offer if you don't have a successful verification outcome. This will still allow you to result a candidate, but the result will have a provisional status and will not be certificated until this is resolved by QAV.

When the results are submitted for a candidate, it is important that you check that the candidate's name and address are up to date as these will be used for certification.

Certification

HNVQ Certification takes place continuously throughout the year, as follows:

Certification type	Days
Group award – includes, SVQ, HNC/D, Advanced Certificate / Diploma, PDA, NPA, NC and Ofqual qualifications.	Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays (weekly)
Unitonly – for candidates who have been resulted for stand-alone units and have no other open entries on their record.	Every Thursday (weekly)

Group award certification

Group award certification takes place when results have been submitted for the candidate that meets the rules of combination of the group award's framework.

We will run an evaluation of uncertificated group awards that the candidate has been entered for, to check if they gain the qualification with the units they have been resulted for. If they do achieve the group award, the system will place a P (pass) result on the candidate's record and the award will be eligible for certification.

We normally start the certification run in the morning of the scheduled day. Any updates made to a candidate's record on the day of certification may not be reflected on the certificate, depending on whether the change was done before the run has commenced.

Unit certification

Unit certification takes place weekly on a Thursday and will automatically certificate resulted units if there are no other open entries on the candidate's record.

If you require a unit certificate and there are open entries on the record, please email certification@sqa.org.uk to request the units to be certificated. We do this run on a Friday afternoon.

More information on certification

The days certification runs take place can change depending on the time of year. We will notify you through SQA Connect or SQA News of any changes or disruptions to this schedule. Click here to view the full [Certification Timetable](#) online.

There is a detailed guide to the [Scottish Qualifications Certificate](#), outlining what candidates can expect to receive in the certification pack. As well as the certificate, the guide explains more about the covering letter, record of achievement, summary of attainment, SCQF points, and Core Skills profile.

Replacement certificates

SQA provides a replacement certificate service.

Your centre can request a replacement certificate on behalf of your candidates. There is a charge of £40.00 for a replacement certificate. To order a replacement certificate, use the [Centre Replacement Certificate request form - SQA](#)

Free-of-charge replacement certificates will only be provided to centres if the candidate was originally certificated within the past four months **and** there has been no change to the record (change of name or change of address).

FAQs

Registrations

How do I know if my candidate already has an SCN?

Most people who have been through the Scottish school system since 1995 will have an SQA record and will therefore have an SCN.

To check if a candidate has a record with SQA, you can search on SQA Connect - Candidate Services or Navigator. You will need the candidate's name and date of birth. It is also worth checking with the candidate if they were ever known as any other name in the past.

My candidate search returned possible matches. How do I know if this is my candidate?

If uncertain, you can check with the candidate to ensure that this is their record, by checking their address or qualifications they have achieved previously.

I have accidentally created a record for a candidate who already has an SCN – can I delete it?

No. Once a record has been created, it is not possible for it to be deleted. You will need to request a merge [Merge Request - SQA](#)

Qualifications

What is an approved qualification?

Approved qualifications are those which SQA has verified and authorised your centre to deliver and assess. This includes units and group awards.

What is a group award?

A group award is a full course qualification consisting of one or more units. Only group awards will include a commemorative certificate.

What is a unit?

A unit is an individual module which may or may not contribute to an overall group award.

What is a 4+2 code?

All SQA qualifications have alphanumeric codes assigned to them. This consists of four unique characters for the Grouping (the 4-code), plus two digits that signify the product type and level (the 2-code). This gives us the 4+2 code.

There are two different codes coming up for my qualification – which one should I select?

There may be instances where there is more than one qualification with the same title. This could be due to one of the qualifications finishing soon and it has been revised. You can look up the qualification to check which one is the most up-to-date version (by checking the start date of the qualification).

What is a lapsing period and lapsing date?

'Lapsing' means that the qualification is soon going to be finishing, often (though not always) to be replaced by a more updated version of the qualification.

The lapsing period is the period between the lapsing date and the finish date of the qualification. The lapsing period will always be at least a full year before the finish date. This is a teach out period of a qualification, where no more entries to the course can be made.

Results and certifications

I have entered all my results. Why have my candidates not been certificated?

If this happens, we always advise that you check the candidates record on either SQA Connect Candidate Services or Navigator. There are several reasons why this could be the case. The most common are:

- ◆ If it is a unit that you are waiting to be certificated, it is important to note that unit certification does not automatically take place if there are any other open entries on the record (See Certification above).
- ◆ The qualification is an SVQ and has been on the candidate's record for less than 10 weeks. SVQs are subject to the '10-week rule'. This means that 10 weeks must pass from the time the qualification was added onto the candidate's record before we can certificate it.
- ◆ The candidate does not achieve the qualification. There may be a contributing unit missing or resulted incorrectly. You can double-check this by using by using our Grouping Check on Navigator (See the Grouping Check section on the **Navigator Guide** or Course Check on the **Candidate Services Guide**).

I have accidentally entered results for a candidate that has not completed yet. What should I do?

If the candidate has not yet been certificated, you can amend the result through SQA Connect Candidate Services – see the Candidate Services Guidance document section 7.3.

If the candidate has been certificated, you can request an amendment to the result through SQA Connect Candidate Services – see Candidate Services Guidance document section 7.2.

What is the difference between 'resulted' and 'certificated'?

Your candidate is **resulted** when you have entered their results, the qualification has moved to Status Code 4 (Resulted), and you are awaiting certification.

Your candidate has been **certificated** only when the certificate has been released, the qualification has moved to Status Code 5 (Certificated), and it has a certification date against it.

What are the different types of 'Hold'?

There could be a hold on a candidate or a qualification:

- ◆ **Provisional Hold:** Qualifications that are on hold cannot be certificated until conditions are met. This is normally added because of unsuccessful verification. If you have candidates on a provisional hold, their resulted entries will be moved to Entry Status Code 3. You can contact gav@sqa.org.uk if you need to check the status of this.
- ◆ **Candidate Hold:** This hold prevents the record from being updated in Candidate Services. This is usually due to a merge request. The hold will be removed once the merge has completed. There are times where we may need to put individual candidates on hold due to manual certification or monitoring. You can contact us at candidate.records@sqa.org.uk if you want to check status of any candidate holds.

Contact us

For more help and support on any of the above you can contact the HNVQ Data Management and Certification team on:

Support on candidates record, ie updating name, address, qualification entry / result –

candidate.records@sqa.org.uk

Support on candidate certification – certification@sqa.org.uk

Support for SQA Connect Candidate Services, Exchange, Navigator –

centre.records@sqa.org.uk

Support on replacement certificates – replacement.certificates@sqa.org.uk

The telephone for any of the above is **0345 213 6015**