

**SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS**

**17-10-06  
Item 3  
Paper 42-04**

**Programme of work to support higher education institutions in using the SCQF  
2006-08**

**Introduction**

1. This paper provides a commentary upon the potential work plan for the period up to March 2008 (attached) to support the higher education in using the opportunities created by the SCQF.

**Recommendation**

2. SACCA members are invited to note the contents of the paper and work plan and comment where appropriate, particularly on the possibilities for working on the SCQF in partnership across sectors of education and training.

**Further information**

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

## **SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREDIT AND ACCESS**

### **SCQF Programme of work for Higher Education 2006-08**

#### **Context**

4. 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 and opportunities whereby the imaginative and creative use of the SCQF can be further encouraged.

5. To this end, the SCQF Joint Advisory Committee (JAC, 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 a unified framework of credits offers as a tool for supporting access and participation across all sectors
- b. what are the needs of learners and sectors in terms of access, participation, progression and credit transfer
- c. what issues and obstacles currently face learners e.g. in relation to progression, credit transfer, recognition of learning etc.
- d. how best the full range of organisations and sectors that participate in JAC can work together over a period of some years in using the opportunities provided by the SCQF to help meet needs and overcome obstacles.

6. The intention is that the sectors and organisations represented on JAC will each develop a programme of work for the coming years. These programmes of work 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, and provide the opportunity for concerted partnership working. In other cases the programme of work might involve working with other bodies or sectors on very particular issues.

7. 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**

8. 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 the development of a considerable amount of work in creating opportunities for the transfer of credit from Higher National Qualifications to Degrees.

9. 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.

10. It is therefore proposed that SACCA develop and deliver a programme of work for the higher education sector until March 2008 in the first instance and possibly beyond that date. 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.

11. A possible work plan is attached as Appendix 1. It identifies ongoing areas of activity based on work done to date; areas of work stemming from and branching out from current activity; and new areas of potential activity. Actions and timescales may vary dependent on factors such as changing sector priorities, availability of extra resources and the discussions referred to below.

12. One particular focus of the work plan is likely to be partnership working, in a range of areas, between the higher education sector and Scotland's Colleges, reflecting the terms of the Ministerial letter of guidance to SFC of Autumn 2005, and in the spirit of the May 2006 conference on cross-sector co-operation within the SCQF staged by QAA, Universities Scotland and the Association of Scotland's Colleges. The creation of the SCQF could provide opportunities for some HEIs and Colleges to create new or alternative means of meeting the needs of a range of groups of learners including those in work.

13. A meeting will take place on 31 October between representatives of QAA, Universities Scotland and the Association of Scotland's Colleges further to develop ideas for continued joint working arrangements to support these sectors. These ideas could assume a range of forms, including joint briefing newsletters on SCQF; continue working on bridging/articulation between the sectors (including a focus on Degree to HN credit transfer); building capacity for credit rating (of off-campus and employer learning etc.); working together on issues surrounding the Recognition of Prior Informal Learning across the sectors; and working together in response to wider credit and framework initiatives in the rest of the UK and Europe. SACCA will be kept informed of developments in this regard.

14 Outcomes from the discussions will be brought back to the next meeting of SACCA with the intention of developing a potential joint programme of work to support HEIs and Colleges in making full use of the opportunities created by the SCQF

15 In addition, there is a continuing need to identify how best to work with the Regional Access For a in supporting the agenda and programme of work outlines above.

### **Recommendation**

16. SACCA members are invited to note the contents of the paper and work plan and comment where appropriate, particularly on the possibilities for working in partnership with the college sector and other sectors

## Appendix 1

### SCQF programme of work for higher education 2006-2008

#### + New areas of activity

#### \* Areas branching out from current activity

Area of work	Possible activities	Date
*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 in using SCQF Feb 2006; the JAC seminar March 2006; ongoing issues raised via the SCQF Practitioners Group and the SCQF conference on working together across sectors May 2006 – a possible event run by members of the Practitioners Group on these issues for wider groups of staff in higher education ?	Winter 2006/2007  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 etc.  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	2006 and ongoing
+Alignment of framework for qualifications of HEIS in Scotland with European Higher Education Area.	Seminar for wider stakeholders held August 2006  Attendance at Irish seminar for stakeholders October 2006  Estonian delegation visiting Strathclyde University briefed on process and outcomes  Completion of report on verification process  Dissemination/promotion of outcomes of process in higher education sector and beyond (information leaflet to be produced)	October 2006  October 2006  Winter 2006/2007

+Discuss Bologna developments with Bologna promoters	Meet with/have regular discussions with Bologna promoters. James Dunphy invited to SCQF Practitioners Group meeting November 2006.  Intention to run half day workshop on Bologna and EQF issues	Autumn 2006 and ongoing  Winter 2006/2007
*Establish greater links with SEED and other credit fora	Member of Burgess Group to be invited to SCQF Practitioners Group meeting November 2006	2006 and ongoing
*Extending work with the Scottish Wider Access Regional Fora	Workshop exploring potential of Fora to work with SCQF staged at May conference, followed by presentation at SACCA 14.6.06.  Work to follow up these initial contacts – AR in attendance at West Forum meeting August 2006	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 potential of Grad Cert/Grad Dip in lifelong learning	Possible seminar on applications of Grad Cert/Grad Dip etc.	2007
+Exploring how the SCQF can further promote part-time study	Possible seminar on good practice in this area	2007
*Regular series of meetings with other SCQF postholders to take place to explore common issues/establish greater links/plan possible seminars etc.  *Link with overall JAC plan of work	Meetings held June, August and September 2006	Postholders to meet every 6 weeks or so, Summer 2006-2008  Summer 2006 and ongoing
*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 May conference).  Work to support establishment of local partnerships between HEIs, Colleges and employers  Work with SQA on linkages with PDAs  Possible half day seminar on CPD within the SCQF	2006 and ongoing  2006 and ongoing  Winter/Spring 2007

<p><b>Ongoing areas of activity</b></p> <p>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</p>	<p>Possible seminar on HE/PSB links within the SCQF (UK and Scottish PSBs)</p> <p>Updating of bridging toolkits</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance/monitoring/marketing of mapping website; letter sent to all contacts June 2006 requesting site be updated for start of session 06-07. Database transferred to QAA systems early October 2006</p> <p>Supporting ongoing Funding Council led work on tracking of student progression</p>	<p>2007</p> <p>2007 and ongoing</p> <p>2006 and ongoing</p> <p>2006 and ongoing</p>
<p>QAA/US/ASC SCQF National Conference?</p>	<p>Conference to be held one year on from 'working together' conference of May 2006?</p>	<p>Late Spring 2007</p>
<p>Credit transfer in a European context: further exploration of ECTS and its links with SCQF credit and possible links with VET</p>	<p>ECVET consultation taking place from June 2006 onwards – possible seminar on HE and VET links</p> <p>'Bologna evening' seminar to update sector on next steps with EQF and ECVET</p>	<p>Winter 2006/2007</p> <p>Winter 2006/2007</p>
<p>Continue to strengthen links with other UK/Irish frameworks</p>	<p>Continue to work with Burgess group, Joint Forum for Higher levels (FfA)</p> <p>5 country group meeting October 2006 in Glasgow – production of interactive version of 'qualifications can cross boundaries' leaflet</p> <p>Possible seminar(s) with Irish pilot on outcomes of EHEA verification process</p>	<p>2006 and ongoing</p> <p>2006 and ongoing</p> <p>Early 2007 onwards</p>
<p>Further exploration of the potential of the Bachelors Degree in providing work-based/work-related learning</p>	<p>Link to self-certification activities?</p>	<p>2006 and ongoing</p>
<p>Continuing to share and further develop approaches to the recognition of prior informal learning within the SCQF</p>	<p>Link with other key SCQF stakeholders to develop results within SCQF of Scottish Executive scoping study on RPL</p>	<p>July 2006 and ongoing</p>
<p>Continue to convene SCQF HE</p>	<p>Report main issues to SACCA</p>	<p>Twice yearly</p>

Practitioner Group to respond to sector needs and issues		meetings to 2008
Continue to produce briefing notes for HE sector on SCQF implementation/use/developments	Dependent upon funds – possible joint briefing note with College sector to be produced	1 in late 2006/early 2007, two in 2007/08
Continue to offer briefings to staff at individual institutions	Workshop held at Glasgow Caledonian University September 2006	Ongoing, 2006-08