

National Qualifications 2024 Strategic Group

Date: Friday 24 November 2023

Time: 09:30 – 10:30

MS Teams

Members: Fiona Robertson; Anne Campbell; Cheryl Burnett; Clare Hicks; Dr Gerald Prescott, Gill Stewart; James Cowan; Jean Blair; John Booth; Olivia Brown; Stewart Nicolson; Tim Chan; Andy Harvey; Mike Corbett; Olaf Stando

Attending: Donna Stewart; Gill Mann; [redacted name]; [redacted name]; Martin Ingram; [redacted name] Emma Sinclair; Richard Pidgeon; [redacted name]

Apologies: Martyn Ware; Andrea Bradley; Gillian Hamilton Jamie Dunlop; Justin Walker; Lorraine Davidson Martyn Ware Ollie Bray; Jacqui Hill; Kerry MacMillan; Graham Hutton

Notes

Item	Topic
3.1	Welcome The Chair welcomed members to the third meeting of the NQ24 Strategic Group.
3.2	Review of previous minutes Members approved the note of the previous meeting held on 29 October 2023, subject to minor amendment. An update on a previous action related to communications on dual presentation was provided. Scottish Government officials agreed to follow up on action relating to the possibility of a communication on dual entry being issued by the Cabinet Secretary. This would be similar to the communication issued by John Swinney in 2017. SQA will carry out research to further investigate the motivations of centres when presenting learners for both National 4 and 5. Members welcomed this update and noted the importance of ensuring that National 4 remains a credible and valued qualification. Action: Scottish Government to consider further communications on dual presentation Action: SQA to undertake further research on dual presentations in 2023.
3.3	Artificial Intelligence [redacted name] provided members with an update on work that has been undertaken by SQA in response to developments in Artificial Intelligence. Whilst AI is not new, there has been a rapid growth in the use of generative AI and SQA has been considering the risks, issues and opportunities raised as a result of AI outputs being used in assessment. Various software is available to assist with the detection of the use of AI, however human detection remains key. SQA has updated Authentication Guidance and reviewed Course Specification documents to support centres in ensuring learners' work is their own.

	<p>SQA’s initial position is set out here https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//107607.html. It highlights that candidates are not permitted to use AI tools to generate outputs that they then submit as their own work when completing assessment tasks that contribute towards a qualification. Candidates must also not reference AI outputs as a source in their assessment tasks. Outputs from AI tools can be incorrect, biased and change over time and may not meet the referencing requirements of subjects. This position, which was communicated to centres in September, is designed to preserve the integrity of qualifications whilst more work and consultation is done.</p> <p>A number of communications and engagement activities have taken place to provide information to centres, learners and parents including SQA Connections week which took place in October, as well as CDN and ETP events. The recently published <i>My Qualifications</i> booklet includes information for learners on plagiarism. There is currently an educator online survey available and focus groups are planned for early next year.</p> <p>Members welcomed the presentation on Artificial Intelligence and SQA’s initial position statement. There was acknowledgment that human detection remains crucial in identifying cases of AI use within assessment and that current software is not 100% reliable. Concern was raised that it may be more difficult to detect AI outputs in some subjects more than others.</p> <p>The importance of considering digital equity in the context of the use of AI in the education sector was noted. There is the potential for a disparity in the quality of AI software used by learners due to cost implications and this should be considered during discussions.</p> <p>Members supported the need for a unified approach across the education landscape and further discussion as part of education reform.</p> <p>Action: Members invited to share and respond to the SQA Generative AI consultation using the following link SQA Generative AI Consultation Survey (smartsurvey.co.uk).</p>
3.4	<p>Access to scripts</p> <p>Martin Ingram updated members on the results of the 2023 Access to Scripts trial. Access to scripts for centres and learners is not currently offered by SQA however it is a service available in some form from other awarding bodies across the UK. SQA carried out a comparison of the various access methods used by RoUK awarding bodies and their associated charges. The 2023 trial involved nine centres from across Scotland and two subjects, National 5 Media and Higher Geography. After the trial was completed, a survey was conducted with participants to gather feedback.</p> <p>Martin outlined the next steps in the project which include further research based on findings of the 2023 trial, more engagement with the education system and exploration of any required policy development.</p> <p>Member discussed the time period for which scripts might be available to access by centres and it was suggested that this should be longer than the timelines associated with appeals. This would ensure that the service is used more widely to support understanding standards and improve teaching and learning.</p> <p>Actions: SQA to establish a working group as part of the NQ24WG workplan.</p>

3.5	<p>ACM and Contingency Appeals</p> <p>It was agreed that this item will be discussed at the next meeting in January.</p>
3.6	<p>Communications and engagement</p> <p>John Booth provided an update on recent and upcoming communications activity. High level Appeals information was published in November with the full data due to be published on 5 December, and updated Attainment data the week after.</p> <p>A number of engagement activities are planned to include Learner Panels, some of which have been in-person, a parent engagement session which is planned for early next year and focus group with SQA Coordinators.</p>
3.7	<p>Next Steps/AOB</p> <p>No other business was raised.</p>
	<p>Date of the next meeting - Friday 26 January 2024</p>