**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

 **FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT**

**AUGUST 2020**

(Due for review by 31 August 2023)

**Introduction**

# This framework document has been drawn up by the Scottish Government (SG) in consultation with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). It sets out the broad framework within which SQA will operate and defines key roles and responsibilities which underpin the relationship between SQA and the SG. While this document does not confer any legal powers or responsibilities, it forms a key part of the accountability and governance framework and should be reviewed and updated as necessary, and at least every 2-3 years. Any proposals to amend the framework document either by the SG or SQA will be taken forward in consultation and in the light of SG priorities and policy aims. Any question regarding the interpretation of the document shall be determined by the SG after consultation with SQA. Legislative provisions shall take precedence over any part of the document.

# References to SQA include any subsidiaries and joint ventures owned or controlled by SQA. SQA shall not establish subsidiaries or enter into joint ventures without the express approval of the SG.

# **Many of the provisions included in this framework document highlight specific requirements in the** [**Sottish Public Finance Manual**](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-public-finance-manual/) **(SPFM) that are considered of particular relevance to SQA. It should be noted, however, that guidance in the SPFM should always be considered in its entirety as and when relevant issues arise.**

# Copies of the document shall be placed in the Scottish Parliament Reference Centre. It shall also be published on the SG and SQA websites.

**Purpose**

# SQA is to contribute to the achievement of the SG’s primary purpose of increasing inclusive sustainable economic growth by aligning its aims and objectives with the Programme for Government, Scotland’s Economic Strategy and National Performance Framework.

# SQA’s statutory duties are set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 as amended by the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002. SQA has the following general functions: -

1. to devise qualifications;
2. to determine the entitlement of individuals to SQA qualifications and, where a person is so entitled, to award and record such a qualification;
3. to keep under review and develop SQA qualifications;
4. to approve education and training establishments as being suitable for presenting persons for SQA qualifications; and
5. to make arrangements for, assist in or carry out the assessment of persons undertaking education and training

# In relation to (a) and (c) above SQA also has the statutory power to: -

1. determine what it is that a person is required to do and the level of competence they are required to demonstrate in order to attain the qualification;
2. determine the means of assessing whether the person has done what is required or demonstrated the level of competence required.

# Under the above legislation, SQA also has two additional statutory functions, to accredit qualifications and to quality assure awarding bodies offering SQA accredited qualifications. The function of accrediting qualifications shall be carried out by the Accreditation Committee.

# SQA’s purpose, strategic aims and objectives, as agreed by the Scottish Ministers, are contained in [SQA’s corporate plan and annual business plan](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5662.html).

# **Separation of functions**

# The SQA should clearly separate its accreditation and regulatory body functions from its awarding body function to ensure that there is no conflict of interest. This separation of functions must apply to the SQA staff supporting the accrediting and awarding functions. The separation of functions must be capable of being publicly demonstrated. The arrangements for separation of functions and the accreditation procedures are subject to the approval of Scottish Ministers.

# **Relationship between Scottish Government and SQA**

# Effective strategic engagement between the SG and SQA is essential in order that they work together as effectively as possible to maintain and improve public services and deliver improved outcomes. Both the SG and SQA will take all necessary steps to ensure that their relationship is developed and supported in line with the jointly agreed principles set out in the statement on ‘[Strategic Engagement between the Scottish Government and Scotland’s NDPBs](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-engagement-between-the-scottish-government-and-ndpbs/)’.

# Scottish Ministers have a policy interest in all qualifications in SQA’s portfolio.

# Scottish Ministers also have an interest in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), of which SQA portfolio forms a significant part. This relates both to specific responsibilities for the various providers of certificated attainment and to ensuring that Scotland has an appropriate range of qualifications available to meet the needs of all learners throughout their lives. Scottish Ministers have a particular interest in the links between qualifications at the same level and the various progression routes available within the SCQF. Their overall aim is to ensure that the qualifications meet standards of educational and public acceptability and provide a flexible framework which meets the needs of learners and the economy.

# It is recognised, however, that the extent of Scottish Ministers’ involvement is not uniform across all qualifications. For instance, it is clear that Scottish Ministers require and possess greater influence and interest in the design and assessment of qualifications offered during the compulsory stages of learning than exists in relation to some qualifications in Further Education and to degrees offered by Institutions of Higher Education. It will be for the relevant policy Divisions of the Scottish Government to agree the practical implications of this feature of Scottish Ministers’ relationship with SQA as it affects SQA’s responsibilities under section 2(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 as set out in paragraph 6 above.

# **Governance and accountability**

# **Legal origins of powers and duties**

# SQA is established under the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 as amended by the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002. It is classified as an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). SQA does not carry out its functions on behalf of the Crown.

# **Ministerial responsibilities**

# The Scottish Ministers are ultimately accountable to the Scottish Parliament for the activities of SQA and its use of resources. They are not, however, responsible for day to day operational matters. Their responsibilities include:

* agreeing SQA’s strategic aims and objectives and key targets as part of the corporate planning process;
* agreeing the budget and the associated grant in aid requirement to be paid to SQA, and securing the necessary Parliamentary approval;
* carrying out responsibilities specified in the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 such as appointments to SQA’s Board, approving the terms and conditions of Board members, and appointment of the Chief Executive;
* carrying out responsibilities under the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002, such as appointments to SQA’s Advisory Council and approving the terms and conditions of Advisory Council members; and
* other matters such as approving SQA’s Chief Executive and staff pay remit in line with SG Public Sector [Pay Policy](https://www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-pay/senior-appointments/) and laying the accounts (together with the annual report) before the Parliament.

**SQA Board Responsibilities**

# The SQA Board, including the Chair, consists of non-executives appointed by the Scottish Ministers in line with the [Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Scotland](https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Code_of_Practice.pdf). It has corporate responsibility, under the leadership of the Chair, for the following:

* providing leadership, direction, support and guidance to ensure the SQA delivers and is committed to delivering its functions effectively and efficiently and in accordance with the aims, policies and priorities of the Scottish Ministers;
* taking forward the strategic aims and objectives for the SQA agreed by the Scottish Ministers and set out in SQA’s Corporate Plan;
* determining the steps needed to deal with changes which are likely to impact on the strategic aims and objectives of the SQA or on the attainability of its operational targets;
* promoting a culture of fair work and fair working practices across the organisation, ensuring appropriate channels for effective voice;
* optimising public sector funding for SQA to drive Fair Work practices through relevant supply chains by attaching Fair Work First criteria to grants, other funding and contracts awarded by SQA, where appropriate;
* promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by the SQA consistent with the principles of Best Value, including, where appropriate, participation in shared services arrangements and ensuring that effective arrangements are in place so that the SQA acts corporately in accordance with the priorities set out in the Scottish Government's statement of corporate expectations;
* ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control. (The SQA Board must set up an audit committee chaired by a non-executive member to provide independent advice and assurance on the effectiveness of the internal control and risk management systems.);
* (in reaching decisions) taking into account relevant guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers;
* ensuring that members of the SQA Board receive and review regular financial information concerning the management and performance of the SQA and is informed in a timely manner about any concerns regarding the activities of the SQA;
* appointing, with the approval of the Scottish Ministers, the SQA chief executive and, in consultation with the Scottish Government, set appropriate performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to these objectives which give due weight to the proper management and use of resources within the stewardship of the SQA and the delivery of outcomes;
* demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times, including openness and transparency in its decision making; and
* carrying out other tasks that may reasonably be required including attending SQA meetings and other meetings and seminars on behalf of the SQA.

# Further guidance on how the Board should discharge its duties is provided in appointment letters and in [On Board – A Guide for Members of Statutory Boards](https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00514817.pdf).

**The Chair’s Responsibilities**

# The Chair is accountable to the Scottish Ministers and, in common with any individual with responsibility for devolved functions, may also be held to account by the Scottish Parliament. Communications between the SQA Board and the Scottish Ministers should normally be through the Chair. He or she is responsible for ensuring that the SQA’s policies and actions support the Scottish Ministers’ wider strategic policies and that its affairs are conducted with probity.

# In leading the Board, the Chair must:

* Lead on the Board’s consideration of strategic policy, planning and procedural papers to ensure they support Scottish Ministers’ wider strategic policies;
* Lead the Board’s challenge of the SQA Executive Team to ensure functions are delivered effectively on behalf of Scottish Ministers;
* Provide the main communication link between the SQA Board and Scottish Ministers meeting Ministers regularly;
* Communicate the SQA’s policies to stakeholders as required and representing the views of the Board to the general public;
* Ensure the probity and effective governance of the SQA’s activities and ensuring its compliance with the terms of the Framework Document; and
* Lead on the recruiting a new Chief Executive (as required) in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 1996.
* Maintain SQA’s focus on Fair Work – as both an employer and provider of public services.

# In common with the Chairs of other public bodies, the chair is also responsible for:

* Organising and leading the participation of members in committees and other aspects of the work of SQA;
* Assessing the performance of individual board members on a continuous basis and undertaking a formal appraisal at least annually;
* Ensuring the work of the board is subject to regular self-assessment and that the board is working effectively;
* Ensuring the board has a balance of skills appropriate to directing the SQA’s business, in accordance with recognised good practice in corporate governance;
* Ensuring board members are fully briefed on terms of appointment, duties, rights and responsibilities;
* Ensuring that he or she, together with the other board members, receives appropriate induction training, including on financial management and reporting requirements and, as appropriate, on any differences that may exist between private and public sector practice;
* Ensuring board members have an awareness of the Scottish Government’s Fair Work policy and actively promote fair working practices.
* Ensuring the Scottish Ministers are advised of the SQA’s needs when board vacancies arise;
* Ensuring there is a code of conduct for board members in place, approved by the Scottish Ministers; and
* Undertaking in consultation with the board as a whole an annual appraisal of the performance of the Chief Executive.

**Individual Board Members’ Responsibilities**

# Individual Board members should act in accordance with the responsibilities of the Board as a whole and comply at all times with the code of conduct adopted by SQAand with the rules relating to the use of public funds[[1]](#footnote-2) and to conflicts of interest. General guidance on Board members’ responsibilities is summarised in their appointment letters and is also provided in [On Board](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00514817.pdf).

# **SQA Chief Executive Responsibilities**

# The Chief Executive of SQA is employed and appointed by the SQA with the approval of the Scottish Ministers. The Chief Executive is the SQA’s principal adviser on the discharge of its functions and is accountable to SQA. He/she provides operational leadership to SQA and ensures that its aims and objectives are met and its functions are delivered and targets met through effective and properly controlled executive action. General responsibilities include the performance, management, staffing, and building and promoting a fair work culture at SQA. General guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive is contained in On Board. Specific responsibilities include:

* advising the Board on the discharge of its responsibilities - as set out in this document, in the founding legislation and in any other relevant instructions and guidance issued by or on behalf of the Scottish Ministers - and implementing the decisions of the Board
* ensuring that financial considerations are taken fully into account by the Board at all stages in reaching and executing its decisions, and that appropriate financial appraisal and evaluation techniques, consistent with the [Appraisal and Evaluation](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/appraisal) section of the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/Intro) (SPFM), are followed
* ensuring that SQA adheres, where appropriate, to the SG’s [Programme and Project Management (PPM) Principles](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/ProgrammeProjectDelivery/Principles)
* having robust performance and risk management arrangements - consistent with the [Risk Management](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/risk) section of the SPFM - in place that support the achievement of SQA’s aims and objectives and that facilitate comprehensive reporting to the Board, the SG and the wider public. Risk management arrangements should include full consideration of organisational resilience to physical, personnel and cyber risks/threats/hazards
* ensuring that adequate systems of internal control are maintained by SQA, including effective measures against fraud and theft consistent with the [Fraud](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/fraud) section of the SPFM
* establishing appropriate documented internal delegated authority arrangements consistent with the [Delegated Authority](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/delegauth) section of the SPFM
* advising the Board on the performance of SQA compared with its aims and objectives
* preparing SQA’s corporate and business plans, in the light of the strategic aims and objectives agreed by the Scottish Ministers
* ensuring effective relationships with SG officials
* ensuring that timely forecasts and monitoring information on performance and finance are provided to the SG; that the SG is notified promptly if over or under spends are likely and that corrective action is taken; and that any significant problems whether financial or otherwise, and whether detected by internal audit or by other means, are notified to the SG in a timely fashion, and
* ensuring staff pay proposals are in line with SG Public Sector [Pay Policy](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-sector-pay/staff-pay) and submitted in time and the necessary approvals obtained prior to implementing any annual award.

# **SQA Accountable Officer responsibilities**

# The Principal Accountable Officer for the Scottish Administration (the Permanent Secretary of the SG) will designate the Chief Executive as the Accountable Officer for SQA. Accountable Officers are personally answerable to the Scottish Parliament for the exercise of their functions, as set out in the [Memorandum to Accountable Officers for Other Public Bodies](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-public-finance-manual/accountability/annex-2-memorandum-to-accountable-officers-other-public-bodies/). These include:

# ensuring the propriety and regularity of SQA’s finances and that there are sound and effective arrangements for internal control and risk management

# ensuring that the resources of the public body are used economically, efficiently and effectively, and that arrangements are in place to secure Best Valueand deliver Value for Money for the public sector as a whole

* ensuring compliance with relevant guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers, in particular the SPFM and SG Public Sector [Pay Policy](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-sector-pay/staff-pay)

# signing the Annual Report and Accounts, and

* a statutory duty to obtain written authority from the Board/Chair before taking any action which they consider would be inconsistent with the proper performance of the Accountable Officer functions. The Accountable Officer should also notify the relevant Portfolio Accountable Officer.

# It is incumbent on the Chief Executive to combine his/her Accountable Officer responsibilities to the Scottish Parliament with his/her wider responsibilities to the Board. The Board/Chair should be fully aware of, and have regard to, the Accountable Officer responsibilities placed upon the Chief Executive, including the statutory duty described above.

**Portfolio Accountable Officer responsibilities**

# The Principal Accountable Officer for the Scottish Administration will designate the Director-General for Education, Communities and Justice as the Accountable Officer for the SG portfolio budget for SQA. The responsibilities of a Portfolio Accountable Officer are set out in detail in the [Memorandum to Accountable Officers for Parts of the Scottish Administration](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/Accountability/aomemo). He/she is personally answerable to the Scottish Parliament for ensuring that:

### the financial and other management controls applied by the SG are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds and, more generally that those being applied by SQA conform to the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management

### the key roles and responsibilities which underpin the relationship between the SG and SQA are set out in a framework document - and that this document is regularly reviewed

### effective relationships are in place at Director and Deputy Director level between the SG and SQA in accordance with the strategic engagement principles, and

### there is effective continuous assessment and appraisal of the performance of the Chair of SQA, in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Scotland.

**Scottish Government Director and Deputy Director**

# The Director of Learning and Deputy Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic have responsibility for overseeing and ensuring effective relationships between the SG and SQA which support alignment of SQA’s business to the Scotland’s National Performance Framework and high performance by SQA. They will approve the Chief Executive pay and determine Board members’ pay and remuneration in accordance with pay policy. They will work closely with SQA Chief Executive and be answerable to the Portfolio Accountable Officer for maintaining and developing positive relationships with SQA characterised by openness, trust, respect and mutual support. They will be supported by a sponsor unit in discharging these functions. The Director of Learning shall be responsible for assessing the performance of SQA Chair at least annually.

**Sponsor unit responsibilities**

# The SG sponsor unit for SQA sits within the Scottish Government Learning Directorate. It is the normal point of contact for SQA in dealing with the SG. The unit, under the direction of the Deputy Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic, is the primary source of advice to the Scottish Ministers on the discharge of their responsibilities in respect of SQA and undertakes the responsibilities of the Portfolio Accountable Officer on his/her behalf. Specific responsibilities include:

* discharging sponsorship responsibilities in line with the principles and framework set out in the document ‘[Strategic Engagement between the Scottish Government and Scotland’s NDPBs’](https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20180529221933/http%3A/www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-bodies/pubs/StrategicEngagement) and ensuring that sponsorship is suitably flexible, proportionate and responsive to the needs of the Scottish Ministers and SQA
* ensuring that appointments to SQA Board are made timeously and, where appropriate, in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies](https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/code-practice) in Scotland
* assessing and advising on pay and grading systems, supporting SQA to meet pay policy requirements
* proportionate monitoring of SQA’s activities through an adequate and timely flow of appropriate information, agreed with SQA, on performance, budgeting, control and risk management
* supporting SQA’s delivery of fair working practices and quality jobs, in line with the [Fair Work Convention’s framework](https://www.fairworkconvention.scot/the-fair-work-framework/)
* addressing in a timely manner any significant problems arising in SQA, alerting the Portfolio Accountable Officer and the responsible Minister(s) where considered appropriate
* ensuring that the objectives of SQA and the risks to them are properly and appropriately taken into account in the SG’s risk assessment and management systems, and
* informing SQA of relevant SG policy in a timely manner.

**Advisory Council Responsibilities**

# Under the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act 2002 (“the 2002 Act”) Scottish Ministers have the power to establish a committee known as the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is established under The Advisory Council (Establishment) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (“the 2002 Regulations”). Members are appointed by Scottish Ministers on such terms and conditions as the Scottish Ministers may determine.

# The Advisory Council’s role as set out in the 2002 Act is to consider and provide advice to SQA and/or Ministers on matters relating to qualifications devised or awarded by SQA, and the functions and procedure of the SQA. The convener of the Council must be a member of SQA’s Board. The Advisory Council’s role is to consider and provide advice to SQA on the needs and views of stakeholders, to help make appropriate decisions on the development, maintenance and delivery of qualifications. The Advisory Council has a duty to consult with and take account of the views of any other persons which it considers having an interest in the matter prior to providing that advice and take account of any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers in fulfilling this duty. SQA and the Advisory Council will consult each other in the exercise of their functions as appropriate, taking account of any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers in fulfilling this duty.

# The Advisory Council does not have responsibility for governing the operations of SQA, this rests with SQA’s Board.

# The Advisory Council will provide the Board with minutes of each Council meeting in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the Board..

#  As provided by the 2002 Regulations, the Advisory Council will have 15 to 25 members, one of which is the Convenor, and its meetings will be quorate when half its membership is present. SQA may pay Council members such allowances and expenses as the Scottish Ministers may determine. The Advisory Council can also make arrangements for its meetings to be open to the public and must hold a meeting that is open to the public at least once a year. The Advisory Council regulates its own procedure and that of any committee or sub-committee it may establish. The Advisory Council must provide Scottish Ministers with a written copy of any advice it provides to SQA. The Board has a duty to consider the advice of the Advisory Council, and where it does not agree to act on a piece of advice it receives, then a written response must be provided, seeing out the reasons why. This response should also be provided to the Scottish Government.

# The Advisory Council has no power to compel SQA to act on its advice.

# The Advisory Council will agree an annual plan which forms and details the core of its work for that year. The workplan will be closely aligned to SQA’s corporate plan and objectives. The workplan will be routinely reviewed by the Advisory Council, and updated to take account of any suggested additions, or to address any urgent areas of work. The Advisory Council will meet at least four times a year and can hold joint meetings with SQA sub-committees if deemed useful and appropriate.

# The Advisory Council will produce an annual report on its work and present it to the Board and the Scottish Ministers. The Advisory Council will share copies of the Advisory Council papers with Scottish Ministers, which will include minutes of the meetings.

# Advisory Council membership will be regularly reviewed in consultation with the Scottish Government, SQA and the Advisory Council.

# Advisory Council members should not communicate directly with the media.

**Committee Structure and Responsibilities**

# The Committee Structure that has been established by, and supports the Board, comprises:

* Audit Committee
* Performance Committee
* Qualifications Committee
* Remuneration Committee
* Accreditation Committee

*Audit Committee*

# This Committee was established by the Board, in accordance with the guidance on Audit Committees within the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

# The Committee is responsible, on behalf of the Board, for ensuring SQA is subject to independent and objective review of financial systems and reporting, assessing the reliability and integrity of assurances provided on the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control, risk management systems and governance, ensuring compliance with law and codes of conduct and monitoring SQA’s relationship with its auditors. The Committee meets at least four times per year.

*Performance Committee*

# The Performance Committee supports the Board in the monitoring of progress against SQA’s Corporate Objectives. The Committee oversees the development and maintenance of a performance framework that provides clear links to the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework and provides advice and guidance on SQA’s key performance indicators.

*Qualifications Committee*

# The Qualifications Committee provides strategic, policy and technical advice to the Board and senior officers on SQA’s qualifications and their assessment, quality assurance and awarding systems. It also oversees the work of SQA in developing qualifications that meet the needs of candidates, centres and employers, now and into the future.

*Remuneration Committee*

# The Remuneration Committee sets and reviews the annual performance plan for the Chief Executive and members of the Executive Management Team. In addition, the committee advises the Board on remuneration and terms and conditions for any new Chief Executive and advises on any severance payments for the Chief Executive and members of the Executive Management Team. When considering these payments, the committee has a duty to represent the public interest and avoid inappropriate use of public funds in accordance with the SPFM..

*Accreditation Committee*

# The Accreditation Committee remit is: to monitor the implementation, by awarding bodies, of Scottish Vocational Qualifications and other accredited qualifications; monitor developments in the vocational qualifications landscape, take cognisance of the work within the UK-wide framework of national occupational standards, to ensure that accredited vocational qualifications add value to the Scottish economy; ensure that criteria for awarding bodies and accredited qualifications are kept under review, revised as appropriate in the context of national developments, and re-published from time to time; and to monitor and evaluate the implementation, operation and quality assurance of accredited qualifications by awarding bodies.

# The Accreditation Committee also discusses strategic issues which impact on SQA’s work. This includes Scottish and UK Government policy, the work of other qualifications regulators and educational development overseas.

# The Accreditation Committee is convened by one of SQA’s Board members. The convenor reports on the proceedings of the Accreditation Committee to subsequent Board meetings.

# The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing activities required for the regulation of qualifications, and in this capacity, attends the Accreditation Committee.

# The separation of functions, as outlined in paragraph 10, also applies to the operations of the Accreditation Committee, which is co-ordinated by the Accreditation Unit. In addition to the Chief Executive, any SQA staff regularly attending committee meetings will be from the Accreditation Unit. Where items of business relate to corporate activity, staff from outwith the Accreditation Unit will attend for those items only.

# A minimum of seven members of the committee will be neither members nor employees of SQA. These committee members are appointed by the Board. The quorum necessary to transact business is three members, the majority of whom must be members (and not observers) of the Accreditation Committee and not SQA Board members or employees of the SQA.

# The Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland have (non-voting) observer status on the committee.

# The procedures for accreditation and regulation adopted by the Accreditation Committee must be transparent to bodies associated with these processes.

**Internal audit**

# SQA shall:

* establish and maintain arrangements for internal audit in accordance with the [Public Sector Internal Audit Standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-internal-audit-standards) and the [Internal Audit](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/internaud) section of the SPFM
* set up an audit committee of its Board, in accordance with the [Audit Committees](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/auditcommittees) section of the SPFM, to advise both the Board and the Chief Executive in his/her capacity as SQA Accountable Officer
* forward timeously to the SG the audit charter, strategy, periodic audit plans and annual audit assurance report, including SQA Head of Internal Audit opinion on risk management, control and governance and other relevant reports as requested, and
* keep records of and prepare and forward timeously to the SG an annual report on fraud and theft suffered by SQA and notify the SG at the earliest opportunity of any unusual or major incidents.

# The SG’s Internal Audit Directorate has a right of access to all documents held by SQA internal auditor, including where the service is contracted out. The SG has a right of access to all SQA records and personnel for any purpose.

**External audit**

# The Auditor General for Scotland (“AGS”) audits, or appoints auditors to audit, SQA’s annual accounts and passes them to the Scottish Ministers who shall lay them before the Scottish Parliament, together with the auditor’s report and any report prepared by the AGS. For the purpose of audit the auditors have a statutory right of access to documents and information held by relevant persons. SQA shall instruct its auditors to send copies of all management reports (and correspondence relating to those reports) and responses to the SG.

# The AGS, or examiners appointed by the AGS, may carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which SQA has used its resources in discharging its functions. The AGS may also carry out examinations into the arrangements made by SQA to secure Best Value. For the purpose of these examinations the examiners have a statutory right of access to documents and information held by relevant persons. In addition, SQA shall provide, in contracts and any conditions to grants, for the AGS to exercise such access to documents held by contractors and sub-contractors and grant recipients as may be required for these examinations; and shall use its best endeavours to secure access for the AGS to any other documents required by the AGS which are held by other bodies.

**Annual report and accounts**

# SQA must publish an annual report of its activities together with its audited accounts after the end of each financial year. The annual report must cover the activities of any corporate, subsidiary or joint ventures under the control of SQA. It should comply with the Government [Financial Reporting Manual](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-financial-reporting-manual-frem) (“FReM2) and outline SQA’s main activities and performance against agreed objectives, targets, milestones and indicators for the previous financial year.

# The accounts must be prepared in accordance with relevant statutes and the specific accounts direction (including compliance with the FReM) and other relevant guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers. Any financial objectives or targets set by the Scottish Ministers should be reported on in the accounts and will therefore be within the scope of the audit. Any subsidiary or joint venture owned or controlled by SQA shall be consolidated in its accounts in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adapted and interpreted for the public sector context.

# The draft report should be submitted to the SG for comment, and the draft accounts for information, by 31 July. The final version should be available for laying before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Ministers by 31 October at the latest. Whilst the statutory date for laying and publishing accounts audited by the AGS is by 31 December, following the close of the previous financial year, there is an expectation on the part of the Scottish Ministers that accounts will be laid and published as early as possible. The accounts must not be laid before they have been formally sent by the AGS to the Scottish Ministers and must not be published before they have been laid. SQA shall be responsible for the publication of the annual report and accounts.

**Management Responsibilities**

**Corporate and business plans**

# SQA must ensure that a corporate plan, agreed with the Scottish Ministers, is in place and published on SQA’s website. SQA shall agree with the SG the issues to be addressed in the plan and the timetable for its preparation and review. The finalised plan shall reflect SQA’s strategic aims and objectives as agreed by the Scottish Ministers, indicative budgets and any priorities set by the Scottish Ministers. It shall demonstrate how SQA contributes to the achievement of the SG’s primary purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth and alignment with the Scotland’s [National Performance Framework](https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/) (NPF). The corporate plan for SQA should include:

* the purpose and principal aims of SQA
* an analysis of the environment in which SQA operates
* key objectives and associated key performance targets for the period of the plan, the strategy for achieving those objectives and how these will contribute towards the achievement of the SG’s primary purpose and alignment with the NPF
* indicators against which performance can be judged
* details of planned efficiencies, describing how SQA proposes to achieve better value for money, including through collaboration and shared services
* SQA’s strategic plans for communicating and engaging with learners, stakeholders, teachers, partners, customers and the mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of these plans, and
* other matters as agreed between the SG and SQA.

# The corporate plan should inform the development of a separate business plan for each financial year. The business plan for SQA should include key objectives, targets, milestones and indicators for the year immediately ahead, aligned to the NPF, and be linked to budgeting information so that, where possible, resources allocated to achieve specific objectives can be identified. A copy of SQA’s business plan should be provided to the sponsor unit prior to the start of the relevant financial year. SQA shall be responsible for the publication of its corporate and business plans.

**Budget management**

# Each year, in the light of decisions by the Scottish Ministers on the allocation of budgets for the forthcoming financial year, the SG will send to SQA a formal statement of its budgetary provision, and a note of any related matters and details of the budget monitoring information required by the SG. The terms of that letter, referred to as the Budget Allocation and Monitoring letter, should be viewed as complementing the content of this document. The monthly monitoring is the primary means of in-year budgetary control across the SG. As such bodies must comply with the format and timing of the monitoring together with any requests for further information. The statement of budgetary provision will set out the budget within the classifications of fiscal resource, fiscal capital and Ring-fenced (non-cash) .SQA will inform the sponsor unit at the earliest opportunity if a requirement for UK Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) budget is identified. The SG should also be advised in the event that estimated net expenditure is forecast to be lower than budget provision.Transfers of budgetary provision between the different classifications require the prior approval of the Directorate for Financial Management. Any proposals for such transfers should therefore be submitted to the sponsor unit. Transfers of provision within the classifications may be undertaken without reference to the SG, subject to any constraints on specific areas of expenditure e.g. the approved pay remit.

# If the trading and other resource income realised (including profit or loss on disposal of non-current assets) – scored as negative fiscal resource, or the net book value of disposals of non-current assets – scored as negative fiscal capital is less than included in the agreed budget SQA shall, unless otherwise agreed with the SG, ensure a corresponding reduction in its gross expenditure. (The extent to which SQA exceeds agreed budgets shall normally be met by a corresponding reduction in the budgets for the following financial year.) If income realised is **more** than included in the agreed budgets SQA must consult and obtain the prior approval of the SG before using any excess to fund additional expenditure or to meet existing pressures. Failure to obtain prior approval for the use of excess income to fund additional expenditure may result in corresponding reductions in budgets for the following financial year. The only exception is where the income is from gifts, bequests and donations but this must be spent within the same financial year as the receipt, otherwise additional budget allocation will be required. In any event, income from all sources and all planned expenditure should be reflected in the monthly budget monitoring statement.

**Cash management**

# Any [grant in aid](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/grants) (i.e. the cash provided to SQA by the SG to support the allocated budget) for the year in question must be authorised by the Scottish Parliament in the Budget Act. Funding not authorised as Grant in Aid under the initial Budget Act will be allocated to SQA once the necessary amendments to the Budget Act have taken effect. This additional Grant in Aid will be allocated in an amended Budget Allocation and Monitoring letter once the budget transfers have been authorised. Grant in aid will normally be paid on the basis of updated profiles and information on unrestricted cash reserves. Payment will not be made in advance of need, as determined by the level of unrestricted cash reserves and planned expenditure. Unrestricted cash reserves held during the course of the year should be kept to the minimum level consistent with the efficient operation of SQA - and the level of funds required to meet any relevant liabilities at the year-end. Grant in aid not drawn down by the end of the financial year shall lapse. Grant in aid shall not be paid into any restricted reserve held by SQA.

# The banking arrangements adopted by SQA must comply with the [Banking](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/banking) section of the SPFM.

**Risk management**

# SQA shall ensure that the risks that it faces are dealt with in an appropriate manner, in accordance with relevant aspects of generally recognised best practice in corporate governance, and develop an approach to risk management consistent with the [Risk Management](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/risk) section of the SPFM. Reporting arrangements should ensure that the sponsor unit is made aware of relevant risks and how they are being managed. SQA Board will, at the earliest opportunity, notify the relevant SG Audit and Risk Committee if it considers that it has identified a significant problem which may have wider implications.

**Organisational security and resilience**

# As part of risk management arrangements, SQA shall ensure that it has a clear understanding at board level of the key risks, threats and hazards it may face in the personnel, physical and cyber domains, and take action to ensure appropriate organisational resilience to those risks/threats/hazards. It should have particular regard to the following key sources of information to help guide its approach:

* [Having and Promoting Business Resilience (part of the Preparing Scotland suite of guidance](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/8006/downloads))
* [The Scottish Public Sector Action Plan on Cyber Resilience](https://beta.gov.scot/publications/cyber-resilience-strategy-scotland-public-sector-action-plan-2017-18/) and associated guidance

**Counter fraud arrangements**

# SQA should adopt and implement policies and practices to safeguard itself against fraud and theft, in accordance with the [Fraud](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/fraud) section of the SPFM. Application of these processes must be monitored actively, supported by a fraud actionplan and robust reporting arrangements. This includes the establishment of avenues to report any suspicions of fraud.

**Performance management**

# SQA shall operate management information and accounting systems that enable it to review, in a timely and effective manner, its financial and non-financial performance against the strategic aims, objectives, targets and milestones set out in the corporate and business plans. The results of such reviews should be reported on a regular basis to SQA Board and copied to the SG. The SG shall assess SQA’s performance, proportionately, on a continuous basis and hold a formal review meeting at least twice a year. The responsible Cabinet Secretary / Scottish Minister shall meet SQA Chair at least once a year.

**SQA staff management**

*Broad responsibilities for SQA staff*

# SQA will have responsibility for the recruitment, retention and engagement of staff. These broad responsibilities are to ensure that:

* HR policies, practices and systems comply with employment and equalities legislation, and standards expected of public sector employers and employees;
* All staff experience fair work and good quality jobs, including core employees, temporary agency workers and self-employed contractors
* the organisational structure including grading levels and numbers of employees are appropriate to its functions and the requirements of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (subject to the SG Public Sector [Pay Policy for Staff Pay Remits](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-sector-pay/staff-pay));
* Staff performance is reviewed and evaluated through SQA’s performance management system, which is reviewed from time to time;
* Staff are encouraged to acquire the appropriate professional, management and other expertise necessary to achieve SQA’s objectives;
* proper consultation with the recognised trade unions and staff takes place on key issues affecting staff grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and these are reviewed at appropriate intervals
* effective whistle-blowing policy and procedures consistent with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 are in place, and;
* An employee code of conduct is in place.

*Pay and conditions of service*

# The SQA shall submit to the SG for approval (normally annually unless a multi-year deal has been agreed) a pay remit in line with the SG Public Sector [Pay Policy for Staff Pay Remits](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-sector-pay/staff-pay) and negotiate with the recognised trade unions a pay settlement within the terms of the approved remit. Payment of salaries should also comply with the [Tax Planning and Tax Avoidance](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/taxavoidance) section of the SPFM. Proposals on non-salary rewards must comply with the guidance in the [Non-Salary Rewards](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/nonsalrewards) section of the SPFM.SQA will also seek appropriate approval under the SG Public Sector [Pay Policy for Senior Appointments](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-sector-pay/senior-appointment-pay) for the Chief Executive’s remuneration package prior to appointment, annually or when a new appointment or change to the remuneration package is being proposed.

*Pensions, redundancy and compensation*

# Superannuation arrangements for SQA employees are subject to the approval of the SG. SQA employees shall normally be eligible for a pension provided by the Strathclyde Pension Scheme. SQA operates an auto-enrolment scheme and staff may choose not to join the occupational pension scheme provided by SQA, but the employers’ contribution to any personal pension arrangement, including stakeholder pension, shall normally be limited to the national insurance rebate level..

# Any proposal by SQA to move from existing pension arrangements, or to pay any redundancy or compensation for loss of office, requires the prior approval of the SG. Proposals on compensation payments must comply with the [Settlement Agreements, Severance, Early Retirement and Redundancy Terms](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/severanceetcterms) section of the SPFM. This includes referral to the SG of any proposed severance scheme (for example, a scheme for voluntary exit), business case for a settlement agreement being considered for an individual, or proposal to make any other compensation payment. In all instances, SQA should engage with the SG prior to proceeding with proposed severance options, and prior to making any offer either orally or in writing.

**State aid**

# State aid is a European Commission term which refers to forms of public assistance, given to undertakings on a discretionary basis, which has the potential to distort competition and affect trade between Member States of the European Union. Any activity that SQA undertakes itself, or funds other bodies to undertake, that can be offered on a commercial market for goods and services is subject to state aid rules. A state aid assessment is therefore required prior to disbursing any funding and would be subject to the guidance in the state aid section of the SPFM.

**Asset and property management**

# SQA shall maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of its current and non-current assets consistent with the [Property: Acquisition, Disposal & Management](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/PropertyManagement) section of the SPFM. ‘Non-current’ assets should be disposed of in accordance with theSPFM. The SG’s Property Division should be consulted about relevant proposed disposals of property that SQA holds for operational purposes (rather than investment) at the earliest opportunity so it may be advertised internally. An [Internal Advertisement](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/PropertyManagement/InternalAdvertisement) form must be completed and submitted at least one month prior to property being advertised on the open market. Any proposal to acquire land, buildings or other rights in property for accommodation / operational purposes should comply with the SPFM. SQA is also subject to the [SG Asset Management Policy](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/02/26142659/1), including the requirement for acquisition of a new lease, continuation of an existing lease, decision not to exercise a break option in a lease or purchase of property for accommodation / operational purposes, to be approved in advance by Scottish Ministers*.* The Property Controls Team should be consulted as early as possible in this process. All assets (property, plant and equipment) are to be properly recorded and updated as necessary by SQA on the Cabinet Office [electronic Property Information Mapping System](https://e-pims.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ePIMSNet/epims_login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fepimsnet) (e-PIMS).

**Specific financial provisions**

**Delegated authorities**

# SQA’s specific delegated financial authorities - as agreed in consultation between SQA and the SG - are set out in the attached **Appendix A**. SQA shall obtain the SG’s prior written approval before entering into any undertaking to incur any expenditure that falls outside these delegations. SQA shall also comply with any requirements for prior SG approval included in the SPFM and/or this document. Prior SG approval must always be obtained before incurring expenditure for any purpose that is or might be considered novel, contentious or repercussive or which has or could have significant future cost implications.

**Income generation**

# SQA shall seek to optimise income - grant in aid does not qualify as income - from all sources, including from the [European Union](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/eufunding#a9), and ensure that the SG is kept informed. Novel or contentious proposals for new sources of income or methods of fundraising must be approved by the SG.

# Under the Education (Scotland) Act 1996, SQA has the power to fix and recover charges for services provided by it in accordance with criteria determined by Scottish Ministers. Fees or charges for any services supplied in Scotland by SQA shall be determined in accordance with the [Fees & Charges](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/feescharges) section of the SPFM. In setting its charges in Scotland SQA shall:

# have due regard to its duty as a public body and to the public purse, bearing in mind that the level of entry charges will have implications for other public sector expenditure (e.g. local authorities);

* develop proposed entry charge changes following consultation with appropriate stakeholders;

# seek the approval of Scottish Ministers to proposed entry charges for products and services offered in Scotland as part of the annual budget exercise, and

# keep its main customer stakeholder organisations updated on changes to entry charges (e.g. Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, The Scottish Council of Independent Schools, and Colleges Scotland)

# Prices for all products and services supplied by SQA outwith Scotland are set at SQA’s sole discretion.

# Gifts, bequests or donations received by SQA score as income and should be provided for in the agreed fiscal resource and fiscal capital budgets, updated as necessary in consultation with the SG. However, SQA should be able to demonstrate that expenditure funded by gifts etc is additional to expenditure normally supported by grant in aid (i.e. SG core funding) or by trading and other income. Before accepting such gifts etc SQA shall consider if there are any associated costs in doing so or any conflicts of interests arising. SQA shall keep a written record of any such gifts etc and what happened to them.

Financial investments

# Unless covered by a specific delegated authority SQA shall not make any financial investments without the prior approval of the SG. That would include equity shares in ventures which further the objectives of SQA. SQA shall not invest in any venture of a speculative nature.

Borrowing

# Borrowing cannot be used to increase SQA’s spending power. All borrowing by SQA - excluding agreed overdrafts - shall be from the Scottish Ministers in accordance with guidance in the [Borrowing, Lending & Investment](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/borrowingetc) section of the SPFM.

Lease arrangements

# Unless covered by a specific delegated authority SQA shall not enter any finance, property or accommodation related lease arrangement – including the extension of an existing lease or the non-exercise of a tenant’s lease break - without the SG’s prior approval. Before entering/ continuing such arrangements SQA must be able to demonstrate that the lease offers better value for money than purchase and that all options of sharing existing public sector space have been explored. Non-property/ accommodation related operating leases are subject to a specific delegated authority. SQA must have fiscal capital provision for finance leases and other transactions which are in substance borrowing.

**Tax arrangements**

# Non-standard tax management arrangements should always be regarded as novel and/or contentious and must therefore be approved in advance by the SG. Relevant guidance is provided in the [Tax Planning and Tax Avoidance](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/taxavoidance) section of the SPFM. SQA must comply with all relevant rules on taxation, including VAT. All individuals who would qualify as employees for tax purposes should be paid through the payroll system with tax deducted at source. It is the responsibility of SQA to observe VAT legislation and recover input tax where it is entitled to do so. The implications of VAT in relation to procurement and shared services should be considered at an early stage to ensure that financial efficiency is achieved. SQA must also ensure that it accounts properly for any output tax on sales or disposals.

**Settlement, severance, early retirement and redundancy**

# The NDPB shall seek to deliver, and demonstrate, robust governance processes, best practice and value for money when developing and implementing a severance scheme or when developing a settlement agreement, in compliance with current policy, observing all policy limitsas set out in the [Settlement, severance, early retirement, redundancy section](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-public-finance-manual/settlement-severance-early-retirement-redundancy/settlement-agreements-severance-early-retirement-and-redundancy-terms/) of the SPFM.

Lending and guarantees

# Any lending by SQA must adhere to the guidance in the [Borrowing, Lending & Investment](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/borrowingetc) section of the SPFM on undertaking due diligence and seeking to establish a security. Unless covered by a specific delegated limit SQA shall not, without the SG’s prior approval, lend money, charge any asset, give any guarantee or indemnity or letter of comfort, or incur any other contingent liability (as defined in the [Contingent Liabilities](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/contingentliabs) section of the SPFM)***,***whether or not in a legally binding form. Guarantees, indemnities and letters of comfort of a standard type given in the normal course of business are excluded from this requirement.

**Third party grants**

# Unless covered by a specific delegated authority SQA shall not, without the SG’s prior agreement, provide grant funding to a third party. Such funding would be subject to the guidance in the [State Aid](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/stateaidrules) section of the SPFM. Guidance on a framework for the control of third party grants is provided as an [annex](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/grantsannex#top) to the Grant & Grant in Aid section of the SPFM.

Impairments, provisions and write-offs

# Assets should be recorded on the balance sheet at the appropriate valuation basis in accordance with the FReM. Where an asset - and that includes investments - suffers impairment it is important that the prospective impairment and background is communicated to the SG at the earliest possible point in the financial year to determine the implications for SQA’s budget. Similarly any significant movement in existing provisions or the creation of new provisions should be discussed in advance with the SG. Write-off of bad debt and/or losses scores against SQA’s fiscal resource budget classification and is subject to a specific delegated limit.

Insurance

# SQA is subject to the SG policy of self-insurance. Commercial insurance must however be taken out where there is a legal requirement to do so and may also be taken out in the circumstances described in the [Insurance](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/insurance) section of the SPFM - where required with the prior approval of the SG. In the event of uninsured losses being incurred the SG shall consider, on a case by case basis, whether or not it should make any additional resources available to SQA. The SG will provide SQA with a Certificate of Exemption for Employer's Liability Insurance.

**Procurement and payment**

# SQA’s procurement policies shall reflect relevant guidance in the [Procurement](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/procure) section of the SPFM and relevant guidance issued by the SG’s Procurement and Commercial Directorate. Procurement should be undertaken by appropriately trained and authorised staff and treated as a key component of achieving SQA’s objectives consistent with the principles of [Value for Money](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-public-finance-manual/best-value/best-value/), the highest professional standards and any legal requirements. All external consultancy contracts over the value of £100,000 or any proposal to award a contract without competition (non-competitive action) over the value of £100,000 must be endorsed in advance by the Chief Executive.

# Any major investment programmes or projects undertaken by SQA shall be subject to the guidance in the [Major Investment Projects](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/majinvest) section of the SPFM and is also subject to a specific delegated authority. The sponsor unit must be kept informed of progress on such programmes and projects and Ministers must be alerted to any developments that could undermine their viability. ICT investment plans must be reported to the SG’s Office of the Chief Information Officer. The Technology Assurance Framework will apply to new digital public services and new investments in technology and any new digital services should comply with the Digital First Service Standard.

# SQA shall pay all matured and properly authorised invoices relating to transactions with suppliers in accordance with the [Expenditure and Payments](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/payments) section of the SPFM and in doing so shall seek wherever possible and appropriate to meet the SG’s target for the payment of invoices within 10 working days of their receipt.

Gifts made, special payments and losses

# Unless covered by a specific delegated authority SQA shall not, without the SG’s prior approval, make gifts outwith SQA’s Gifts and Hospitality policy or special payments or write-off of losses. Special payments and losses are subject to the guidance in the [Losses and Special Payments](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/lossesetc) section of the SPFM. Gifts by management to staff are subject to the guidance in the [Non-Salary Rewards](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/nonsalrewards) section of the SPFM.

**Clawback**

# Where SQA has financed expenditure on assets by a third party, SQA shall make appropriate arrangements to ensure that any such assets above an agreed value are not disposed of by the third party without SQA’s prior consent. SQA shall put in place arrangements sufficient to secure the repayment of its due share of the proceeds - or an appropriate proportion of them if SQA contributed less than the whole cost of acquisition or improvement. SQA shall also ensure that if assets financed by SQA cease to be used by the third party for the intended purpose an appropriate proportion of the value of the asset shall be repaid to SQA.

**Board expenses**

# Remuneration (daily fees), allowances and expenses paid to Board members must comply with the SG [Pay Policy for Senior Appointments](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/public-sector-pay/senior-appointment-pay) and any specific guidance on such matters issued by the Scottish Ministers.

**EXECUTIVE SQA MODEL FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT: APPENDIX A**

**SPECIFIC DELEGATED FINANCIAL AUTHORITIES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Delegated Limit** |
| Operating leases – other than property/ accommodation related leases |  | £50,000 |
| Gifts |  |  £1,000 in individual cases |
| Special payments |  | £5,000 in individual cases |
| Claims waived or abandoned |  | £10,000 in individual cases |
| Write-off of bad debt and/or losses |  | £10,000 in individual cases |
| Major investment programmes/ projects |  | £500,000 |
| External business and management consultancies |  | £100,000 |
| Non-competitive action |  | £110,000 |

1. In this context “public funds” means not only any funds provided to SQA by the Scottish Ministers but also any other funds falling within the stewardship of SQA, including trading and investment income, gifts, bequests and donations. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)