



Internal Assessment Report: Early Education and Childcare

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

SVQ Awards

Titles/levels of SVQ Awards verified

Children's Care Learning and Development Level 2

Children's Care Learning and Development Level 3

Children's Care Learning and Development Level 4

General comments

There is a consensus of opinion from External Verifiers, following this year's visits, that the vast majority of centres are making good progress and supporting candidates to produce evidence at the appropriate SCQF levels.

Centres are now very aware of the sector skills council (SSC) assessment strategy and are taking a holistic approach to the award.

Assessors are supporting good assessment planning, which underpins the delivery of the award and facilitates the holistic approach.

Candidates are now also claiming much more knowledge in their reflective accounts of observed competent practice. Knowledge evidence not easily identified in reflective accounts is, in general, being shown in well thought-out assignments or tasks.

Some centres have developed particularly good tasks to cover Child Protection, Legislation and Children's Rights as well as the necessary task to cover Child Development. Candidates are being encouraged to claim evidence in these tasks across the whole award.

All evidence produced by candidates is now tracked, in some way, to the National Standards and the majority of centres have clear audit trails. Candidates and assessors are supported in creating these audit trails by effective internal verification. This identifies gaps in tracked evidence and highlights incomplete claims where performance criteria are substantial and complex.

Electronic assessment and evidence recording has increased again this year. Most centres now use commercially produced programmes to support assessment and verification.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

Areas of good practice

The majority of CCLD candidates are supported by very good teaching that is geared towards candidates' individual needs. Most centres also give candidates access to good learning materials and appropriate, current text. Level 4 candidates are effectively taught and assessed, particularly in the management Units, which are a requirement of the Scottish Social Services Council for lead practitioners.

Some centres make use of a diverse range of instruments of assessment. In some areas there is particularly good use of naturally occurring questions put to candidates after competent practice has been observed. This is used to link theory to practice.

Many centres have to be congratulated on the quality of the CPD carried out by assessors and verifiers. This is particularly necessary in light of the current changes in policy and practice in early years' education in Scotland. All staff must maintain and develop their expertise in the sector if they are to help candidates achieve a level of qualification never before expected of them, and if they are to fulfil the expectation of creating leadership in the sector through advanced qualifications.

Many centres have provided opportunities for assessors and verifiers to match their D32/33/34 qualifications to the A1 and V1 Units. This should be encouraged.

Areas for further development

Centres are, in the main, achieving the requirements of the assessment strategy. However, as candidates' evidence is required to be drawn from work activities that take place under normal work conditions, centres must take care to reflect the roles and responsibilities across a diverse sector. To this end, assessment plans must be individual to the candidate to allow them to generate reflective accounts of their own competent observed practice, reflecting the work they do. It is not appropriate to have general assessment plans, as one size does not fit all.

Questions also have their place in providing evidence. However, some centres are still too reliant on banks of questions. Naturally occurring questions are a good way of finding out candidates' knowledge after direct observation, and can be used to 'gap-fill' at the end of an award. A diverse range of assessment types should be used. It is never appropriate to provide a substantial amount of evidence through written questions.

It is also not appropriate for candidates to use the settings policies as evidence. This is only valid when the candidate has written or reviewed and amended the policy, or when there are written accounts of how the candidate has put the policy into action.

In some centres, assessors record knowledge evidence in their direct observation. Knowledge cannot be assumed and needs to be made explicit through candidates' reflective accounts, assignments or questions. Further exemplification material may help to resolve this issue.

For centres assessing Level 4 candidates there is a particular issue as they have candidates who are lead practitioners or managers who must achieve Level 4 for registration with SSSC. There is a small but significant minority of candidates who have difficulty producing written evidence at the appropriate SCQF levels. The centres concerned are doing a good job of supporting these candidates. However, all centres must continue to challenge Level 4 candidates to produce evidence of theory and practice which demonstrates achievement at SCQF levels 8 and 9.

CPD is an important part of currency for assessors and verifiers. As already stated, many centres have records of excellent CPD. However, some centres find it difficult to keep up-to-date in an ever-changing sector. It is crucial that centres make use of HMIE and Learning and Teaching Scotland's websites, as well as accessing the many government documents available to pass on this expertise to candidates across Scotland.