

E APPROVALS PROCESS FOR SQA AWARDS

Purpose

- E.1 The university holds fully devolved approval powers from SQA to offer specific SQA awards. The university is responsible for the approval of devolvable SQA awards, and applies established quality assurance arrangements to secure SQA non-devolvable awards. University approval, in setting its own SQA curriculum, has primacy over all SQA automatic approval decisions. The university's approval process addresses quality aspects additional to SQA's validation criteria and determines the SQA provision that will be included within the university's HE curriculum.
- E.2 The university approval procedure will address; quality criteria, curriculum coherence and implementation of faculty agreed SQA programme frameworks. The procedure reflects its regional structure and meets both internal and external approval criteria. Faculty boards are responsible for approving proposals for new courses or replacement awards with significant development requirements. All proposals must be approved by faculty board by May at the latest, to ensure that quality assurance activity is completed satisfactorily prior to delivery in the following session.

Scope

- E.3 This procedure applies to all SQA HE provision. SQA HE provision is broadly defined as activity at SCQF level 7 and above. Specifically:
- All Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) courses
 - All Professional Development Awards (PDAs) at SCQF level 7 and above
 - Individual Higher National units
 - Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) courses at SCQF level 8 and above (formerly SVQ levels 4 and 5).

Definitions

- E.4 There is a very clear distinction between the terms 'validation' and 'approval' in relation to SQA awards.
- E.5 'Validation' addresses the nature of the award itself. It focuses on the justification, coherence and content of the new award, ie it is award-specific. SQA are responsible for the validation of all SQA awards and units.
- E.6 'Approval' addresses the capacity of the institution to offer a unit/group award. It focuses on the institution's ability to deliver and manage the award successfully. The university as a single SQA centre uses its faculty structure and its Academic Planning Committee to approve and confirm all SQA HE curriculum approval proposals.

Responsibilities

- E.7 The university's SQA co-ordinator has overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate implementation and updating of the approval procedure and for reporting on compliance in relation to internal and external reviews. The SQA co-ordinator acts as centre contact between the university and SQA for all approval matters.
- E.8 Curriculum approval is a key responsibility of faculty board and Academic Planning Committee. Academic partner staff (curriculum and quality) work closely with Heads of School and faculty liaison advisors and each holds a responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the procedure in order to submit approval proposals to FBs.

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2024-25
Approvals process for SQA awards

Procedure

- E.9 Each approval request will progress in accordance with the current approval procedure provided in the university's [SQA SharePoint area](#).