
Quality Enhancement
Support Team
(QuEST)
Scottish Qualifications
Authority Accreditation
Session 2019/20

CHAPTER 10 SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY ACCREDITATION

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ANY QUERIES CONCERNING THIS BOOKLET SHOULD BE RAISED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE WITH QUEST. THIS BOOKLET CAN BE PROVIDED IN OTHER FORMATS ON REQUEST.

THE PROCEDURES DESCRIBED WITHIN THIS BOOKLET HAVE BEEN ASSESSED FOR EQUALITY IMPACT AND CONFIRMED AS BEING AT LOW RISK OF HAVING ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE.

1 SQA QUALIFICATIONS AT UWS

This chapter covers the policies and procedures in place to ensure full compliance with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) quality criteria. The policies and procedures that are relevant to SQA approval are updated regularly through the University's committee structures, ultimately being approved by Senate.

The Quality Handbook is updated on an annual basis and is approved through Academic Quality Committee, a committee that has powers devolved from EAC and ultimately Senate (See Chapter 1 of this handbook). The University Committee structure can be found in the Committee Handbook section of the UWS Regulatory Framework.

There is currently one programme offered at UWS that has SQA approval:

- PDA Mental Health Peer Support

SQA Guidance and Requirements

Where Schools have made the strategic decision to offer an SQA accredited award - normally for CPD purposes - the following guidance should be reviewed in advance and the relevant responsibilities should be clearly identified and assigned, to ensure that the SQA requirements are adhered to and clearly evidenced. It should be noted that the Professional Development Award (PDA) is classed as an 'unregulated' SQA qualification, and therefore the University's normal processes for appeals and complaints apply.

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SQA Co-ordinator

UWS has an assigned SQA Co-ordinator, Assistant Director of Student Administration – Elaine Maitland, who works in close collaboration with the Head of QuEST and named contacts in the Schools to ensure the following core roles and responsibilities as determined by SQA are undertaken.

SQA Co-ordinator's role and responsibilities are:

- To be the first point of contact between the centre and SQA
- To ensure policies and procedures are in place to support the quality assurance process
- To ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated in line with current SQA guidance and with centre decisions
- To ensure the SQA is notified of any changes that may affect the University's ability to meet the quality assurance criteria
- To ensure that the most current version of all documentation is used
- To enable internal verifiers and assessors to meet on a regular basis
- To support the sharing of best practice amongst assessors and internal verifiers
- To liaise between SQA quality assurance staff and assessors/internal verifiers when SQA quality assurance staff wish to visit
- To circulate the subsequent quality assurance report to appropriate personnel
- To ensure that any required actions and development points identified in a quality assurance report are discussed and acted upon
- To ensure all data passed on by IVs and assessors is processed and submitted to SQA within according to the University's data management policy

- To ensure relevant Student Administration staff check for Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) of new students

The SQA Co-ordinator will liaise with the SQA in the event of the following:

- Change of premises
- Change of head of centre, owner or SQA Co-ordinator
- Change of name of centre or business
- Change of contact details
- Outcome of internal/external investigations
- Removal of centre and/or qualification approval by another Awarding body
- Lack of appropriate assessors or internal verifiers (there is no requirement to inform SQA about changes to individual assessors and/or internal verifiers)

Schools must ensure that the SQA Co-ordinator is fully informed in writing of all changes or updates to the programme content, structure and delivery.

Assessor roles and responsibilities

The Assessor's role and responsibilities mirror the role of the UWS Module Co-ordinator. In general, the Assessor will judge the evidence of a student's performance, knowledge and understanding against national standards through the setting of appropriate assignments and decide whether the student has demonstrated competence in the area being assessed. They will provide guidance and support and give feedback on the student's performance and contribute to the internal quality assurance procedure. All UWS staff involved in the delivery and assessment of SQA programmes will have a postgraduate qualification in teaching and learning in higher education or equivalent.

Internal Verifier roles and responsibilities

The internal verifier must have an appropriate qualification and/or expertise in the subject area, and must be familiar with the national standard. The role is similar to that of the UWS Module Moderator as detailed in the UWS [Assessment Handbook for Staff](#).

The internal verifier is responsible for ensuring that the chosen assessment instrument is valid, fair and practicable. This means they need to have knowledge of different assessment methods and instruments and must have assessment expertise.

The internal verifier or verifier team is responsible for ensuring the validity of internal assessments and the reliability of assessors' judgements. This responsibility has several parts:

- supporting assessors
- checking assessment instruments to ensure validity
- arranging standardisation exercises
- sampling assessment decisions
- maintaining assessment and verification records

Once internal verifiers are satisfied that these requirements have been met, they act as 'guarantors' that national standards are being met. Please note that no individual can act as assessor and internal verifier for the same group of students.

Data Administrator roles and responsibilities

Designated Student Administration staff will be responsible for:

- creating and maintaining student records on the SQA Awards System
- uploading approved marks to the SQA Awards System
- informing the SQA of any changes to students' details

SQA data entry procedures are listed in Appendix 2.

3 MALPRACTICE, APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Suspected Student Malpractice

Chapter 3 (Assessment) and Chapter 5 (Code of Discipline for Students) of the University Regulatory Framework apply to students on SQA programmes and include definitions, examples and formal procedures for addressing suspected incidences of malpractice. Further guidance for students is included in the relevant Student Handbook.

SQA examples of student malpractice include:

- plagiarism — failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the student's own
- collusion with others when an assessment must be completed by individual students
- copying from another student (including using ICT to do so)
- personation — pretending to be someone else
- inclusion of inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or obscene material in assessment evidence
- unauthorised aids — physical possession of unauthorised materials (including mobile phones, MP3 players, notes etc.) during the internal assessment
- inappropriate behaviour during an internal assessment that causes disruption to others. This includes shouting and/or aggressive behaviour or language.

Suspected Staff Malpractice

Staff malpractice is covered by the UWS Disciplinary Policy & Procedure. With specific reference to SQA, malpractice means any act, default or practice (whether deliberate or resulting from neglect or default) which is a breach of SQA assessment requirements including any act, default or practice which:

- Compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any SQA qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/ or
- Damages the authority, reputation or credibility of SQA or any officer, employee or agent of SQA.

Malpractice can arise for a variety of reasons:

- Some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage in an examination or assessment (deliberate non-compliance);
- Some incidents arise due to ignorance of SQA requirements, carelessness or neglect in applying the requirements (maladministration).

Malpractice can include both maladministration in the assessment and delivery of SQA qualifications and deliberate non-compliance with SQA requirements.

Whether intentional or not, it is necessary to investigate and act upon any suspected instances of malpractice, to protect the integrity of the qualification and to identify any wider lessons to be learned.

Where SQA becomes aware of concerns of possible malpractice, its approach will be fair, robust and proportionate to the nature of the concern. These procedures will be applied where SQA's view is that there is a risk to the integrity of certification, which is not being successfully managed through our regular processes.

Examples include:

- misuse of assessments, including repeated re-assessment contrary to requirements, or inappropriate adjustments to assessment decisions
- insecure storage of assessment instruments and marking guidance
- failure to comply with requirements for accurate and safe retention of student evidence, assessment and internal verification records
- failure to comply with SQA's procedures for managing and transferring accurate student data
- excessive direction from assessors to students on how to meet national standards
- deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates

The procedure for reporting, investigating, communicating outcomes, actions, sanctions and appeals will depend on the type and severity of the misconduct and is covered by chapters 3 and 5 of the Regulatory Framework and the following policies and procedures via the [staff intranet](#):

- Dignity and Respect at Work
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Supporting Performance Improvement

And via the UWS website:

<https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/your-rights-responsibilities/>

Reporting suspected malpractice to SQA

Any suspected cases of University malpractice must be reported to SQA.

The matter must also be reported to the police if the malpractice involves a criminal act.

Appeals

The processes for academic appeals and appeals against plagiarism are covered in the Regulatory Framework and associated policies. These policies apply to unregulated SQA qualifications, such as PDAs.

Candidates on regulated qualifications, such as HNC and HND programmes, have additional stages of appeal:

- Appeal to SQA (the awarding body), once the UWS appeals procedure has been exhausted;
- Appeal to SQA Accreditation or Ofqual if they feel that UWS and/or SQA has not dealt with the appeal appropriately

(https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Appeals_Process.pdf).

Students on SQA qualifications must be made aware of the relevant appeals process in the student handbook.

Record retention

Where an investigation of suspected malpractice is carried out, the University must retain related records and documentation for three years. Records should include any work of the student and assessment or verification records relevant to the investigation.

In an investigation involving a potential criminal prosecution or civil claim, records and documentation should be retained for five years after the case and any appeal has been heard. If the University is any doubt about whether criminal or civil proceedings will take place, it should keep records for the full five year period.

Conflicts of Interest

No-one with a personal interest in the outcome of an assessment is to be involved in the assessment process. This includes assessors, internal verifiers and invigilators.

Declaring conflicts of interest

In line with UWS policy on [Conflict of Interest](#), staff should make a declaration if they are related to, or have a personal relationship with, a student, and are currently deployed to:

- set assessments which this student will undertake
- make assessment judgements on this student's evidence
- internally verify assessment decisions on this student's work
- invigilate an assessment which this student is sitting

In addition to the procedure in the policy, any conflict of interest should be reported to the SQA Co-ordinator.

Student Complaints Procedure

The University's Complaints Procedure is fully compliant with SQA requirements for non-regulated qualifications. The procedure and supporting documentation can be accessed here: <https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/complaints/>

If students have exhausted the UWS complaints procedure, they have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman. Students must be made aware of this in the relevant section of the Student Handbook.

4 FEEDBACK

Student Feedback

In line with other programmes and modules delivered at UWS, students on SQA accredited programmes can expect to provide feedback through the recognised feedback mechanisms which include Module Evaluation Questionnaires, Programme Boards and Student Staff Liaison Groups. Further detail on student engagement can be found in Chapter 3 of this handbook.

Staff Feedback

Staff feedback is gleaned through a variety of methods including module review forms and programme annual reports which facilitate the opportunity for staff to reflect on successes and challenges. All staff are aligned to a School Programme Board which

acts as a forum to raise issues and drive forward school strategy. Anything of concern specifically relating to SQA matters should also be raised with the SQA Co-ordinator.

5 EXTERNAL VERIFICATION BY SQA

External Verification

In offering SQA qualifications, the University will be subject to regular visits to ensure compliance with the SQA quality assurance criteria. SQA Qualifications Verifiers can expect to have access to records, information, candidates, staff and premises for the purpose of these activities. The SQA Co-ordinator will be responsible for managing this process with the assistance of staff involved in the support and delivery of the programmes.

It is recommended that Schools create a master folder containing the following for External Verification visits:

- assessment materials
- marking guidelines and rubrics
- timetables, resources and lesson plans for delivery
- sample assessment marking and moderation (assessor and internal verifier)
- minutes of meetings where SQA business was discussed

Once a visit has taken place, a report and action plan will be sent to the SQA Co-ordinator. Staff involved in the delivery of the programme will be made aware of action points or recommendations and areas of positive practice through the established Divisional Programme Boards and any actions will be addressed within the agreed timescales and reported through these boards. Schools should ensure that these programmes are included in the Schools' Enhancement and Annual Monitoring process to ensure institutional oversight at a strategic level.

Competence of Assessors and Internal Verifiers

Assessors and Internal Verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification. They must have occupational experience, understanding, and any necessary qualifications, as specified in the SQA requirements for the qualification.

The University's [Recruitment and Selection Policy & Procedure](#) applies. Staff who are deployed as assessors and internal verifiers should be able to demonstrate via their CV that they have the appropriate qualifications and experience for the role. They should also retain evidence of all CPD activities. These will be confirmed by the SQA Qualification Verifier during Systems Verification.

More information about working in line with the current assessor/verifier standards can be accessed from [SQA web site](#).

Induction Training for Assessors and Internal Verifiers

All staff involved in the delivery of SQA qualifications must ensure they have completed the induction activities listed on the checklist in Appendix 1. This is in addition to the general UWS staff induction process.

Review of Learning & Teaching

The University is responsible for ensuring that it has sufficient resources to enable all candidates to achieve the competences defined in the SQA qualifications offered. Resources must be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant, current and

available in quantities appropriate to the qualification requirements and candidate numbers.

The SQA requires that there is a documented system for initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments, equipment, as well as reference, learning and assessment materials. The UWS procedures for institution-led review are detailed in Chapter 2, and the Annual Monitoring process is explained in Chapter 7 of this handbook.

For new SQA programmes, the University's procedure for approval of a new programme via the relevant School Board must be followed (see Chapter 4 of this handbook). A full validation will not be required for proposed delivery at UWS of existing SQA qualifications, but QuEST must be kept fully informed of developments and will advise as necessary. The School must retain records of the approval process for three years. Approval for delivery should be given by the School before notifying SQA of the proposal.

Once approved by the School, the programme leader should liaise with the SQA Co-ordinator to arrange submission of the approval application to the SQA.

Copies of all approval documentation, including minutes of School Board meetings, completed approval forms and SQA approval reports, should be retained as evidence for SQA verification visits. Similarly, qualifications verification reports after approval, and all documentation relating to ongoing reviews should also be retained. The processes for annual review, such as gathering student and staff feedback and school annual monitoring, should incorporate the SQA qualifications delivered by the School. All evidence of annual monitoring of SQA qualifications should be retained for verification visits.

Student Handbook

In preparing to deliver a new SQA programme, schools must ensure that their student handbook and induction covers the following areas:

- Content and structure of the qualification
- Roles and responsibilities of the student, assessor, internal verifier and external verifier
- Guidance and support – information on support services available
- Assessment / reassessment, including modes and formats of the assessment and opportunities for re-assessment (including any charging policy for reassessment if relevant)
- How feedback on assessments will be provided
- Equal opportunities and assessment arrangements
- Equality and diversity with details on accessing support
- Malpractice and declarations of authenticity
- Complaint / grievance procedure (to take into account that students have the right to contact SQA)
- Internal assessment appeals – UWS process and SQA process (if relevant – regulated qualifications only, not for PDA students)
- Data protection (consent to share information, open mail)

Student induction checklists should be provided to ensure that staff conducting induction cover all the required information. The staff delivering the programme may wish to have students sign the checklist to confirm that they were provided with all the information.

Equal Opportunities

University staff are committed to enabling all learners, respecting diversity, promoting equality and embedding inclusivity in all aspects of its work. It is fully cognisant of and compliant with relevant external and institutional policy in this area. The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/equality/>

Support for students is provided through the Hub and further information on the support available can be accessed here: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/university-life/student-support-wellbeing/>

Security of Assessment Materials and Student Evidence

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that the security of assessment materials accessed from the secure site is maintained within the centre.

Retention of Assessed Work

All assessment evidence should be retained for a minimum of three weeks after the student group award completion date the University has notified to the SQA. However, if the University is selected for external verification, the student assessment evidence must be retained for the Qualification Verification visit or central verification event. See also [the Assessment Handbook](#).

In the case of an appeal to SQA against an internal assessment result in a regulated qualification, the University must retain all materials and candidate evidence until the appeal has been resolved. Thereafter assessment and internal verification records for appeals cases must be retained for five years.

SQA [evidence retention requirements](#) can be found on the SQA website.

6 INTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Internal Assessment and Verification

Internal assessment and verification procedures must be documented, monitored and reviewed to meet SQA requirements. They must also be implemented in a way that ensures standardisation of assessment. There are three stages of internal verification (pre-assessment, during assessment, and post- assessment).

The School is responsible for holding the following records and documenting the processes:

Stage 1 (Pre-assessment)

Procedures must cover:

- how the assessment instruments have been checked for validity (currency and fitness for purpose) including SQA-devised assessments
- evidence of submitting School-devised assessments to SQA for prior verification, where appropriate
- evidence that all assessors and internal verifiers have a common understanding of the standards required, even when assessments have been published by SQA

Evidence may include: annotation of assessment materials to confirm these have been through an internal quality assurance process, records of meetings between assessors to discuss the planned assessment in order to help minimise any differences in interpretation, etc.

Stage 2 (During assessment)

Procedures must cover:

- how and when candidate evidence is internally verified
- assessment and internal verification records
- schedule and records of assessor and internal verifier meetings
- records of standardisation activities
- how the risk of plagiarism is minimised
- associated documentation such as: internal verifier feedback sheets; observation of assessment record forms; sampling plans or matrices to record all internal verification activity; internal verifier 'sign-off' sheets confirming candidate achievement

Sampling candidate evidence

Procedures should state the sampling strategy which takes account of factors such as:

- new or inexperienced assessors and internal verifiers
- new or revised qualifications
- revised assessment instruments
- previous quality assurance reports
- methods of assessment
- assessment location
- mode of delivery

Stage 3 (Post-assessment)

Procedures should state how assessment and internal verification processes are reviewed and updated.

Examples of evidence

- documented internal verification procedure
- minutes of assessor/internal verifier meetings
- records of standardisation
- records of sampling activity
- schedules of internal verification activities
- documented feedback to assessors
- review records such as action notes, minutes of assessor/internal verifier meetings
- internal audit, review records
- document control records logging any changes to procedures
- notification to staff of changes to procedures

Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.

Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.

Assessment materials and candidate evidence (including examination question papers, scripts, and electronically-stored evidence) must be stored and transported securely.

Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements.

Transportation and Storage of Candidate Evidence and Assessments

The School is responsible for the secure transportation and storage of assessment materials and candidate evidence (electronic and hard copy).

The School must be able to show:

- physical evidence of secure storage of assessment materials and candidate assessments
- documented procedure for storing assessment materials,
- documented roles and responsibilities for those involved in this process e.g. of SQA Co-ordinator, assessors

Secure storage procedure

In the event of any breaches of security, the SQA Co-ordinator must be notified immediately so that the SQA can be informed.

7 DATA MANAGEMENT

Handling of Candidates' Personal Data

All student data is handled in accordance with the University's [Data Protection Code of Practice](#).

Schools are responsible for ensuring during the induction process that students are made aware that their personal data will be sent to the SQA for certification purposes. Their written permission should be sought via the SQA candidate induction checklist. Students must inform the School immediately of any changes to their personal details which are held by the University and SQA. The School must then inform the SQA Co-ordinator.

Student Administration is responsible for student records management. The SQA Awards System can only hold one address for each student, and therefore the home (permanent) address must be used, rather than a term-time address. When certification is requested from the SQA, Student Administration will first ensure the addresses on the SQA Awards System are still correct (noting that students may have updated their details on Banner without alerting the University). Students will be identified on the SQA Awards System by their SQA Candidate Number, which is requested on enrolment.

SQA can send certificates of award directly to students, or in a batch to UWS. If certificates are to be distributed by UWS, this information should be included in the candidate induction checklist.

Schools are responsible for the accurate recording, storage and retention of assessment records, internal verification records and candidate records of achievement including:

- details of candidate assessment, including the name of the assessor, location, date and outcome
- results sheets/records
- portfolio log sheets
- secure storage policy
- physical evidence of secure storage
- records of internal verification activity
- certificates claimed

APPENDIX 1

Induction Checklist for Assessors and Internal Verifiers

	<p><i>This checklist is to be completed in addition to UWS and School induction procedures for new staff.</i></p> <p>Assessors and Internal Verifiers must ensure they understand the following areas prior to embarking on the delivery of an SQA programme:</p>	Completed
1	Roles and responsibilities of those delivering the qualification (QH Ch.10, section 1)	
2	Qualification Assessment Strategy (QH Ch.10, section 4)	
3	Student Handbook and associated guidance for candidates (QH Ch.10, section 4)	
4	Internal verification procedures (QH Ch.10, section 6)	
5	Malpractice procedures (QH Ch.10, section 2)	
6	Conflict of interest (QH Ch.10 section 2)	
7	Secure storage and transport of assessment materials (QH Ch.10, section 6)	
8	Retention policy for candidate assessment evidence and records (QH Ch.10, section 5)	
9	Contact SQA co-ordinator and share contact details	

Signed:..... Date:.....

Name (printed):.....

SQA Role: Assessor / Internal Verifier*
(*delete as appropriate)

APPENDIX 2

SQA Data Entry Procedures

Any change to personal information must be communicated by the School to Student Administration.

Student Administration update Banner (the Student Records Management Information System) and the updated information is submitted to SQA.

The School must communicate all modules to Student Administration prior to the students enrolling.

Students will enrol online and will automatically be attached to these modules during this process.

Each student's module entries will form the basis of the unit entries to SQA. Any direct entrants will be entered for the group award with SQA ahead of unit entries.

Prior to the meeting of the Course Board, results are inputted to Banner by Academic staff.

Student Administration will produce course paperwork ahead of the Course Board, where results will be checked at meeting.

Results are submitted to SQA following the ratification of results at the meeting of the Course Board.

APPENDIX 3

Further guidance is available from the SQA at www.sqa.org.uk.

Useful documents include:

[SQA Guide to Assessment](#)

[Retention of Candidate Assessment Records](#)

[Qualification Development Toolkit for Centres](#)