



Internal Assessment Report 2013
Higher National and Vocational Qualifications
Brickwork

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

Higher National Units

General comments

All centres continue to deliver this qualification effectively with all staff having a clear understanding of the required Unit and national standards.

All External Verifiers' reports commented on the high quality of candidate practical brickwork evidence on display at centres visited. This confirmed that centre staff and candidates had a firm grasp of the required standards and tolerances for this qualification.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All External Verifiers reported that centre staff had a clear understanding of all Unit specification requirements for each specialist brickwork Unit, both in terms of practical competence and knowledge.

Centres continue to use the SQA-developed PDA Bricklaying SCQF 7 Training and Assessment Programme (TAPs) materials effectively for the delivery of the assessment process, and again the External Verifier reports confirmed that centre staff are familiar and comfortable with these assessments.

Evidence Requirements

Staff at centres delivering this qualification have a sound and consistent understanding of the Evidence Requirements for individual Units.

Candidates undertaking this qualification continue to produce high quality practical brickwork evidence, well in excess of the Unit Evidence Requirements. Candidates continue to achieve success in national competitions with the skills and knowledge gained on this programme.

Administration of assessments

All centres that were verified had robust and supportive internal verification systems which ensured that the delivery and administration of the assessment process was both consistent and effective.

All centres verified had internal verification reported as a key strength and this strength is also evident in the fact that only one minor development point was noted across all centres visited.

Assessments continue to be delivered in a professional and consistent manner with the high quality candidate evidence underpinning this view.

General feedback

External Verifiers reported that the quality of candidate practical evidence was very high at all centres verified. Candidates accessed assessment opportunities through a variety of attendance and delivery modes to meet candidate and employer needs and exigencies. Feedback from assessments was focused, supportive and developmental, and candidates valued this and were encouraged to reflect on the feedback before the next assessment.

Areas of good practice

All of the external verification reports for session 2012–13 highlighted and reported aspects of good practice in the delivery of the PDA Bricklaying SCQF 7 for:

- ◆ quality of practical brickwork evidence
- ◆ internal verification practice and support
- ◆ supportive feedback to candidates after assessments

Individual centres had good practice highlighted in relation to:

- ◆ professional approach to the delivery of the qualification
- ◆ staff/candidate relationships
- ◆ specialist facilities for delivery of the qualification

Specific areas for improvement

Only one minor enhancement point was noted by one External Verifier and this related to the Arch Unit and specifically the size of the bull's-eye drawing which was too small to see the voussoirs clearly.

SVQ awards

General comments

All centres have a well established understanding of the requirements of the national standards as defined by the standard setting body Construction Skills. Almost all External Verifiers commented on the high quality of candidate practical brickwork evidence on display at centres, which is the real measure of candidates consistently reaching and exceeding national occupational standards.

The SQA-developed Training and Assessment Programmes (TAPs) are well defined in terms of assessing the ability of candidates to progress towards national standards.

Some centres were commended by the External Verifiers for meeting and sometimes exceeding industry standards and for maintaining a high quality of candidate practical work in light of the late withdrawal of the new TAPs in October 2012 and the change back to the old TAPs.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of specialist brickwork Unit specifications and their TAP assessments. External Verifiers reported that centre staffs' familiarisation of generic Unit requirements impacted on effective integration of specialist and generic Units at more than a few centres.

However, at almost all centres, staff understanding and familiarisation of Unit specifications ensured that the very late withdrawal of the new TAPs and PDA Units in favour of the old ones had little impact on the candidates and their assessment experience.

Evidence Requirements

In all centres that were externally verified there was a well-established, clear and unequivocal understanding of the Evidence Requirements for almost all specialist brickwork Units, and this was evident from the positive comments and items of good practice highlighted by External Verifiers.

The single exception to this was in relation to the quality of drawings and sketching at a few centres for the Year 2 TAPs with subjective knowledge questions.

In all External Verifier reports, recorded discussions with centre staff focused on the Evidence Requirements of the new Construction Craft Competence Assessment (Phase Tests) and the Construction Craft Employment Skills (CREWs) Units.

The External Verifier verification meetings of October and December 2012 had directed External Verifiers to support centre staff with the introduction of these additional industry-specific generic Units. This was clearly a major strength of the external verification process last session.

Administration of assessments

External Verifiers reported that assessment planning and administration of the assessment process was effective at all centres verified.

In more than a few centres, External Verifiers highlighted peer formative assessment, constructive and development feedback, photographic evidence, assessment administration, and recording sheets as being particularly effective.

Almost all External Verifier reports noted internal verification as being robust in terms of confirming assessment decisions but also supportive in terms of assessor feedback.

One example of effective feedback from knowledge assessments, and subsequent development needs, was noted by the External Verifier and highlighted as good practice.

Centres continue to encourage candidates to access assessment opportunities at their own pace and this is supported by the effective use of TAPs formative assessments (Tasks) which candidates see as a major strength.

General feedback

In the majority of centres verified, External Verifiers reported that the quality of candidates' practical brickwork was exceptionally good in relation to the candidates' practical experience and stage they had reached in their apprenticeship.

Feedback given to candidates was effective in all centres verified and this was recorded in the candidate TAP record to enable candidates to focus on areas for development both in industry and at the centre.

However, in more than a few centres, development points were noted by External Verifiers concerning the integration and recording of generic Unit competences.

Most centres continued to develop their learning environments and the resources used by candidates to enhance the learner experience.

Areas of good practice

All of the external verification reports for session 2012–13 highlighted and reported areas of good practice in the delivery of the Bricklaying SVQ. Much of this good practice was evident at all centres, specifically:

- ◆ robust internal verification practice
- ◆ effective assessment feedback to candidates at formative and summative assessments

Most external verification reports noted good practice in the following aspects of centre assessment delivery:

- ◆ staff/candidate relationships
- ◆ quality of practical brickwork evidence
- ◆ workshop facilities and resources
- ◆ compliance with the sector skills council assessment strategy

Individual centres had good practice highlighted in relation to:

- ◆ feedback to candidates after knowledge assessments
- ◆ delivery of generic Units
- ◆ quality of candidate drawing and sketching evidence
- ◆ templates for the circular walling TAP

Specific areas for improvement

More than a few centres had areas for improvement reported for the integration and evidence recording for generic Units. However, this will be addressed with the introduction of a specific generic Unit TAP in session 2013–14.

Again, more than a few centres had improvement points noted for the quality of candidate drawing and sketching, especially in Year 2 subjective knowledge assessments.

Individual centres had improvement and enhancement items reported for the following aspects of assessment:

- ◆ vocational CPD for assessors and verifiers
- ◆ CPD logs being current for all staff involved in the assessment process
- ◆ signing and dating candidate portfolio feedback
- ◆ compliance with the assessment strategy in terms of assessor vocational
- ◆ qualifications and experience — rather than one or the other