



**National Qualifications 2012  
Internal Assessment Report  
Skills for Work: Early Education  
and Childcare**

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

# National Qualifications (NQ) Awards

Titles/levels of NQ Awards verified:

Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare (SCQF 4) (C221 10)

Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare (SCQF 5) (C246 11)

## General comments

Across the centres sampled this session, it is clear that the majority have developed Courses which are providing their learners with a very positive learning experience of early education and childcare.

There is a clear understanding within centres of the requirements of the national standards in these Courses in terms of SCQF level, embedded employability, and the vocational area of early education and childcare.

## Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It is evident, that in most cases, assessors delivering the Early Education and Childcare Skills for Work Courses have a consistent and reliable understanding of the Course Arrangements as found in SQA's Arrangements documents and in the Unit specifications.

There is external verification evidence that Courses are being delivered and assessed appropriately and consistently across centres whether schools, colleges or training providers. Courses are delivered in line with the requirement of learners to engage in practical vocational skills and undertake employability activities.

All the centres sampled this session are using the instruments of assessment from SQA's National Assessment Bank (NAB). These are used to assess learners' knowledge and understanding of the aspects of early education and childcare found in the Units delivered. In the majority of cases, the application of these NABs has been reliable and valid, with a clear understanding of the assessment requirements and the SCQF levels.

## Evidence Requirements

From external verification this session, it is clear that centres have developed a considered approach to the Evidence Requirements in the Unit specifications. It is evident that the majority of centres are meeting these requirements whether for individual work under controlled conditions; individual or group investigations; group presentations; case studies; folios of evidence; or peer group discussions.

These have been consistently presented to learners and clearly evidenced and assessed.

Centres are supporting learners to meet the requirements for the development of employability skills. For example, working co-operatively, personal and group planning, self-evaluation and peer review, research and presentation skills, and understanding the roles and responsibilities of those working with children. Centres are also supporting learners to develop personal skills such as communication, decision making and evaluation, and developing their sense of responsibility and self-confidence.

### **Administration of assessments**

The centres sampled this session are all using the instruments of assessment from SQA's NAB. In most cases, these have been used correctly and accurately; and the assessment decisions made by assessors were considered judgements of the evidence presented for the Units delivered. Clear and constructive feedback was provided to learners by assessors, which was both helpful and specific to the assessment decisions made.

Standardisation of assessment decisions were being made across assessors through cross marking and standardisation meetings. These were recorded on feedback or marking sheets and in minutes of meetings.

Internal verification was completed by most centres in line with the guidance provided in 'Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications'. This has meant that effective and robust systems of internal verification are in place which has provided support to assessors and reliability of assessment processes. Internal verification has highlighted correct assessment practice and any issues or concerns have been raised with assessors prior to completion of Courses. Clear records of sampling, internal verification decisions and feedback, and minutes of meetings have been recorded and are available for external verification.

### **Areas of good practice**

There have been a number of areas of good practice highlighted by External Verifiers over the current session:

Opportunities for learners to engage in workplace practice experiences have encouraged the link between early education and childcare theory, and vocational practice. These have often been in the form of work experience through school or nursery placements organised by a college or training provider. In some cases, this has been at on-site nurseries. There is clear evidence that learners have benefited from this experience through their own evaluation, confidence and motivation, and through feedback from childcare professionals and their assessors.

Opportunities for learners to hear from external speakers and to visit external organisations have provided an extended approach to professionalism and

variety in early education and childcare. Learners have been able to engage with professionals in childcare and playwork; health, social work and education; and those in the voluntary sector. This has allowed learners to understand the breadth of vocational opportunities within early education and childcare careers.

Holistic delivery of Units has assisted learners to take an integrated view of the subject and to develop a fuller understanding of the nature of working with children and young people. This has also helped those learners who may struggle to develop a broad understanding of the subject across practical and achievable tasks. While this requires careful planning and good record keeping, it ensures consistency of delivery and assessment practice, and removes duplication of teaching.

It is clear that in many cases, there are opportunities for learners to engage with their local community through the delivery of the Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare Courses. For example:

- ◆ Learners have used their local library to undertake investigations for their Course and have then assisted with storytelling sessions for young children visiting the library.
- ◆ Learners have engaged with their local sports centre to undertake sports leadership training alongside their Skills for Work Course. They have then assisted with the provision of classes for younger children.
- ◆ Learners have been part of the community learning centre and have assisted with the children in the crèche whilst their parents have undertaken their own learning.
- ◆ Learners have undertaken fundraising for local community groups which provide services for children.

Internal verification and standardisation have been shared across cluster groups of schools, colleges and training providers within local authority areas. One local authority has appointed a Skills for Work Co-ordinator, who works across the area to support the delivery and verification of these Courses. In another authority, local schools delivering Courses have regular standardisation and verification meetings to ensure consistency of assessment and verification practice. It is clear that there is a lot of sharing of good practice across centres which is benefiting learners by supporting assessors and Internal Verifiers.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

External Verifiers have highlighted a few specific areas for improvement in a small number of centres:

Continuous professional development — the need for assessors and Internal Verifiers to undertake continuous professional development was highlighted. This is to ensure that they have current and relevant understanding of the range of services and professionalisms within the early education and childcare sector. For example, assessors and Internal Verifiers with an education background should try to spend some time within a nursery, out-of-school care setting or

crèche; to job shadow another professional; or to engage with other professionals on a regular basis.

Standardisation and internal verification — in a few centres this was highlighted to ensure the consistency of assessment decisions and a robust and reliable process for internal verification. An appropriate and robustly followed internal verification policy, which clearly sets out processes for prior verification, verification practice, internal verification sampling, recording of verification decisions, internal verification and standardisation meetings, would greatly improve practice in these centres.