



**National Qualifications 2012  
Internal Assessment Report  
Skills for Work: Rural Skills**

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

# National Courses

National Courses verified:

Skills for Work: Rural Skills (Intermediate 1)

National Progression Award: Rural Skills (Intermediate 2)

## General comments

There continues to be a year-on-year increase in the number of centres in Scotland offering Skills for Work: Rural Skills (Intermediate 1). This is evidenced by the number of approval visits carried out by the team during 2011–12.

The team carried out six external verification visits for Skills for Work: Rural Skills (436) during the last academic year. A total of nine centres were recorded as 'not running' this is a very high proportion of the overall selection.

No routine external verification visits were conducted in relation to the National Progression Award: Rural Skills (Intermediate 2) (Group 437). This is a matter of some concern as assessor and verifier competences are more exacting/specialised for the SCQF level 5 Courses.

All external verification visits resulted in an 'Accepted' decision and none resulted in a hold on certification. Centre staff continued to have a good grasp of the national standards and provision was generally of a good quality. Some concerns were raised, at a number of centres, as to the robustness, effectiveness and timeliness of internal verification procedures.

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

Assessors generally had a good understanding of standards required for successful completion of the qualification, although at some centres there was a rather poor appreciation of the requirements for internal verification. Most centres had developed comprehensive Course documentation and some had contextualised national materials to their own institutional/geographical needs.

The National Assessment Bank materials and the Scotland's Colleges Course Support Resources were universally in use by those centres visited.

## Evidence Requirements

Assessors were generally well acquainted with the Evidence Requirements for the Units and Course as a whole. Generally, Evidence Requirements were satisfied at all centres visited. Some minor issues were identified and these are listed in the 'areas for Improvement' section (below).

## **Administration of assessments**

Record keeping gave rise for concern at a number of centres as did internal verification requirements, see specific areas for concern (below). A poor understanding of internal verification procedures was also evident at the approval visits carried out in relation to the award. Clearly, this represents an area for improvement generally across the school sector for Courses not subject to an externally assessed national exam.

## **Areas of good practice**

Areas of good practice were identified at all centres visited. There is no doubt that the quality of teaching and learning was generally good, as was the learner experience. The verification team comments are included in full below:

‘The centre must be commended for the way it has fully embraced the delivery and assessment of this award. Candidate written assessment evidence was particularly well presented and practical products readily available to see on site.’

‘The learning was informing the assessment process, which was appropriate to the SfW Course practical activities, and there was clear and explicit links to the principles of Curriculum for Excellence with school projects linked to the award and needs of the schools.’

‘The assessors gave appropriate levelled feedback to written completed work of candidates.’

‘The candidates were able to work in some excellent outdoor locations.’

‘Candidates were able to develop their own individual interests in the Land-based Industries Unit. I was particularly impressed with the crab fishing presentation.’

‘I felt that the Employability Unit was very well handled and that candidates had a good grasp of their own abilities.’

‘Overall I believe that, over the duration of the Course, the candidates will have developed an insight as to whether they have long-term career aspirations in the land-based industries. The school provided an excellent real-work environment for the candidates.’

‘The school was extremely well equipped with the resources and site locations for effective and comprehensive course delivery.’

‘Paperwork was well laid out and easy to follow.’

‘Staff feedback to candidates on all assessed work was detailed and constructive. Peer review of land-based industries posters is a useful exercise.’

‘The packs from Scotland’s Colleges have been customised by the school for use by their learners.’

‘PowerPoint presentations were of a high standard.’

‘The centre has developed facilities and support for this award which is to be commended. Candidates are encouraged to develop ownership and responsibility for their ‘plot’ and in doing so are extending their confidence and skills for work.’

‘The candidate had provided a comprehensive poster display for his work on the Land-based industries, Estate Maintenance and Animal Handling and Husbandry Units. He obviously takes a great deal of pride in his work. Indeed these submissions represent some of the best of their kind and capture the spirit of the Skills for Work curriculum.’

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Areas for improvement centred on the need for a better understanding of internal verification procedures and improved record keeping. Verifier comments (below):

‘For the Introduction to Land-based Industries Unit, care should be taken to ensure that the industries chosen and the research done are in line with the Unit specification.’

‘Establish a schedule for carrying out internal verification and keep records of the verification that has taken place.’

‘Whilst it was clear that assessed work was of the standard appropriate to the award, the lack of summative candidate tracking evidence was of concern in relation to identifying candidate ‘gaps’ in assessment when they neared completion of the award. Record keeping could be improved in the following ways:

- ◆ Ensure that all written assessments are initialled and dated, identifying if it is a pass by all assessors
- ◆ Maintain up-to-date (real-time) summative evidence of achievement of individual candidates to allow easier tracking of candidates’ progress
- ◆ Transfer evidence to the NAB checklists when completed — eg the tool sheets for the Estate Maintenance Unit
- ◆ Undertake internal verification sampling of candidate work and record keeping mid-way through delivery in line with the centre’s internal verification procedures’

‘Although I was satisfied that the assessments were valid and assessment decisions reliable, I had concerns about the record keeping to allow clarification of achievement of all required assessment activities. I would therefore recommend an EV visit next year to ensure that record keeping activities have improved as no completed Units were seen on this visit.’

‘A minor observation, rather than a development point, I think it would be good if candidates were encouraged to keep a photographic record of their work activities — this would add substance to their assessment sheets. I gather that this is in the process of being implemented by the school.’

‘The centre should ensure candidates fully appreciate the seasonality and grazing phase of livestock enterprises when discussed in the Land-based Industries Unit.’

‘The centre should encourage candidate’s assessment responses within the Crop Production Unit to make reference to actual data where appropriate, eg actual temperatures or plant spacings.’

‘The centre should review the chosen crop used within the Crop Production Unit. A crop which can be more easily scaled-up to reflect commercial practices and which can involve practical visits to local commercial sites would be more appropriate.’

‘The centre should introduce the Employability Skills Unit at an earlier stage within the Course. This will ensure it links with the practical delivery of other Units and allow candidate reviews to be phased over time.’

‘The centre should ensure all written assessment evidence is clearly marked and candidate feedback on both written and practical assessments is clearer.’

‘The centre has agreed to explore some additional IV support for the Soft Landscaping and Crop Production Units. This is in relation to written assessment evidence and sampling of one live assessment if possible.’

‘The centre should amend the Estate Maintenance tools identification assessment to 10 items only.’