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	February 2024	Additional Schedule Review Date	

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]**
[LIST]			

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
[LIST]	**[CROSS REFERENCE]**			

Policy Aims

Name of Policy or practice	National Courses with grades criteria for development
New Policy or Revision	Revision
Name of Policy Owner	Policy and Research Manager, Policy NQ
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	February 2023

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
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, e.g., 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 (e.g., 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.   - 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.

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

What are the aims of this policy or practice?

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.

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

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. Each course offered by SQA is validated, including ensuring that each course offered is as inclusive as possible.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?
As a procedural policy this has been engaged on internally.

What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?	
All characteristics	As this is a generalised procedure, there is no single customer base or qualification type to present as evidence. Each instance of the process's application is supported by its own evidence, in the form of extensive market research.

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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity

	Foster good relations
Protected Characteristic	**General Equality Duty**
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
Protected Characteristic	**General Equality Duty**
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations

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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
Protected Characteristic	**General Equality Duty**
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations
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 requirement for market research on any new or revised qualification can be considered as a positive impact, as each instance of the policy's application is supported by its own evidence base, and can consider equality impacts for the target market and qualification.

	Advance equality of opportunity
	Foster good relations

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.
No impacts have been identified through this process, however SQA expect that each application of this process is likely to have its own equality impacts. This policy marks the very start of the qualification design process, and includes extensive market research, including any EDI implications. At the end of the qualification design process, the validation of SQA qualifications includes steps to ensure that each qualification SQA provides is fair, including its inclusiveness.