



Internal Assessment Report 2010: Construction and Civil Engineering Services (352)

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

SVQ Awards

Titles/levels of SVQ Awards verified

G88 A 21: General Construction Operations Level 1

G89 5 22: General Construction Operations Level 1

General comments

New entrant and OSAT (on-site and assessment training)

Almost all centres have a good working knowledge of the requirements of the national occupational standards (NOS) as well as levels of competence and performance that are specific to each Unit within the Awards being delivered.

However, in more than a few instances centres required direction and support through specific development points, specifically to address:

- ◆ Ensuring that candidates had a clear understanding of the level of performance (tolerances or cutting scores) that they needed to display to show competence.
- ◆ Providing a wide enough range of practical activities to meet the requirements of the NOS and individual Units.

Almost all centres have complied effectively with the requirements of the assessment strategy which underpins the NOS. This includes ensuring that Assessors and Internal Verifiers have occupational expertise, knowledge of the NOS and a clear understanding of the assessment strategy.

However, in a few centres staff had not updated existing D Units to current A or V Units as required by the assessment strategy.

Most centres provided appropriate, effective and well recorded vocational and professional CPD activities to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy.

Only a few centres failed to provide CPD records for review during external verification visits.

New entrant

Assessors at most centres had an in-depth knowledge of Unit specifications, while instruments of assessments developed by centres reflected well the Evidence Requirements of each Unit.

Centres in the main were using valid, reliable, appropriate and well structured assessment instruments which enabled candidates to have fair access to assessment opportunities.

Assessors at a few centres had experienced difficulties specifically in relation to:

- ◆ Embedding and integrating generic Units' requirements with specialist Unit practical activities.
- ◆ Familiarisation with and use of SQA Unit numbers (centre using NVQ Unit numbers).

OSAT

Assessors at all OSAT centres verified in 2009–10 had an excellent working knowledge of Unit specifications and instruments of assessment linked to each Unit. Assessors need to be focused in the natural work environment on how a variety of assessment opportunities can be linked to and integrated with specific Units, hence their intimate knowledge of each Unit.

New entrant

In most centres, Assessors and Internal Verifiers had a clear understanding of Evidence Requirements for Units within the awards they delivered. External verification activity focused clearly on confirming sufficiency, appropriateness and authenticity of evidence, and more importantly confirming compliance with the Evidence Requirements by observing live practical assessments at centres.

Issues were noted at some centres in relation to:

- ◆ Underpinning knowledge evidence questions not covering the full range of the Unit knowledge Evidence Requirements.
- ◆ Practical checklists for Performance Evidence not reflecting all requirements and stipulating tolerances that candidates should work to meet required performance levels.

OSAT

Having a clear and consistent understanding of Evidence Requirements is again the most demanding and contentious area within the OSAT delivery mode.

The extensive variety of evidence and potential integration opportunities available in the natural work environment can and has again led to the following issues at some centres, linked to interpretation of Evidence Requirements.

- ◆ Authenticity of evidence: some centres received development points in relation to authenticity of photographic evidence. Centres need to ensure that this form of evidence shows the candidate clearly visible and involved in work processes. Photographic evidence of a completed work or artifact is difficult to authenticate.
- ◆ Observation reports: in a few instances these reports tended to be too generic and failed to link competences observed onsite to Units and Performance Criteria evidence.

It is, however, worth noting that centres' overall understanding of Evidence Requirements for authenticity, validity and sufficiency has improved steadily over the last few years. Almost all centres use appropriate sources of evidence to show competence. The majority used observation reports, photographic evidence and written underpinning knowledge questions as direct evidence.

Centres should seek guidance where possible from the *OSAT Quality Manual* which is available from SQA.

New entrant and OSAT

Most centres experienced some issues in relation to the assessment process which required developmental support and guidance during external verification visits. Specific issues were:

- ◆ Written assessments without stated performance levels to inform candidates what they needed to do to achieve competence were reported in most centres.
- ◆ Inappropriate assessment planning continues to be problematic for a few centres: this leads to poorly informed candidates and an ineffective assessment process.
- ◆ Effective and supportive feedback to candidates on assessment decisions was reported at most centres. Candidates at a few centres, however, received ineffective feedback on their achievement and progress.
- ◆ Almost all centres gave supportive and developmental feedback to their Assessors from the Internal Verifier.

These issues, however, need to be put into context, as almost all centres have shown a marked improvement in the delivery of the assessment process over the last few years. Again, centres should seek guidance where possible from the *OSAT Quality Manual* which provides an overview of current best practice within the OSAT context.

New entrant and OSAT

Most centres had candidates available for interview during external verification visits, most of whom were aware of their achievements and were happy with the award and the assessment delivery. The majority were well informed on their progress and achievement to date.

However, on some external verification visits candidates were not available for interview due to the current industry downturn or to candidates not being in attendance during the visit.

Access to assessment opportunities was appropriate and, in the main, was tailored to individual needs, with no evident barriers to achievement at almost all centres.

One centre had implemented individual PLSPs (Personal Learning and Support Plans) to gauge candidate support needs. This should be viewed as excellent practice.

Areas of good practice

New entrant and OSAT

Most centres provided appropriate and very effective and well recorded vocational and professional CPD activities to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy.

Almost all centres have complied effectively with the requirements of the assessment strategy which underpins the NOS. This includes ensuring that Assessors and Internal Verifiers have occupational expertise, qualifications and current knowledge of the NOS and have a clear understanding of the assessment strategy.

Implemented and effective use of individual PLSPs to gauge candidate support needs should be viewed as excellent practice.

Standardisation activities including meetings were very effective and ensured a key focus on quality assurance at almost all centres.

Areas for improvement

In a few centres, staff had not updated existing D Units to current A or V Unit standards. This needs to be a key focus for future External Verifier activity to ensure full compliance with the assessment strategy.

Authentication of photographic evidence was reported at some centres. Assessors need to ensure that this form of evidence shows the candidate clearly visible and involved in work processes. Photographic evidence of a completed job or artifact is difficult to authenticate.

Written assessments need to have stated performance levels to inform candidates on what they need to do to achieve competence.

Inappropriate assessment planning continues to be problematic for a few centres: this leads to poorly informed candidates and an ineffective assessment process.

Access to candidates for interview during verification visits needs to be given a higher priority by External Verifiers.