# QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION

## ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 29 JULY 2026

Minutes of the third meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Wednesday 29 July 2026.

**Members**
* Ken Thomson (Convener)
*Ryan Reed
Angela Hamilton
*Laura Lamb
Elaine Hutton
*Kirsty Summers
Caroline McFarlane
*Sarah Higgins-Rollo
*Ian Hughes
*Jeniffer Davies

**Observers**
Shirley Rogers
Gary Gray
Nick Page
John Booth
*Declan Walsh
*[redacted]
*Jane Duffy

**Officers**
*Liz Barron-Majerik
*[redacted]

* Indicates present

## 03 WELCOME

The Convener welcomed Members to the meeting:

Jane Duffy, Scottish Government, [redacted], Accreditation Manager and [redacted], Accreditation Administrator, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation joined the meeting as observers.

## 03 APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Nick Page, Shirley Rogers, John Booth, Elaine Hutton, Gary Gray, Angela Hamilton, Caroline McFarlane,[redacted].

**Redacted - section 38(1)(b) personal data**

## 03 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Convener asked Members to declare whether they had any 'conflicts of interest' in relation to any matters on the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared.

## 03/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the second meeting of the Accreditation Committee were approved as a correct record.

The Convener raised the following under matters arising:

The Convener asked Declan Walsh if he could give members an update on funding. Declan informed members that the business case and funding proposals had been submitted and that a response from the Scottish Government was awaited. Members noted that the ongoing uncertainty around funding continued to present challenges for planning. It was reported that the funding submission was supported by a robust budgeting process and remained consistent with the organisation's medium-term financial strategy.

## 03/02 RISH APPETITE FRAMEWORK

Jacqueline Campbell, Qualifications Scotland introduced paper 03/02 Risk Appetite Framework.

Jacqueline Campbell, Head of Test Operations Services, gave an update on the revised Risk Appetite Framework, which had been reviewed by Qualifications Scotland's Audit and Risk Committee and approved by the Board. Members noted that the framework places greater emphasis on risk appetite in organisational decision-making. The Committee was invited to provide feedback on whether additional Accreditation-specific context or examples should be included. It was also suggested that the Risk Appetite would be reviewed annually.

Members welcomed the Risk Appetite Framework and sought clarification on how it would be embedded across the organisation, including through change management and staff development. It was suggested that greater emphasis be placed on organisational learning alongside innovation, and clarification was sought on how accountability for the framework would be reflected in roles and responsibilities.

It was agreed that the framework could be updated to include greater emphasis on organisational learning alongside innovation. Members noted that the organisational culture, management and staff development aspects would be taken forward through the Corporate Plan delivery programme, including a dedicated people workstream, with the Risk Appetite Framework providing examples of where related risks may arise.

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**Action:** Accreditation Team to review Risk Appetite with Jacqueline.
**Outcome**: Members approved of the Risk Appetite Framework.

## 03/03 CHIEF ACCREDITATION OFFICER REPORT

Liz Barron-Majerik gave an update.

Following approval to consult on the Corporate Plan at the previous meeting, the team had developed consultation materials, including a survey, presentation and stakeholder engagement plan. It was reported that this work had been undertaken collaboratively across the team.

The Committee noted that the presentation had been developed collaboratively and that stakeholder engagement was undertaken through regular meetings and direct contact. Members also noted that each engagement session included an overview of the Accreditation role and remit.

It was noted that there will be a summary of the engagement and feedback for members at the next meeting in October.

Members acknowledged the challenges of securing engagement with communications, noting the volume of information stakeholders receive and current pressures across the sector.

Members sought clarification on discussions with the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) regarding reducing duplication across the system. The member queried how accreditation aligns with wider skills planning and system reforms, and whether prioritisation sits outside the Accreditation function. It was noted that, unlike elsewhere in the UK, Accreditation in Scotland is not a mandatory requirement for publicly funded provision, creating potential risks for oversight and quality assurance. The current focus is therefore on increasing awareness of the Accreditation function and ensuring it is involved in discussions on wider system reform to help identify impacts and support learners.

Members welcomed the paper and suggested that the impact assessment be broadened to reflect all learning providers, including private training providers and work-based learning. It was also suggested that the description of the innovation and improvement risk category be revised to better align with the appetite statement and reflect both large- and small-scale organisational change.

Members suggested including learner case studies in future communications to demonstrate the impact of accredited qualifications on learners' career pathways.

**Action:** Liz to broaden the impact assessment to reflect all learning providers and revise the innovation and improvement risk category to align with the appetite statement and organisational change.

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**Action:** Liz to look into including learner case studies in future communications to demonstrate the impact of accredited qualifications on career pathways.

**Outcome:** Members discussed and considered the report.

## 03/04 ANNUAL REPORT

[redacted] introduced paper 03/04 and gave an update on the Annual Report.

[redacted] gave an update on the revised annual report, which combines the previous annual statistics report and annual review into a single document to improve accessibility and reduce duplication. Members were invited to provide feedback to support the development of a more accessible and comprehensive report in future.

It was confirmed that once the report has been approved it will be published on our website.

Members suggested that future reports could make greater use of data analysis to demonstrate the organisation's impact, including insights by age, geography, employment sectors and links to wider economic and social policy priorities. It was noted that presenting data in a more people-focused way would help better illustrate the value and impact of the organisations work.

Members highlighted the potential to use the data within the report to inform communications activity. It was suggested that insights such as qualification trends and top-performing areas could be used to develop engaging stories that better demonstrate the organisation's impact and improve understanding among wider audiences.

The Chair noted that the improved quality of data and analysis now provides a stronger evidence base to support future resource discussions. It was also suggested that wording within the report be reviewed where necessary to ensure it clearly communicates the issues.

**Action:** [redacted] to review and amend the wording within the report, where necessary, to ensure it communicates the issues clearly.

**Outcome:** Members discussed the Annual Report.

## 03/05 OPERATIONAL PLAN AND REVIEW

Liz Barron-Majerik introduced paper 03/05 on the Operational Plan and Review.

The Committee received an update on the operational plan, noting that the Corporate Plan will inform the Operational Plan and associated KPIs. Members noted that the Accreditation operational planning approach is being

aligned with wider organisational processes, moving from a detailed logic model to a more practical framework and dashboard approach. A draft operational plan will be shared at Accreditation Committee meeting being held in October.

**Action:** Liz to draft and share operational plan with Accreditation Committee at next meeting.

**Outcome:** Members discussed the Annual Report.

## 03/06 WEBINAR SERIES

Liz Barron-Majerik introduced paper 03/06 on the Webinar Series.

The Committee received an update on the development of Accreditation user guide webinars following a request at the previous meeting. Members noted that the guide covers the full accreditation process in a sequential format and has been developed collaboratively by the team. The Committee noted plans to progress with delivery and accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.

Members welcomed the proposed webinar programme and supported recording sessions to improve accessibility. Clarification was also sought on the proposed format and duration of the webinars. It was suggested the webinars would range from around 30-60 mins; this includes time for questions.

The Chair expressed strong support for the proposed approach and suggested that introductory information on accreditation should be available in a concise, accessible format, rather than requiring users to attend multiple webinars.

Members suggested developing an engagement and testing plan for the webinar programme to ensure content meets the needs of the target audience, avoids unnecessary jargon and helps address common misconceptions. It was also suggested that partner communication channels could be used to promote the webinars.

**Action:** Liz to develop an engagement and testing plan for the webinar programme, including using partner communication channels to promote the webinars.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Webinar Series.

## 03/07 QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER 2026 / 2027

Liz Barron-Majerik introduced paper 03/07 on the Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's Risk Register.

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The Committee received an update on the Risk Register, noting that risks are now reviewed monthly and that the July top 10 risks had been included to show changes over time.

Members noted that the highest risk remains uncertainty around funding, which is impacting workforce planning and delivery. The Committee also noted actions to strengthen workforce resilience through succession planning and staff development.

An increase in the risk relating to understanding of the wider skills system and SCQF activity was highlighted, with work underway alongside the SCQF Partnership to improve communication and clarify respective roles.

It was also reported that operational planning is being aligned with risk management and performance reporting, and that engagement with other UK regulators is continuing to strengthen understanding of the accreditation function and its role within the wider system.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Qualifications Scotland Accreditation Risk Register.

## 03/08 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORT

[redacted] introduced paper AC03/08 and provided an update on the Audit Report and Action Plans.

Members were informed that three Awarding Bodies were included in the current reporting period. A total of nine issues identified across these with no concerns identified.

[redacted] informed members that Issues, for the following awarding bodies were closed out:

BIIAB – Issues 1, 3 and 4
GQA Qualifications – Issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

**Outcome:** Members approved the Audit Report and Action Plan.

## 03/09 PROVIDER MONITORING ACTIVITY REPORTS

[redacted] introduced paper AC03/09 and provided an update on above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were informed that four Awarding Body provider monitoring visits had been completed, with a total of four issues raised across the providers. Of these, three issues have been closed out, with the remaining issues scheduled for closure later in the year.

**Outcome:** Members approved the Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

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## 03/10 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

[redacted] introduced paper AC03/10 and presented the Quarterly Performance Report for the first quarter of 2026 / 27.

The Committee noted that the performance dashboard will be reviewed to reflect previous feedback on the information presented to members. It was also noted that a typographical error had been identified in the KPI section, with the average turnaround time for credit rating confirmed as 18.3 days for 40 submissions, rather than 40 days.

Members welcomed the planned review of the performance dashboard and suggested that a clearer visual presentation of KPIs, such as a red/amber/green or good-to-needs-improvement approach, would better support the Committee's oversight of performance.

It was noted that the performance dashboard is no longer required to follow a prescribed corporate format, giving the team greater flexibility to redesign it to better meet the Committee's needs.

**Outcome**: Members discussed the Quarterly Performance Report.

## 03/11 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

[redacted] introduced paper AC03/11 and updated Members on the Standards and Framework projects.

It was reported that the current position for 2026-27 commissioning is that 27 National Occupational Standards (NOS) projects have been commissioned so far and contract awards have been issued for four Scottish qualification products.

The Committee noted that confirmation of the next stage of commissioning was still awaited, although tenders were expected for the Science, IT/Digital, and Automotive sectors, covering apprenticeships, associated qualifications and National Occupational Standards (NOS). It was noted that funding would be provided by SDS, removing the requirement for the work to be completed within a single financial year and providing greater flexibility in delivery. The Committee also noted that this was expected to reduce the time pressures experienced under previous funding arrangements.

**Outcome:** Members discussed the Standards and Frameworks Commissioning paper.

## 03/12 INTERNATIONAL

Liz Barron-Majerik introduced paper 03/12 on International.

Liz gave members an overview of proposals to explore an international accreditation offer, aligned with ambitions for Accreditation to develop a

greater international presence by 2030. It was noted that a previous proposal had been developed but had not progressed and had now been refreshed for consideration with relevant stakeholders.

The Committee noted that a number of awarding bodies already operate internationally and have expressed interest in highlighting the value of having qualifications recognised as accredited by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation. The proposal would not involve establishing new markets but would support existing awarding bodies to extend the reach of their qualifications and enhance their international reputation.

The potential benefits of the proposal were discussed, including supporting workforce mobility, providing greater recognition for employers, and strengthening relationships with awarding bodies. The Committee noted that provider monitoring arrangements would need to be considered, although increased use of remote approaches provides greater flexibility.

The Committee noted that the proposal was at an early stage and that approval was being sought to progress the development of a fully costed business case. Subject to approval, the next steps would include working with one or two awarding bodies to undertake a pilot in one country, validate the approach, and assess opportunities for wider rollout.

It was recognised that additional resource would be required to support delivery and that international activity would need to be carefully managed to ensure core Accreditation responsibilities are not impacted. The Committee noted that the proposal would be progressed cautiously, with appropriate consideration of risks, capacity and sustainability.

The Committee discussed the proposed international accreditation activity and requested further detail on the strategic rationale, intended outcomes and added value for Accreditation. Members highlighted the need for a feasibility and options appraisal, including consideration of costs, monitoring requirements, resource capacity and the potential impact on existing priorities.

The Committee noted the importance of clarifying whether the primary objective was to support awarding bodies, increase market opportunities or deliver wider benefits, and agreed that further work was needed to define the purpose and approach before progressing.

**Action: Liz/Team to** develop a fully costed business case for an international accreditation offer, including consideration of a pilot approach with awarding bodies and resource requirements.

**Outcome**: Members discussed and considered the International paper.

## 03/13 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2026 / 2027

Liz Barron-Majerik introduced paper AC03/13 and invited Members to discuss the Committee's work plan for 2026 / 2027.

**Action:** [redacted] to add operational plan and risk appetite to the work plan for the next meeting.

**Outcome:** Members discussed and noted the Accreditation Committee Work Plan 2026 / 2027.

## 03/14 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT

Liz Barron-Majerik introduced paper AC03/14, drawing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 April 2026 until 30 June 2026.

The paper provided a summary of decisions made by the Accreditation Coordination Group (ACG) between these dates.

**Outcome:** Members noted the contents of the paper.

## 03/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

[redacted] gave an update on the importance of communicating the value and impact of Accreditation through positive case studies and success stories. An example was shared of [redacted] counter-terrorism qualification, which was recently accredited and developed in response to the requirements of Martin's Law. The Committee noted the collaborative work undertaken with the awarding body and the wider value of qualifications that support skills development and public safety.

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next Accreditation Committee meeting was Wednesday 28 October 2026 at 1000 hours at Optima Building.