



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2013  
Carpentry and Joinery**

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

Three centres were visited for the PDA Level 7 award in Carpentry and Joinery. All the assessment decisions were Accepted.

The centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of the national standards and showed some good, innovative ways of delivering this award. The Communications Unit (which is an HNC General Construction Unit, whilst belonging to the 161 Technician moderation group), was being delivered in an integrated and holistic way, which was encouraging. The centres visited were producing work to a good or very good standard, which is to be commended. Centres were also using ICT and VLEs to assist in the delivery of this award, which is also very encouraging and further develops candidates' skills in these areas.

## General comments

Of the three centres visited, all were using the correct SQA Unit specifications and instruments of assessment. There was only one instance where a centre had misinterpreted the requirements for a practical assessment, but this did not have an adverse effect on the outcome, or disadvantage the candidates.

All written assessments sampled were from the exemplar materials provided by SQA for the award.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres visited had a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the award (except as noted above) and were using the recognised assessment exemplars to make consistent, fair and reliable assessment decisions.

## Evidence Requirements

Centres were using very innovative ways to administer the assessments and tried, wherever possible, to have a holistic and integrated approach to assessment. As an example, the Communications Unit requires candidates to demonstrate a range of communication methods, one of which is sketching, and this evidence was being sourced across a range of the other Units contained within the award. This work was being internally and externally verified with no issues raised.

## Administration of assessments

The feedback being provided to candidates was of a high standard and the compilation of candidate portfolios with photographs of their work was commended in one centre. Candidates were being encouraged to stretch themselves and not just be satisfied with producing the minimum requirements for gaining the award. Candidates who were interviewed were very positive about

their experience and could see the benefits, both to themselves and their employers, of studying at this level.

Candidates were very satisfied with access to assessment and particularly commented in one centre that they enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their learning at the end of each Unit.

It was noted in the centres visited that the development of learning materials to support the delivery of this award was very good and that the teaching staff demonstrated a very good team approach to delivery.

### **Areas of good practice**

The following points of good practice were noted for the centres visited:

- ◆ Good quality systems to support the award
- ◆ Feedback to candidates
- ◆ Candidate reflection sheets
- ◆ Photographic evidence for candidates to retain
- ◆ Encouraging candidates to exceed minimum requirements
- ◆ Standard of drawing
- ◆ Standard of practical work

### **Specific areas for improvement**

The following point was noted for improvement across the centres visited:

- ◆ Ensuring candidate portfolios are kept up to date in terms of signatures and dates

# SVQ awards

There were a total of 32 visits undertaken last session with a breakdown as follows:

SVQ 3 Wood Machining	2
SVQ Level 3 Carpentry and Joinery*	30

\*Two were private training providers

Five of the visits were conducted under SQA's New Approach to Quality Assurance.

There were no Holds on certification recommended for any of the 36 visits undertaken, which would indicate that centres have a clear understanding of the requirements of the national standards. However, there has been a lot of uncertainty in centres regarding the implementation of the new Training and Assessment Programme (TAP) that was initially launched in 2012. Centres have coped tremendously well with the challenges of having to revert back to the previous TAP with their 2012 intake and to deliver a hybrid of the two awards. The mapping exercise carried out by SQA certainly assisted to a certain extent but nonetheless centres found it very challenging indeed.

## General comments

Assessors were using new Unit specifications and cross-matching these to the old instruments of assessment, with which they were familiar. This was very challenging, but centre staff continued to assess candidates in a very professional and competent manner.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements of the old TAP and will only really start to develop their knowledge of the requirements of the new TAP in session 2013–14. All centres now have the assessment materials required for the new TAP.

## Evidence Requirements

The new TAP is in a unitised format and the assessment materials have been centrally devised, ensuring they are all at the appropriate SCQF level. Centres should continue to administer assessments in an integrated and holistic manner and to carry out internal verification procedures according to SQA policy. It is encouraging to note that over the last session the majority of centres have been commended on their robust internal verification systems which support the delivery of the award.

## **Administration of assessments**

With very few exceptions, the feedback provided to learners is to a very high standard and is well received. The use of a portfolio encourages feedback to take place and this is being captured in written format as opposed to only the more common verbal feedback. When asked, candidates found this to be a very constructive process and felt it contributed to their overall improvement as they progressed through their course.

Candidates also felt that the design of their course was relevant, achievable and enjoyable. Almost all candidates welcomed the opportunity to undertake work in college, which they may never have experienced on-site, and could see the benefits for both their employer and themselves.

Candidates found that access to assessment was good and that centres were very accommodating in terms of being flexible in the administration of assessments.

It is very encouraging to see a year-on-year increase of ICT playing a greater role in the delivery of these awards. Evidence of 'e-technologies' in both classroom and workshop situations is apparent, with more than a few centres having specific 'apps' available for learners to support their learning.

It is also very encouraging to see reports continuing to feature more examples of sustainability, as well as a general environmental awareness.

The CREWs which were introduced last session have bedded-in to the curriculum and on more than one occasion mention has been made of the high quality of information recorded within these documents as well as detailed photographic evidence. This is particularly encouraging as some centres were very reticent about the administration of this particular part of the award.

## **Areas of good practice**

A sample of the points of good practice noted throughout the visits are noted below. This list is not exhaustive but gives a good cross-sectional flavour of the activities occurring in centres:

- ◆ Use of ICT to support learning
- ◆ Use of ICT to record assessment decisions
- ◆ CREW paperwork available on Moodle (or similar systems) for learners
- ◆ Electronic marking of assessments
- ◆ Good emphasis on health and safety
- ◆ Use of 'apps' for learners
- ◆ Sustainability and environmental awareness
- ◆ Quality of information contained within the CREWs
- ◆ Well motivated learners
- ◆ Standard of work

- ◆ Internal verification systems
- ◆ Staff support

### **Specific areas for improvement**

The only main recurring theme is the timely completion of learners' portfolios. In more than a few centres, staff and learner signatures were missing as well as dates. This, of course, was whilst using the old TAP and hopefully this situation will improve with the implementation of the new TAP, which requires significantly fewer signatures and feedback sheets per Unit.