

**SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS**

**14-06-06  
Item 4  
Paper 41-04**

**SCQF programme of work for the higher education sector 2006-08**

**Introduction**

1. This paper sets out a proposed schedule of activities for the two-year QAA Scotland/Universities Scotland/SACCA programme of work to support the use of the SCQF in the higher education sector in the forthcoming two years.

**Recommendation**

2. SACCA members are asked to note the contents of the paper and provide comment on the priorities for the sector with regard to supporting the use of the SCQF.

**Further information**

3. Further information on the contents of this paper is available from David Bottomley or Alan Runcie

**SCQF programme of work for the higher education sector 2006-08**

**Background**

1. The SCQF is well on the way to being implemented across the main sectors of education and training. Further work on implementation will continue but there is a general recognition of the need to explore avenues whereby the imaginative and creative use of the SCQF can be further stimulated.
2. To this end, the Joint Advisory Committee (with refocused terms of reference) will provide a means for the range of sectors and organisations that provide and/or support education and training in Scotland to consider together:
  - a. what opportunities does a unified framework of credits offer as a tool for supporting access and participation across all sectors
  - b. in broad terms, what are the needs of learners and sectors in terms of access, participation, progression, credit transfer etc
  - c. what issues and obstacles currently face learners e.g. in relation to progression, credit transfer, recognition of learning etc.
  - d. how best can the full range of organisations and sectors that participate in JAC work together over a period of some years in using the opportunities provided by the SCQF to help meet needs and overcome obstacles.
3. A seminar for the JAC was held on 31 March 2006 to begin a) the process of thinking about the new role of the JAC and b) the process of identifying the ways in which the SCQF might be used to support lifelong learning needs as described above.
4. The seminar helped to provide the foundations for further work across the sectors and organisations on the JAC, with the aim of identifying needs and issues and of developing a collective programme of work to share in making use of the SCQF to help address needs and issues.
5. The overall idea is that the sectors and organisations represented on JAC will each develop a programme of work for the coming years. These programmes of work, however, will interlink and come together in the form of an overall collective effort to make full use of the SCQF. Thus, some issues might run across all sectors. In other cases the programme of work might involve working with other bodies or sectors on specific issues.
6. Alongside this, the Scottish Executive has agreed to continue to make available funds to support this work for the period up to March 2008. The majority of the funds will be used to extend the current employment of staff in: higher education (the joint QAA Scotland/Universities Scotland SCQF officer); the college sector (postholder employed by the SFEU); the community learning and development sector (postholder employed by Communities Scotland); the social care sector (postholder employed by the Scottish

Social Services Council) and the health sector (post holder and matched funding provided by NHS Education for Scotland).

**The programme of work in the higher education sector**

7. Higher education in Scotland has worked with a credit framework for many years and has a history of sharing developments and practices in using the framework to enable the recognition of prior learning; the transfer of credit; the recognition of work-based learning; and a considerable amount of work in developing opportunities for the transfer of credit from Higher National Qualifications to Degrees.

8. Nevertheless, the creation and implementation of a unified credit system across all sectors potentially raises a new context and new opportunities for higher education institutions in considering such needs and issues.

9. It is proposed therefore, that SACCA develop a programme of work for the next two years and beyond. This work will be supported by the joint QAA/US SCQF Officer, with some monies from QAA Scotland and potentially a small amount of additional monies from the Scottish Executive.

10. The first stage of this work should involve exploration of the potential opportunities offered by the SCQF and the ways in which it can help widen access, participation and progression both into and out of higher education.

11. An SCQF conference on the themes of extending cross-sector collaboration (particularly between HE and FE) and forging stronger partnerships between different stakeholders in the SCQF, was staged by QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland in conjunction with the Association of Scotland's Colleges on 22 May 2006. Discussions at the conference have helped to feed into the proposed programme of work. One immediate result is that a leaflet will soon be issued to the sector reflecting on the discussions and key issues raised in the last couple of months, with thoughts on how work can best be progressed to provide best support to the sector within the coherent programme of work being developed by the successor to JAC.

**Potential areas of work to be addressed during the HE programme of work**

12. The following table outlines potential major areas of SCQF work to be addressed during 2006-2008 in HE. Priorities, actions and timescales may vary dependent on factors such as changing sector priorities, availability of extra resources etc.

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<b>Area of work</b>	<b>Possible activities</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sharing practice within and across the SCQF – what works, what doesn't, what are the ongoing opportunities, what are the ongoing barriers?	Building on the results of the survey of HEI intentions Feb 2006, the JAC seminar, ongoing issues raised via the Practitioners Group and the conference on working together on 22 May – a possible event run by members of the Practitioners Group on these issues for wider groups of staff?	Autumn/Winter 2006  Repeated Autumn/Winter 2007?
Sharing approaches to credit rating of 'off-campus' and work-based learning	Possible seminars/workshops on this topic, across HE and in conjunction with other sectors e.g Scotland's Colleges, Social Services  Potential to work with SSDA in this area	2006 and ongoing  2006 and ongoing
Credit transfer and bridging from Degree programmes to Higher National qualifications	Work with SQA and Scotland's Colleges to explore the possibilities in setting up workshops, good practice case studies etc	Autumn 2006 and ongoing
Articulation between higher education programmes and those of e.g. the college sector; might include exploring the potential of Grad Cert and Grad Dip in lifelong learning, e.g. for returners to HE, and expansion of GradCert and Grad Dip for work-based/work-related purposes	Production of exemplars of good practice/case studies.  Possible seminar on applications of Grad Cert/Grad Dip etc.	2006 and ongoing
Building on the outcomes of the Mapping, Tracking and Bridging Project and also the outcomes of relevant enhancement themes to support progression and credit transfer from other sectors	Updating of bridging toolkits  Ongoing maintenance/monitoring/marketing of mapping website;  Supporting Funding Council led work on tracking of student progression	2006 and ongoing

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Development of clear routes for exit and credit transfer from Degree programmes to other provision	Work with other key stakeholders in the SCQF (Health, Social Services, Community Learning etc.) to provide exemplars of good practice	2006 and ongoing
Exploring provision for CPD and sharing approaches to credit rating of CPD programmes and programmes designed for employers; working with employers and PSBs to develop and offer credit rated provision; exploring the potential in and linkages with short programmes for CPD e.g. professional development awards	Produce exemplars of possibilities with regard to CPD in the SCQF (topic explored in workshop at conference 22 May)  Work to support establishment of local partnerships between HEIs, Colleges and employers  Work with SQA on linkages with PDAs  Possible seminar on HE/PSB links within the SCQF (UK and Scottish PSBs)	2006 and ongoing
Alignment of framework for qualifications of HEIs in Scotland with EHEA.	Completion of report on verification process  Dissemination/promotion of outcomes of process in sector	September 2006  Winter 2006/early 2007
Credit transfer in a European context: further exploration of ECTS and its links with SCQF credit and possible links with VET	ECVET consultation taking place from June 06 onwards – possible seminar on HE and VET links  Seminar to update sector on next steps with EQF and ECVET	Autumn/Winter 2006  Autumn 2006
Continue to strengthen links with other UK/Irish frameworks	Continue to work with Burgess group, Joint Forum for Higher levels (FfA)  Possible seminar(s) with Irish pilot on outcomes of self-certification process	2006 and ongoing  Early 2007 onwards
Further exploration of the potential of the Bachelors Degree in providing work-based/work-related learning	Link to self-certification activities?	2006 and ongoing
Extending work with the Scottish Wider Access Regional Fora	Workshop exploring potential of Fora to work with SCQF staged at conference 22 May – presentation at SACCA 14.6.06. Work to follow	2006 and ongoing

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	up these initial contacts	
Continuing to share and further develop approaches to the recognition of prior informal learning within the SCQF	Link with other key SCQF stakeholders to develop results within SCQF of Scottish Executive scoping study on RPL	July 2006 and ongoing
Joint Degrees and credit arrangements (RPL, credit transfer etc)	Exploration of topic through seminars, good practice studies etc.?	2006 and ongoing
Exploring how the SCQF can further promote part-time study	Possible seminar(s) on good practice	2006/7
Continue to convene SCQF HE Practitioner Group to respond to sector needs and issues	Report main issues to SACCA	Twice yearly meetings in 2206 and 2007
Continue to produce briefing notes for HE sector on SCQF implementation/use/developments	As before	1 in late 2006, two in 2007
Continue to offer briefings to staff at individual institutions	As before	Ongoing
Regular series of meetings with other SCQF postholders to take place to explore common issues/establish greater links/plan possible seminars etc.	As before	Postholders to meet every 6 weeks