

Information for Learners

Undertaking Qualifications Scotland (QS) Accredited Courses with WEA Scotland

Your QS Qualification / Unit Title	QS Unit Number

Your Course Tutor	
WEA Address	
WEA Telephone Number	WEA Email address

WEA QS Unit Internal Verifiers	Contact telephone number and Email

WEA QS Head of Centre	Contact telephone number and Email
Craig Brown	c.brown@wea.ac.uk

WEA Scotland is an approved QS centre
Centre Number 559 2631



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WELCOME

This Handbook

The front cover of this handbook should be filled in with information specific to the course you are undertaking. If it is not, please contact the WEA to get this information completed.

This learner information handbook also provides you with some general information you may find useful. There may be many other questions you would like to ask and you will have an opportunity to do this when you are with your course tutor. We hope to provide you with the opportunity to find out as much as possible about the WEA Scotland, QS and your course. During the first class meeting you will also have an opportunity to get to know other members of your group with whom you will spend most of your time during the course.

Guidance and Learner Support

For each course you undertake there is a Course Tutor who will provide information and support relating to your work. Your Course Tutor will give you as much help as possible, but he/she is not a mind reader! Please ask for help when you need it. We will do our very best to help.

Your tutor will also help you with information, advice and discussion about other learning opportunities, both within the WEA and elsewhere, and will be able to refer you on to other people who can help if you need more detailed advice and discussion.

If you have a disability, a learning difficulty, a health issue or other support needs, we will do our best to provide specialist staff and resources to help you succeed on your course.

If you would like support, and you have not already indicated on the WEA's Course Enrolment Form, please let your tutor know as soon as possible. Your Tutor or WEA Course Manager will discuss your support needs with you. The information you provide may need to be passed to other staff who can provide or arrange support. We may also suggest that we talk to other organisations who may have helpful knowledge. If we need to talk to someone else on your behalf, we will ask your permission.

At the beginning of the course your tutor will give you an overview of the QS unit you are undertaking and discuss the contents of this handbook with you so that you and your fellow learners understand what is involved and what is expected of you.

We hope that you will greatly enjoy your time with us and that you achieve your aims.

Good Luck.

HOW WE WORK

The WEA is a democratic voluntary organisation, which since 1903 has worked to extend educational opportunities for adults. Our learners and members participate in every area of the WEA's work, from making policy decisions about the management of the Association locally and nationally, to organising courses and deciding the content of a class.

The WEA is respected as an important provider of innovative adult education and as such receives funding from the Scottish Government and Local Authorities, but we must also earn a substantial proportion of our funding from other sources. The WEA is a non-profit making charity.

The WEA is different from Colleges and Universities in that:

- it is a voluntary organisation, not a statutory body.
- it is a democratic body, controlled by its learners.
- there are no examinations at the end of WEA courses, and only a small number of courses carry qualifications.
- We have voluntary members and staff working throughout Scotland and classes are held in small towns like Kilmarnock, the rural areas in the Highlands and Islands, the fishing villages in Fife and across the central belt from Greenock to Edinburgh.

What sort of classes does the WEA run?

WEA classes are friendly, informal and enjoyable, but this does not mean that they do not have a serious purpose or that they do not tackle difficult or challenging subjects. By respecting the many and varied life experiences of the learners in the group, and by tutors and learners sharing together their knowledge and information, WEA classes provide a unique forum for learning.

WEA approach to learning:

Central to the WEA's approach to learning is embedding core skills, including literacies and information technology, building citizenship skills including confidence and critical understanding, into courses, regardless of the subject or issue being studied. The approach includes:

- Valuing and making use of students' life experience
- Involving students in organising provision and planning their own learning
- Targeting students who have benefited least from the school system and from opportunities for further and higher education
- Collaborating with other organisations and agencies to meet the needs of adult learners for educational guidance, equal access to provision, and for relevant, progressive learning opportunities
- Offering high quality learning experiences underpinned by regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme
- Encouraging student ownership of the learning process, providing explicit outcomes to learning programmes, recording achievement, and, where appropriate, offering external accreditation
- Employing appropriately qualified and experienced staff
- Providing staff development opportunities for professional staff and training for voluntary members
- Promoting and supporting the voluntary movement by which the association governs itself and decides its future strategy

QS ACCREDITED UNITS - Explained

What is a QS Accredited Unit?

The term 'QS' is shorthand for Qualifications Scotland. A QS unit is a unit of study usually lasting 40 hours and, in most cases, spread over a 13-week block of time. Each unit has a title and a number of learning outcomes. In addition, WEA offers 10-hour bite size units in Numeracy and Communication and Personal Development Awards for ESOL and Literacies practitioners.

What is a Learning Outcome?

An outcome is a recognised level of knowledge or skills to be demonstrated by the learner in order to prove competency, (**i.e. you have to show that you can do it**). When all the learning outcomes have been successfully achieved, the unit is credited to the learner's 'Record of Education and Training'.

How does assessment take place?

Units are assessed initially by your tutor but may also be assessed by the WEA's Internal Verifier and by officially appointed QS External Verifiers who scrutinise the internal assessments made by the WEA Scotland to ensure the standard is nationally acceptable.

Opportunities for remediation and reassessment

You must meet all of the learning outcomes to be awarded an QS qualification. If the work you submit in the first instance does not meet the standard required for the specific qualification your tutor will provide guidance on what you need to do. You will be offered an opportunity to make changes and/or additions to remediate your work. Your work will then be reassessed, and your tutor will inform you of the outcome.

HOW TO APPEAL

Stage 1

If you are unhappy with the result of your assessment, you have 5 working days from the date you receive the assessment result, to appeal to your tutor.

You must make clear the reason for the appeal. Your tutor will acknowledge your appeal within 3 working days and will invite you to discuss the matter. They will contact the assessor (where this was not the person directly assessing your work) to gain further information. They will use this information to inform discussions and will keep a written record of this, detailing the outcome and the date of this outcome.

An outcome must be reached within 14 working days of the tutor acknowledging receipt of your appeal. The appeal outcomes will be reported to the appropriate awarding body, as necessary.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can ask for your appeal information to be forwarded to the Internal Verifier who will conduct a review.

Stage 2

The Internal Verifier will confirm receipt of your appeal information within 3 working days. They will contact the tutor/assessor to discuss the reasons for your appeal and will investigate.

In some cases, the Internal Verifier will decide that you should be re-assessed by another assessor (with experience of the subject area). Where this isn't possible, the internal verifier will internally verify your assessment and provide both you and your tutor with feedback.

You may be offered the opportunity (depending on the Internal Verifier's decisions) to either:

- a. Contribute additional work needed to achieve
- b. Re-sit assessment activities

This process must be completed within 14 working days of the Internal Verifier acknowledging receipt of your appeal. The outcome will be recorded.

The appeal outcomes will be reported to the appropriate awarding body, as necessary. If you are still unhappy with the outcome, you can ask for your appeal information to be forwarded to the Accreditation Manager who will make a final decision.

Stage 3

The Accreditation Manager will confirm receipt of your appeal information within 3 working days. They will contact the tutor/assessor and the Internal Verifier to discuss the reasons for your appeal and the outcomes to date.

The Accreditation Manager will investigate and inform you directly of the outcome of your appeal within 14 working days of them acknowledging receipt of your appeal.

The decision of the Accreditation Manager is final.

The appeal outcomes will be reported to the appropriate awarding body, as necessary.

You maintain the right to make a complaint following this final decision – please refer to the WEA's Complaints Procedure.

Record Retention

When an appeal is investigated, the WEA will retain related records and documentation for 3 years.

Records should include any scanned copies of student work, assessment or verification records, appeal records and outcomes. These will be secured digitally.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is about copying someone else's work and handing it in as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally.

WEA Scotland's Qualifications Scotland Units and other academic awards are given in recognition of a learner's personal achievement. All work submitted by learners for assessment is accepted on the understanding that it is the learner's own effort so obviously copying another learner's work is not allowed.

The development of the Internet has made information much more readily available to everyone and so we have set out some rules for you to follow to help you avoid any problems.

To avoid the risk of plagiarism, any work which has been copied (from a book, a magazine or the internet, etc.) must have quote marks ("") around it along with the name of the original author / document/ magazine title / website address. You are allowed to use this in your work; you just must make it clear that you are quoting the information and give recognition to the person who originally wrote it.

The main areas where you will need to use quotes and give the author are:

- A direct quotation.
- A close paraphrase (using similar wording to the original text).
- An unacknowledged summary of a source.
- Direct copying or transcription.
- Text from the Internet

If a learner is suspected of plagiarism, the course tutor shall speak to the learner informally to point out the plagiarism in question. If the learner and tutor are in agreement, then the piece of work should be suitably altered and re-submitted. It is hoped that this informal route will resolve most cases.

If the learner is unhappy with the tutor's response, she/he can appeal the decision.

Information on making an **appeal** is available within this document.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence is a label used to describe any type of artificial intelligence (AI) that is used to create text, prose, formulae, code, images, video or audio. ChatGPT and Google Gemini are two examples of generative AI tools.

Learners cannot submit AI outputs as their own work

Learners are **not** permitted to use generative AI tools to create outputs – for example text, prose, formulae, code, images, video, audio – that they then submit as their own work for assessment tasks that contribute towards an QS qualification. These tasks include: exams, unit assessments, coursework, and portfolios. Doing so would constitute **plagiarism** and could result in awards being cancelled.

For more information see the QS website:

[Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in assessments - QS](#)

MALPRACTICE

Malpractice is a term which covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the assessment process or the integrity of an QS qualification, the validity of an QS certificate, or the reputation and credibility of QS. This may be intentional or unintentional.

WEA has a policy on malpractice which will be explained to you at the beginning of your course. You may request a copy of the full policy, see 'Additional Information'.

If you have any concerns about malpractice, please discuss these with your tutor. Alternatively, you may contact the WEA, see 'Additional Information'.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Learner Agreement

We want you to get the most from your course with the WEA. Please read the statement below which sets out the agreement between learners and the WEA to ensure that learning opportunities are of a high standard. A discussion of these points should also be held with the tutor, yourself and other members of the course.

The WEA Will

- Take positive action to promote equality and diversity
- Provide information about the course before you enrol
- Check what you want to get from the course and whether it is suitable for you
- Provide you with an introduction to the WEA and the course.
- Provide you with a safe learning environment
- Check with you whether you need any extra help
- Provide this extra help as far as is reasonably possible
- Provide suitably qualified, experienced and supportive tutors

- Keep you informed about your progress and achievement
- Let you know about opportunities for involvement in activities related to your course, and in the WEA
- Provide you with information and advice on what you could go on to do from this course
- Provide opportunities for you to let us know what you think about the course and the WEA
- Deal with any complaints about its education provision and organisation efficiently and courteously.

As a learner you should:

- Attend punctually and regularly
- Pay any required fees when asked to do so
- Let your tutor know of any unavoidable absences from the course
- Let your tutor know of anything, e.g. health condition, which could affect your ability to participate in your course
- Let your tutor know about any extra help you need to complete the course
- Contribute to a positive and safe learning environment for yourself and others
- Keep a record of your learning and progress, with the support of your tutor
- Let your tutor know if you are leaving the course, or if there are any changes in circumstances (change of address etc).
- Return any borrowed materials and resources
- Abide by the WEA Equality and Diversity Policy
- Keep to the WEA Code of Conduct and if applicable, the WEA Computer Use Policy (See appendix 1)

Code of Conduct

When participating in WEA courses and activities, the following behaviours are expected of all staff, students and members:

- Act in a responsible way to safeguard your own health and safety and that of others (in line with the WEA Health and Safety Policy)
- Respect for the different backgrounds, experiences and lifestyles of others.
- Act in ways which do not discriminate against people of different backgrounds (in line with the WEA Equality and Diversity Policy*)
- Use respectful language and be sensitive to avoid offending others, e.g. racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, or language offensive to people with a disability
- If you feel you have been treated with a lack of respect, been harassed, or discriminated against, you can contact either the Course Tutor, the Course Manager, or the WEA Director for Scotland. They will follow up your complaint with you
- Comply with any other policies of the centre. They will be displayed in the classroom, if applicable

All policies are available on request from your WEA local area office, or the WEA Scotland headquarters, address and contact details at the foot of this page.

Health and Safety

Everyone is responsible for ensuring the safety of themselves and of others and must be careful and observe safety in the classroom and surrounding areas. The WEA Tutor will advise you of the Health and Safety arrangements specific for the course and venue e.g. Fire Exits and evacuation procedures.

What to do if there is an accident:

Report the accident immediately to your tutor or another member of staff (failure to record accidents and receive First Aid may have serious consequences).

Personal Information

For your own safety, you are also advised not to share any personal contact details with fellow learners.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service provided by the WEA, we promise to take our complaint seriously and treat it confidentially. Passing on personal information about you is protected by the Data Protection Act. However, there are some situations – for example, complaints about assessment grades – where we may need to involve other organisations. If so, we will explain this and ask you if you agree to continue. If you disagree, we may not be able to resolve your complaint fully. The WEA will keep records of complaints for 6 years from the date of the last action relating to the complaint. These will be secured digitally.

If you want to complain, here's what you can do

It helps if you speak straight away to the people directly involved, as they may be able to put things right immediately without any need to take matters further. There are, however, times when you do not wish to do this. For example, you may disagree with the way someone has treated you or you may simply feel uncomfortable making a complaint when it involves someone you know personally.

If you would like someone else to consider your complaint, contact your nearest Regional Office or the Student Support Centre (contact details below). State that you want to complain. Give as much information as you can about what has happened, including times, dates, places and names. You will get a first response within 5 working days of receipt of complaint. If further investigation is needed, your complaint will usually be referred to Student Services and Safeguarding Manager who will involve other people where appropriate. If this is the case, you will be informed who is investigating your complaint. You will receive a response within 20 working days.

Depending upon the complaint, there are further stages that you can go through if you are still not satisfied. For complaints relating to assessment decisions, please refer to the Appeals against Assessment policy. For Discretionary Learner Support appeals, see our separate Appeals procedure for Discretionary Learner Support.

In all other cases, if you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may appeal to the Chief Executive and General Secretary. They will investigate further and respond to you, usually within 10 working days of receiving your appeal.

Finally, if you remain unsatisfied with the way in which we have handled your complaint, you maintain the right to appeal beyond the WEA – for example, to the bodies that allocate our funding. If your course is QS accredited, all candidates have the right to complain to QS about assessment-related matters (but not assessment judgements), once you have exhausted the WEA's complaints procedure.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOU

- **Additional Support from the WEA**

If you have any additional needs, you may wish to discuss your support needs with your tutor. He or she will always try to make reasonable adjustments to class arrangements to ensure that you will get the best from your course. If you do not feel comfortable discussing your support needs directly with your tutor, you can contact WEA staff at your local office. They will be able to discuss how best we can help you. Only with your agreement will this discussion be reported back to the tutor or raised with other organisations that may be able to offer help.

Examples of support we may be able to offer include:

- Extra tutor support or help in the classroom
- Specialist equipment you may need
- Class material in different formats i.e. In large print
- Any special arrangements which can be made for you in examinations or assessment

Where is the information about me kept?

We keep all personal data confidential. It can only be accessed by WEA staff whose job it is to meet your needs and would only be passed on (with your permission) to others on a need-to-know- bases. For example, if you are taking an exam as part of your course and need some alternative arrangements – maybe extra time to help you complete it – this information would need to be shared with the tutor and the examination board.

Qualifications Scotland (QS) will receive data from WEA to register you for an award and to issue your certificate. For information about how long they can retain your data, and how to change your consent to being contacted, please visit <https://www.QS.org.uk/QS/45397.html>

Access

The WEA audits the resources available in all its teaching venues, your local WEA Office will be able to give you up-to-date information about access at specific sites.

The sooner you can make contact with us the better, as sometimes support and take a while to organise. If we cannot provide the support you need, we will tell you and try to help you find alternative provision.

- **Safeguarding**

Why do we need safeguarding?

Safeguarding covers the full range of preventative measures in place to protect young people and vulnerable adults from potential danger, including sexual, physical, emotional and financial abuse, neglect and acts of omission and discriminatory abuse.

Part of the tutor's role is to contribute to creating a safe and welcoming environment through:

- Ensuring a non-discriminatory and respectful environment

- Supporting learners
- Ensuring everyone feel safe
- Actively preventing harm, particularly to vulnerable adults

Tutors should make it clear to learners that they can raise concerns directly with their tutor or with the designated WEA person in their local area or region if they prefer.

- **Equality and Diversity**

The WEA places great importance on Equal Opportunities, taking positive steps towards meeting and encouraging equal opportunity practices on its courses and workshops and paying special attention to accessibility, curriculum design and delivery, learner support and learner costs.

Recognising that the lives of individuals are damaged by discrimination at all levels of society; the Association believes that education plays a major role in challenging discrimination and disadvantage.

The Association promotes full and lifelong access to education. It upholds the right of everyone to be treated with respect and dignity and values the differences in backgrounds and experience that a multi-cultural society

- The Association will strive to remove barriers to involvement at all levels and to encourage and celebrate diversity by enabling learners to determine their own educational needs and priorities at a local level.
- No one involved in the work of the Association will receive less favourable treatment because of their age, gender, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, faith, marital or parental status, disability, sexual orientation, HIV status, political belief or social or economic class.
- The Association shall operate within an equal opportunities framework for the delivery of its educational provision, for the organisation of its voluntary membership and for its employment practices.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you would like a copy of any of the following processes and policies they can be obtained from your local WEA office or from the WEA Scotland headquarters Bonnington Bond, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP Telephone: 0131 226 3456 or Email scotland@wea.ac.uk

- WEA Complaints Procedure
- WEA Malpractice Policy
- Full WEA Equality and Diversity Policy, including statements on the Race Equality & Disability Discrimination
- Full WEA Health and Safety Policy
- Full WEA Safeguarding Policy and Information leaflet
- WEA Scotland Membership forms

Would you consider supporting the WEA?

Why WEA Membership is Important

WEA Scotland is a voluntary organisation which provides adult education based on democratic principles through the participation of its students and voluntary members. Its structure offers the benefits of a national organisation with local accountability and responsiveness through its Local Associations.

As a democratic voluntary organisation, our members are our lifeblood. We know that there are very many people who recognise the importance of the work done by the Association and who support the values and purpose of the WEA. Our members who share our aims and objectives, may participate in the democratic governance of the Association and/or contribute voluntary work in support of our programmes or simply record their support by subscribing to the WEA.

Interested in joining the WEA?

If you wish to become a member of the WEA, please contact your local area office, or the WEA Scotland headquarters unit or visit <https://www.wea.org.uk/volunteering>

WEA Students' Computer Use Policy

- Do not bring food or drink near computer equipment
- Do not load any software, e.g. games, music, screensavers
- Do not make any changes to the connection or configuration of any computer equipment
- Do not use disks from unknown sources or from home computers. If you use a disk to save your work, leave it in the computer room at the end of each class
- You must not send racist, defamatory, obscene, indecent, abusive, offensive, harassing or misleading messages
- You must not view, download or pass on any pornographic material or use obscene or offensive screensavers
- Do not open any e-mail messages unless you are certain it is from a reliable source. Your tutor will give you guidance
- If you think your computer has a virus, report it immediately to your tutor
- Do not give passwords to anyone outside the WEA
- The WEA reserves the right to monitor your use of our computer system
- Comply with any other policies of this centre. They will be displayed in the classroom, if applicable