

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	Qualification Design Principles
Completed by	Research and Policy Manager
Head of service	Head of Service, Policy, Research and Standards
Date	10 June 2021
Signature	Signed off by QDMT
Next scheduled review date	Next policy review date May 2024

2 Main purpose of policy

What is the main purpose of the policy?

The objective of the policy is to ensure that all SQA qualifications are developed in accordance with the Design Principles for that product type.

Design Principles are required to ensure that all SQA qualifications are designed, developed, assessed (both reliably and with validity) and certificated according to the qualification type, market and learners.

Design principles provide a consistent framework for the development of qualifications, stating rules such as the appropriate SCQF level and number of SCQF credit point for that product type, the course structure, opportunities to develop skills (both Core Skills and Skills for learning, life and work), the assessment approach and, for some qualifications, alignment to National Occupational Standards.

There is a broad internal and external target audience for Design Principles, including SQA staff, Appointees, learners, centres and other stakeholder groups and organisations.

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

Supporting procedures, processes and guidance documents provide more information to qualification development teams. As such, these tools should be impact assessed to ensure that no discrimination occurs at that level.

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?

No major changes to content have been made to the Design Principles since the previous EqIA was carried out. Engagement with colleagues in Qualifications Development has taken place regarding their content and no concerns regarding the impact of this policy on people who share protected characteristics have been raised. The Design Principles themselves do not provide a sufficient level of detail on how a qualification should be written or delivered or assessed.

However, all SQA qualifications must take into account the needs of different learners and be designed to be accessible to learners who will achieve in different ways and at different rates. Therefore, supporting procedures, processes and guidance documents provide more detailed information to qualification development teams. SQA will ensure that these tools will be impact assessed to ensure that no discrimination or unjustified barriers to learning and assessment occurs.

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.

5 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	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of Age.
Disability	Neutral	<p>SQA ensures that accessibility is fully considered in the development of qualifications. This involves identifying and justifying those requirements within a qualification which may potentially have an adverse impact on disabled candidates and considering whether it is possible to remove the particular requirement. If it is not possible to remove the requirement, for example, something which is a National Occupational Standard or an essential skill, then consideration needs to be given to what reasonable adjustments can be made to mitigate the adverse impact.</p> <p>The relevance to these Design Principles has been classed as low because accessibility and equality for disabled candidates is embedded in qualification development and delivery for example, in the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality Review of Qualifications - <i>Equality of Access to SQA qualifications</i> Policy - the provision of various Assessment Arrangements and the guidance on their use - promotion of accessibility in the Guide to Unit Writing - awareness of Equality Legislation for delivery of qualifications in SQA Centres <p>These documents and procedures are encompassed in the Equality of Access Policy and this policy will be equality impact assessed.</p>

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

Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of marital or civil partnership status.
Race	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of race.
Religion, belief or non-belief	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of religion or belief.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of sexual orientation.
Gender re-assignment (gender identity and transgender)	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of Gender reassignment.
Pregnancy/maternity	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of pregnancy or maternity status.
Sex	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners on account of their sex.
Care experience (where relevant)	Neutral	In all Design Principles there are no barriers or disadvantage to learners who are care experienced.

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

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

N/A

7 If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact despite the mitigatory arrangements identified in Step 5, are you satisfied that this is objectively justified, ie a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim? Please provide explanatory details.

N/A

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

N/A

9 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.

No

10 How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

Design Principles are monitored regularly and subject to periodic review. Design Principles and associated practices are discussed at SQA committee level (QDMT and Qualifications Committee). These committees approve any further action required, for example, external engagement, development of further guidance, training etc.

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

Action plan

Ref:	Action:	Owners:	Dates:
	No actions identified	n/a	n/a

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

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

- ◆ 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.