



Language of Assessment and Certification in Regulated Qualifications offered by SQA (delivered in the United Kingdom)

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Why do we need the policy?

This policy outlines the principles and criteria related to the language of assessment and certification of regulated units and qualifications offered by SQA and delivered by centres in the United Kingdom.

This policy supports SQA's corporate goals to:

- ◆ provide a credible qualifications system
- ◆ be flexible in meeting customer needs
- ◆ be trusted, respected and valued by our customers, stakeholders and partners

What does it apply to?

The policy applies to all SQA qualifications regulated by SQA Accreditation, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), and Qualifications Wales.

Exclusions

SQA does not offer Designated Qualifications in Wales, therefore does not offer Welsh-medium qualifications, nor 'partially' Welsh-medium qualifications. All SQA qualifications offered in Wales are delivered, assessed and certificated in English.

The scope of this policy does not extend to requests for assessment in British Sign Language (BSL). SQA is committed to the Equality Act (2010) and seeks to remove unnecessary barriers to access for candidates and make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates consistent with maintaining the integrity of the qualification. SQA considers requests for assessment in BSL as a reasonable adjustment. You can find more information on reasonable adjustments in two SQA guidance documents on our website:

- ◆ Reasonable adjustments for SVQs and related qualifications guidance, October 2015
- ◆ SQA's Guide to Reasonable Adjustments in Regulated Qualifications, August 2016

Who is it for?

This policy is for SQA centres, SQA staff and learners.

What support is available?

The Higher National and Vocational Policy Team, within the Policy, Analysis and Standards Directorate can provide support on implementing this policy.

The Operations Directorate can provide advice and guidance to centres regarding quality assurance procedures.

1 Policy statement

SQA adheres to the relevant regulatory authority's criteria in relation to the language of assessment and certification. Our regulated qualifications are assessed in English and, to a limited extent, in Gaelic (where demand is present). This is in recognition that these are the principal languages of Scotland by custom and usage. The qualifications permitted to be delivered and assessed in Gaelic are:

- ◆ **SVQ ann an Seirbheisean Sòisealta (Clann agus Daoine Òga) aig SCQF Ìre 6 (GV69 22)**
(SVQ in Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 6)
- ◆ **SVQ ann an Seirbheisean Sòisealta (Clann agus Daoine Òga) aig SCQF Ìre 7 (GV6A 23)**
(SVQ in Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7)
- ◆ **Dioplòma ann am Meadhanan Cruthachail aig SCQF Ìre 7 (GV73 47)**
(Diploma in Creative Media at SCQF level 7)

The regulated qualifications and units that form the following Foundation Apprenticeships can also be delivered and assessed in Gaelic:

- ◆ **Preantasachd Tòiseachaidh ann an Seirbheisean Sòisealta: Clann agus Daoine Òga (GV71 46)**
(Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services: Children and Young People)
- ◆ **Preantasachd Tòiseachaidh ann am Meadhanan Cruthachail agus Digiteach (GV72 46)**
(Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media)

Please note that separate Group Award codes are used to denote Gaelic delivery and assessment. Centres must ensure learners are entered onto SQA systems for the correct version of the qualification.

For the purposes of reasonable adjustments, assessment in BSL may be permitted if it does not compromise the integrity of the qualification and the competences being assessed.

Our regulated qualifications are certificated in English, and where Gaelic has been used in the assessment process, a recognition statement will also be added to the commemorative certificate.

SQA does not currently offer the assessment and certification of regulated qualifications in other languages. We record and monitor requests for assessment in other languages. If sufficient demand is evident, we will explore whether delivering in another language would be practical, proportionate, and viable, and would not compromise the integrity of the qualification or competences being assessed.

2 Policy relationship to SQA's Governing Principles

[SQA's Governing Principles](#) govern how SQA meets its statutory duties and self-regulates its activities. This policy supports the following Governing Principles:

Governing Principle 7: SQA will ensure that all qualifications and assessments are as fair and accessible as possible and that the needs of candidates are met in the administration of its assessments.

Governing Principle 13: SQA will ensure that its externally-regulated qualifications and assessments are open to external scrutiny by appropriate bodies.

3 Action

SQA must ensure that the assessment of our qualifications is valued and credible to users, partner organisations and the wider community. SQA offers a range of qualifications regulated by SQA Accreditation, Ofqual and Qualifications Wales, therefore we must adhere to the relevant regulatory criteria in relation to the language of assessment and certification.

'Language of assessment' refers to the language in which assessments are conducted, and in which learners' evidence and assessment responses must be presented. It does not refer to the assessment of languages, like French. We acknowledge that some language assessments require specific assessment elements to be written in that language, and for learners to respond in that specific language.

All regulated qualifications offered by SQA in Scotland are assessed in English or, to a limited extent, Gaelic, in adherence with the language requirements of the regulator. This is in recognition that English and Gaelic are Scotland's widest spoken main languages by custom and usage¹. Regulated qualifications are certificated in

¹ [Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

English. Where qualifications have been assessed in Gaelic, this will be stated on the commemorative certificate.

All regulated qualifications offered by SQA in England are assessed and certificated in English.

All regulated qualifications offered by SQA in Wales are assessed and certificated in English. SQA does not offer Designated Qualifications in Wales, therefore there is no requirement to offer Welsh-medium qualifications.

Gaelic delivery and assessment requirements and procedures

Should a centre wish to deliver and assess the above noted qualifications in Gaelic, they must come forward for qualification approval for the specific qualifications noted above. Candidates must also be entered using the Gaelic Group Award codes. This will allow us to identify if candidates are being assessed in Gaelic, and therefore plan quality assurance activity and certificate accordingly.

Quality assurance activity will be conducted as per our published process. However, in addition, when Gaelic is used in the assessment process, the subject specialist external verifier will be supported by a Gaelic speaking SQA appointee. This will negate the need for candidate evidence to be translated into English.

At this time, qualification documentation will be presented in English. Should centres wish to translate unit specifications (for example), they are permitted to do so. It is assumed that if you have qualification approval to deliver the above noted qualifications in Gaelic, you will have sufficient expertise to translate the necessary materials. Alternatively, if you do not have the capacity to do so, translation should be conducted by Scottish Government-approved translators. SQA will not be responsible for the mistranslation of materials and any implications that may cause.

4 Compliance

SQA is required to comply with the regulatory requirements of our regulators. We set out our regulators' requirements and conditions about the language of assessment and certification below.

SQA Accreditation

[SQA's Accreditation Regulatory Principles](#) (SQA, 2021) states that 'The awarding body and its providers must ensure that its qualifications and their delivery and assessment are fair, inclusive and accessible to learners (Regulatory Principle 14).'

The Supplementary Information to this Principle states that ‘The awarding body must demonstrate that it has a clear process for reasonable adjustments and special considerations.’

[SQA Accreditation states that](#) it ‘will not normally accredit qualifications which are delivered and assessed in languages other than English and Gaelic’.

Ofqual

The General Conditions of Recognition (Ofqual, September 2023) state the following requirements in relation to language of assessment:

G2.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that all learners taking its qualifications in England are assessed in English except to the extent that the use of another language is permitted by this condition.

G2.2 A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in BSL where it is permitted by an awarding organisation for the purpose of reasonable adjustment.

G2.3 A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in any other language where it is one of the primary objectives of the qualification:

- (a) for the Learner to gain knowledge of, skills in, and understanding of that language, or
- (b) to support a role in the workplace, providing that proficiency in English is not required for the role supported by the qualification.

G2.4 Where an awarding organisation makes available a qualification in more than one language, the awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that assessments in different languages ensure a consistent level of demand for learners.

Qualifications Wales

The Criteria for Recognition (Qualifications Wales, December 2023) states that:

G2.1 An awarding body must ensure that all learners taking its qualifications are assessed in Welsh and/or English in Wales except to the extent that the use of another language is permitted by this condition.

G2.2 A learner taking a qualification in Wales may be assessed in British Sign Language where it is permitted by an awarding body for the purpose of reasonable adjustment.

G2.3 A learner taking a qualification may be assessed in any other language where it is one of the primary objectives of the qualification:

(a) for the learner to gain knowledge of, skills in, and understanding of that language; or

(b) to support a role in the workplace, providing that proficiency in English or Welsh is not required for the role supported by the qualification.

G2.4 Where an awarding body makes available a qualification in more than one language, the awarding body must take all reasonable steps to ensure that assessments in different languages ensure a consistent level of demand for learners.

5 Definitions

Centre: An organisation (such as a school, college, training company/provider or place of employment) that is approved by and accountable to an awarding body for the examination and assessment arrangements leading to a qualification award.

Language of assessment: The language in which assessments are conducted, and in which learners' evidence and assessment responses must be presented. It does not refer to the assessment of languages.

Learner: An individual who pursues a course of study independently but makes an entry and takes an assessment at an approved SQA centre. (May also be referred to as a 'candidate'.)

Ofqual: The regulatory body responsible for maintaining standards, improving confidence and distributing information about qualifications and examinations in England. It regulates general and vocational qualifications.

Qualifications Wales: The independent organisation responsible for regulating non-degree qualifications and the qualifications system in Wales. Its regulatory functions include ensuring that the organisations that offer qualifications are suitably resourced to do so.

Regulator: An organisation designated by government to establish national standards for qualifications and to secure compliance with them.

Regulated qualifications: Qualifications that are awarded by a recognised awarding organisation approved by a UK regulator. For the purposes of this policy, the regulators are SQA Accreditation, Ofqual and Qualifications Wales.

SQA Accreditation: The regulatory body that regulates vocational qualifications offered across Scotland, including Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

6 SQA policies and legislation

Related SQA policies include:

- ◆ Language of assessment and certification in units and qualifications validated by SQA (delivered in the United Kingdom)
- ◆ Language of assessment in units and qualifications validated by SQA (candidate assessment undertaken outside the United Kingdom in languages other than English)
- ◆ Language of Assessment in Customised Products Validated by SQA