

SQA Equality Impact Assessment

Please read the [Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance on assessing impact](#).

Your policy

1 What is the name of your policy, procedure, proposal, project, or decision*?

*Referred to as 'policy' hereafter.

Policy name	National Courses with grades criteria for development
Completed by	Gill Mann
Head of service	Martyn Ware
Date	27 January 2022
Next scheduled review date	27 January 2023

2 Main purpose of policy

What is the main purpose of the policy? This policy ensures that all new National Courses with grades meet the criteria laid out in SQA's business case process, prior to being approved for development.

The policy ensures that there is a strong rationale for the development of all new National Courses with grades, supported by market research, so that all new developments are of value to the Scottish education system.

Before any proposal for a new National Course can go forward, a business case must be made, addressing the following criteria:

- There is a strong rationale, and clear evidence of demand, supported by market research.
- There is evidence that the market research has been conducted nationally and, depending on the nature and purpose of the proposed Course(s), has included consultation with centres of all types, eg schools, FE, HE, local authorities, HMIE, Scottish Executive, SSCs, employers, unions, professional bodies.
- There is evidence of the added value of offering graded external assessment over and above a coherent group of Units (eg Where else would it take the candidate? Who would recognise it? What different sort of progression would it offer?).
- There is evidence that external assessment is required, and will be used, by stakeholders.
- There is evidence relating to the need for a course at a specific SCQF level or, if a suite of Courses is being developed, of the need for a course at each level from 4–7 (Intermediate 1–AH) in a hierarchy.

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

- There is evidence of a commitment to offer the new course(s) from a number of centres, and projected take-up figures for each of the first three years of implementation, supported by factual information. For example, for a community language, factual information should be provided relating to size of ethnic minority population and number of children of/close to secondary school age within each centre's catchment area, number of experienced community language teachers/subject experts in each centre, etc).
- There is evidence of how the proposed course(s) fits with other, possibly competing, SQA qualifications and other related subjects in the curriculum.
- There is evidence of progression routes.

3 Information and evidence used to evaluate impact

What information, and evidence, is being used to evaluate the impact of this policy on people who share protected characteristics?

Ensuring that there is a strong rationale for the development of all new National Courses with grades, supported by market research, ensures that SQA continues to provide a broad and balance suite of National Courses that have value and relevance to the Scottish Education system as a whole. This means that learners can be confident that the qualifications they achieve fully support their progression to further or higher education, employment or training. In this respect, this policy provides equity of opportunity for all learners, including those who share the protected characteristics.

Evidence of this equity of opportunity is provided in the suite of existing National Courses with grades and their ability to support learner's future aspirations, including those who share the protected characteristics.

Public Sector Equality Duty

SQA is required to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This section provides the opportunity to capture how the policy will contribute towards the three aims of the general equality duty, and to consider if there is anything more we need to do to meet our responsibilities.

4 How might this policy impact on people who share protected characteristics?

Please consider positive or negative impacts. (At the beginning of the process, you may want to record perceived impact. Ongoing monitoring of the policy will allow you to measure the actual impact of the policy.)

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive/negative/neutral)	Please provide more information
Age	Neutral	There is no impact. This is a procedural policy that ensures that National Courses with grades have a clear rationale for development that reflects the value they have to the Scottish education system as a whole
Disability	Neutral	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	As above
Race	Neutral	As above
Religion, belief or non-belief	Neutral	As above
Sexual orientation	Neutral	As above
Gender re-assignment (gender identity and transgender)	Neutral	As above
Pregnancy/maternity	Neutral	As above
Sex	Neutral	As above
Care experience (where relevant)	Neutral	As above

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

5 What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified above?

Not Applicable

6 If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact despite the mitigatory arrangements identified, are you satisfied that this is objectively justified, ie a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim? Please provide explanatory details.

Not Applicable

7 Could this policy be revised or changed to better meet the general equality duty?

Not Applicable

8 Has there been consultation/is consultation planned with people who will be affected by this policy/procedure/project/decision? Please detail below how this has affected your decision making.

Not Applicable

9 How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

The policy will be monitored and evaluated on a yearly basis.

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

Action plan

Action:	Owners:	Dates:
Evaluate policy	Gill Mann	20 October 2022

Approval and publication

Completed equality impact assessments will be published on SQA's website. As such, they must:

- ◆ be discussed and approved
- ◆ be sent electronically to equality@sqa.org.uk
- ◆ have actions identified, recorded and monitored as part of SQA's equality action plan

Summary of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010

Components

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act (**Fairness**)
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (**Opportunity**)
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (**Respect**)

Due regard

Regarding (b) **Opportunity**, having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:

- a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic*
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of the persons who do not share it
- c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

Regarding (c) **Respect**, having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:

- a) Tackle prejudice
- b) Promote understanding

*Due regard comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. The weight that public authorities give to equality should be proportionate to how relevant a particular function is to equality. In short, the more relevant a policy, procedure or practice is to equality and people, then the greater the regard that should be paid.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are:

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Marriage and Civil Partnership**
- ◆ Religion or Belief
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Pregnancy and Maternity
- ◆ Sex

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- ◆ Gender Re-assignment
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Sexual Orientation

**Although marriage and civil partnership applies to section a) in employment only, this will be considered for all stakeholders.