

**SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS**

**13-02-07  
Item 4  
Paper 43-06**

**Self-certification of the framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland against the framework for the European Higher Education Area**

**Introduction**

1. This paper provides detail on the conclusion and early promotion of the process to verify that the framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland is compatible with the framework for the European Higher Education Area.

**Recommendation**

2. SACCA members are invited to note the contents of the paper and suggest means, in addition to those mentioned in the paper, of further disseminating the outcomes and promoting the successful conclusion of the Scottish self-certification process.

**Further information**

3. For further information on the material covered in this paper please contact Alan Runcie or David Bottomley.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION  
QAA Scotland**

**SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS**

**Self-certification of the framework for qualifications of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Scotland against the framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**

**Background**

4. Ministers from those countries signed up to the Bologna process in higher education recommended in the communiqué from their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 that for the functioning and reputation of the Framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a whole, it is important that there exist clear and demonstrable processes for aligning national frameworks within the overarching European Framework.
5. It was therefore proposed that criteria should be put in place for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA Framework, and that procedures of such compatibility will be 'self-certified' by each country.
6. Scotland agreed with the "Bologna working group on qualifications frameworks" to be one of two nations (the other being Ireland) to pilot the self-certification process, and to report by December 2006 on that process and the issues raised during its conduct. The experience will serve to inform the process of self-certification against the EHEA in the remainder of the Bologna countries. Ministers recommend that all signatories to the Bologna process will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

**Update**

7. At the last meeting of SACCA (17 October 2006, paper 42-08) members endorsed the conduct and conclusion of the Scottish EHEA verification process and the overall outcomes of self-certification. Members also agreed that final approval of the verification report be given by the Chair of QAA Scotland Committee.
8. Since then, the report has been approved by the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee and the QAA Scotland Committee, and has been formally endorsed by the Chair of QAA Scotland Committee at its meeting in December 2006.
9. The report was received by the 'Bologna working group on qualifications frameworks' at its final meeting in Copenhagen in December 2006. Scotland and the Republic of Ireland have now verified the compatibility of their higher education frameworks with the EHEA.
10. The report has been placed on the ENIC-NARIC website by the Council of Europe and can be seen at [http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Scotland\\_en.pdf](http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Scotland_en.pdf).
11. The national description of higher education in Scotland (<http://www.uknec.org.uk/index.asp?page=106>) will be updated to reflect the completion of the self-certification process.

### **Promotion of the outcomes of self-certification**

12. An information leaflet highlighting the completion of the Scottish verification process - and the implications of that successful completion - is currently being produced. It will be distributed to all Scottish HEIs and to key contacts and organisations in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world.
13. An article on the completion of the Scottish verification process appeared in the October 2006 edition of the QAA magazine *Higher Quality* (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/higherquality/hq22/default.asp#item11>).
14. Consideration is currently being given to other possible means of promoting the Scottish verification process e.g. an article in the Times Higher Education Supplement; delivering workshops at existing European or Bologna Process events; staging a workshop with Irish colleagues for a European audience; placing articles in key publications across Europe; and working to promote the outcomes through the network of national 'Bologna promoters'. One outcome already being developed is the placing of a joint Scottish/Irish paper on the experience of self-certification in the European University Association (EUA) Bologna Handbook. The Handbook has approximately 1500 subscribers across the whole of Europe, including a number of governmental bodies and agencies in various countries.

### **Recommendation**

15. SACCA members are invited to note the contents of this paper and suggest means, in addition to those mentioned above, of further disseminating the outcomes and promoting the successful conclusion of the Scottish self-certification process.