



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2016
OPITO and Oil Related Awards**

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

SVQ awards

General comments

There were 18 centres running SVQs for this verification group. The active awards that were verified were as follows:

- ◆ G8LY 21 SVQ Processing Operations: Hydrocarbons Level 1 (5 centres)
- ◆ G8M8 23 SVQ Processing Operations: Hydrocarbons Level 3 (7 centres)
- ◆ G8M7 23 SVQ Processing Operations: Hydrocarbons (Control Room) Level 3 (5 centres)
- ◆ GD0J 23 SVQ Processing Engineering Maintenance (Instrument and Control) (4 centres)
- ◆ GD0G 23 SVQ Processing Engineering Maintenance (Electrical) (4 centres)
- ◆ GD0H 23 SVQ Processing Engineering Maintenance (Mechanical) (4 centres)
- ◆ G8M0 22 SVQ Offshore Deck Operations Level 2 (1 centre)

The impact of the downturn in the oil & gas industry continues to have an effect on the numbers of candidates undertaking SVQs. The vast majority of candidates doing SVQs are trainee technicians enrolled in Modern Apprenticeship (MA) schemes.

It is apparent that staff in all centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the SVQ standards for these awards. Assessment materials and documentation produced by all centres ensure that all standards performance criteria are achievable.

There were three non-compliances with quality assurance management system (QAMS) criteria applied to two of the centres and several recommendations were also made by external verifiers to enhance delivery and administration. These were accepted willingly by all centres. Details of non-compliances and recommendations are provided later in this report in the appropriate sections.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres have several assessors assigned to assess the SVQ awards and all appear to be familiar with the guidance and requirements of the standards. Assessment instruments and methods used by all centres ensure that assessment of evidence is standardised and consistent. Detailed procedures and assessor guidance notes are extensively employed by all centres.

All centres issue standard portfolios to all candidates and this assists greatly in ensuring consistency in the assessment process. One of the centres uses an online e-assessment process that ensures standardisation of the assessment process.

All centres utilise CPD and standardisation activities to contribute to ensuring assessors achieve a common understanding of the assessment and verification

requirements. Documenting and recording CPD and standardisation activities remains an area for improvement for most.

Some centres have experienced challenges of staff movements which have impacted on assessor and internal verifier resources. Consequently there are several assessors who are 'in training' and working towards their assessor qualification. One of the centres has outsourced internal verification to a third-party organisation as an interim measure.

Evidence requirements

All centres have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the SVQ awards. Evidence requirements are clearly aligned to the standards and are in all cases, appropriate and adequate. A range of evidence including observation, witness testimonies, candidate personal statements, products of work and Q&A are utilised by all centres. Simulation is also used, in line with the appropriate assessment strategy, for units covering response to emergency situations. Most centres issue standardised portfolios to candidates with guidance on specific evidence requirements clearly stated. One of the centres utilises an online e-assessment process which provides candidates with specific information on types of evidence required.

Administration of assessments

Most assessments are conducted in the workplace in onshore and offshore oil and gas facilities and petrochemical/refinery plant. There are three centres that deliver Level 1 SVQs (G8LY 21) in a training environment. Some centres, where possible, assign assessors to candidates who work similar shift patterns to ensure maximum contact between candidates and assessors is maintained. Other centres with candidates located in offshore facilities utilise 'third party' assessors who maintain contact with candidates by e-mail and telephone with regular, planned onshore meetings.

Workplace assessments are generally planned in line with operational activities to ensure that 'naturally occurring' assessment opportunities are utilised as much as possible.

A non-compliance was identified at one centre as there was no evidence of internal verifier involvement in any of the assessments completed up to the date of the QV visit. This was a non-compliance with the centre's own procedures, the assessment strategy and SQA requirements. The quality of the assessment decisions and candidate evidence in portfolios sampled during the visit was very good and met the relevant standards.

Some centres carry out internal verification using their own qualified internal verifiers and others utilise third-party internal verifiers. Interim internal verification still appears to be a challenge for some centres and external verifiers have made several recommendations to centres to improve the interim internal verification process by amending their internal verification strategy and formally recording interim reviews. In general, the quality of internal verification when carried out is to an acceptable standard and meets SQA requirements. There are some examples of good practice having been identified by external verifiers in some

centres where the internal verification process is excellent and well documented and recorded.

General feedback

There was evidence of candidates receiving regular feedback from their assessors, although it was not always formally documented in some centres. Recommendations are regularly made to centres by external verifiers to improve the transparency of much of what they do by formally recording it.

Discussion sessions involving candidates, assessors and internal verifiers were carried out during visits with discussion topics including but not limited to the following:

- ◆ candidate induction process (which candidates felt could be improved)
- ◆ evidence gathering for units requiring candidate involvement in emergency response situations
- ◆ challenges of gathering evidence for some of the optional units — this led to a recommendation that where evidence was difficult to obtain, candidates should choose other optional units where evidence gathering would be less difficult
- ◆ discussion on clarifying the actual assessment process
- ◆ value and ‘transferability’ of SVQs within the oil & gas and petrochemical industries
- ◆ impact of the SQA Systems Verifier visit on centre’s policies and procedures
- ◆ impact of SQA L&D QV visit on content of CPD records
- ◆ Cogent & OPITO Assessment strategies and confirmation that only the Cogent strategy applies to the awards currently run by the centres
- ◆ the importance of formal written internal verifier and assessor feedback — discussions on the informal feedback provided by assessors to candidates but not necessarily documented suggested that such feedback should be summarised and recorded in the assessor’s final feedback for each unit

Access to workplace assessment is not an issue as assessments in most centres are conducted in the workplace in onshore and offshore oil and gas facilities and petrochemical/refinery plant utilising naturally occurring assessment opportunities.

All centres have implemented additional documents to aid assessment and/or verification, however these are not always clearly referenced in some of the centres’ applicable procedures. This is a fairly common occurrence in centres where assessors and internal verifiers strive to improve standardisation of assessment and verification documentation but omit to update the relevant procedures accordingly.

Another regularly occurring issue is access to assessor and internal verifier qualification and CPD records. Some centres require assessors and internal verifiers to insert copies of relevant qualifications in candidate portfolios, which is a good practice that has been recognised by external verifiers. Other centres keep scanned copies of records in their document management system or paper

copies in folders, however it has been noted by external verifiers that these records are not always up to date and complete.

There were several other general areas for improvement and these are detailed later in this report.

Areas of good practice

The following are some examples of areas of good practice that were identified against the indicated criteria:

Criterion 2.4 — One centre has provision for access to the latest version of all documentation by all candidates, assessors and internal verifiers through an intranet system.

Another centre has implemented a process of internal auditing of relevant assessment and internal verifier documentation to ensure alignment to SQA QAMS criteria.

Criterion 3.2 — One centre requires assessors to maintain formal records of assessor/candidate planning and review meetings.

Three centres have implemented a quarterly candidate progress review process that covers a range of relevant matters including training and assessment progress and candidate welfare.

Criterion 4.2 — One centre has implemented SVQ programme guidance which includes a simple process flowchart that clearly shows candidates and assessors all of the steps and connections in the assessment process.

Specific areas for improvement

Several recommendations on areas for improvement were made to centres and these were mainly in the area of administration. Some examples are:

- ◆ Formally documenting any new processes or documentation introduced
- ◆ Missing signatures on various assessment and verification documents
- ◆ Marking of Q&A papers not very clear as responses to individual questions not marked or initialled by assessors
- ◆ Implementing a more formal process for assigning, recording and tracking actions arising from audits. Some centres tend to have informal processes that rely on the SQA co-ordinator manually tracking progress and following-up
- ◆ Inserting relevant evidence references for updating unit achievement records instead of using ticks.
- ◆ Formal recording of assessor/candidate planning and review meetings
- ◆ Attributes relating to the validity, reliability, practicability, equitability and fairness of assessment methods should be clearly defined in relevant procedures/guidance documentation
- ◆ General administration and maintenance of records such as assessor/internal verifier qualifications and CPD records, standardisation events, internal verifier sampling/schedules and assessor/candidate scheduled meetings

- ◆ Cross-referencing of observation reports, witness testimonies and candidate personal statements to the relevant performance criteria in the standards is still an area where improvements can be made