



QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – 4 FEBRUARY 2026

Minutes of the first meeting of the Accreditation Committee held on Wednesday 4 February 2026.

Members

*Dr. K Thomson (Convener)
*Mr. R Reed
Ms A Hamilton
*Ms. L Lamb
*Ms. E Hutton
Ms K Summers
*Ms. C McFarlane
*Ms S Higgins-Rollo
Mr I Hughes

Observers

*Ms. S Rogers
*Mr K McKeown (SG)
*Mr. G Gray (SDS)
Mr. N Page
* [REDACTED]

Officers

* [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
*Ms K Wood

* Indicates present

As the meeting was not quorate [REDACTED] will email all absent Members asking for them to agree the decisions from this meeting.

01 WELCOME

The Convener welcomed Members to the first meeting of Qualifications Scotland Accreditation. Members gave a brief update on their role.

Two new members from the Board joined the Committee, Mr Ian Hughes, Construction Industry Training Board and Ms Sarah Higgins-Rollo, Forth Valley College.

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Mr Gary Gray attended in place of Mr Frank Quinn, Skills Development Scotland. Mr Kristoffer Keown attended in place of Ms Eni Adesida, Scottish Government.

Mr [REDACTED], Accreditation Manager, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation joined the meeting as an observer.

01 APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Ms Summers, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hughes, Mr Page, Mr Quinn and Ms Adesida.

01 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.

01/01 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the one hundred and eighty-one meeting of the Accreditation Committee were approved as a correct record.

01/02 MATTERS ARISING

The Convener raised the following under matters arising:

181/04 - **Action:** [REDACTED] to provide Dr Thomson with an overview of the risk ratings, (low, medium, high etc). This will be circulated round members after the meeting.

181/07 - **Action:** [REDACTED] will upload the approved version of the SQA Accreditation Annual Complaints Handling Report to the website. This has been closed out.

181/10 - **Action:** [REDACTED] to provide Dr Thomson with a list of attendees. Now closed.

181/15 - **Action:** [REDACTED] to circulate the final dates to Members. This has been closed out.

Members were informed that [REDACTED] membership to the Accreditation Committee had been removed, this was due to no attendance at the meetings.

01/03 AWARDING BODY AUDIT REPORT

[REDACTED] introduced paper AC01/03 and provided an update on the Audit Report and Action Plans.

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Members were informed that there are no major concerns arising from this audit in relation to Target Date Issue 2, it was noted that the original close-out date of 1 February 2026 has been extended to 31 August 2026.

The extension was attributed to delays in the transition to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation and the associated time required for the awarding body to update its documentation, rather than any issues of non-compliance identified through the audit.

Action: [REDACTED] to provide Members with the Risk Descriptor document.

Outcome: Members approved the Audit Report and Action Plan.

01/04 PROVIDER MONITORING ACTIVITY REPORTS

[REDACTED] introduced paper AC01/04 and provided an update on above Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

Members were updated on [REDACTED] and it was noted that the outstanding actions have not been closed out and are unlikely to be progressed further. The organisation is in the process of withdrawing as an awarding body.

Key members of staff have left the organisation, and the company owner is not in a position to close out actions before de-approval.

It was agreed that a line would be drawn under this matter and that withdrawal would proceed, with the necessary documentation completed. This will be reflected in the next dashboard update, where the awarding body will be recorded as withdrawn.

It was highlighted to Members that they have no registered candidates.

Outcome: Members approved the Provider Monitoring Visit Reports.

01/05 UPDATED APPROVED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

[REDACTED] introduced paper AC01/05 and provided an updated on the changes to approved documents and policies.

It was noted that this item relates solely to the transition resulting from the change in the title of the documents in relation to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.

Outcome: Members approved the updated documents and policies.

01/06 STANDING ORDERS FOR THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

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Ms Wood introduced paper AC01/06 and provided an update on the Accreditation Committee Standing Orders.

It was highlighted that the document has been updated to reflect a change in format. The wording has been aligned with the Act, its explanatory notes, and the style used elsewhere within the organisation.

The document has been deliberately kept at a high level and flexible, allowing for further review of delegated authority, the Accreditation Coordination Group, standing orders, and related matters once the Chief Accreditation Officer, assumes the role.

This allows the committee to continue to operate under the current arrangements. The principal changes relate to governance, particularly the reporting lines to Scottish Ministers rather than directly to the Board, as was previously the case under Accreditation Committee. All references to Scottish Ministers have been reviewed by the committee to ensure appropriateness.

Action: Ms Wood will email a copy to Scottish Government.

Action: Convener, Ms Rodger and Ms Wood to discuss whether someone should step in to deputise in the event that the Convener cannot attend. Once agreed wording with the Standing Orders to be updated.

Outcome: Members approved the Standing Orders for the Accreditation Committee. These will go to the Qualifications Scotland Board for noting at its March meeting.

01/07 QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION'S RISK REGISTER

██████████ introduced paper AC01/07 and presented the Qualifications Scotland Accreditation Risk Register for the Committee's consideration.

It was highlighted to Members that a new risk has been added relating to the age profile of the team. This highlights the need to consider a knowledge management approach, including potential succession planning, and aligns with earlier discussion on resource considerations.

Updates were provided on a number of other risks:

- 114 AC 10R – relating to limited resources. An updated business case for additional resources was submitted to the Scottish Government last month.
- 14 ACC 04R – relating to the need for an accreditation database. Actions are underway to explore positive developments in this area.

It was agreed that progress on these matters will continue to be monitored, and further discussion will take place in future meetings.

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A query was raised regarding the persistent red risk related to resources, seeking clarification on whether it arises from increased workload or reduced staffing.

██████████ explained that the risk is primarily financial, as the grant funding received is less than the salary costs. Changed, increased, demands from the wider system also contribute to the risk, creating concerns about the organisation's capacity to adapt.

It was also highlighted that as new awarding bodies come onto the regulatory site, resources must be dedicated to monitoring both the awarding bodies and their delivery partners in line with the regulatory risk framework. This stretches the team's capacity, diluting the focus and type of activity that can be undertaken. The risk has therefore persisted for several years, and increasing resource levels is not possible without additional funding.

A Member commented on the ongoing red resource risk, noting that the discussion had been helpful in clarifying its implications. It was suggested that future corporate plan and risk reporting include a summary of management actions being implemented, including whether activities relate solely to required regulatory functions or include voluntary actions, and the impact of those actions.

It was noted that it is unusual for an initial risk assessment followed by mitigating actions to result in no change to the risk score, unless the underlying risk is fundamentally unchangeable. It was suggested that Accreditation consider reviewing the scoring methodology to reflect the impact of mitigating actions, distinguishing between the raw risk and the residual risk, to provide clearer insight into risk management and support effective oversight.

Ms Rogers noted that discussions are ongoing regarding the establishment of Qualifications Scotland and the associated funding arrangements. The organisation is working closely with its primary funder, the Scottish Government, to explore sustainable funding across its functions.

Members were informed that the historic funding arrangements for the SQA were unusual, with a portion of funding allocated at the start of the year and additional bids made mid-year. While this approach worked in times of financial abundance, it did not encourage robust financial management and is less suitable in the current context. The aim is to move towards a more regularised budgetary arrangement, providing clarity on allocations and enabling more effective resource management.

Consideration will also need to be given to the resourcing of the accreditation function, which must maintain some independence while operating within Qualifications Scotland governance arrangements. It was acknowledged that these arrangements are complex and will require further negotiation. A proposal on future funding arrangements will be considered by the Qualifications Scotland Board once developed by Declan Walsh who is

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working with Scottish Government to try and establish a different kind of funding arrangement going forward from April.

Ms Rogers highlighted to Members that the organisation is in the process of developing a three-year corporate plan, supported by a commensurate financial plan. While significant additional funding is not expected, the focus of the plan is on how to allocate existing resources effectively. The corporate plan is intended to be ambitious and persuasive, demonstrating the organisation's objectives and the art of the possible, to support resource allocation discussions with the Scottish Government.

The new plan, extending over multiple years, aims to provide stability and enable realistic, yet ambitious, planning of the organisation's functions. The Scottish Government has indicated a willingness to work collaboratively to support the organisation in implementing the corporate plan. It was emphasised that while additional funding may be limited, effective allocation of existing resources is critical to managing risk and delivering strategic priorities.

Action: Ms Rogers will give further updates once Mr Declan Walsh has feedback.

Action: [REDACTED] to include in the Risk Register whether the risk has increased or decreased

Outcome: Members discussed and noted the Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's Risk Register.

01/08 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

[REDACTED] introduced paper AC01/08 and presented the Quarterly Performance Report for the third quarter of 2025/26.

It was reported that all deliverables are on track, with more detailed reporting to be provided at the next Accreditation Committee meeting where relevant. Appendix 2 sets out performance against KPIs, with no matters of particular note for the last quarter. Overall performance is meeting or exceeding most targets.

It was noted that recent months have been challenging due to significant staff absence. While there has been minimal impact on KPIs to date, the coming months are expected to be more demanding, particularly during a peak period for accreditation approvals and completion of targets. The team is meeting regularly to prioritise work and manage potential delays, with a focus on minimising impact.

Members welcomed the strong performance of the team in meeting KPIs and acknowledged the effort required to maintain them. It was suggested that, in the context of the corporate plan and risk discussions, it would be useful to review whether the current KPIs remain the most appropriate measures.

Outcome: Members discussed the Quarterly Performance Report.

01/09 STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS COMMISSIONING

██████████ introduced paper AC01/09 and updated Members on the Standards and Framework projects.

Members were informed that the operational year for these projects concludes on 14 March 2026, with the majority of approvals traditionally occurring in February and March. While performance reporting shows 90% of projects still outstanding, this is consistent with previous years and represents an improvement over 95% outstanding at this point in the last two years. To date, eight National Occupational Standards projects have been approved.

It was noted that some delays are expected, which may impact Skills Development Scotland (SDS) due to their funding and project management responsibilities. Delays in project completion can have a knock-on effect on the following year's commissioning cycle.

It was agreed that a more detailed paper would be helpful for future Accreditation Committee discussions.

Action: ██████████ will prepare a more detailed paper for the next Accreditation Committee meeting.

Outcome: Members discussed the Standards and Frameworks Commissioning paper.

01/10 ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS RESEARCH

██████████ introduced paper AC01/10 and provided Members with an update Assessment Arrangements Review.

██████████ provided an update on a research project examining assessment arrangements for vocational qualifications, building on previous SVQ research conducted in 2021.

The project aims to explore how policies are implemented, the learner experience, and the readiness of those delivering qualifications. Initial desk-based research analysed 17 policies, with one notable finding that only one policy referenced training for staff involved in assessment decisions.

This highlighted potential areas for further investigation, including learner experience, and the need for standardisation in training for staff implementing assessment arrangements. Ethical considerations relating to learner data and privacy were noted, and it was acknowledged that these could be addressed under existing Qualifications Scotland policies.

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Members highlighted the relevance of SVQs delivered in the college sector and the importance of understanding how employers identify learners requiring reasonable adjustments. It was emphasised the need to capture both the learner voice and the readiness of staff in centres and workplaces to implement policies, noting that ethical considerations can be managed with appropriate procedures.

It was agreed that the project is a valuable starting point and will provide insights into learner experience, policy implementation, and staff readiness. Board members expressed interest in contributing to further development and oversight of the project.

Action: [REDACTED] to look at the next steps.

Outcome: Members discussed the Assessment Arrangements Review.

01/11 QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND TRANSITION

The Convener asked Ms Rogers to give an update on the Qualifications Scotland transition and the next steps.

Members were informed that Qualifications Scotland legally started on 1 February 2026, becoming fully operational on Monday 2 February 2026.

The Committee noted:

- The transition was completed successfully with minimal operational disruption.
- Core business functions are fully operational

Ms Rogers would like to formally thank everyone and especially IT and Facilities colleagues for their significant work over the weekend.

The Committee acknowledged the substantial work undertaken to reconfigure the Accreditation Committee under the new organisational structure.

Thanks were extended to:

- The Accreditation Administration Team
 - The Accreditation Leadership Team
- for their contributions to ensuring continuity and readiness for the new governance arrangements.

Members noted that the Board of Qualifications Scotland is now fully established.

The following updates were provided:

- Sarah Higgins-Rollo and Ian Hughes were welcomed as new Board members and will join the Committee
- An informal inaugural meeting of the Board took place the previous week and was described as highly positive, with strong ambition and effective engagement among members.

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The Committee noted the establishment of the following four Board committees:

1. Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
2. Accreditation Committee
3. Qualifications Committee (with a focus on education reform)
4. People Committee (new)

It was noted that the People Committee is a new addition and that its inaugural meeting is scheduled for March.

The Strategic Advisory Council has been formally approved. Recruitment is underway for two Interest Committees:

- Learner Interest Committee, convened by the Learner Board Member
- Practitioner and Teacher Interest Committee, convened by a Board Member

The first formal meeting of the fully constituted Board of Qualifications Scotland will take place on 11 February 2026.

The Chair reported that the Transition Board, established to oversee the transition from SQA to Qualifications Scotland, has now concluded its work and has been formally closed. Confirmation and minutes of the final meeting will be presented to the Board.

The Chair emphasised that completion of transition marks the beginning of a wider transformation programme for the organisation. Strengthening accreditation activity remains a key priority. The Chair welcomed the leadership of the Accreditation Committee and noted increased engagement and capacity within the committee.

The Chair recorded thanks to Katie for her contribution to the organisation, noting her forthcoming departure.

The Committee noted the appointment of Liz Barron Majerik as Chief Accreditation Officer. Liz was previously Chief Executive of Lantra and will take up post on 9 March 2026.

The Committee noted that work is underway to finalise the organisation's vision, mission and purpose, with further development of the agreed narrative to follow.

The Convener outlined that the future operation of the Accreditation Committee will be aligned closely to the Corporate Plan, which is expected to be available by the end of February and submitted for approval at the next meeting. The Committee's primary role will be to:

- hold the organisation to account for delivery of the Corporate Plan
- provide scrutiny and constructive challenge
- offer advice and support, drawing on members' expertise and professional experience

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The Convener reported on engagement with Scottish Government sponsor colleagues, noting positive feedback and strong support for the direction of travel for accreditation.

The Convener sought and received confirmation from Committee members and executive colleagues that they were content with the proposed direction of travel and the planned approach to accreditation governance and support.

The Convener concluded the need to report on Qualifications Scotland transition.

Outcome: Members discussed the transition of SQA Accreditation to Qualifications Scotland.

01/12 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2026

██████████ introduced paper AC01/12 and invited Members to discuss the Committee's work plan for 2026.

Members were informed that the Accreditation Committee Work Plan would change significantly in terms of content and reporting requirements. While certain standing agenda items will continue to be included, over time it is anticipated that the work plan can be streamlined to focus on items requiring Committee level oversight, with operational matters being addressed at the management level.

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

01/13 ISO 9001 AUDIT REPORT

██████████ introduced paper AC01/13 and updated Members on the ISO 9001 Audit Report.

Members were informed that we had retained ISO 9001 certification.

Outcome: Members noted the ISO 9001 Audit Report.

01/14 ACCREDITATION DECISION LIST REPORT

██████████ introduced paper AC01/14, drawing Member's attention to those qualifications that had been accredited from 1 October 2025 until 30 December 2025.

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.

01/15 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BOARD

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Dr Thomson will update the SQA Board in relation to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation transition.

01/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

██████████ informed Members that there are now requirements to produce several policies and statements for the Official Statistics document. The deadline for these documents is 31 March 2026

██████████ noted that the organisation became an official statistics producer in 2019 and that a new Code of Practice for Statistics 3.0, introduced in October last year, requires the production of nine new statements and policies, with a publication deadline of the end of March.

██████████ has prepared these documents, approval from the Accreditation Committee (AC) is required. It was agreed that these would be circulated to Members outside of the Committee.

Action: ██████████ to prepare a cover note on behalf of the Convener.

Outcome: It was agreed that Members would approve this outside of the Committee.

01/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next Accreditation Committee meeting was Wednesday 29 April 2026 at 1000 hours via MS Teams.

The Strategy Accreditation Committee Session will take place in person on 25 February 2026.