

# **Audit Report**

## **Safety Training Awards**

**4 February 2026**

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# 1 Background

This was the ninth audit of Safety Training Awards (STA) since it was approved as an awarding body by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation (previously SQA Accreditation) in June 2009.

STA is a nationally recognised awarding body offering qualifications in the following areas: teaching swimming, pool lifeguarding, aquatic teaching, and emergency first aid at work.

STA was formed in 1932 and is a company limited by guarantee. The awarding body is a registered charity in England and Scotland. STA's headquarters are in Walsall.

## 1.1 Scope

Qualifications Scotland Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy*. This states the type and frequency of our quality assurance activities, describes our reporting procedures and indicates how the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated.

As this was a scoped remote audit of STA, only specific regulatory requirements were included within the scope of the audit. Our quality assurance activities are conducted on a sampling basis and, consequently, not all aspects of the awarding body's systems, procedures and performance have been considered in this report to the same depth.

Qualifications Scotland Accreditation audit reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended.

Consequently, this approach to audit reporting does not detail areas where compliance or good practice was found.

The audit was designed to ensure STA complies with Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's regulatory requirements namely:

- *Qualifications Scotland Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2021)*
- *all Regulatory Principle Directives*
- the awarding body's Accreditation Licence

Awarding body documentation considered for review by the Audit Team includes all documents banked on STA's SharePoint site at the time of audit and information supplied to support audit activity. Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence.

## 1.2 Audit Report and Action Plan Timescales

STA audit date: 4 February 2026

Audit Report approved by  
Accreditation Co-ordination Group on: 24 February 2026

Audit Report to be signed by STA: 9 April 2026

Action Plan to be emailed to  
[regulation@qualifications.gov.scot](mailto:regulation@qualifications.gov.scot) by STA: 9 April 2026

The process will apply in relation to the timescales specified above:

- The awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the Audit Report by email.
- The awarding body must sign the copy of the Audit Report and return by email to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.
- The awarding body will also be emailed a copy of the Action Plan.
- The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and email this in Microsoft Word format to [regulation@qualifications.gov.scot](mailto:regulation@qualifications.gov.scot).
- Qualifications Scotland Accreditation will confirm when the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Issues and present it to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for approval.
- Following approval by ACG, the awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the approved Action Plan by email.
- The awarding body must sign the copy of the Action Plan and return by email to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.

The findings of this Audit Report and the associated Action Plan will be published on Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's website following signed agreement.

Qualifications Scotland Accreditation will continually monitor progress towards completion of the proposed actions identified in the Action Plan and update the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating as appropriate.

### 1.3 Summary of Audit Issues and Recommendations

An Issue has been recorded where evidence shows that the awarding body is not compliant with Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's regulatory requirements. The awarding body must address the Issues and specify corrective and preventative measures to address them through its Action Plan.

The Action Plan is emailed to STA as a separate document to the Audit Report, and must be submitted to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2.

As a result of the audit and post-audit activities, five Issues have been recorded and no Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principles 7 and 9	STA's Equal Opportunities Policy V25.1 states an incorrect list for protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010.	Low
2. Principles 5, 7, 9 and 13	The process for monitoring the status and closure of External Quality Assurance (EQA) activity is not effective.	High
3. Principles 7, 9 and 18	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy V25.1 does not reference that all cases of suspected or actual malpractice or maladministration should be reported to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.	Low
4. Principles 7 and 9	Documentation within STA's SharePoint site has out of date and incorrect information.	Low
5. Principles 7 and 9	STA's SharePoint site does not contain appropriate documentation to confirm compliance with Regulatory Principles. Documentation held is also out of date with historical versions not being removed.	Medium

## 1.4 Risk Rating of Issues

Qualifications Scotland Accreditation assigns a rating to each Issue recorded, depending on the impact on or risk to the awarding body's operations, its Qualifications Scotland accredited qualifications and/or the learner.

Issues recorded during the audit will count towards STA's Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards future quality assurance activity. Further detail on how the Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated can be found on the [Qualifications Scotland Accreditation website](#).

## 2 Detail of Audit Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail Issues recorded and Recommendations noted against Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's regulatory requirements.

### 2.1 Issues

**Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.**

**Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.**

STA's Equal Opportunities Policy does not correctly list the protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010. It is sufficient for documents to reference the legislation generically or the Equality Act 2010 specifically; however, if the awarding body chooses to list the protected characteristics, then these must be listed accurately.

STA must ensure that any documentation referring to equality and diversity complies with current equality legislation.

This has been recorded as **Issue 1**.

**Regulatory Principle 5. The awarding body and its providers must provide clear information on their procedures, products and services and ensure that they are accurate and appropriate to accredited qualifications.**

**Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.**

**Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.**

**Regulatory Principle 13. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have systems and processes which ensure the effective quality assurance of accredited qualifications.**

During the audit, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation auditors requested that STA demonstrate its process for planning and recording EQA visits across a sample of approved training centres (ATCs). From the ATCs reviewed, it became evident that the awarding body was not consistently following its process for monitoring, reviewing, and recording actions.

Actions identified at the ATCs reviewed were, in some cases, up to 12 months overdue, with no evidence or justification recorded to explain the delays. At the time of the audit, it was unclear whether this was due to the EQA not recording the status of actions or whether the issues remained outstanding.

This issue was also noted in STA's PMA 2025–26, where one of the sampled ATCs reported to the auditor that they had a number of issues still open from EQA visits and were unsure of their status.

STA must review its process for monitoring and recording actions arising from EQA visits to ensure clarity and to ensure that the processes are being followed effectively.

This has been recorded as **Issue 2**.

**Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.**

**Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.**

**Regulatory Principle 18. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that it has safeguards to prevent and manage cases of malpractice and maladministration.**

While reviewing Malpractice and Maladministration Policy V25.1, it was noted that the policy does not reference that all cases of suspected or actual malpractice or maladministration should be reported to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.

STA must update the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy to ensure it is current and valid.

This has been recorded as **Issue 3**.

**Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.**

**Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.**

Prior to the audit, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation auditors reviewed documentation uploaded to STA's SharePoint site. They found the following issues:

- Complaints Policy V25.1 — The signposting for complaints is incorrect and directs complainants to Qualifications Scotland awarding body rather than Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.
- Procedure for the Reporting and Management of Incidents V25.1 — The procedure contains information that relates to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2014) instead of the current Qualifications Scotland Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2021).
- Compliance Advisory Board Terms of Reference V25.1 references the previous Accountable Officer instead of the current one.

STA must review documentation held in their SharePoint site to ensure that it is current and valid.

This has been recorded as **Issue 4**.

**Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation.**

**Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.**

Prior to the audit, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation auditors reviewed documentation uploaded to STA's SharePoint site. Several documents that had been

superseded were found. The documentation held was also not sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the Regulatory Principles. Key documentation is missing, such as:

- up to date risk register
- business plan
- business continuity plan
- organisational chart
- job descriptions

This list is not exhaustive.

The documents held within STA's SharePoint site must be current and accurate. STA's SharePoint site must be reviewed to ensure that documents held are sufficient to demonstrate STA's compliance against Qualifications Scotland Accreditation's Regulatory Principles. All obsolete documentation must be removed.

This has been recorded as **Issue 5**.

## **2.2 Recommendations**

No Recommendations have been recorded.