

## Qualifications Advisory Group Minutes

QAG/23/M3

Qualifications Advisory Group meeting

To be held on Tuesday 3 October 2023 virtually on Microsoft Teams

Meeting scheduled to start at 10:30 until 12:30

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Chair:	Amy Smith	Nottingham Trent University
Attendees:	Andrew Shield	SQA
	Bethany Hughes	Ofqual
	Clare McNicholl	CCEA Regulation
	David Kimber	University of East London
	Elaine Carlile	Qualification Wales
	Heidi Page	The University of Manchester
	Joanna Brown	Milton Keynes College
	Martha Charles	University of Huddersfield
	Martin Smith	Ulster University
	Michelle Thorn	University of South Wales
	Mike Upton	London Metropolitan University
	Lisa Littlewood	Bouraside school and sixth form college
	Liz Wyman	Association of College (AoC)
	Lizzie Gauntlett	FAB
	Sally Rutterfords	Cardiff University
Apologies:	Sheila Dunn	SCQF Partnership
	Sharon King	CCEA Regulation
UCAS in attendance:	Andy Frampton	Service Delivery Manager (Results)
	Ben Jordan	Head of Policy
	Callie Hawkins	Lead Product Manager
	Jon Brook	Service Delivery Partner (Qualifications)
	Laura Hawkins	Customer Engagement Co-Ordinator
	Pete Milsom	Partnerships Manager
	Philippa Always	Senior Policy Adviser
Observing:	James O'Brien	Data Collections Support Officer

**A3/20/01 Welcome and apologies**

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and the apologies were noted. Clare McNicholl represented CCEA Regulation in Sharon King's place.

**A3/20/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting**

The minutes were approved as a correct and accurate reflection of the last meeting.

The open actions from the log were discussed:

- QAG107 – SCORM package is available for some providers.
- QAG108 – UCAS have launched a web form with access for all awarding bodies to input their Qualification Profiles (QIPs). The hope for this is to keep all qualifications up to date. These can be viewed here: <https://qips.ucas.com/>  
UCAS have also met with colleagues from ECCTIS to look at improving International and Global QIPs. The group have been asked to give any feedback to [j.brook@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:j.brook@ucas.ac.uk)

**A3/20/03 Tariff and Apprenticeships Update**

Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager for apprenticeships gave an update to the group on UCAS' apprenticeship roadmap. UCAS' goal is to attach Tariff points to Level 3 / SCQF Level 6 apprenticeship programs across the UK. A presentation was shared with the group detailing product developments and UCAS' collaboration with the Department of Education (DofE) on Early Connect.

As Tariff calculation is applied to the duration of the program and grade output, the points will likely remain consistent across all subjects. In England this is measured by the guided learning hours, or in Scotland the SCQF credits.

The groups raised the following concerns:

- It may be difficult assigning overall Tariff to Northern Irish Apprenticeships due to general, or technical qualifications that underpin the apprenticeships with diploma or extended diploma level.

As Wales set up the commission of tertiary education research commencing in April, it was questioned whether Qualifications Wales were able to share the UCAS' Apprenticeship pilot and partnership with DfE. It was assured that this is public knowledge which can be shared, and if any updates were required in the meantime, to reach out to Pete.

Pete's contact email is [p.milsom@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:p.milsom@ucas.ac.uk).

**A3/20/04 Policy Update – C&C Reflections in 2023, and Considerations for 2024**

Philippa Alway introduced herself as the new Senior Policy Adviser for Apprenticeships and Skills at UCAS.

Philippa and Ben Jordan covered an overview of recent Research outputs, a reflection on 2023 and what that means for 2024 and gave an update to the group on T-Levels.

Statistics were shared from the following report UCAS released with Sutton Trust [Three in five do not pursue apprenticeships because they cannot find one, say UCAS and Sutton Trust | Undergraduate, Apprenticeships | UCAS](#)

The group are encouraged to look at UCAS' Journey to a Million essay collection. <https://www.ucas.com/about-us/journey-million>

All WP questions released for 2023 entry cycle will have a next step report associated with them. The first will be on Young Carers, and a deep dive on Journey to a million and the effect it will have on apprenticeships, widening access and accommodation. UCAS are also looking into adult education with regards to Lifelong loan entitlement.

The group were asked how C&C Qualifications went.

- A challenge experienced by many members of the group was managing skewed grade profiles in comparison to applicants' predicted grades and results.
- As an institution with one of the highest RPA submission rates is verification of qualification. Less than half are received in the ABL file.
- The average predicted tariff has shifted down.
- There were some challenges faced with grade parity on the Welsh border due to different marking schemes and grade profiles awarded via different standards across prestigious Universities. This was especially in England and in subjects such as Law, and STEM subjects for A level grades.
- Some Sciences were predicted As and resulting in receiving D/Es.
- BTECHs ran smoothly. However, CACHE applicants' results came through as X and were then processed as reject decisions. UCAS are picking up conversations with NCFE to understand why those issues happened.

The group were asked whether there are areas UCAS could be deploying its voice on more, and what learnings can be applied to 2024?

- Some development in supporting Teachers with accuracy of grade predictions and managing expectations earlier and firmer.
- Would UCAS consider producing a report on predicted grades vs achieved grades?
- UCAS could consider the broader issue with parental pressure, and helping teachers and parents understand the standards of predicted grades.

### **A3/20/05 Post C&C Roundup**

Andy Frampton updates the group on a post C&C operational update. A presentation was shared with the group and will be circulated with the minutes.

The group questioned whether UCAS introduce more trend analysis to results before they get sent to universities. QAG110  
AF

Ofqal update

Ofqal will be looking to publish equality statistics and analysis late November.

These will be released for A Levels, GCSEs as well as technical and vocational qualifications. A letter was published last week to students and teachers about arrangements for assessments and grading for all qualifications in 2024, with an outlook to reflect pre-pandemic standards.

The first students to complete Key Stage 4 technical awards, which were reformed relatively recently, will do so in summer 2024. There is an expectation for awarding organisations to be generous with awarding technical qualifications within T levels in the first years of those awards.

Ofqual are looking at calls review for NVTQs and submissions that awarding organisations have sent through for Level 3 Qualifications.

#### CCEA Regulation Update

CCEA GCSEs and A level results are on route to be back to 2019 pre-pandemic standards and to be achieved by summer 2024. CCEA and OOA will be working with principals groups Northern Ireland to reinforce reflecting this in predicted grades.

#### SQA Update

A presentation will be circulated to the group after the meeting.

There have been some modifications to courses in 2022 and 2023 due to timetable changes.

Information and statistics on distribution of grades since 2019, with details on alternate certification models, and grade A distribution increases can be read here:

[Background information for Provisional Attainment Statistics – August 2023 \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/background-information-for-provisional-attainment-statistics-august-2023)

[Official Statistics Provisional Attainment Statistics - August 2023 \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/official-statistics-provisional-attainment-statistics-august-2023)

The Hayward and Withers reviews looking at the review of qualifications within schools are under way. A consultation with teachers stays open until the end of October. The proposals include having a Scottish diploma or leaving certificate which would have three elements: a qualification, interdisciplinary and project element. The results will be announced in November.

#### Qualification Wales

New GCSEs and the new curriculum has been introduced, with grades forecasted to being awarded in 2027.

- The Welsh Government commissioned report on the review of vocational qualifications which was published in on September 11. Link here: [Review of vocational qualifications in Wales | Qualifications Wales](#)
- Decisions on the return to pre-pandemic arrangements in 2023-2024 were announced in September: [Qualifications Wales confirms a return to pre-pandemic exam and assessment arrangements this year | Qualifications Wales](#)
- Decisions in June on reformed GCSEs for first teaching in 2025 and first award in 2027 to align to the Curriculum for Wales: [Made-for-Wales GCSEs | Qualifications Wales](#).
- List of GCSEs for first teaching in 2025 and first award in 2027 linked to the curriculum's areas of learning experience here: [Subject-level – Approval Criteria | Qualifications Wales](#)

## **A3/20/06 Product Roadmap**

Action

QAG111

CH

Callie Hawkins presented a Product Roadmap to the group.  
A workshop style delivery has been requested for the next meeting to allow the group to give feedback pm the 2025 -2026 cycle development plans.

**A3/20/07 Any other business and Close**

QAG112

The group requested institutional level data showing the proportion of applicants who BJ answered WP questions in comparison to other providers.

The next meeting will be Amy Smith's last one as Chair. The group have been invited to submit an expression of interest if they wish to apply for the role, with term effective from February 2024.

The meeting dates for 2024 have been agreed Wednesday 28 February 2024, and Tuesday 1 October 2024. Placeholders will be sent out to the group after the meeting.