

## **Credit and Qualification Frameworks in England**

### **Introduction**

- 1 This paper aims to give an update about the work being conducted in England around the development of Credit and Qualification Frameworks. The paper gives a brief summary of the results of the consultation conducted by the “Burgess Group” in September 2005 and reports on other work being carried out in England.
- 2 In addition, the paper also gives a brief report about further work being conducted in England by the Qualifications Curriculum Authority to produce a Framework for Achievement.
- 3 SACCA is requested to note these developments.

### **“Burgess Group” Consultation**

- 4 In September 2005 the “Burgess Group” launched a consultation on proposals for “national arrangements for credit in England”. The consultation ran until December 2005, the results of which were reported to the “Burgess Group” at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006.
- 5 The consultation responses were described as positive and in the main accepted the main proposals the Group put forward. To summarise, the responses indicated that:
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    - a. Credit arrangements should be organized in the form of a framework;
    - b. Any Guidelines produced to support this Framework should not be seen as or be prescriptive;
    - c. Credit arrangements should integrate with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
    - d. Credit arrangements in England should integrate with credit arrangements that exist already in the United Kingdom. In essence, the Framework should follow the nomenclature the SCQF uses for the measure of credit i.e. 1 credit per ten hours of notional learning time. However, it was also thought important that the Framework should be compatible with the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (ECTS).
    - e. Guidance and recommendations for the use of level descriptors should be produced although these should not be or seen as prescriptive.
    - f. Typical credit values for higher education awards should be identified.

- g. Volume of credit associated with the level of award for awards that span different levels of study, should be identified. However, concerns were expressed about this would be implemented in practice.
  - h. Credit arrangements should reference the NICATS level descriptors. However, the FHEQ and the European qualification descriptors should also act as key reference points.
- 7 The “Burgess Group” will now work towards finalizing the credit arrangements by perhaps holding a second consultation in March 2006, which will run until May 2006. on a paper entitled “National arrangements for the use of academic credit in HE in England”. Thereafter, it is proposed that they move toward the publication of the recommendations and guidelines for credit at a later date and that the second consultation and the guidelines should bear in mind other developments in the area of credit in England.

#### **Other credit developments in England**

- 8 The Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) is currently developing a Framework for Achievement (FfA) which is designed to replace their National Qualifications Framework. The FfA will be comprised of units that are credit-based which will be linked to individual computer learner records. In addition, there is political will to ensure compatibility between credit developments in the vocational/further education and the higher education sectors. A group called the Joint Forum for Higher Levels has been charged with this task and have produced a “set of overarching principles for a common approach to credit” which seem to be consistent with the “Burgess Group” consultation. Future work includes the development of shared operational criteria and it is expected that both principles and operational criteria will in be place to be used in trials of the FfA in September 2006.