MORAY COLLEGE UHI

Academic Quality Policy

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Revision Date & Change Log

Date of Revision	Brief Description of Change	Date Approved
02/12/14	Insertion of Research Committee membership and remit (p4; 3.0) and subsequent revision to following page and section numbering throughout document Insertion of Research Committee reporting to LTQ into Committee Structure diagram (p38; App 1) Insertion of paragraph referencing requirement for lecturers to report instances of conflict of interest into Assessment and Progression section (p22; 8.5)	02/12/14
01/12/15	Requirement to consider employer engagement and commercialization inserted within remit of Directorate Academic Committees (p5; 4.2.7) Inclusion of requirement for Course Committees to consider sector benchmarking and planning/modification of curriculum (p8; 5.3.2) Assessment Regulations (Responsibilities of Lecturers) inclusion of requirement to retain assessment material (p22; 8.5h) Internal Verification revised to align with SQA's approach to early/mid-point internal verification (p28; 9.23) Duties of an Assessor revised to reflect requirement to record/report student/centre malpractice and declare conflicts of interest (p32; 10.6 and 10.10) Duties of an Internal Verifier revised to reflect requirement to record/report student/centre malpractice and declare conflicts of interest (p33; 11.4 and 11.6) Student Appeals revised to reflect process for students registered on regulated and non-regulated qualifications (p37; 12.20-12.21)	01/12/15
01/10/17	LTQC membership – updates to reflect new structure (2.1, 3.1, 4.2) Additional information and changes regarding FE reviews and Self-Evaluation systems (7.13) Course or unit approval and modifications – changes to how managed/approval panel structure (5.0) Appeals – timescales added for the process (13.5 – 13.17)	Due March 18
01/03/18	SQA Coordinator role – to advise changes to secure storage arrangements (6.1) Approval and modification document retention details (8.55) Additional detail regarding qualifications that the SQA have not devolved approval to the college (8.9 – 8.11) SQA EV and SQA Accreditation staff centre access requirements, and details regarding distribution of EV reports (10.14) Responsibility to ensure assessor/verifier qualifications have occupational experience and necessary qualifications (10.45) Cross referenced details provided to 'SQA Secure Website Access' guidance note (11.1 & 12.1)	Due March 18

	Clarity regarding timescales to achieve relevant assessor/verifier qualifications when delivering regulated qualifications (11.12 & 12.12)	
	Clarity regarding submission of Appeals form (13.6)	
	Clarity regarding appeals to SQA Accreditation (13.19)	
	Cross referenced details provided to 'Retention/Disposal of Candidate Evidence and Candidate Records Guidance' (13.20)	
	Appendix 3 Appeals – Form added to process	
	Appendix 5 – Distribution List	
26/04/2018	Update to refer assessors and verifiers to the appropriate procedures regarding malpractice and maladministration, and candidate evidence and records retention (11.6 & 12.4)	
07/08/2018	Amend job titles to reflect changes to academic management structure in multiple sections: 5.2, 6.2 (information required regarding CTL role), 7.4, 8.11, 8.22, 8.54, 8.55, 9.19, 10.12, 1.14, 10.45, 12.9 8.49 & 8.54 to clarify name to replace Directorate – Curriculum Area 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 Committee structures to be reviewed 4.0 Course Committee changed to Curriculum Committee, also see 7.6, 7.7, 7.19, 8.1 5.1 Approval Modification Panel membership updated 6.1 – SQA Navigator has merged with SQA Connect, amendment to reflect changed access, added responsible for supporting SQA Prior Verification process. Section 13 Change of title from 'Student Appeals' to 'Assessment Appeals'. 13.1 Addition of new paragraph to identify aim of appeals process and subsequent renumbering of remainder of points in this section. 13.2 Clarity on scope of procedure 13.3 & 13.5 Clarity on grounds for making an appeal 13.7, 13.8, 13.9 & 13.10 Clarity on appeals procedure and timescales changed. 13.11 – 13.16 Clarity on appeals panel and timescales changed 13.17 Clarity on student rights of appeal Appendix 1 – addition of Staffing Committee Appendix 3 Form Academic Appeal Form updated 11.14, 12.13, 13.19 – British Computer Society updates to meet awarding body requirements regarding assessor role and appeal process	August 2018
03/10/2018	Section 2 – Membership and remit of Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee updated Section 3 – Research Committee deleted, not currently in operation Appendix 1 – Committee Structure updated 5.1 & 5.2 – Course Approval and Modification Panel – details updated to reflect new academic management structure roles linked to this panel	November 2018
08/112018	Update to formatting – adjusted formatting across the policy document. Section 3 (previously section 4) - update to 'Course Teams' and 'Curriculum Committee Meetings'. Section 6 (previously section 7) – 'Monitoring of the Curriculum' updated to ensure alignment with updated Quality Cycle processes. Sections 9, 10, 11 (Previously Sections 10, 11, 12) Updated as above. MIS Analyst job role name change updated as appropriate.	November 2018

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1. <u>Introduction</u>

The College's vision statement has been framed as a response to the question, 'What do we want this college to be famous for?'

Our Vision is that we well be 'famous' for:

- The quality of our teaching and learning

- Our partnership work with stakeholders

- The positive impact and outcomes of what we do

- Our values – doing the right things in the right way

The purpose of the Academic Quality Policy is to provide the framework and support for relevant College staff in aspiring to this vision and mission.

1.1 Key Principles

The key principles of Quality (continuous quality enhancement through self-evaluation, and the aspiration to provide high quality learning opportunities) apply to the Academic Quality Policy.

The first key principle specific to the Academic Quality Policy is that staff, students and other stakeholders have a vital role to play in evaluating quality and in identifying areas for enhancement.

A second key principle specific to the Academic Quality Policy is that all provision should be subject to review to ensure that:

- courses are relevant to students and other stakeholders;

- staffing, accommodation and other resources are appropriate to deliver the provision;

- learning and teaching approaches are appropriate;

- assessments are valid and reliable, and carried out appropriately;

- individual support needs are met in both delivery and assessment.

A third key principle specific to the Academic Quality Policy is that internal arrangements should address the requirements of external scrutiny, e.g. by Education Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) or other awarding bodies.

1.2 Scope

The Academic Quality Policy applies to the full range of College provision. Procedures will vary according to mode of attendance in that fuller scrutiny will be given to full-time courses than discrete evening classes or short courses, but all provision will be subject to the policy to some extent.

Arrangements relating to advanced-level provision, mainly HNC, HND and Degree, comply with UHI policy and procedure.

1.3 References

References supporting this policy are listed at Appendix 5.

1.4 Related Policies

The main related quality policies are as listed below.

UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations

1.5 Responsibilities

The Quality Officer is responsible for the annual review of this policy and related cross-College policies, procedures and guidance notes.

The Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC) is responsible for ensuring that the Committee monitors the development of academic quality enhancement, including compliance with quality policies and procedures.

The Director of Learning and Teaching is responsible for the implementation of quality policies and procedures in the college's academic areas and for developing an annual College Quality Cycle.

Identified staff are responsible for conducting internal verification as required, and for preparing responses, if needed, to external verification reports.

The Quality Officer is responsible for reporting to LTQC on quality performance and development; for the co-ordination of internal and external quality events, e.g. reviews, approvals, audits; and for monitoring appropriate and timeous follow-up action arising from these events.

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development is responsible for ensuring that the staff development programme offers relevant quality-related in-service events, including opportunities for the dissemination of good practice identified through self-evaluations, internal monitoring, audit and review activities, and reports of external agencies.

College representatives on UHI Committees, particularly the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and Quality Forum, are responsible for ensuring that relevant issues are reported to appropriate College managers.

2. **Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC)**

2.1 Membership

Members of Board of Management (4)

Principal (Chair) ex officio

Director of Curriculum & Academic Operations

Director of Learning and Teaching

Director of Information, Planning and Student Support

Head of Academic Partnerships

Curriculum Representatives:

2 per curriculum area – to include 1 non-promoted post, e.g. Lecturer, and 1 promoted post, e.g. Head of Curriculum, Deputy Head of Curriculum or Curriculum Team Leader

Quality Officer

Highlands and Islands Student Association Representatives (1-2)

2.2 Remit

To ensure the delivery of relevant and high quality learning for students by:

- seeking to secure and maintain coherent provision for students, having regard to other provision in the region or College's locality

- being aware of external local, national and international bodies and their impact on the quality of the student experience including community planning partners, employers, skills development and enterprise agencies and employers' bodies

- developing and maintaining positive relationships to ensure that the College works in partnership with external partners to enhance the student experience including employability and the relevance of learning to industry needs.

The committee will meet at least three times per Academic Session.

3. <u>Curriculum Committees and Course Teams</u>

The following section defines Curriculum Committee membership and remit in relation to FE provision. It is also relevant to HE provision, but should be read in conjunction with the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations, which set out requirements for Programme (and Scheme) Committees of HE programmes.

The UHI Regulations also highlight the need for Academic Partner Programme (and Scheme) Sub-committees to be established by each academic partner contributing to the delivery of networked programmes.

3.1 Curriculum Committee Membership

Education Scotland Associate Assessor

All staff teaching on the course

All learning assistants supporting course delivery

1 x Student Representative from each course represented

1 x External member, preferably an employer representative (meetings 2 + 3 only)

Learning Development Worker

An employer/stakeholder representative

Curriculum Administration Assistant (secretary)

The Associate Assessor shall act as Chairperson in the first instance

The meeting shall be considered quorate providing at least one-third of all members are present, to include students. In the event that no student representatives attend, the meeting will be rearranged.

Where members of staff teaching on the course, including servicing staff, are unable to attend the meeting a brief report highlighting any pertinent issues or required information should be forwarded to the Chair of the Committee prior to the meeting.

Key information identified in the minutes of the Curriculum Committee meetings will be collated into a report by the Associate Assessors for submission to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

3.2 Curriculum Committee Remit

What follows refers to all full-time courses and part-time structured courses.   Short courses and evening classes are subject to evaluation. Any issues which require the

attention of the course area, such as those highlighted through UHI Subject Network or Programme Committees should be drawn to the attention of the relevant Curriculum Committee.

The Committee will be responsible for the quality assurance and enhancement of courses being offered, adhering to policies agreed by the College's LTQC and UHI Academic Council.

Over the course of a session, Curriculum Committees will consider the key elements of the Education Scotland quality framework and identify actions for enhancement. The following evidence should be given critical consideration by the relevant Curriculum Committee at appropriate points in the session:

- analysis, and where applicable sector benchmarking, of current data and long-term trend patterns of performance indicators in relation to the level of applications, enrolments, retention, achievement and progression, first destinations;

- analysis, evaluation and long-term trend patterns in relation to the protected characteristics, such as gender; age; disability; and any other relevant factors around which the College policy is based;

- programme planning and modification of courses and component units;

- staff evaluation of the course and its constituent units;

- student evaluation of the course, units and learning support (particular attention should be given to feedback from students where an equality issue appears to be significant);

- the views of other key external stakeholders;

- internal verification planning and subsequent verification activity

- external verifier or external examiner reports and any external reports related to the subject area, such as sector skills reports or UHI Subject Review reports;

- the resources available (staffing and other resources) in support of the course.

The Committee will be responsible for developing opportunities for commercialisation and promoting employer engagement.

Curriculum Committee Meetings will be held three times per academic session.

3.3 Course Teams

Whilst the full Curriculum Committee is required to meet three times per academic session, the academic staff who teach on the course(s) will require to meet as a Course Team on a more regular basis, at least every 4 weeks, to fulfil their roles in:

- learning, teaching and assessment

- student attendance and progress

- course administration

- evaluation, enhancement planning and monitoring

The Curriculum Team Leader or Deputy Head of Curriculum shall normally chair meetings of the group and ensure that a note of each meeting is recorded. The Head of Curriculum will normally be in attendance at Curriculum Team meetings at least once per month.

3.3.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

In the delivery of the course academic staff will:

- ensure that learning and teaching strategies and methods will be of the standard and level required to meet the stated aims of the course;

- be encouraged to employ a student-centred and blended approach to learning and teaching. The methods adopted will be varied but appropriate to the needs of students, the course and the subject area;

- organise the teaching of programmes to enable students to make progress;

- ensure that instruments of assessment to be used meet the requirements of awarding body unit specifications in terms of learning outcomes and performance criteria (SQA); with new materials prior verified by the awarding body before use;

- prepare assessment schedules for the course so as to avoid, where possible, heavy concentrations of assessment;

- arrange and carry out assessments as detailed in course documentation;

- retain assessed material for verification by internal verifiers and/or external verifiers until notified disposal dates (SQA);

- constitute the Course Assessment and Progression Board (but not in the case of degree awards). As such they will agree which students have successfully completed assessments and:

  o are eligible for the appropriate Group Award/College Certificate
  o or can proceed to the next stage of the course or next course;

- deal with appeals against assessment decisions in accordance with the College policy on appeals;

- co-operate in arranging re-assessments (with reference to Section 8: Remediation and Re-assessment) where necessary to facilitate student progress;

- keep records of student progress and ensure results are entered into the Online Resulting system on completion of assessment.

3.3.2 Student attendance and progress:

- Reports of absence and lateness will be addressed in the first instance by the Learning Development Workers.

- Learning Development Workers will take action to see students concerned and will record the detail of the interview on the student's file.

- The onus is on the student to obtain medical or other documentary evidence relating to unavoidable absence. Such information should be submitted to the Learning Development Worker for inclusion in the student's file.

- Significant problems concerning student attendance will be considered by the Course Team.

- The course team will ensure that attendance is monitored using the MORAGAA report and that appropriate interventions are agreed, monitoring of this will be carried out through MORAGAA meetings with the Director of Learning and Teaching three times per Academic Session.

3.3.3 Course Administration:

In the delivery of the course the academic staff will:

- ensure that all documentation relating to delivery and assessment of the course is completed by due dates.

- ensure that unit specifications (SQA) or relevant course syllabi in use are current issue.

- ensure that instruments of assessment, specimen answers and checklists are available in an electronic master file for units being taught. Such instruments of assessment should meet the requirements of performance criteria and should where necessary be updated in the light of changes to unit specifications.

- carry out internal verification planning and subsequent verification activity – the team will identify Verification Group Leaders for all verification groups for which it is responsible, and through the work of Curriculum Administrators and Quality Officer report to the LTQC on internal verification activity;

- record an outline of discussion and agreed action to be taken with respect to the outcome of course team meetings, course committees, internal or external reviews and reports, learner feedback and strategic or operational planning requirements.

- gather evidence to support the Education Scotland self-evaluation process.

- submit completed HE Self Evaluation Documents (programme reports) to UHI Subject Networks and Faculty Boards by specified dates.

3.3.4 Evaluation, enhancement planning and monitoring

In deliver of the course academic staff will:

- engage in evaluative activity led by Heads/Deputy Heads of Curriculum and Curriculum Team Leaders

- contribute to the evaluative aspects of Curriculum Committee Meetings

- undertake evaluative and enhancement planning activity as identified in the College Quality Cycle.

- monitor progress against the course and curriculum Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP).

4. <u>Course Approval and Modification Panel (CAMP)</u>

4.1 Course Approval and Modification Panel Membership

Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations (Chair)

Director of Learning and Teaching

Quality Officer

In attendance:

MIS Administration Assistant

The Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations shall act as Chairperson in the first instance, if unable to attend the Director of Learning and Teaching will act as Chairperson.

If either the Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations or the Director of Learning and Teaching cannot attend, the Head of Academic Partnerships should be invited to ensure the meeting is considered quorate. If the Head of Academic Partnerships cannot attend, a Head of Curriculum from a different Curriculum area to that being discussed should be invited.

If a course approval or modification being presented relates to external partnership working, e.g. Modern or Foundation Apprenticeships or short courses for employers, the Head of Academic Partnerships or Deputy Head of Academic Partnerships should be invited to attend.

4.2 Course Approval and Modification Panel Remit

The Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations will have oversight and ownership of the Curriculum Strategy. The strategy provides guidance to Curriculum teams and the Course Approval and Modification Panel regarding the college's strategic aim to, "Offer a forward-looking curriculum shaped by local, regional and national priorities which meets the needs and aspirations of our students, employers and wider communities".

The CAMP will report to the College LTQC on the curriculum to be offered for any particular session, following review and approval of proposed provision.

Whilst 'short courses' are exempt from the full validation procedures the relevant Head of Curriculum will nevertheless submit information to the Course Approval and Modification Panel ensuring approval, monitoring and evaluation of such provision. Short course approval documentation will include competitor pricing to ensure this context has been fully considered.

The Course Approval and Modification Panel will report to the College LTQC with regard to any provision which it is thought necessary to remove from the College's portfolio together with justification for removal.

The Quality Officer will report outcomes of Panel meetings to the Curriculum Administrators, Head of Marketing and Business Development, Student Advice

Manager and Administration Centre Manager to ensure college records are updated accordingly.

5. <u>SQA Related Roles and Responsibilities</u>

5.1 SQA Co-ordinator

SQA Co-ordinator role is included in the job specification of the college's Quality Officer. This role is a liaison point between staff and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

As the SQA Co-ordinator, the college's Quality Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring SQA are notified of any changes that may affect the college's ability to meet SQA's quality assurance criteria, this may include:
    - Change of premises
    - Change of Head of Centre, owner or SQA Co-ordinator
    - Change of name of centre or business
    - Change of contact details
    - Outcome of internal/external investigations, e.g. malpractice
    - Removal of centre and/or qualification approval by another Awarding body
    - Lack of appropriate assessors or internal verifiers
    - Change to the college's arrangements for the secure storage of SQA examination papers and candidate evidence

- Access to the SQA Secure site to obtain assessment materials, when requested by academic staff, and store secure materials in the appropriate academic Master files.
- Record and submit assessment Prior Verification requests for academic teams.
- Access to SQA Connect to check:
- If the college is approved to deliver group awards and/or units when staff wish to consider changes to course frameworks.

- Information updates and details relating to verification selections.

- Organising SQA External Verification visits, attending feedback sessions during the visit, and sharing the Verification Report with the relevant academic team.

- Circulating all SQA Newsletter and SQA communications to relevant college staff

5.2 SQA Administration Management

The administration, management, assessment and quality assurance of SQA qualifications is conducted by:

Director of Learning & Teaching and Director of Curriculum & Academic Operations

- Provide strategic leadership in relation to Quality Assurance

Heads of Curriculum

- Manage quality assurance in the Curriculum teams

Deputy Heads of Curriculum

- Drive quality assurance in the subject areas, following the Academic Quality Policy, ensuring academic quality duties are conducted, e.g. assessment and verification duties, entering candidate results

Curriculum Team Leaders

- Lead quality assurance in the Curriculum teams

Lecturers & Vocational Training Advisors (Assessors and Verifiers)

- Following the Academic Quality Policy, conducting assessment and verification duties, entering candidate results

Quality Officer

- SQA Co-ordinator duties as noted in 6.1

Management Information Systems Analyst

- Manages SQA data entry and reporting

- Maintains SQA data submissions, candidate records, ensures SQA data is current and valid

Exams Officer

- Co-ordinate exam security, exam arrangements and submits requests to SQA for alternative assessment arrangements

Administration Assistants – Exam Centre

- Maintain exam security and organises exam arrangements

Curriculum Administrators

- Monitor and maintain internal verification records

Administration Assistants – Admin Centre

- Candidate data processing and records maintenance

Clerical Assistants – Admin Centre

- Data input

Learning Support Officer

- Co-ordinating and reporting alternative assessment arrangements needs

Learning Support Workers

- Assesses candidate needs, records details, obtains relevant evidence, plans additional assessment arrangement needs

6. <u>Monitoring of the Curriculum</u>

All Further Education college courses will be monitored and reviewed to ensure the standards and quality of college provision are being attained, maintained and enhanced in accordance with the Moray College UHI Curriculum Strategy and College Key Performance Indicators. Higher Education courses will be reviewed as per the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.

Course monitoring and review will be undertaken on a regular basis, with the frequency of monitoring activity largely being determined by the nature of the provision under observation.

Under-performing courses will be further monitored and reviewed through a risk-based approach based on learner outcomes and feedback to ensure staff are supported in raising standard and promoting positive outcomes for learners.

Monitoring will take place at a local level through the Quality Cycle. Regional monitoring for course outcomes will also be carried out as per the Regional Attainment Strategy.

6.1 Objectives

The objectives of course monitoring and review are:

- to ensure courses are being delivered as validated and approved, with reference to course title, structure and content;
- to ensure all FE courses are designed and developed in accordance with the FE Curriculum Design Principles outlined in the Curriculum Strategy.
- to consistently promote a culture of high standards and expectations
- to ensure issues relating to course delivery are identified and acted upon;
- to identify and disseminate examples of good practice in learning and teaching;
- to enable staff and students to contribute to the development and continuous improvement of course/s.

6.2 Responsibility

The Head of Curriculum (HoC) or UHI Programme Leader is responsible for the preparation and coordination of course monitoring and review activities.

The Director of Learning and Teaching is responsible for the implementation of course review for those courses identified as under-performing, and for the implementation of regional attainment activity within Moray College UHI.

6.3 Participation

It is essential to the process that all staff, students and external representatives, e.g. employers and sector skills agencies, are able to contribute to the course monitoring and review process. This might be achieved through a cross-selection of approaches such as the use of surveys, letters, face-to-face or telephone contact and focus groups and through Curriculum Committee Meetings (CCMs).

6.4 Evaluative Reporting and Enhancement Planning

Through the annual Quality Cycle, Evaluative Reports and Enhancement Plans (EREPs) will be developed which provide course teams with a central focus for enhancement and improvement. Monitoring will occur throughout the year via CCMs and Moray Red Amber Green Attendance Attainment (MORAGAA) Progress meetings.

All staff will engage in evaluative activity leading to planning for enhancement through a range of activities as identified in the Quality Cycle. This is reviewed both locally and regionally and adaptations to the process are informed by adjustments to external requirements as set out by Education Scotland.

6.5 HE Self Evaluation Documents (SEDs)

Annual programme reports (HE Self Evaluation Documents) for HE provision should be prepared and reviewed in line with requirements that are defined within the UHI Academic Standard and Quality Regulations.

6.6 FE Curriculum Reviews

Moray College operates a process of review of its further education provision through the implementation of the Curriculum Strategy, which requires course teams to consider the extent to which the range of courses within their subject area meet the needs of employers, are aligned to local, regional and national policy and priorities, and respond to student demand.

6.7 HE Internal Subject Review

Higher education provision will be reviewed according to the requirements of the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.

Each programme team will contribute to the collation and development of the internal Subject Review self-evaluation documentation and participate in the preparatory discussions and meetings prior to the subject review event and during the event as determined by the review visit schedule.

6.8 Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation and subsequent enhancement planning supports the ongoing improvement of the curriculum and promotes the sharing of good practice. It facilitates teams to reflect on and evaluate the services to learners helping the college to respond to learner and other stakeholder needs.

Throughout the session, staff in both Academic and Support teams will continually evaluate the provision offered within their area. The evaluation process is informed by qualitative and quantitative evidence captured during the academic committee cycle.

Self-evaluation of academic and support areas will be reviewed by the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee to determine key strategic issues highlighted across areas, and to advise upon self-evaluation reporting practice with a view to enhancing approaches.

6.9 Evaluation of Process

The Learning Teaching and Quality Committee shall evaluate annually the effectiveness of course monitoring procedures and practice by reviewing reports submitted following Curriculum Committee meetings, course cohort statistics, external assessment or verification reports (together with internal responses).

7. Course Development, Validation and/or Approval Process

It is recognised that proposals for new courses may evolve from discussion by Curriculum Committee meetings, UHI Subject Networks and/or Faculty Boards. However, it is important that proposals for all newly developed courses or existing national qualifications (not having been offered at the College within the previous two sessions) will undergo a process of quality assurance.

7.1 Overview of Validation and Approval

Validation and approval refer to formal quality processes and procedures, requiring proposed programmes to meet particular quality requirements that ensure an appropriate standard of delivery is achieved and that the training and educational needs of the wider community are met.

For operational purposes, a definition of validation and approval is provided as follows:

a) validation considers the quality of a new course in terms of issues such as its structure, content and coherence;

b) approval addresses a centre's capacity to deliver new or existing awards, taking into account issues such as planned resources, and learning and teaching materials.

It should be noted that the UHI Academic and Standards Quality Regulations refer to 'Programme Approval' of Higher Education provision, a term which relates to both the validation and approval process as described above. In the context of this Policy, the separate processes will be referred to as 'validation' and 'approval'.

7.2 Devolvable Status of Moray College and UHI

SQA, and other awarding bodies, have the power to devolve authority for elements of the quality assurance frameworks to colleges, based upon the management of procedures that underpin the implementation and assessment of SQA and other

awarding body qualifications in centres. Moray College has been awarded devolved authority to approve itself to offer certain categories of SQA qualifications.

UHI also has devolved responsibility for the approval of existing Higher National (HN) awards and units. This means that whilst Moray College retains devolved authority for processes relating to the FE curriculum, responsibility for the approval process for HE provision sits with UHI.

Proposals for the validation of new HN/PDA awards and units are developed in collaboration with the relevant SQA qualification section and processed under Programme Approval procedures defined within the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.

The development of new SVQs is not devolvable to centres, as responsibility lies with the appropriate standards-setting body, such as a National Training Organisation (NTO) or Sector Skills Council (SSC).

7.2.1 Approval of SVQs and other non-devolvable awards

SQA advise that devolved authority for approval does not extend to certain types of qualifications, due to policy and/or agreements, where SQA offer the qualification in partnership with another body. SQA currently do not offer devolved authority for validation of National Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications. SVQs usually have additional requirements set by SQA, such as compliance with a specific assessment strategy.

The college's approval procedure for SVQs and other non-devolvable awards is as detailed in the next section 'Development Process and Procedures'

SQA's response to an approval application will be either to complete the approval process or to generate an approval visit to the college, usually from a specialist SQA external verifier. If an approval visit is required, SQA approval will be dependent on the outcome of the approval report submitted by the external verifier following the visit. The Quality Officer (SQA Co-ordinator) will advise the relevant Head or Deputy Head of Curriculum (H/DHoC) of visit arrangements and visit outcomes and will ensure that following approval completion of approval records are updated.

7.3 Development Process and Procedures

The development of courses will normally be subject to the following key stages:

Stage 1: Initial Proposals for Course Planning and Development

Stage 2: Course Development

Stage 3: Validation/Approval Event

Validation and/or approval events for awards due to commence the following session will not normally be held any later than March to allow adequate time for application documentation and student applications to be processed through external bodies, and course codes for student application and registration to be established.

However, it is important that the planning process, particularly in the context of HN provision, is started at an early stage to allow the relevant academic committees, such as the UHI Subject Network, UHI Faculty Board, UHI Partnership Planning Forum, and the Moray College Course Applications and Modifications Panel to consider the implications of new or replacement courses and programmes.

In the case of proposals for new SQA awards, the course development team should liaise with the relevant SQA Qualifications Manager/Officer to confirm full SQA support and consultation for the proposal and to facilitate the validation process.

7.3.1 Stage 1 - Initial Proposals for Course Planning and Development (FE and HE)

Course teams will submit a Course Development Approval application to the Course Applications and Modifications Panel (CAMP), through the Head of Curriculum, for all proposed new curriculum development (HE and FE) and for approval to offer programmes that have been previously validated by another external body.

The process enables the CAMP to consider the need for the course in line with the framework provided by the Curriculum Strategy and also consider the development and resource implications of the proposal.

Having established the viability of the provision, proposals for new HE programmes will also be discussed and approved by the relevant UHI Subject Network Committee, which will recommend the proposal to the UHI Faculty Board for its consideration followed by endorsement at the Planning Partnership Forum.

Approval for qualifications for which SQA has awarded "automatic approval" will also be considered by the Moray College CAMP.

7.3.2 Course Modifications to Validated/Approved Course Title/s, Structure and/or Content

Approval for qualifications which the College has been awarded "automatic approval" by SQA will be considered against the criteria for internal approval. However, where there is judged to be a significant amount of credit-transfer between the existing and the replacement award, a Course Modification process can be applied.

Proposals for modifications to programmes which affect the course title, entry requirements, attainment threshold, or the course structure or which involve the addition/removal of units should be registered with the Quality Officer prior to any adjustments being implemented. Where these are considered to form a significant change to the course, then it may be necessary to follow the full new course Stage 1 Initial Proposal Process.

Where changes to a course title, structure or content are necessary during the session of delivery, following approval by the CAMP, the relevant Head of Curriculum (HoC) is responsible for ensuring enrolled students are notified in writing with details about any amendments within three weeks of the changes being agreed.

7.3.3 Part-time, Short Course and Evening Class Courses

Applications for new part-time, short course or evening class at non-advanced levels should be submitted to the Quality Officer, for approval by the Moray College CAMP

7.3.4 Stage 2 - Course Development

The course development team will prepare relevant documentation that will address the key SQA validation/approval criteria. The submission should also include any ancillary documentation required by any outside accrediting body such as SQA.

The course team should regularly update the Quality Officer about progress of the proposal, details about which will be forwarded to the Moray College CAMP.

7.3.4.1 Validation/Approval of Further Education (FE) Courses

Proposals to design new or revised qualifications based on nationally-validated Units and Courses must be developed in conjunction with guidance from the relevant SQA Qualifications Manager/Officer and in liaison with the Quality Officer.

7.3.4.1.1 Approval of SQA National Qualification (NQ) courses and units (SCQF Levels 1-6)

Proposals for nationally validated NQ awards should be developed against the SQA approval criteria using Stage 2 course documentation.

Requests for the addition of validated units to a course or for approval to offer stand-alone units should be submitted to the Quality Officer.

7.3.4.1.2 Approval of SQA Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and qualifications of other external bodies (SCQF Levels 4-6)

Once the Moray College CAMP has confirmed an initial course proposal, approval for SQA vocational awards and units, or programmes other than those validated by SQA (for example, City & Guilds qualifications and schemes) should be progressed according to the procedures set out by the relevant body. Applications for the approval of vocational or other external awards will be forwarded to awarding bodies by the Quality Officer.

Stage 2 course approval documentation for new vocational awards will also be drawn up by the course team against the SQA approval criteria, and submitted to the Quality Officer. This should happen early enough to allow ample time for SQA (or other external body) documentation to be drawn up and submitted, and an external verifier to arrange and carry out an approval visit, as judged necessary by the awarding body.

7.3.4.2 Validation/Approval of Higher Education (HE) Programmes:

7.3.4.2.1 Validation of SQA Higher National (HN) Awards (SCQF Levels 7-8)

Proposals for the validation of SQA HN provision will proceed in line with UHI procedures described within the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations. (ASQR).

Development of proposed HN qualification developments should be progressed towards both validation and approval in consultation with the relevant UHI Faculty Board and Subject Network, to ensure that opportunities for the networking of programmes across academic partners are realised.

7.3.4.2.2 Approval of SQA Higher National Awards and Units (SCQF Levels 7-8)

Proposals for approval of SQA nationally validated HN provision or to modify existing UHI-approved HN awards by the addition or substitution of validated HN units to a programme should first be presented to the Moray College CAMP and if approved will proceed in line with UHI requirements as described within the UHI ASQR.

Approval to offer the new or replacement HN awards should be sought in consultation with the relevant UHI Faculty Board and Subject Network, to ensure that opportunities for the networking of learning and teaching and assessment across academic partners are explored.

Approval documentation should be submitted to the Quality Officer, who will forward the information to UHI Executive Office for approval by SQA.

7.3.4.2.3 Validation/Approval of CPD, CertHE, DipHE and Degree programmes (SCQF Levels 7-12)

Documentation for non-SQA higher education proposals that have been approved by the Moray College CAMP will proceed in line with the UHI Programme Development and Approval requirements, as described within the UHI ASQR.

7.3.5 Stage 3 - Validation and/or Approval Events

Validation and approval events ensure that course developments are subjected to independent scrutiny to assure the academic credibility of the proposed provision and confirm that the College is ready to deliver the course.

7.3.5.1 Validation/Approval of Further Education (FE) Courses

Course documentation for the proposed award/s will be submitted by the course team to the Quality Officer, who will make arrangements for an Approval event on behalf of the CAMP, including the nomination of between four and six members of validation/approval panels.

The Moray College CAMP will nominate the Chair of the Panel who will be responsible for overseeing the process of the event.

The panel will consider proposals for new qualifications against the SQA validation and/or approval criteria.

After considering the submission, the panel will make one of the following recommendations:

- The submission is approved for a specified number of years.

- The submission is approved for delivery for a specified number of years once specified conditions have been met and/or recommendations are satisfactorily addressed.

- The submission is rejected. It requires fundamental changes and will require a further event before being considered for approval.

7.3.5.2 Validation/Approval of Higher Education (HE) Programmes

Approval events for proposed HE programmes that have been approved by the Moray College CAMP will be progressed in line with the process defined in the UHI ASQR.

Arrangements for SQA programme approvals for which Moray College has been designated as the responsible lead partner will be co-ordinated by the Quality Officer, in liaison with the relevant Faculty Officer at UHI Executive Office.

In the case of combined SQA HN validation and approval events, arrangements will be made to include the appropriate members of UHI and any other academic partners involved with the course development.

Where responsibility for such events is devolved to Moray College, the Quality Officer shall co-ordinate arrangements for the meeting.

HN Approval Event – Multi Site: The panel for a multi-site approval event held at the College, where more than one academic partner is involved with the proposal, will consist of the Chair of the Moray College Camp (or a nominee), the relevant UHI Dean of Faculty (or a nominee), a member of College academic staff from a Curriculum Team other than that which is presenting the proposal and a representative from each UHI academic partner that intends to offer the programme.

Where a multi-site event is organised for proposals that are to be offered at more than one academic partner, the course team will ensure that relevant documentation

for all centres involved with the proposal is forwarded to the Quality Officer for dissemination to panel members.

In cases where the proposal event is co-ordinated by another academic partner, the course team will submit a copy of the documentation to the Quality Officer, who will forward it to the relevant Quality Manager of the Co-ordinating Approval Partner.

The Quality Officer will co-ordinate the identification of an appropriate member of staff on behalf of the CAMP in cases where a panel member from Moray College is required for a multi-site event at another academic partner.

HN Approval Event – Single Site: Documents for what are considered to be single-site events, where no other academic partners are offering the award or the proposal relates to an award already offered at other academic partners, should be submitted to the Quality Officer, who will provide copies for members of the event panel.

The panel for a multi-site approval event held at the College will consist of the Chair of the Moray College CAMP (or a nominee), the relevant UHI Dean of Faculty (or a nominee) and a member of College academic staff from a Curriculum Team other than that which is presenting the proposal.

7.3.6 Approval and Modification Document Retention

All approval and modification documentation is stored in the Approvals & Modification file in the Quality folder, in the Staff drive. Records are filed by either the Quality Officer or a Curriculum Administrator. Approval and Modification documents are retained for 3 years.

8. <u>Assessment and Progression</u>

The following sections should be read in conjunction with the SQA Guide to Assessment, other awarding body assessment guidance and in the case of HE provision, with reference to the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.

8.1 Philosophy of Assessment

The primary purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate they have fulfilled the objectives of their course and achieved the standard required for the award in question. To this end, the Moray College Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee requires all courses to be subject to course regulations which relate the

assessment requirements of the course, to its objectives. Within this context, assessors make their judgement on student performance.

8.2 Assessment Principles

As there is no single ideal method of assessment, the principles governing assessment will therefore be as follows:

- Equitable and Fair Assessment:

  All assessments shall be conducted fairly and objectively with equality of treatment for students;

- Valid and Reliable Assessment:

  The method of assessment should be appropriate to the objective/s being assessed and should constitute a valid and reliable test of it;

- Practicable:

  The overall scheme of assessment should be practicable especially in terms of the burden placed upon staff and the demands of the assessment load on students. It will be the duty of Course Committees to ensure that such considerations are adequately taken into account.

8.2.1   Assessment Regulations

8.2.2   Responsibilities of Staff:

Heads of Curriculum will ensure the assessment requirements and regulations for courses will be made known to students at the start of their course.

Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations will be responsible for ensuring students are:

- Notified about the need to provide details of mitigating circumstances that they wish to be presented to and considered by, the Course Assessment and Progression Board. Students should discuss requests for mitigating circumstances with their Learning Development Worker who will refer them to the appropriate policy;

- Informed at the beginning of a programme of study about their right to appeal against an assessment decision or the decision of the Course Assessment and Progression Board, as described within Section 13 of this document.

Lecturers are responsible for ensuring:

- appropriate assessment arrangements are put in place that reflect the requirements of the unit of the awarding body, e.g. SQA, and the learning needs of students.

- assessment instruments are subjected to the necessary internal and external verification procedures prior to use, as per Awarding body requirements, e.g. SQA;

- appropriate steps are taken to ensure the risk of student academic malpractice is minimised, and approaches to authenticate assessment evidence are implemented where necessary;

- students are given due notice of assessment, normally 10 working days (or less than this with prior agreement of students) and given full information concerning the conditions of assessment;

- students' work is marked and feedback given within an approximate timescale (normally not more than 15 working days). Students will be informed that all assessment decisions are provisional and subject to verification;

- internal verifiers or course/programme leaders are notified where instances arise which could lead to a potential conflict of interest in terms of assessment, where academic staff could either benefit personally or in the context of friends, family or acquaintances – written details should be captured using Internal Verification documentation;

- assessment material is retained in line with the recognised timescales identified by the awarding body (e.g. SQA) and within College and UHI procedure.

8.2.3   Responsibilities of Students

It is the responsibility of students to submit assessed course work by the due date as required.   Assessments not so submitted will not be considered except where an extension has been agreed prior to the due date. Extensions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be agreed by the Learning Development Worker. If a student fails to do so without good cause, the Course Assessment and Progression Board may deem the student to have failed the assessment concerned.

N.B.   It is recognised that not all assessments will be subject to an assessment schedule and therefore not subject to this regulation, e.g. where students are developing a skill to a point where assessment is appropriate.

It is the student's responsibility to provide the relevant Learning Development Worker, in advance of the Course Assessment and Progression Board, with any relevant information on personal circumstances which may have affected their performance and which they wish the assessors to take into account. Failure on the part of the student to provide such information without good cause may be taken by the Appeals Review Committee as sufficient reason to dismiss a request for its consideration.

8.3 Remediation and Re-assessment

Where a student has submitted an assessment by the due date and has not passed the assessment, suitable arrangements shall be made for remediation and re-assessment.

Re-assessment will be in accordance with SQA (other awarding body where appropriate) guidelines and normally only one summative re-assessment attempt will be allowed before the completion date of a unit. The Course Assessment and Progression Board has the authority to allow additional re-assessment opportunities but this will not normally exceed one attempt.

It is expected that all re-assessment instruments will be significantly different to the original. However, the requirements and conditions for re-assessment should be of equal demand when compared with those of the original assessment to ensure that students receive a fair and equitable approach to assessment.

A decision to re-assess should be balanced against the form and requirements of the original assessment instrument that has been used. In any instance of re-assessment, there should be no penalties applied as passing an assessment the first time is not an SQA pre-requisite to achieve a unit. In the case of HE modules, reference should be made to the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations document, which provides clear conditions on the management of assessment.

Lecturers responsible for assessment of SQA HN Graded Units to be carried out under examination conditions should ensure arrangements are co-ordinated through the UHI Examinations Centre. For further guidance, reference should be made to the Assessment Process for SQA Graded Unit Assessments provided in the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.

8.4 Progression

Academic staff shall monitor the progress of each student on the course. External verifiers can be consulted when necessary, but the following general principles will apply:

The academic staff will make recommendations regarding the progression of students to the next stage of the course or to the next course at the interim or end-of-session Course Assessment and Progression Boards.
Such recommendations will be based on the outcome of assessments and the extent of re-mediation and re-assessment, if any, which has been required.

8.5 Course Assessment and Progression Boards

The following two sections should be read in conjunction with the 'Moray College Course Assessment and Progression Board and Graduation Procedures'.

Course Assessment and Progression Boards will be established to confirm the results of students in order to determine if a student has passed all assessments, subject to verification by the external verifier/s and to consider the progression of students between levels.

At least three Board meetings will be held annually; an interim Board in February, a main Board at the end of June and reconvened Boards in August to review the results of examination re-sits and assessment extensions.

The Course Assessment and Progression Boards have the authority to allow additional opportunities for assessment where particular circumstances might have affected students' performance.

8.5.1 Membership of Course Assessment and Progression Boards

Course Assessment and Progression Boards will be chaired by the Director of Curriculum and Academic Operations, Director of Learning and Teaching, Head of Academic Partnerships or a Head of Curriculum and consist of:

- A Chair as stated above (the Head of Curriculum should be from another subject grouping)

- Head of Curriculum or Deputy Head of Curriculum responsible for leadership of the courses

- All members of staff who have been involved in assessing students

- Curriculum Administrator/Administration Assistant from the Administration Service Centre (Clerk)

No student may attend a meeting of the Board, and staff who are students will not be allowed to attend a meeting where their results are presented.

9. <u>Internal Verification Procedure</u>

This procedure applies to all provision where assessment for certification is the responsibility of the College. The procedure relates, in the main, to SQA requirements. In the event of another awarding body being used, staff should ensure that the requirements of the individual awarding body should be followed.

9.1 Purpose of Internal Verification

Verification ensures that learners are being assessed consistently, accurately and in a well-designed way which meets the needs of the awarding body. This principle should also be consistent with the intent to mainstream equalities, in that steps should be taken to ensure that no group is disadvantaged by the assessment process in a manner which is not justifiable.

9.2 Criteria for the Standard of Verification

UHI and Moray College have devolved authority from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) for internal verification of internal assessment, as identified by the SQA Quality Assurance Criteria.

The criteria within this framework include:

SQA Quality Assurance Criterion (4.4)

"Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair."

In practice, this requires that:

- Assessment instruments (including re-assessment instruments), assessment specifications and other assessment material should be internally verified before they are issued to students – this action should be recorded using Internal Verification documentation.

- The IV Coordinator must ensure that the intended instrument of assessment is appropriate to the given circumstances.

- The assessment specifications should outline clearly what the candidate actually has to do, e.g. written questions, project guidelines, task descriptions.

- Other assessment material should be available which adds reliability to the process, e.g. for written questions an outline solution or marking scheme; for practical tasks, a checklist containing the points to be observed.

- The arrangements for re-assessment must also be covered, as should the assessment conditions, e.g. open or closed book, in class or out of class.

- The IV Coordinator should also ensure that the appropriate arrangements have been made for the assessment to be carried out, e.g. that there is the proper security for an unseen written test, or that there will be sufficient equipment/materials and/or accommodation for a practical test.

- Assessments should be prior verified by the awarding body.

Although it is preferable that much of this is documented (see below), it is perfectly acceptable that some of these issues are dealt with by way of individual discussion or at internal verification meetings (however, a brief note of such discussions or meetings should be kept revealing who was there, the issues discussed and any decisions made to provide suitable evidence for external verification visits).

The important point to be made is that once developed and verified as having been `fit for purpose`, there is no need for this process to be endlessly repeated for units which are established and shown to be running well. However, assessments should be given a cursory check prior to use annually to ensure there have been no updates, and this should be noted as part of the Internal Verification process. (SQA Quality Assurance Criterion 2.4)

Other points which should be considered include:

- wherever possible, alternative assessments should not be too similar to the original assessments, nor should practice assessments be too similar to assessments for certification;

- assessment demands made of students need to be kept to a minimum and opportunities for integration identified and undertaken wherever possible.

SQA Quality Assurance Criterion (4.6)

"Evidence of candidates work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements."

This requires the internal verification process to check for consistency in the marking of assessors and confirms that the appropriate standard for the unit has been applied.

In circumstances where the Internal Verifier believes that SQA requirements have not been met and would therefore result in a hold being activated by the external verifier, details of their concerns must be shared and recorded with the appropriate assessor/s involved with delivery of the unit to resolve the problems.

Such concerns might relate to:

- approved instruments of assessment were not used;

- approved assessment specifications were not used;

- information contained in other assessment material (such as assessment conditions) was ignored;

- the evidence of candidate performance was insufficient;

- candidate evidence is incomplete or unavailable;

- work marked inconsistently/inappropriately;

- no record or inaccurate record of candidate achievement available.

Assessors are required to enter results directly into the UHI Online Resulting system, it is necessary for Internal Verifiers to notify Curriculum Administrators and the Quality Unit of any holds that need to be placed on certification.

Students may be required to re-submit evidence or undertake a new or amended assessment.   Because of this, it is important that any internal verification of candidate evidence takes place within a reasonably short period of time from the completion date of any unit (it is also possible that this could happen during the period of delivery, although this would make it unlikely that all outcomes would be covered).

External verifiers (EVs) assess the effectiveness of the internal verification system and will expect to see the following information during their visits:

- all evidence of candidates' performance - i.e. the material which the students have produced.

- the records of candidates' achievement - results obtained for each outcome or groups of outcomes from the current session and the previous session.

- records of the assessments used with candidates (i.e. instruments of assessment, assessment specifications and other assessment material), showing that they have been internally verified.

SQA Quality Assurance Criterion (1.9)

"The centre must comply with requests for access to records, information, candidates, staff and premises for the purpose of external quality assurance activities."

Access will be provided by the college to SQA External Verifiers, and SQA Accreditation staff if requested in relation to regulated qualifications.

This information may also be required for the purposes of central or postal verification.

Where Electronic portfolios are used staff should adhere to 'SQA Requirements for e-portflios' ensuring that

External verifiers can access the system to sample candidate evidence, verify assessment decisions and confirm the audit trail, including the internal verification process.

Following external verification visits, the awarding body will send the college a report of the external verifier's findings. These reports are sent to the college's Quality Officer, as the main point of contact (e.g. SQA Co-ordinator, for SQA awards). The Quality Officer will then record receipt of the EV report, save it to the Quality folder in the staff drive, and forward details to the relevant Head or Deputy Head of Curriculum (H/DHoC). It is the responsibility of the Head or Deputy Head of Curriculum (H/DHoC) to address any actions identified in the report and provide evidence to the Quality Officer within the agreed timescale advised by the EV of the awarding body.

During a visit to the College, external verifiers may also wish to see a list of students registered with SQA during the previous session for the qualification/s being verified. Records of candidate assessment undertaken over the previous year should be made available on request, which includes details of the assessor, location, date and outcome; evidence of internal verification activity and the certificates claimed. Evidence of continuing professional development undertaken by assessors and/or internal verifiers might also be requested.

Additionally, the following evidence of the internal verification process should be retained:

- internal verification schedule

- a list of the units for which the IV Coordinator has responsibility

- a list of assessors with whom the IV Coordinator liaises

- records relating to design of assessment

- a record of comments made about the assessments being used by assessors

- records relating to the delivery of assessment

- notes of verification or standardisation meetings with the assessors

- confirmation that assessment complied with the unit standards

- records relating to review of the assessments

- feedback from external verifier, assessors and candidates

- changes made to assessments in the light of feedback.

9.3 College Approach to Internal Verification

Although the college is under a strict obligation to ensure adherence to the criteria outlined above, SQA (and other awarding bodies) has made it clear that centres have considerable scope to determine how they set about satisfying such criteria:

"We have no wish to impose a particular quality assurance system on centres, although all systems must meet our quality requirements and ensure that all candidates are assessed to national standards." (SQA, Feb 2011)

The UHI and College internal verification system is based upon an activity-based approach of verification planning and monitoring, and internal verification activity. Although the relevant forms are numbered IV1-6, use of the forms will rely upon the timing of various factors during the session, such as delivery schedules, changes in staff or provision, or external verification activity, and might require verification planning schedules to be revisited.

The key elements of the process are described in the following sections, and should be read alongside the diagram in Appendix 2 'Planning, Monitoring and Recording Internal Verification'.

9.3.1 Team Approach

Responsibility for successful completion of Verification lies with IV Coordinators. However, Moray College in general will operate on a team-based approach, i.e. all

staff delivering a unit are part of the Internal Verification Group both within the College and across UHI academic partners.

This methodology is encouraged to support the evaluation and sharing of learning and teaching experiences and good practice between subject area staff, and is particularly relevant to HE provision as UHI academic partner colleges are required to carry out cross-college verification activities to ensure consistency in assessment approaches and practice.

9.3.2 Sampling

In order that the task of verification is kept manageable and efficient, it is absolutely vital that IV Coordinators do not attempt to verify everything that assessors do and everything that candidates produce.

Internal verification sampling can be undertaken at the beginning, mid-point and/or end-point of the assessment process. Assessment evidence may not be appropriate to the level entered, therefore an early sample will enable adjustments to be made and enable students to gain credit for the level of work undertaken. The advice given by the SQA is to "...choose a sample which is comprehensive enough to give the internal verifier confidence in the conclusions that he or she draws from the sampling exercise."

In essence, the depth and extent of internal verification activity at any point in time is necessarily a matter of professional judgement.   However, if the following factors are considered in arriving at sampling decisions, this should lead to a greater consistency of approach to this matter:

- the experience of the assessor/s involved; the work of assessors who are new to the system should normally be found within any sample.

- the number of assessors involved; where there is more than one assessor involved it will normally be important to verify across all of the assessors to ensure consistency.

- the types of candidates who have been assessed; even where only one assessor is involved it is important to ensure that sampling takes place across all modes of delivery (if applicable), e.g. block-release, part-time day and/or evening, full-time, open learning.

- whether the units involved are new or revised; as it is likely that candidates are working with new instruments of assessment, such units should normally be given priority over established units.

- whether problems were previously experienced during verification (either internal or external) of any of the unit/s; the reason for sampling such units should be self-evident.

If staff should come upon problems within the sample it is likely that it would need to be widened, to allow for consideration of other units, which it had not previously been the intention to verify.

9.4 Frequency, Timing and Scope

At an initial meeting between subject staff at the start of the session, a 3-year rolling plan of verification should be established to ensure that all units for which IV Coordinators are responsible are covered. The agenda for the meeting should include discussion about appropriateness of learning and teaching approaches, with a particular focus on sharing good practice between staff delivering the units.

With reference to the preceding section on sampling, it is not necessary for all units to be verified every session. However, internal verifiers should normally aim to have sampled student evidence for all units that have been delivered within their lists over a 2-3 year period.

Units that are offered more than once in any one session would not normally be expected to be verified on more than one occasion.

Examples of fail and borderline assessments should be subject to verification.

Where a decision is taken to verify a particular unit, candidate evidence should be sampled as follows:

Sample size = square root of candidates plus 1 (number of candidates) + 1.

The sampling of HN material across UHI Academic Partners might require a slightly different approach due to the extensive scale of activity. The UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations (Internal Verification of SQA Provision) provide suggested sample sizes in such cases.

Where verification activity indicates that final assessment decisions are not 'accurate (and) reliable', then further work will need to be sampled.

9.5 HN Graded Units

SQA advises that internal verification of HN graded units should be no different to that carried out for other units. Where arrangements are put in place for double-marking, these should not be seen as a substitute for internal verification.

Internal verifiers should ensure that the assessment instrument is appropriate for the context in which it will be used prior to use; this includes the use of centre-devised assessment exemplars or SQA-produced assessment exemplars, and where exemplars have been amended or the context for assessment is altered.

Use of the SQA's Prior Verification Service is strongly advised where assessments and marking schemes are internally developed, or where any instrument has been amended.

In the case of project-based Graded Units, consideration should be given to internal verification of student material at an early point to confirm the appropriateness of the planning and development stage of the project.

Assessment instruments to be forwarded to SQA for prior verification should be internally verified prior to submission, using the IV3 form, and submitted via the Quality Unit along with the SQA Prior Verification Form.

9.6 SQA NQ National Assessment Bank (NAB) and HN Exemplar Material

The use of NAB assessments and HN exemplars is not mandatory, and staff are free to develop their own assessments in place of these should they so wish. SQA recommend that NAB and HN exemplars are internally verified to ensure that they are suitable for the context in which they are to be used.

Where replacement assessment material has been developed in place of NABs and HN exemplars, the instruments should be sent to SQA for prior verification via the College's Quality Unit once they have been internally verified, as noted above for HN Graded Units.

9.7 Documentation

Master files/folders: IV Coordinators should ensure that all of the necessary documentation pertaining to a unit is kept together in the form of a `master file`, which should be stored in an accessible electronic format in the relevant folder on

the computer drive earmarked for learning, teaching and assessment material (M:/ drive).

Specifically, such a file should contain at least the following documents:

- Current unit specification;

- Instruments of assessment and re-assessment;

- Assessment specifications;

- Other assessment material, such as marking schemes, checklists and exemplar responses;

- Delivery schedules and schemes of work (including an assessment schedule for the unit);

- Evidence of internal verification, and where applicable prior verification;

- Unit evaluation forms.

The same folder should also contain information on the learning and teaching approaches adopted for the unit in question and some indication of lecturers' individual reflection on delivery of the unit.

9.7.1 Internal Verification Records

The specific requirements have already been outlined above (also see 9.15 – 9.16). It is important that staff do not go overboard in seeking to evidence the operation of the system by way of documentation.   However, at the same time, they should demonstrate that "...assessors of a unit get the chance to meet and talk about their assessment activities and to compare judgments they make on different candidates."

The preparation of a formal minute is not expected, however brief notes of such meetings should be prepared and should only take a few minutes to compile. Records kept should clearly indicate what has been verified (this includes the candidate evidence sampled). The basis of sampling should also be recorded.

All such records should be retained electronically at a central point on the Staff shared drive and be available on request.

9.7.2 Responsibilities

The Head or Deputy Head of Curriculum (H/DHoC) is responsible for ensuring that, on an on-going basis, assessors and internal verifiers have the occupational experience, understanding and any necessary qualifications to perform their role, as

specified in the SQA requirements for the qualification. Also see 11.12 and 12.12 regarding ongoing CDP requirements for Assessors and Verifiers.

NB. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the relevant verification forms and guidelines, and the corresponding section within the UHI Regulations: 'Internal Verification of SQA Provision'.

10. <u>Duties of an Assessor</u>

10.1 Assessors will:

- support the safe and secure maintenance and development of master files containing documentation that includes assessment instruments, marking schemes and specimen answers and ensure that all unit specifications and course syllabi in use are current – refer to 'SQA Secure Website Access Guidance Note' for more details regarding secure storage and transport of assessment materials;

- ensure that assessment instruments are of an appropriate standard and adequately cover performance criteria detailed in the unit descriptor;

- when required, liaise with the relevant Learning Development Worker and Extended Learning Support staff to ensure that alternative arrangements are established for students with specific learning requirements;

- notify the relevant Learning Development Worker of any student requests for extensions to assessment;

- accurately and effectively assess all students' work and provide appropriate feedback to students within the required timescales;

- report instances of suspected student, staff or centre malpractice as directed in the college's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure, this will ensure the Quality Officer is kept informed and if necessary will advise the Awarding Body. Also ensure documentation is retained according to the regulations of the awarding body, e.g. SQA – refer to the college's Retention/Disposal of Candidate Evidence and Candidate Records Guidance;

- ensure that accurate records of student achievement and examples of student-assessed work from their subject are maintained and made available on request for internal verification and (where practicable) internal or external review and audit processes;

- ensure that online marks recording student achievement are entered into UHI Online Resulting on completion of assessment;

- alert the relevant internal verifier to areas where a holistic approach, integration across units or subject areas could be achieved;

- following the Conflict of Interest procedure, complete a conflict of interest form to be stored with the internal verification records, about any instances of assessment where a conflict of interest might exist, for example whilst setting or making assessment judgements involving family relations or personal friends;

- contribute to discussions on learning and teaching approaches, assessment and assessment feedback, standardisation and documentation, these discussions should be noted to provide verification evidence;

- undertake CPD and complete training in assessor techniques and/or assessor qualifications within appropriate timescales and as required by the relevant vocational subject assessment strategy, e.g. SQA Regulated Qualifications – where no alternative timescale is stated in an assessment strategy, assessors and internal verifiers of regulated qualifications must achieve a relevant assessor/verifier qualification within 18 months of starting to practice;

- ensure that, where relevant, assessment guidance contained within qualification assessment strategies and/or qualification arrangements documents is followed in relation to the subject area of their responsibility.

- Assessors of British Computer Society Qualifications (invigilators) should be observed on their first live test and, thereafter, annually as co-ordinated by the nominated BCS centre manager. Please refer to appendix 4.

11. <u>Duties of an Internal Verifier</u>

Internal Verifiers will be assigned on a college wide basis. As such their remit will cover delivery of their subject, across Curriculum and vocational areas, at advanced and non-advanced level.

11.1   Internal Verifiers will:

- ensure that master files containing documentation that includes assessment instruments, marking schemes and specimen answers are accurate and securely held, and that all unit specifications and course syllabi in use are current – refer to 'SQA Secure Website Access Guidance Note' for more details regarding secure storage and transport of assessment materials;

- monitor, using the appropriate sampling method, the assessment for the subject(s) with which they are associated to ensure that student work is accurately and effectively assessed, and through discussion with all

appropriate teaching staff ensure that all students' work has been accurately and effectively assessed, and that appropriate feedback has been given normally within a 15 working day timescale;

- ensure that assessment instruments in their subject area are of an appropriate standard, adequately cover performance criteria and are verified prior to use;

- report instances of suspected student, staff or centre malpractice as directed in the college's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure, this will ensure the Quality Officer is kept informed and if necessary will advise the Awarding Body, also ensure documentation is retained according to the regulations of the awarding body, e.g. SQA – refer to the college's Retention/Disposal of Candidate Evidence and Candidate Records Guidance;

- ensure that assessment material is verified where there has been notification of a potential conflict of interest;

- following the Conflict of Interest procedure, complete a conflict of interest form to be stored with the internal verification records, where they are required to internally verify assessment decisions or invigilate an assessment that involves family relations or personal friends;

- ensure that records of assessment, standardisation, verification, student achievement, and examples of student-assessed work (candidate evidence) from the subject area/s for which they are responsible are stored securely and can be made available for external verification when required and ensure that all preparation is completed in time for any External Verification Visit

- audit teaching and assessment materials against the Quality and Equality of Learning and Teaching Materials (QELTM) framework or an alternative framework which ensures teaching and assessment materials are in line with Moray College's Equalities Outcome Document;

- ensure that internal verification documentation is recorded and filed within the master folder/internal verification system;

- record and notify Curriculum Administrators about internal verification activity by forwarding an updated (IV2) Internal Verification checklist, to enable assessment results to be transmitted to SQA or other accrediting bodies timeously;

- promote and enable good practice in their subject area on issues relating to learning and teaching approaches, assessment and assessment feedback, standardisation and documentation, these discussions should be noted to provide verification evidence;

- identify and report on areas in the curriculum where integration with other subjects could be achieved;

- provide for and receive from staff in their subject area professional advice and guidance on issues included in Section 11;

- undertake CPD and complete training in verification techniques and/or verification qualifications within appropriate timescales and as required by the relevant vocational subject assessment strategy, e.g. SQA Regulated Qualifications – where no alternative timescale is stated in an assessment strategy, assessors and internal verifiers of regulated qualifications must achieve a relevant assessor/verifier qualification within 18 months of starting to practice;

- Be aware of the Student Appeals process for both HE and FE.

The nominated British Computer Society (BCS) centre manager is to ensure all BCS Qualifications (invigilators) are observed on their first live test and, thereafter, annually. Please refer to appendix 4.

12. <u>Assessment Appeals</u>

These procedures aim to provide a fair, accessible and timely process for Further Education students to request a review of an assessment decision made by the college, where there are grounds to do so. All FE students will be provided with information about the appeals procedure within four weeks of enrolling on a college course.

Students have the right to appeal against an assessment decision made by the Course Assessment and Progression Board (CAPB). This will be subject to the following procedures:

12.1 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals will normally only be considered on the following grounds:

- Student's performance was adversely affected by illness or other factors that he/she was unable or, with valid reason, unwilling to divulge to their lecturer prior to attempting an assessment, or not made known a CAPB when it made its decision. The student's appeal must be accompanied by documentary evidence acceptable to the Director who considers the appeal in the first instance.

- Evidence of material administrative error or that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the course regulations.

Appeals that question the academic judgement of a member of staff or the CAPB will not be considered.

Appeals will not normally be accepted from third parties.

12.2 Grievance and Appeals

If a student is pursuing a grievance against the College and also wishes to appeal then the grievance shall be resolved prior to consideration of the appeal. However, evidence relevant to the appeal produced during the resolution of the grievance may then be considered if the student wishes to present that evidence.

12.3 Appeals Procedure

12.3.1 Stage 1 – Informal Procedure:

A student who believes they have grounds for appealing against the decision of the CAPB should in the first instance, discuss the matter with the appropriate lecturing staff. This is likely to be the lecturer delivering the unit, the SVQ Assessor or the Learning Development Worker (LDW). The LDW will hold information on the reasons why a student has been resulted as a fail. This should normally be done within ten working days of the assessment decision being notified to the student.

12.3.2 Stage 2 - Formal Procedure

If the matter is not resolved through the informal procedure, a student who wishes to appeal should complete the formal appeals proforma (Appendix 3) setting out the reasons for the appeal and including any documentary evidence. This should be marked for the attention of the Principal's Office, or by email to appeals.moray@uhi.ac.uk normally within fifteen working days of an assessment decision being notified to the student.

The Principal's Office will handle the complaint in the first instance and allocate to a Director for consideration. The Director will immediately acknowledge to the student, receipt of the appeal. The Director will then, normally within ten working days, consider the grounds for appeal and the evidence presented and determine whether there is a 'prima facie' case to be referred to the chair of the CAPB which made the original assessment decision. The Director who handles the appeal must be an individual who had no involvement in the original assessment decision. The student will be informed of the outcome in writing, within five working days of the decision being made.

If the Director decides that there is a prima facie case, they will refer the matter to the chair of the CAPB for review. If the Director decides that there is no prima facie case and the student is dissatisfied with this decision, then the student may appeal in writing directly to the Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC), normally within ten working days.

12.3.3 Stage 3 – Appeals Panel

The Chair of LTQC shall constitute an Appeals Panel of three members of the LTQC not involved in the case to consider the appeal. The Appeals Panel shall consider any written evidence and may decide to interview relevant persons.

The Appeals Board may recommend to the LTQC that:

- The appeal should be rejected; or

- The decision of the CAPB be annulled.

The LTQC shall consider the recommendation of the Appeals Panel and take appropriate action.

If the LTQC considers the issue affected more than one student then it may decide to rescind an assessment or part of it.

If the LTQC rescinds the decision of a CAPB, appropriate action shall be considered, including where necessary reconstituting the CAPB to receive new recommendations concerning the assessment of the students(s).

Students should expect the outcome of the Stage 3 Appeal Panel to be advised within 15 working days of submitting their appeal to the Chair of the LTQC.

After having exhausted the college appeals process, students may have the right to appeal directly to any relevant awarding body (please refer to current awarding body guidance).

Students enrolled on programmes leading to non-regulated qualifications issued by awarding bodies such as SQA or City and Guilds, do not have a further right of appeal to that awarding body.

Students undertaking regulated qualifications (such as SVQs) who remain dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which their appeal has been handled may appeal to the relevant qualification awarding body. Students registered on SVQs may appeal to SQA Accreditation, however it should be noted SQA Accreditation cannot overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements, but may investigate the effectiveness of the college's and/or SQA's appeals process and request corrective action.

All appeal documents should be retained as appropriate to meet both college and Awarding body retention guidelines – for full details see 'Retention/Disposal of Candidate Evidence and Candidate Records Guidance'.

Appeals relating to British Computer Society (BCS) qualifications should refer to the BCS regulations – for key details refer to Appendix 4.

13. Appendix 1

13.1 Moray College UHI Committee Structure

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┌─────────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Moray College Course      │ ──▶  │  Curriculum Committee    │ ◀──  │    UHI External          │
│ Assessment and Progression  │      │      Meetings            │      │  Examination Boards      │
│         Boards              │      └──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────────────┘                  │
                                                  │
┌─────────────────────────────┐                  │
│  Senior Curriculum Team     │                  │
│         (SCT)               │                  │
└─────────────────────────────┘                  │
              │                                   │
              ▼                                   │
┌─────────────────────────────┐                  │
│   Course Approvals and      │                  │
│ Modifications Panel (CAMP)  │                  │
└─────────────────────────────┘                  │
              │                                   │
              ▼                                   ▼
┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│  Audit   │  │ Learning, Teaching & │  │  Finance & General   │  │  Staff Governance    │
│Committee │  │Quality Committee(LTQC)│  │ Purposes Committee  │  │     Committee        │
└──────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
      │                │                          │                         │
      └────────────────┴──────────┬───────────────┴─────────────────────────┘
                                   ▼
                          ┌──────────────────┐
                          │   Board of       │
                          │  Management      │
                          └──────────────────┘
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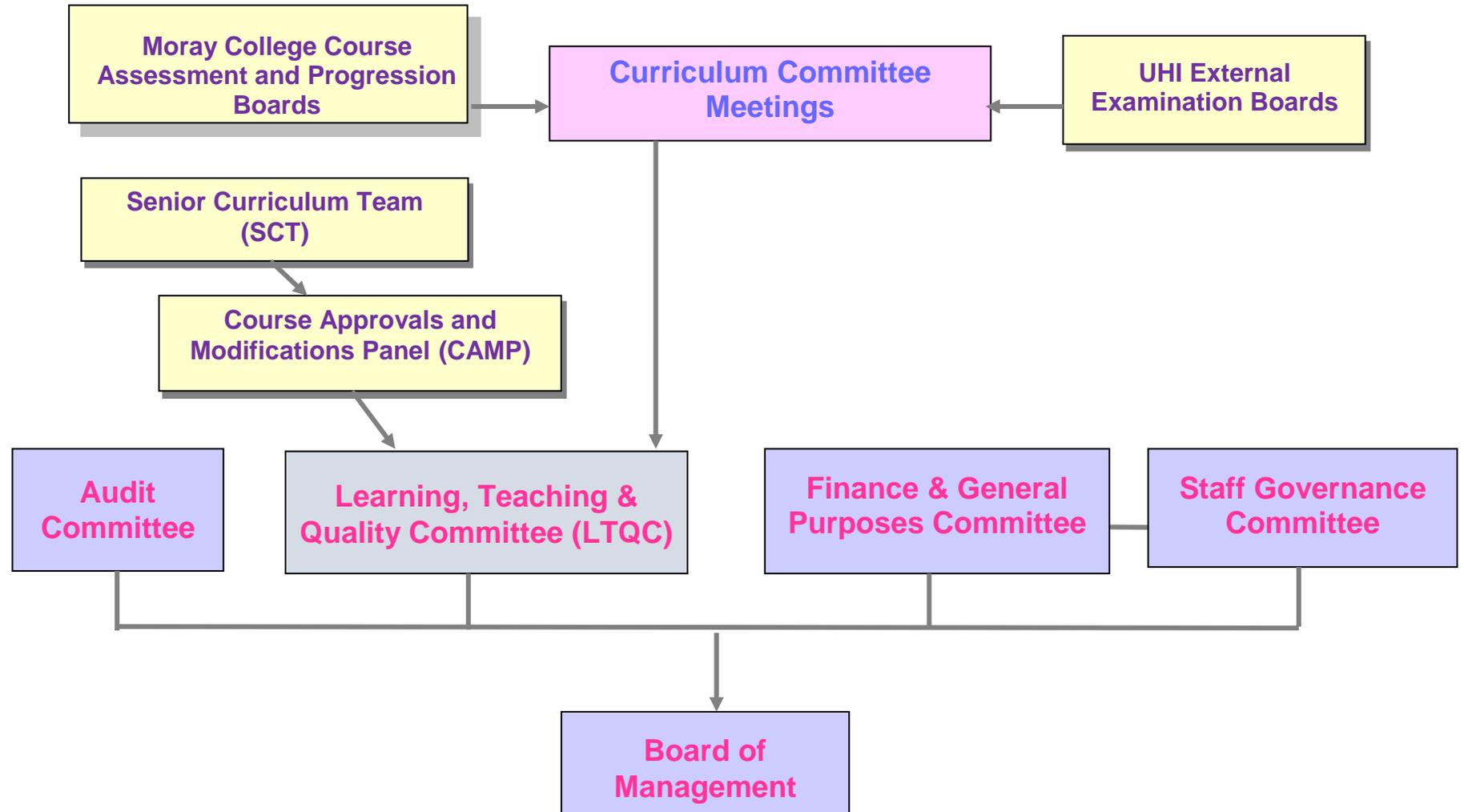
14. Appendix 2

14.1 Planning, Monitoring and Recording Internal Verification

IV1: Review and Planning Meeting

Verification teams (assessors and verifiers) meet to draw up an agenda of verification activity for the year, and record planned action. A review of verification activity during the previous session is carried out, which is supported by evidence such as previous IV/EV reports, changes in assessors or provision, etc.

IV2: Recording of the Internal Verification Plan

A record of units to be sampled during the session is recorded. The IV2 form is revisited during the year to confirm actual verification activity and record where problems arise.

NB Notification of EV visits during the session or new members of staff might require the plan to be amended (see IV6).

Verification Planning and Monitoring

IV4: Pre-delivery Checklist and Sample Selection

An overview for each unit to be verified is completed for each unit to identify whether sampling is required.

Verification Activity

IV5: Record of Sampling

Sampling of student material is recorded and actions identified if necessary.

IV6: EV Feedback

Responses to development points highlighted by external verifiers are recorded and action identified.

IV3: Issues Arising from Assessment and Verification

Details of discussion are recorded on the IV3 and where relevant, and an action point identified with an appropriate timescale for completion. Use the IV3 form if putting forward a college developed assessment for the SQA Prior Verification service.

15. Appendix 3

15.1 Formal Academic Appeals Form

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name:									
Student reference:									
Programme of study/Course:									
Contact address:									
*Email address:									
Contact telephone no:									

*Please note that, where possible, email communication will be used to correspond with you during the appeals process.

1. I wish to appeal against the following academic decision:

2. I base my appeal on the following grounds:

3. I have suffered the following disadvantage as a consequence of the academic decision indicated in 1 above: (if this applies to you)

4. I am submitting the documentary evidence listed below to support my appeal: *(where appropriate include any additional Statement of Appeal and any evidence of medical or personal circumstances)*

Signed:		**Date:**	

Normally, submission should be within **10 working days** of the date of the formal communication that notified you of your results or the decision against which you are appealing (i.e. publication of your results whether by email or in paper form). Include any supporting documentary evidence appropriate to the academic appeal.

Appeals should be submitted to appeals.moray@uhi.ac.uk or by hard copy to the Principal's Office.

16. <u>Appendix 4</u>

16.1 British Computer Society Regulations (BCS)

"To comply with British Computer Society Regulations all BCS Invigilators will be observed on their first live test and, thereafter, annually as co-ordinated by the BCS centre manager"

Learner appeals procedure relating to BCS qualifications should consider prior to submission:

Valid appeals

If you disagree with the results of your assessment

If you believe that we did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly in relation to the assessment decision

If you disagree with our decision on the allocation of reasonable adjustments or special consideration

If you disagree with the action taken against you following an investigation into malpractice

NOTE: Notice of appeals must be submitted within 20 working days of the assessment."

17. <u>Appendix 5</u>

17.1   References

Education Scotland: External Quality Arrangements for Scotland's Colleges (*updated August 2017*)

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk18-hgiocollege.aspx

UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations (*current session*)

https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/about-uhi/governance/policies-and-regulations/regulations/regulations-2017-18/

Quality Assurance Agency (www.qaa.ac.uk)

Scottish Qualifications Authority (www.sqa.org.uk)

SQA Quality Assurance – provides details regarding internal and external verification

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74557.6217.html

SQA Guide to Assessment (*August 2017*)

https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Guide_To_Assessment.pdf

SQA Prior Verification Information page

National Qualifications – https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74666.6219.html

HN Awards & Vocational Qualifications – https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74665.6214.html

Moray College Guidance Documents

Moray College: Course Assessment and Progression Board and Graduation Procedures (*current session*)

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure

Conflict of Interest Procedure

Site Selection Process for SQA Provision

Retention/Disposal of Candidate Evidence and Candidate Records Guidance

IV 1-6 documents

Approval and Modification Forms Secure Site Guidance

18. Appendix 6

18.1 Distribution List

TITLE
Principal
Director of Learning & Teaching
Director of Curriculum & Academic Operations
Director of Information, Planning and Student Support
Heads of Curriculum (ALL)
Head of Academic Partnerships
Deputy Heads of Curriculum (ALL)
Deputy Head of Academic Partnerships
Curriculum Team Leaders
Academic Staff
Student Advice Manager
Quality Officer
Administration Officer
Learning Support Officer
Curriculum Administrators
Exams Officer
Staff Development Officer
Clerk to the Board