

Job Description

Job Title: Director of Policy, Analysis and Standards

Directorate: Generic

Reports To: Chief Executive

1. Job Purpose

Provide leadership to the organisation in the area of, policy, analysis and standards, and as a member of the Executive Management Team, contribute to the strategic development and direction of SQA.

2. Key Responsibilities

- Support the Board, Chief Executive and other Directors in setting strategic direction, policies and operating priorities for SQA.
- Support the development of the long-term SQA qualifications, assessment and QA strategies.
- Lead the SQA's research on the design, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications and services to meet best practice.
- Ensure that SQA Awarding Body is meeting the principles of the code of practice.
- Lead on standards setting and maintenance to ensure the credibility of SQA's qualifications.
- Provide a data analytics function for the organisation.
- Provide CPD for staff and appointees around product and assessment design.
- Ensure a highly effective, centralised research and data service is provided to the SQA to enhance decision making.
- Provide leadership in the development of thinking and research on education and training to ensure SQA is an influential voice at a national and international level.
- Encourage the highest standards of quality in respect of the development of all SQA qualifications and services to maintain the integrity and relevance of our products.
- Provide effective leadership to the directorate team and ensure that people resources and expertise are developed appropriately to support SQA's strategic goals.
- Lead on stakeholder relationship management with Scottish Government, other regulators and contacts with other public organisations regarding directorate issues to ensure SQA has an effective voice.

- Represent SQA externally to promote SQA's qualifications and services, to establish and maintain links with stakeholders and customers and to ensure that SQA's interests are represented appropriately.
- Engage with all SQA directorates to develop the use of research, analytics and statistics to support decision making and meet SQA's strategic goals.
- Contribute to the organisation's aims of change and innovation in the way products and services are delivered, in response to changing business and stakeholder needs.
- Ensuring effective budget setting, management control and accounting to achieve efficiency gains cost savings and best use of available resources in the directorate.

3. Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Be qualified to degree level, SVQ level 4 / SCQF level 9 or equivalent.

Proven expertise in the development of organisations and people, and in a senior leadership role.
- A strong track record of relationship building and influencing skills, working across boundaries and organisations to deliver.
- Experience of undertaking / managing research and / or analytical functions
- Ideally, experience of leading in an analytical and policy environment.
- Able to exercise high level analytical and problem solving skills in a strategic management context.
- Proven track record of managing and coordinating teams as well as managing projects, and have a commitment to the development of empowered, committed and multi-skilled staff, and in a positive and inclusive workplace culture
- Actively demonstrate values led leadership behaviours.
- Possess outstanding communication skills with people at all levels.
- Be decisive, adaptable and able to manage business pressures.
- Ability to maintain a strategic focus whilst managing business as usual operations.
- Ability to articulate the bigger picture in a way that is meaningful and engaging for all.

4. Dimensions

The job holder reports directly to the Chief Executive.

Contributes fully to the Executive Management Team strategy development and implementation.

Develops and leads the provision of research, statistical, and managerial information to support effective evidence based decision making by SQA.

Responsible for strategic integration and leadership for the directorate, and as a corporate leader, providing direction and operational leadership across all of Policy, Analysis and Standards' activities.

As a corporate director have responsibility for delivery against corporate plans and budgets, and deliver best value for public funds affecting approximately 900 staff and a net organisational budget of approximately £48 million.

Full management responsibility for directorate budget.

Full management responsibility for 7 direct reports and approximately 25 indirect reports, but this is likely to expand, as the new Director shapes and builds this area further within SQA.

5. Planning and Organising

A key responsibility of the job holder is to lead their teams as they deliver their own business area plans, but also to develop strategy for the SQA including development of the long-term SQA qualifications, assessment and quality assurance strategies. The focus on strategy requires the job holder to focus on future developments and ensure that their teams undertake this too.

The job holder leads external research and ongoing environment and literature scanning. This must be targeted and planned to ensure that relevant research is taking place to inform strategic decision making.

A key responsibility of the job holder is also supporting and leading SQA's response to external reviews such as the OECD Review, as well as influencing and working closely with the Strategic Change Programme to ensure that change is aligned with SQA strategies and expectations of future demands.

The job holder leads the operational planning for each business area in the directorate. This includes agreeing the activities, resources, budgets and milestones in line with corporate objectives. The job holder will take account of external influences such as legislation, Scottish Government targets/objectives.

They are responsible for the performance management of their directorate plan.

The job holder will also need to be able to respond to rapidly changing priorities and lead on discussions and the re-allocation of resources where applicable. These changes must balance the needs of internal and external stakeholders.

The position also requires the job holder to have the foresight to anticipate likely problems and risks and put in place measures which will counter or minimise the effects of these.

6. Problem Solving and Decision Making

The job holder will ensure that an effective work plan is prioritised and delivered.

The job holder will provide high level advice and guidance to resolve complex problems and issues that may pose a risk to SQA's credibility and success. Problems escalated to the job holder may be novel, without precedence, and involve conflicting priorities.

The job holder will work very closely with internal customers and external stakeholders to ensure that the work of the directorate is informed by customer needs and expectations and also an understanding of current challenges and future developments.

The job holder will enhance how SQA makes decisions: they will challenge both internal and external thinking. This will be difficult when seeking to change or influence established thinking and ways of working, but challenge will be done based on research, analytics, and evidence undertaken by the directorate.

The job holder will ensure that SQA's investment in the Policy, Analysis and Standards directorate adds value and that this area is increasingly influential in decision making across the organisation. The directorate must also play a pivotal role in identifying and setting the strategic direction and ensuring that SQA is developing products and services that are aligned with best practice.

The job holder will need to provide statistical and management information (along with its analysis) to the Executive Management Team, Board of Management and Scottish Government that will inform and influence decision making.

7. Communication and Relationships

The job holder will provide, receive, adapt and disseminate highly complex and sensitive information effectively and persuasively to the Board, Executive Management Team, Scottish Government and other organisations.

The job holder will demonstrate excellent communication skills both internally and externally to represent and promote SQA. They will successfully manage and develop the relationship with Scottish Government and with Board members.

The job holder will work closely with their executive level colleagues on leading successful organisational change within SQA and in their capacity as Director will challenge assumptions and decision-making as appropriate providing analysis and insight on all activities, plans and targets.

The job holder will be responsible for influencing the whole organisation to make best use of research, statistical data, and to embrace strategic thinking.

The job holder will work closely and influence all directorates in SQA to understand, analyse and challenge established ways of working and to identify and support adoption of best practice.

The job holder will lead a well organised, skilled and motivated team and Directorate.

This job description is intended to be indicative of the duties and responsibilities associated with the post and are not exhaustive.

This job description is open to review from time to time in light of changing environments and circumstances.