



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

April 2004

Dear Colleague

The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004

Please find enclosed *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004*, which has been revised following the public consultation completed in November 2003. It replaces *Arrangements for the statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland 2000*.

This document is for awarding bodies, sector bodies, professional bodies and other national organisations with an interest in the delivery of accredited qualifications. It sets out clear principles for regulation, a revised National Qualifications Framework and regulatory criteria, which have been significantly enhanced for ease of use and understanding by awarding bodies and other key stakeholders.

The revised criteria and the National Qualifications Framework, will become fully operational and enforceable from 1 September 2004. Awarding bodies will be expected to begin putting in place arrangements for compliance from 15 April 2004. New forms and details for seeking accreditation under the new arrangements, will be published in June 2004. Awarding bodies offering qualifications at the existing levels 4 and 5 will be contacted by the regulatory authorities, to determine transition arrangements.

The *GCSE*, *GCSE in vocational subjects*, *GCE*, *VCE*, *GNVQ* and *AEA code of practice* and the *NVQ Code of Practice* should be used in conjunction with this document. The current references in the *NVQ code of practice*, to the *Common code of practice* from the 2000 statutory regulation document, should be read as references to the equivalent provision in the 2004 document. An amendment sheet setting out the new cross-references will be issued shortly.

We are committed to ensuring that qualifications accredited to the National Qualifications Framework are responsive to the needs of stakeholders whilst maintaining public confidence in their quality, rigour, cost-effectiveness and consistency of standards. We will ensure that the criteria are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that innovation and change can be accommodated effectively, in particular, to ensure that the developing agendas in relation to equality of opportunity are fully reflected in the criteria.

If you have any questions about this document, please contact Sarah Harris (ACCAC) on 029 2037 5431 or by e-mail sharris@accac.org.uk, Roger McCune (CCEA) on 028 9026 1202 or by e-mail rmccune@ccea.org.uk or Janice Charlton (QCA) on 020 7509 5337 or by e-mail charltonj@qca.org.uk. A bilingual English/Welsh version is available from ACCAC.

Yours faithfully

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