

Continuing Professional Development in Social Work (CPD)

Continuing professional development for social workers is set within a UK wide framework of post qualifying education and training. The framework delivers two nationally recognised Awards in Social Work - the Post Qualifying Award (PQSW) and the Advanced Award (AASW) - built on two different levels of competence. The awards are open to all staff of the personal social services who hold a professional social work qualification such as the DipSW, CQSW, CSS or a recognised equivalent. This includes social workers in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. The awards are also open to independent social workers and those intending to return to practice after a career break.

1 The Framework

The PQ framework was developed by the Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work [CCETSW] in consultation with the main government, employer, educational, professional and trade union interests and has four main aims:

- to recognise and validate the professional development of qualified social workers
- to ensure common minimum standards across a wide variety of social work education and training at this level, in different sectors and settings;
- to provide structures for post qualifying education and training which are flexible and responsive to the changing needs of service delivery, to different career pathways, and to the requirements of regulatory bodies.
- to promote education, training and qualifications that support high standards of service and care in the personal social services.

2 How it works

The framework is delivered across the UK by 20 post qualifying education and training consortia, each now approved by the Council of the appropriate country. The Post Qualifying Consortium for Social Work in Scotland is responsible for delivery of the framework within Scotland. Each consortium is made up of local employing agencies and academic institutions working in collaboration. This enables social workers to have access to the awards in the area in which they work, or if they are not currently in employment, the area where they live.

At the heart of the framework is a system of credit accumulation and transfer (CATS) linked to academic awards which allows candidates to work towards an award over time, and if necessary in different workplaces. It also means that new courses and programmes designed to meet changing service delivery and work patterns can be readily bought into the framework.

The framework concentrates on the assessment of learning outcomes, in other words, on the recognition of a worker's professional competence as a result of learning. This means that all forms of learning - assessed courses, informal learning in the workplace, distance and open learning - can be used to provide the evidence of competence in particular areas. In addition, the system allows professional credits to be put towards academic awards. The PQSW is comprised of a minimum of 120 professional credits, assessed at the academic equivalent

of the final year of an undergraduate degree: the AASW is comprised of a minimum of 120 credits, assessed at the academic level equivalent to a masters degree.

3 Revised Requirements

In 1997 the requirements for the PQSW and AASW were revised to take account of the changing face of social work and to ensure that they meet the needs of the future. The revisions, which are set out in Assuring Quality for Post Qualifying Education and Training - 1, clarify and refine what is expected of candidates and are designed to make the awards more accessible to all social workers.

Candidates who registered for an award under the CCETSW Paper 31 requirements will not be adversely affected by the changes and can continue to work towards an award with credit for previously completed work. Information on the relationship between the Paper 31 requirements and the Revised Requirements is presented diagrammatically in Section 4.

4 What's in it for agencies?

The PQ framework offers personal social services agencies a structure for the professional development of staff linked to a UK standard.

It is designed to both improve standards of practice and to provide employers with a strategy to improve recruitment and retention of experienced workers.

The two awards provide recognised standards of competence. At PQ level in particular, the individual development of social work staff can be structured using a variety of learning and education opportunities. This will enable a more focused use of limited resources.

The framework enables all forms of assessed education and training to be accredited. In-house training programmes, for example, can receive a credit rating which denotes a recognised standard and allows individual social workers to use the credits towards an award.

Accreditation allows the purchasers of training to know the quality of external programmes and means that new courses and programmes, designed to meet changing service delivery and work patterns, can be readily brought into the framework.

5 What's in it for workers?

The opportunity to work for qualifications which have a UK-wide standard

The formal recognition of professional skills and competence

Credits for different forms of learning including in-service training programmes, work-based learning, distance learning or college courses

Portfolio route which provides the opportunity to pace study to fit with other commitments and with changes of workplace

Opportunities to use professional credits towards academic awards

A fast track for those who have already done ASW/MHO training or have the Practice Teaching award

Bursaries may be available through the consortia

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1 Introduction

The PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland was established in 2001 and has been fully operational since October of that year. It has responsibility for promoting and supporting post qualifying social work awards in Scotland at both PQ and Advanced Award levels which includes providing a service to those candidates, employers and programmes, registered with the previous organisation.

The new consortium represents the whole of Scotland, and membership consists of the three regional consortia (North of Scotland, West of Scotland and South East Scotland); and the Tayforth Partnership.

The objectives of the Consortium are as follows:

- to promote and service the framework for post qualifying social work awards amongst candidates, employers and programme providers.
- to carry out the functions required by the Scottish Social Services Council to implement the framework and provide the services required by candidates either directly by means of its own staff or by delegation to the regional consortia.
- to monitor and assure the quality of these services and in particular of the assessment and programme approval work undertaken.
- to promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in relation to post qualifying education and training.

The Consortium's planning and monitoring functions are carried out primarily by means of regular meetings of the Management Committee and by its two sub-committees. Services delivered centrally by the Consortium such as initial advice to prospective candidate and programme providers, registration, tracking and certification will be provided by its Manager and Administrator.

The main resources that social work agencies and academic institutions are required to commit to the Consortium are staff time. Meetings are normally held in Islay House, Stirling and last from 11a.m. to 1.00 p.m. approximately.

The Consortium is funded on an annual basis by the Scottish Social Services Council. The sum available will be in line with that disbursed to approved consortia in the rest of the UK. In addition the Consortium receives some of its income through registration fees.

Membership of the Consortium offers an opportunity to contribute to and participate in a Scotland wide group dealing with national issues surrounding PQ education at a crucial time in it's and the profession's development.

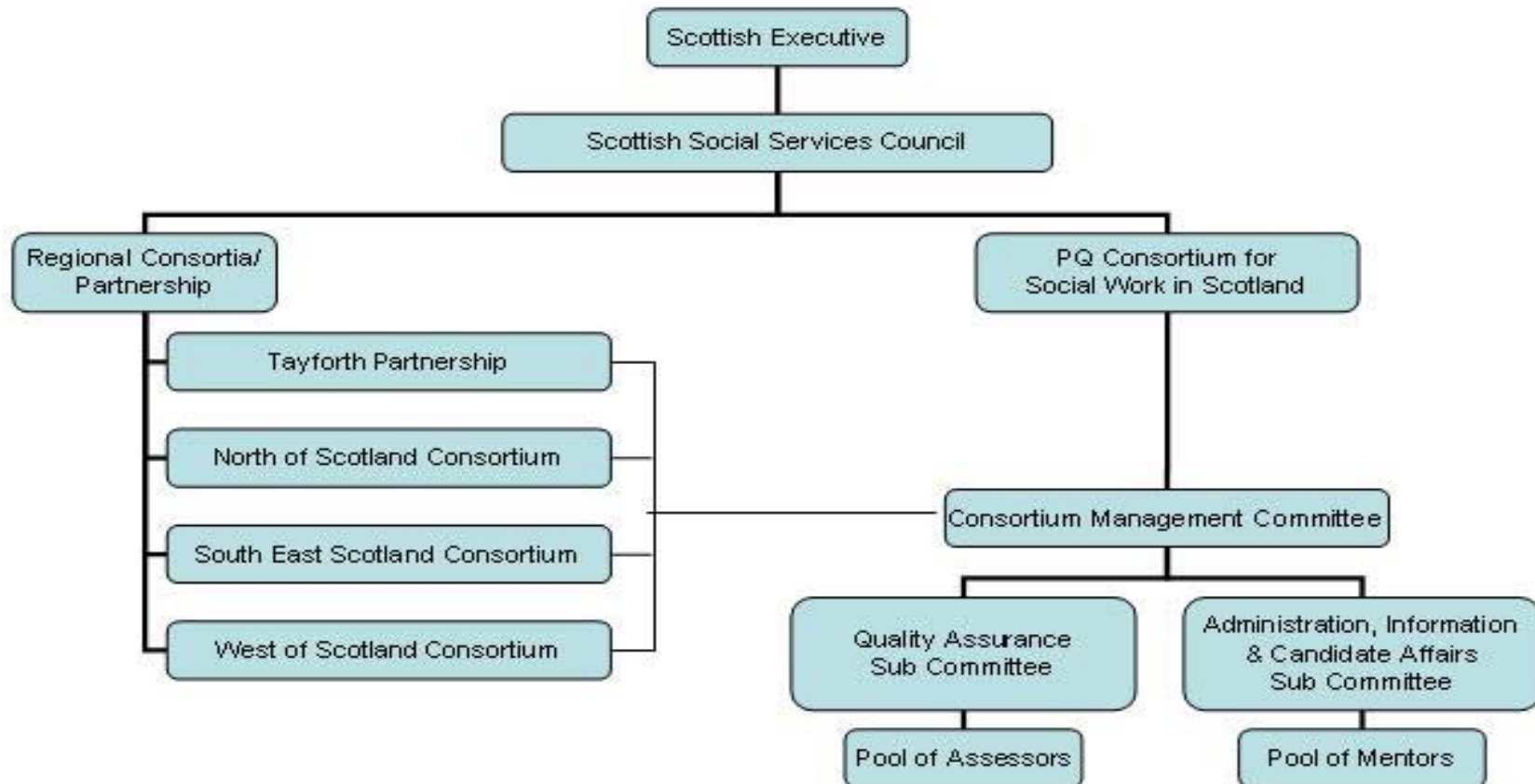
2 Submission/Approval

The PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland submission document went to CCETSW in March 2001, and was approved later that month. Responsibility transferred to the Scottish Social Services Council on 1 October 2001.

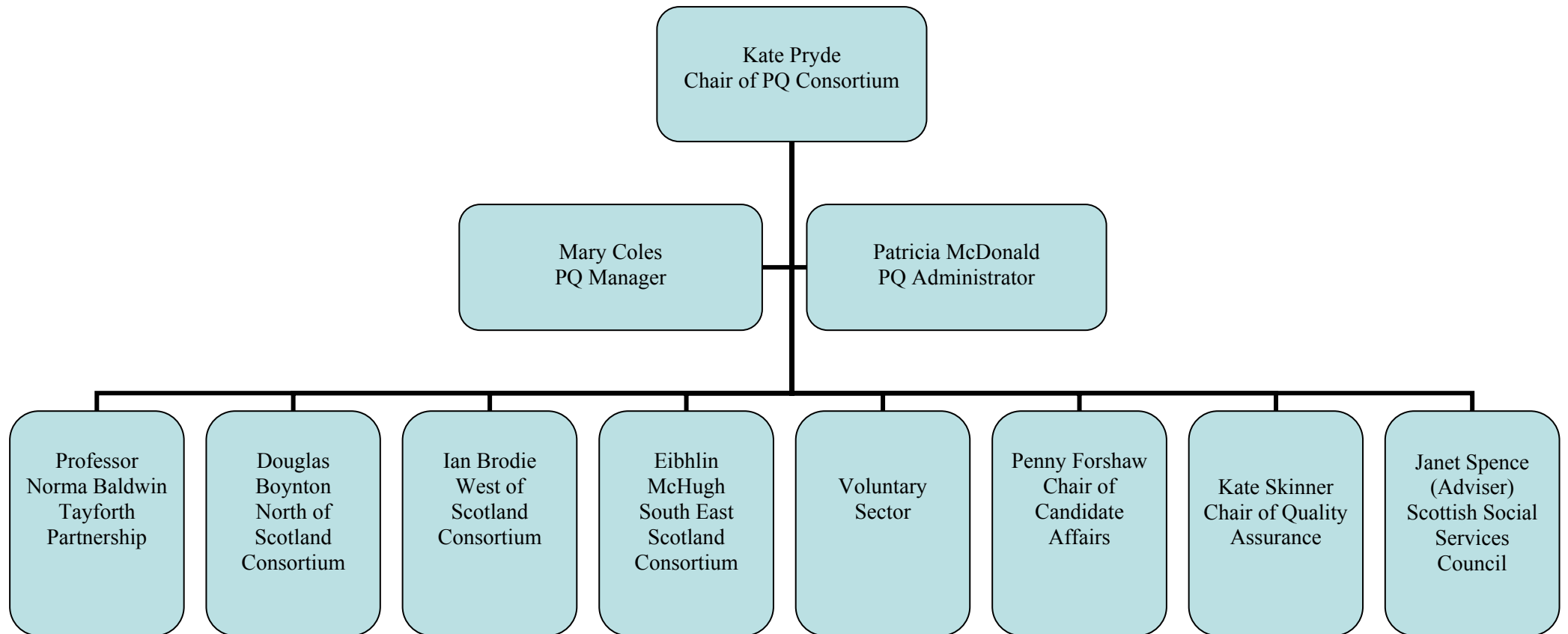
3 Structure (Membership)

The PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland promotes and supports Post Qualifying Social Work Awards in Scotland at PQ and Advanced Award Levels. This is reflected in its membership from across Scotland which is as follows:

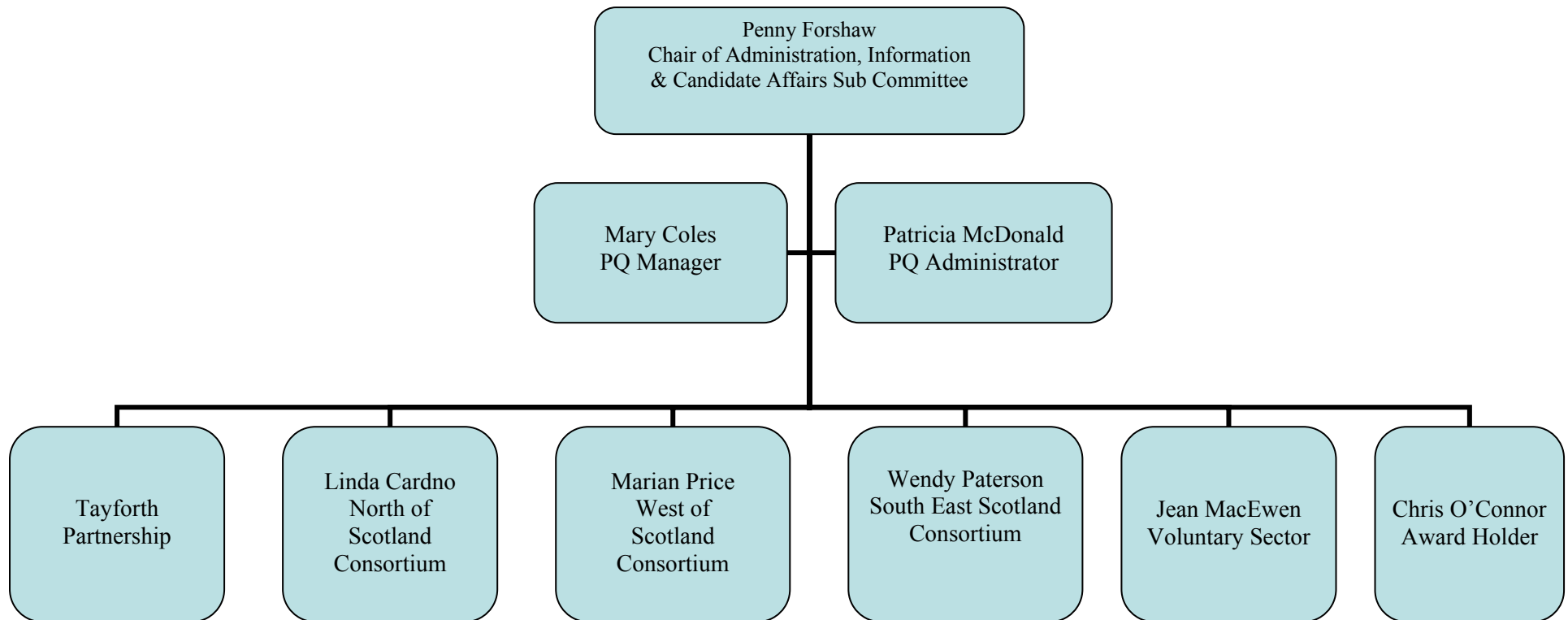
PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland



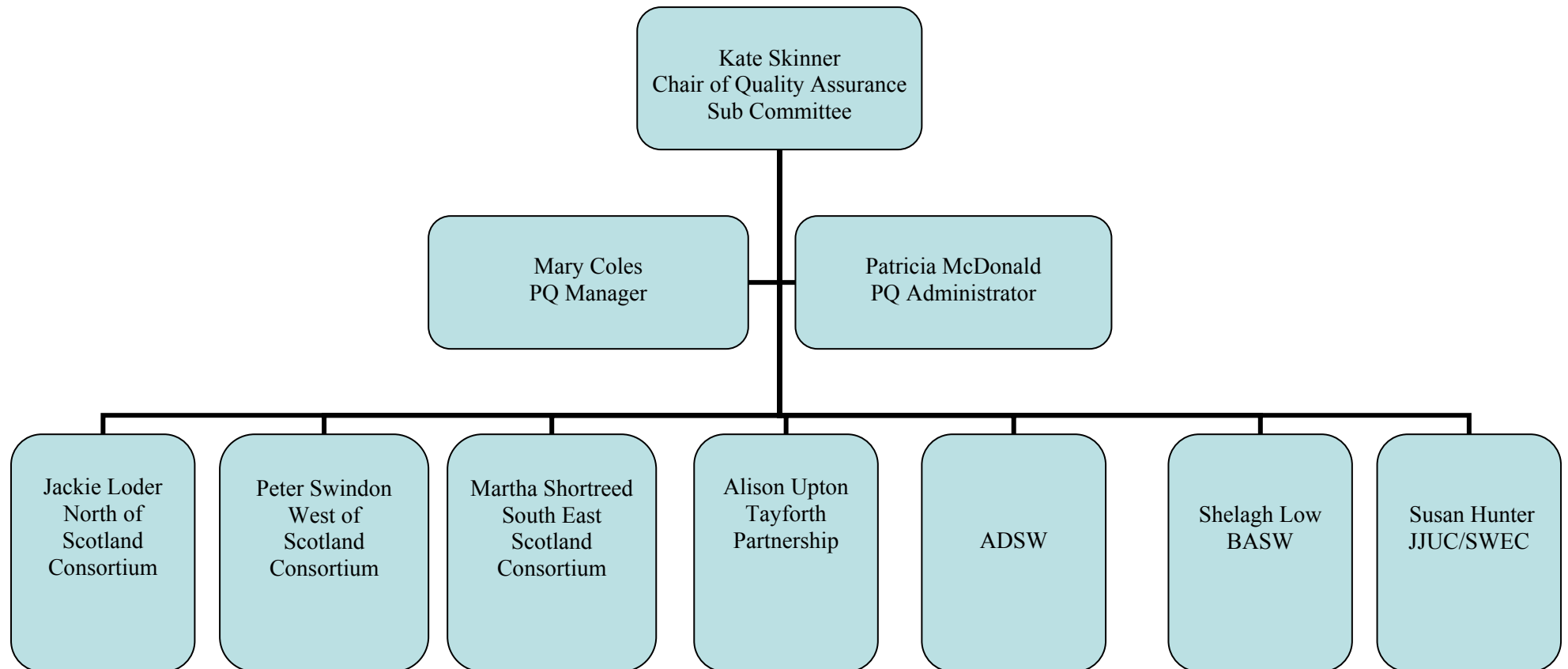
Management Committee



Administration Information & Candidate Affairs Sub Committee



Quality Assurance Sub Committee



4 Management Committee

The Management Committee has a maximum of 8 members including one Senior Representative from each of the 4 regional consortia/partnerships. The Chair is appointed by the Management Committee from its members or by invitation to a suitable person (Kate Pryde, Head of Adult Services, Falkirk Council accepted the unanimous invitation to Chair the Consortium Management Committee). Other members may be co-opted to ensure a balance when necessary. The current membership is detailed on page 4.

Also in attendance are Janet Spence, Social Work Education Adviser, Scottish Social Services Council who is our liaison adviser, and Mary Coles, who took up post as Consortium Manager in October, 2001. Patricia McDonald, Consortium Administrator takes the minutes and services the work of the Management Committee

5 Management Structure

The Consortium Management Committee is responsible for the overall management:

- Strategic planning and policy
- Management of finance and resources
- Oversight of all aspects of the work of the Consortium

It usually meets quarterly when it receives reports from each of the sub-committees and from the Consortium Manager (including the financial statement) and discusses issues from the Scottish Social Services Council.

6 Administration, Information and Candidate Affairs Sub Committee

Remit

This sub-committee has delegated responsibility/authority to ensure the establishment of appropriate systems for:

- the registration of candidates
- the maintenance and up-dating of their details
- the registration and review of courses
- publicity
- the recording of mentors' details
- the recording of other work undertaken.

Membership

The Sub-committee is chaired by a member or co-opted member of the Management Committee. There are 6 other members drawn from partner organisations, who have experience relevant to the work of the Committee. A full list of current membership is outlined above on page 5.

7 Quality Assurance Sub Committee

Remit

The Quality Assurance Sub Committee has delegated responsibility/authority for all assessment and accreditation activities (including development of relevant procedures; guidance; Pool of Assessors; standardisation; and assessment and accreditation decisions).

Membership

Chaired by a member or co-opted member of the Management Committee. Normally 6 other members drawn from partner organisations, who have experience relevant to the work of the committee and to the chairing of Assessment Panels. Two External Assessors from the Council's approved list have been appointed to ensure that quality assurance systems and processes in relation to assessment and programme approval work are carried out according to the requirements. They will attend sub-committee meetings when assessment decisions are being confirmed/ratified. A full list of current membership is outlined above on page 6.

Information and Registration of Candidates

1. Introduction

All material relating to information and guidance for candidates, employers and programmes is the responsibility of the Information, Administration and Candidate Affairs Sub Committee of the PQ Consortium. This committee also oversees all matters of administration and the registration processes.

2. Registration for the Post Qualifying/Advanced Award in Social Work

Registration

- If you wish to undertake the Post Qualifying or Advanced Award in Social Work, you must first of all register with the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland who accredit the awards for Scotland. Application Forms are available from the Consortium office
- Only qualified Social Workers are eligible for registration (***i.e. you must hold CQSW, DipSW, CSS or equivalent***)

Costs

Registration Fees until 31 August 2003:

- PQ Award £201 (includes central registration fee of £51)
- Advanced Award £252 (includes central registration fee of £102)
- Upgrade from PQ to AA £51 (includes central registration fee of £51)

Registration Fees from 1 September 2003:

- PQ Award £202 (includes central registration fee of £52)
- Advanced Award £254 (includes central registration fee of £104)
- Upgrade from PQ to AA £52 (includes central registration fee of £52)

The Awards

- The Post Qualifying Award (*equivalent academically to 3/4th year Undergraduate Student*)
- The Advanced Award (*equivalent academically to Master's Degree*)
- Individuals can build up their award by:
 - Portfolio route
 - Completion of accredited taught programme(s). (*A Directory of all accredited programmes is available from the PQ Consortium office*)
 - A combination of the above

Support and Guidance

Help is available in the shape of:

- Individual advice from Consortium Manager
- guidance materials available free to registered candidates
- workshops in you own area run by agency or regional consortia/partnership
- mentoring arranged through local and national contacts
- bursaries for assessment fees, mentoring costs, accredited course fees, special needs costs
- extracts from submissions may be available through the Consortium Office
- local training sections & consortia

For support and guidance please call:

Mary Coles, PQ Consortium Manager, PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland,
Ross House, 20 Melville Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NQ
Tel/Fax: 01786 446430 Email: pqswscot@hotmail.com

Further information is available from:

Patricia McDonald, PQ Consortium Administrator, PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland,
Ross House, 20 Melville Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NQ
Tel/Fax: 01786 446430 Email: pqswscot@hotmail.com

3.	Guidance: Portfolio Route Candidates	
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Accredited Programmes are responsible for all their registered students and will provide guidance about all aspects of their programme usually in the form of a student handbook. Thus material has been prepared by the consortium's Information Administration & Candidate Affairs Sub-committee, specifically for candidates using the portfolio route for elements of their award, which will include those participating in in-house support arrangements through their agency or a group of neighbouring agencies. Three sets of guidance are available through the Consortium Office in relation to:

- **The PQ Part 1** (40 Credits): Different pathways for staff in different situations. Guidance Pack available from the Consortium Office (address noted above)
- **The PQSW Award** (120 credits at PQ Level): PQ requirements 1-6. A separate booklet - Guidance Pack PQ Part 2 is obtainable from the PQ Consortium Office (address noted above)
- **The Advanced Award** (120 Credits at M Level): AA requirements 1-8. A separate booklet – Guidance Pack Advanced Award is obtainable from the PQ Consortium Office (address noted above)

Additionally the PQ Consortium is able to offer guidance about portfolio development and key elements such as critical analysis and reflective writing, with examples from recently assessed portfolios, for the PQ and Advanced Award Frameworks.

This guidance is relevant to those candidates who will submit a portfolio for assessment to this consortium for some or all elements of the award they are seeking. The process for this is detailed in Section 6 (Assessment of Candidates and Accreditation/Approval of Programmes).

Scottish Social Services Council Scottish PQ Bursary Scheme Notes for Applicants	
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1 Introduction to the Scheme

From the financial year 2002/2003, the Scottish PQ Bursary Scheme will be administered on behalf of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) by the Post Qualifying Consortium for Social Work in Scotland. The Scheme has been reviewed during 2003 in the light of our first experience of administering the Scheme and the circumstances in which for the first time the Scheme was heavily oversubscribed. The revisions will lead to awards to a greater number of individuals with a more balanced distribution in terms of geography, sector of employment and purpose of bursary award.

All candidates who are thinking about making an application under the Scheme must read these Notes for Applicants. All applications for PQ Bursaries should be made to the Post Qualifying Consortium for Social Work in Scotland using the **Application Form for Candidates**.

Please note that all completed application forms, with the required supporting evidence, should be returned to the PQ Consortium, at the address given on the Application Form, **by 24th November, 2003**.

Please note that any applications received after this date will not be processed.

2 How to apply for a PQ Bursary

PQ Bursaries will only be awarded to individual, named candidates, who are fully registered with the PQ Consortium for the Post Qualifying Social Work Award (PQSW) or the Advanced Award in Social Work (AASW).

PQ Bursary Awards will be allocated according to geographical spread, purpose of award, sector of employment and by date order of receipt of completed application. In the circumstances of the Scheme being oversubscribed then the maximum level of award to an individual will be reduced to £1500 which would lead to partial awards in relation to programme fees, but to more individuals. Every effort will be made by SSSC staff and the PQ Consortium to ensure that PQ Bursary Awards are distributed fairly across Scotland.

3 Eligibility

All candidates must hold one of the following qualifications: DipSW, CQSW, CSS or an equivalent social work qualification recognised by the SSSC, and CCETSW before it. Please note that certain specialist qualifications do not meet the required criteria. These include: CRCCYP, CRCC, CRSW, DTMHA. Where there is any doubt about eligibility, confirmation of status should be made through the SSSC before applications are made.

All candidates must have been resident in the United Kingdom for the three-year period immediately prior to application for funding. Candidates applying for a PQ Bursary award must normally be resident in Scotland.

Mentors

Mentors are used in relation to CPD for social workers to encourage/facilitate staff to reflect on and critically analyse their practice and to help in shaping the

account of learning since qualification into the framework required for the portfolio. Some accredited programmes also use mentors and will provide details of the role expected of them. The Consortium is responsible for developing resources for mentoring across Scotland, particularly for those candidates preparing a portfolio for assessment through its Quality Assurance structures. It should be noted that for this group of staff funding towards mentoring costs is available through the Bursary Scheme to be administered by the Consortium from Summer 2002 and mentors may be sought by candidates from anyone on the Consortium's approved list.

Applications to the pool of approved mentors

The Consortium's Administration, Information & Candidate Affairs Sub-Committee has agreed the following specification for those wishing to be on the approved list and therefore available to portfolio route candidates who have been awarded bursaries for this purpose.

The Consortium therefore seeks applications from appropriately qualified and experienced personnel who meet the following person specification and may have been involved in this capacity with the previous organisation. (See Forms Appendix)

Person specification

1. Holders of DipSW, CQSW, CSS or precursor professional qualification.
2. Experience of practice teaching, or supervision or mentoring of staff/candidates on accredited programmes.
3. Current knowledge and experience of working within the PQ framework e.g. contributing to CPD courses and other examples.
4. Experience of constructing a portfolio: this should involve research analysis and reflective writing in putting together a portfolio or supporting a member of staff or a candidate to do so.
5. Commitment to equal opportunities.

Roles and responsibilities

A mentor will:

- Help the candidate to decide on the appropriate level of award for her/him.
- Help the candidate decide what experience and learning s/he can already demonstrate which might be accredited towards an award (i.e. Accreditation of Prior [Experiential] Learning).

- Help the candidate to review her/his career.
- Help the candidate to plan a pathway through work-based experience, accredited and non-accredited learning.
- Help the candidate to extend or acquire and document the evidence and underpinning knowledge and theory.
- Produce guidance to the candidate on the development of evidence and reflective commentary required in a portfolio.
- Provide information on assessment criteria.
- Encourage the candidate to complete the award.
- Provide a written report as part of the candidate's portfolio.

Assessment of Candidates & Accreditation/Approval or Programmes

The Quality Assurance Sub-Committee has delegated responsibility/authority for all assessment and accreditation activities, which includes the development of relevant procedures; guidance; the Pool of Assessors; standardisation; and assessment and accreditation decisions.

1 The Pool of Assessors

The pool of assessors, who will function as readers of portfolios and be members of Assessment and/or Programme Accreditation Panels, was established early in 2002. Individuals apply to become members of the Pool with the approval of their employer and by completing the pro-forma which seeks detailed information about qualifications and experience relevant to the primary tasks of assessors (See Forms Appendix). Once approved/accepted by the sub-

committee individuals will be invited to a briefing/standardisation meeting, and will then be allocated to Panels as required.

2 Assessment of Individual Portfolios

Candidates are required to submit portfolios for assessment on specified dates 6/7 weeks before the Assessment Panel dates. Every portfolio must be accompanied by a Line Manager's Report (copies in the Forms Appendix). On receipt of portfolios these will be allocated for reading to two members of the Pool of Assessors, one of whom will normally be an academic and one a social work practitioner from an agency, normally with a mix of genders. Assessors will submit independent reports using a standard pro-forma (See Forms Appendix) on which recommendations for credit will be made following discussion at the meeting of the Panel chaired by a member of the Quality Assurance Sub-committee. Panel decisions will be presented to the next meeting of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee as recommendations. When an award has been confirmed in this way (with the involvement of External Assessors), the candidates achievement will be recorded and when appropriate, notified to the Central Registry in London who will make the award.

3 Programme Approval Panels and the Process of Credit Rating of Taught Programmes

The authority to approve and credit-rate programmes is delegated by the PQ Consortium's Management Committee to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee. A Panel is set up when the full documentation on the programme is received by the Consortium office. It is chaired by a member of the Quality Assurance Sub-committee and will include two members drawn from the Pool of Assessors along with the Consortium Manager. The Panel will comprise at least one member from an academic institution and one from a social work agency, normally with a mix of genders, and with due attention to excluding any member of the pool who has an 'interest' in the programme being considered. The process for approval and accreditation of programmes through the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland is outlined below. Detailed guidance on the preparation of programmes for accreditation can be found in CCETSW's PQ Handbook Section 1.4 July 2001. Additional guidance for Programme Providers is also available from the PQ Consortium's Manager.

When the full documentation on the programme has been received and a Panel set up that documentation is read by the Panel members, and their views collated by the Chair. Feedback is then given to the Programme Provider either at a meeting, by telephone or in writing. The Programme Provider is invited to suggest a date by which any amendments or additional material will be available. A date is then made for the Panel to meet with the Programme Provider.

At this meeting the members may decide to recommend to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee that:

- the programme and its credit rating be approved
- the programme is not approved
- identified requirements need to be met before approval and credit rating can be given
- the programme be approved with recommendations for amendments or additions

The Panel reports its recommendations to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee for confirmation and recording of the decision. Detailed feedback is prepared

and sent to the Programme Providers (See Forms Appendix). Once the Programme has been approved and credit-rated, it will be subject to the PQ Consortium's quality assurance and review processes on an annual basis. In addition, those who successfully complete the programme and are registered with the PQ Consortium will be notified by the programme, confirmed by the Quality Assurance Sub-committee for professional credit and processed through Central Registry when PQ 1 or a full Post Qualifying or Advanced Award has been achieved.

The Consortium Manager is available to provide information and guidance to programmes applying for credit rating.

List of Approved Programmes in Scotland:

This is currently a separate document published by the Scottish Social Services Council and is available from them or from the PQ Consortium Office.

4 Monitoring and Review of Accredited Programmes

When the Panel recommends to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee that a programme should be approved and credit-rated the Consortium will formally advise the programme provider that continued accreditation within the PQ Framework will be subject to regular monitoring and review. This will require the programme provider to complete our Monitoring and Review form on an annual basis (see Forms Appendix).

Programme providers will also be informed that the Consortium must be advised of all subsequent changes to the accredited programme.

The Quality Assurance Sub Committee will be the Consortium's main mechanism for ensuring that all programme providers meet the requirements as set out in the PQ Handbook from CCETSW. That document will be the foundation for the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland's quality assurance process.

5 Monitoring and Review of Candidates

Candidates who have successfully completed awards may be requested to fill out a questionnaire based on their experiences of being a candidate thus allowing us to monitor candidates' experiences of completing PQ Awards.

ADP statement

Anti-Racism and Anti-Discriminatory Practice

The Scottish PQ Consortium is committed to an equal opportunities policy based on a belief that no person should be discriminated against because of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or marital status. Each of the regional consortia also has their own equal opportunities policies (which are subject to CCETSW approval) as do the service provider agencies and academic institutions that belong to them. Members recognise the importance of integrating an equal opportunities approach within all aspects of the Consortium's functioning.

In relation to both the Consortium and the APAB there is a requirement that in making nominations regional consortia (who can make two nominations to each) bear in mind the need to ensure a balance in terms of gender, race etc. Both bodies also have powers of co-option which can be used, where appropriate, to

facilitate this. Currently there is minority ethnic representation on the Assessment and Programme Approval Board although not the Consortium.

In preparing the Submission document the Forum spent time considering the implications of the anti-racism paper for structures in Scotland and attempting to incorporate this thinking within its credit-rating structures for example, in its guidance to programme providers on meeting the Consortium's requirements for credit-rating and selection for APAB members (Appendix 9 and 13 of the Submission document).

Equal opportunities in relation to access to the awards is a key component of the Consortium's policy. Monitoring of the effectiveness of this will be undertaken in relation to both registration of candidates and the achievement of awards by collecting data on the characteristics of individual candidates (in terms of gender, race, employment status, disability etc.) to establish how registered candidates differ, if at all, from the profile of qualified workers in Scotland eligible to register and, once candidates are registered, whether there are differential outcomes for different groups.

As part of this monitoring strategy the Consortium also intends to follow up people who have indicated a firm interest in registration but not pursued this in an attempt to establish what the disincentives to registration might be. Similarly the Consortium's tracking systems should permit contact to be made e.g. by means of a questionnaire, with registered candidates who do not appear to be making progress towards their award. Collection of this type of data will be undertaken by the administrator, collation and analysis by the development officer, responsibility for taking appropriate action in the light of the findings rests with the Consortium, or where assessment issues are concerned, with the APAB.

Data from equal opportunities monitoring and the Consortium's response to this will be made available to CCETSW on an annual basis in line with that organisation's requirements.

Appeals procedure

There will be a right to appeal against decisions of the Quality Assurance Sub Committee. The sole grounds for appeal will be that quality assurance procedures have not been properly followed. If the appeal is upheld the decision will be referred back to the Quality Assurance Sub Committee with a recommendation that it reconsiders its decision. If the appeal is not upheld the decision will stand and there will be no further appeal against this.

Appeals will be heard by an adhoc committee of the PQ Consortium made up of 3 of the latter's members. No Consortium member with a direct interest in the outcome of an appeal as a programme provider will be permitted to hear such an appeal.

Complaints Procedure

1 Introduction

The Complaints Procedure has been formulated to ensure that any formal complaints regarding the operation of the Consortium can be dealt with through a recognized mechanism. It is important to distinguish between informal complaints arising from minor or incidental problems, which should be dealt with if possible through brief discussions, and formal complaints where the complaint remains unresolved after preliminary discussions. This Complaints Procedure is there for the resolution of the latter.

An issue for consideration is whether the situation complained of results from the operation of the Consortium or concerns some activity or problem relating to an employing agency or individual members of an agency. If a complaint is against an agency or individual members of an agency then the complainer should be directed towards that agency.

Where a complaint concerns the operation of a post-qualifying programme accredited by the Consortium then the complainant would normally be expected to first make full use of that Programme provider's complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint once these processes have been exhausted then they may complain to the Consortium. The Consortium will focus solely on the extent to which the complaint was dealt with under the Programme's agreed procedures.

The Consortium reserves the right to postpone consideration of a complaint if the matter complained of may have a bearing or relate to any matter that is likely to be OR is the subject of legal proceedings OR if professional confidentiality to any person in receipt of social work intervention may be breached during the process of dealing with the complaint. If the complainant so wishes, the complaints procedure may be reactivated when any legal proceedings have been fully concluded. The Consortium will take steps to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to avoid any breach of confidentiality.

2 Procedure

The aim of the Complaints Procedure is to ensure equity and fairness in the operation of the Consortium and its Committees. Complaints hearings will attempt to resolve matters impartially. The Complaints Hearing is not a legal hearing.

1. Complaints should be made in writing to the Consortium Manager, who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 14 days. (Where complaints are concerned with the Manager please refer to sections 16 - 18 of this procedure)
2. The Consortium Manager will investigate the complaint. The Manager will consider the results of the investigation and if he/she considers it appropriate make a response to the complaint. When a decision is reached at this stage, the Consortium Manager will convey the results of the investigation in writing to the Complainant
3. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Consortium Manager then he/she should write to the Chair of the Consortium within 14

days of receiving the decision and request a Hearing before a Complaints Panel.

4. The Chair will write to the Complainant within 14 days advising of the date of the Complaints Panel, which should be convened within 28 days of the request, or as soon as possible thereafter.
5. The Complainant will be advised in writing of the composition of the Complaints Panel. He/she will also be advised of her/his right to attend the hearing and be accompanied by a colleague of her/his choice, who may speak on her/his behalf.
6. If the parties to the complaint wish the Panel to consider any written information they should submit this to the Chair of the Consortium at least 7 days prior to the date of the Panel. The Chair will arrange for copies of such documentation to be circulated to the other parties concerned and to the members of the Panel.
7. The Chair should be informed of the number and identity of witnesses the parties wish to present.
8. The Complaints Panel will consist of the Chair or her/his nominee and two members of the Management Committee or Consortium sub-committees. No one can be appointed as a Panel member if they have been involved in previous discussions about the complaint, or if they were party to decisions or procedures that are now the subject of the complaint.
9. The Chair of the Consortium or her/his nominee will Chair the Complaints Panel.
10. The Chair of the Panel has the power to request the attendance of any witness(es) that he/she considers relevant to the consideration of the complaint.
11. The conduct of any Hearing will be at the discretion of its Chair guided by the requirements of these procedures.
12. The Chair of the Panel will ask all parties to the complaint, including witnesses, to withdraw prior to the Complaints Panel making its decision.
13. The Chair of the Panel has the power to adjourn the Hearing for further information/guidance to be gathered.
14. The Complainant will receive the Panel's decision in writing, signed by the Chair of the Panel within 7 days.
15. The Complainant has no right of appeal against the decision of the Complaints Panel but may decide to make a complaint to CCETSW.
16. Where the complaint concerns the Consortium Manager then the matter should be put in writing to the Chair of the Consortium. He/she will arrange for the matter to be investigated by a member of the Consortium Management Committee.
17. The member charged with the investigation will, following the investigation, make a response to the complaint. They should convey this in writing to the complainant, normally within 28 days of the complaint being received.

18. Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this complaint the procedure outlined in sections 3 – 15 of this procedure applies.

Conversion tables

These are available as a separate document.

FAQs

1. I think I registered for the PQ/AA Award three years ago but I haven't managed to put a submission together yet, what do I need to do and how long have I got left to do it in?

You have five years from the date on which you registered to complete your award. However, if you haven't done anything yet you should consider working to the 'new' PQ/AA requirements. To do so you will probably need some advice and guidance. Contact your local Social Work Training Department or go directly to the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland office to find out what to do.

2. I need help with my portfolio, who should I ask?

Your local Social Work Training Officers or the PQ Consortium Manager can either advise you directly or they may be able to put you in touch with a mentor who will meet with you on a few occasions to guide you in your work. They may also know of a workshop you can attend where you will meet PQ/AA candidates and obtain help with the structure and/or content of your submissions.

3. Where can I obtain written guidance about the PQ/AA competencies?

From the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland office at Ross House, 20 Melville Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NQ, tel/fax: 01786 446430; Email pqswscot@hotmail.com.

4. I'm going to do my Mental Health Officer training, Practice Teaching Award or Child Protection Certificate in a few months time, will this count towards my PQ Award and what can I do in the meantime?

Completion of all these courses automatically counts towards the PQ Award. (Other courses may also count and a leaflet listing these and what each is worth in terms of PQ or AA credits can be obtained from the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland office. If you have been qualified for at least a year and haven't started on a taught programme yet, you can undertake the first part of the PQ Award which is called PQ1. (See question 11 for more information about PQ1).

5. How do I change my registration from PQ to AA?

Write a letter to the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland stating when you registered for PQ and explaining why you wish to change to AA. There will be an additional fee required to upgrade from PQSW to AASW (£52 from Sept. '03). You will be expected to provide some evidence that your current work is conducted at a strategic level e.g. that you manage people or projects, have developed links with staff at senior levels in social service and allied organisations and have training, research or senior practitioner responsibilities.

6. How long after I've qualified can I register for PQ?

Normally between one and two years - this is to allow you to develop the competencies you held at the point of qualification, in a practice setting, including taking on some responsibility for the management of cases involving risks such as might arise in relation to child protection or community care of people with mental illness, dementia or complex and multiple problems. Potential PQ candidates who have been qualified for a long time but who do not have specialist qualifications are strongly advised to seek guidance before beginning to put a portfolio together. A mentor may be available. Please contact the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland for advice and information.

7. Do I have to do PQ before I can do AA?

No, if a substantial amount of your work is normally conducted at a strategic level and you are a manager, researcher, trainer or senior practitioner you can apply for AA.

8. I already have a degree. What is the point in doing a PQ/AA award? What is it worth?

The work submitted for the PQ Award is 'at degree level' but does not automatically carry academic credits. Similarly, the work for AA is at

Masters level but does not automatically carry M credits. PQ and AA credits are what is known as 'professional' credits - once achieved they assure employers and the public that you have reached the agreed standards of professional competence described by the Framework of Requirements.

PQ/AA is validated by the four Regulatory Councils established during 2001 who now have responsibility for the functions previously carried out by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) and recognised by the National Training Organisation for social work and social care, TOPSS, and by an increasing number of agencies in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. These Councils are likely to use the Framework in the creation of standards for registration so achievement now will stand you in good stead for any future requirements which might be placed upon you.

There are some taught courses which give you both academic and professional PQ or AA credits and a leaflet listing these is available from the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland.

9. How do I know if I've pitched my submission at the right level and if my reflective writing is good enough to meet the standard required for PQ/AA?

The best way to reassure yourself is to look at examples of work which have been 'passed' by the assessment process. For PQ candidates, a publication is available from your local Social Work Training Department or from the PQ Consortium office called: "Reflecting Practice and Reflective Writing" Coles M. (2002) which includes extracts from successful PQ and Advanced Award submissions. The key issues for reflective writing are as follows:-

- **clear distinction between fact and opinion and accounting for both by means of careful analysis and references to the work of others.**
- **evaluation of your own responses to what occurred in the work under analysis and evidence of having learned from experience in the context of explicit theory and models.**

For PQ, the references must be directly relevant, should include some which are up to date but not be very extensive. They should be used to inform a critique of your experience in the areas of work described by the PQ requirements and include research.

For AA, a much wider range of literature should be consulted and reflection provided which involves a critical analysis of the theories themselves, as well as of your own work in the areas described by the AA requirements.

Guidance on the detailed requirements for both PQ and AA (i.e. word counts, amount and type of evidence etc.) is available from the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland.

10. What is the difference between the 'old' and the current PQ Framework?

The 'old' PQ and AA Awards were described using paragraph numbers from the CCETSW policy document Paper 31 which set out the

original PQ/AA Framework. For PQ, these were paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6, and for AA, paragraphs 4.4.3 (i) to 4.4.3 (xii).

Since 1998 we have been working to new/revised requirements PQ 1-6 and AA 1-8. Candidates will be given credit for 'Old' requirements and the appropriate conversion details are in Appendix * .

The current PQ is still worth 120 credits. PQ1 is worth 40 credits and is the consolidation section of the Award in which you must demonstrate that you have developed your skills in the most fundamental aspects of social work practice to a point which is demonstrably higher than that achieved at DipSW. You may or may not do PQ1 first, as it is possible to achieve the other parts of PQ through a combination of a taught course such as Mental Health Officer training or Child Protection Certificate with the Practice Teaching Award. The current AA has 8 requirements, AA1 to AA8, instead of the former 12.

The value base of social work is now woven through the requirements for PQ and AA, as is the requirement to demonstrate the influence of critical analysis and reflection. These two are known as the 'Core Requirements' and must be explicitly addressed in the claims for all the other requirements.

11. What is PQ1 and do I have to do this first?

PQ1 is the consolidation of the new PQ Award and amounts to one third of it i.e. 40 professional credits. You don't have to do PQ1 first but if you haven't met any other PQ requirements yet and are ready to start this would be advisable. Guidance about how to tackle PQ1 is available from the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland.

12. What does PQ/AA cost and can I get any financial assistance?

The cost of registration for PQ is £201 and for AA £252 – from 1st Sept. 2003 these fees increase to £202 for PQ and £254 for AA.

If you are attending a taught course for which PQ and AA credits are awarded, the assessment costs will be incorporated into the total fees charged by those delivering the course.

Mentoring costs £25 per hour of contact time plus travel expenses.

A bursary scheme exists to help those candidates who are unable to obtain sufficient financial support from their employers to pay for all that is required to achieve the Award. Please ask the PQ Consortium Manager for information about this.

Partnership Organisations

Kate Pryde
Chair of PQ Consortium
PQ Consortium for
Social Work in Scotland
Ross House
20 Melville Terrace
STIRLING FK8 2NQ

Tel: 01786 446430
Fax: 01786 446430
Email pqswscot@hotmail.com
:

Mary Coles
PQ Consortium Manager
PQ Consortium for
Social Work in Scotland
Ross House
20 Melville Terrace
STIRLING FK8 2NQ

Tel: 01786 446430
Fax: 01786 446430
Email pqswscot@hotmail.com
:

Patricia McDonald
PQ Consortium
Administrator
PQ Consortium for
Social Work in Scotland
Ross House
20 Melville Terrace
STIRLING FK8 2NQ

Tel: 01786 446430
Fax: 01786 446430
Email pqswscot@hotmail.com
:

North of Scotland Consortium

Development Officer
Voluntary Service Aberdeen
38 Castle Street
ABERDEEN AB11 5YU

Tel: 01224 589077 Fax: 01224
: 589650
Email nosc@ndirect.co.uk
:

Andrea Lawrie
Administrator
Voluntary Service Aberdeen
38 Castle Street
ABERDEEN AB11 5YU

Tel: 01224 Fax: 01224
589088 589650
Email nosc@ndirect.co.uk
:

South East Scotland Consortium

Wendy Paterson
Development Officer
c/o City of Edinburgh Council
Shrubhill House
Shrub Place
EDINBURGH EH7 4PD

Tel: 0131 553 8309 Fax: 0131 553
: 8368
Email (care kathleen.mcclean@edinburgh.gov.uk
of):

Kathleen McLean
Administrator
c/o City of Edinburgh Council
Shrubhill House
Shrub Place
EDINBURGH EH7 4PD

Tel: 0131 553 8309 Fax: 0131 553
: 8368
Email kathleen.mcclean@edinburgh.gov.uk
:

West of Scotland Consortium

Manager
c/o City of Glasgow
Social Work Services Training Team
117 Brook Street
Bridgeton
GLASGOW G40 3AP

Tel: 0141 554 9897 Fax: 0141 554 9959
Email denise.alexander@wofscon.com

Tayforth Partnership

Sheila Spittal
Administrator
26, Glen Eagles Ave.
Glenrothes
FIFE KY6 2QA

Tel: 01592 751336 Fax: 01592 751336
Email sheilaspittal@blueyonder.co.uk

Scottish Social Services Council

Janet Spence
Learning & Development Adviser
Scottish Social Services Council
Compass House
Riverside Drive
DUNDEE DD1 4XA

Tel: 01382 207101 Fax: 01382 207215
Email janet.spence@sssc.uk.com

