



National Qualifications 2014 Internal Assessment Report Core Skills: Numeracy

Verification Group Number: 340

Senior Verifier Name: Raymond McDonald

Date: 11th July 2014

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

Notes for report authors

This Internal Assessment Report will provide feedback to centres on visiting and central verification activity in relation to National Qualifications.

Our aim is to provide information for centres on the overall standard of assessment, specifically the assessment design, implementation and judgements made. The report should also cover any variation across centres, areas of good practice, and recommendations for areas that could be improved.

When preparing this report, please:

- ◆ write in plain English using the headings provided on the following pages
- ◆ ensure that your comments stand on their own within the overall context of the report, and are not just responses to the prompts
- ◆ be as specific as possible
- ◆ use objective language — base your comments on fact rather than assumption or opinion and indicate if the standard is improving or deteriorating
- ◆ back-up all comments with verification activity evidence — for example, provide an indication of what is causing a problem

Finally, remember to complete the Senior Verifier questionnaire at the end of this document. Your comments help us to improve our processes.

SQA's plain English policy

All written communication from SQA has to be written in plain English. It applies to publications, letters, e-mails, circulars, updates, and anything else we release in writing. We have this plain English policy because:

- ◆ it is the most efficient way of working — communicating clearly means there is less need for clarification later
- ◆ it will help us be transparent and open
- ◆ it is a way of avoiding discrimination
- ◆ it is good for public perceptions of the organisation

You can find detailed guidance on plain English in our style guide [Writing for SQA](#) (web search 'SQA plain English').

National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Numeracy SCQF level 2 (40hr) F3GF 08
Numeracy: Using Number – Measuring SCQF level 2 (10hr) F3GL 08
Numeracy: Using Number – Money SCQF level 2 (10hr) F3GH 08
Numeracy: Using Number – Time SCQF level 2 (10hr) F3GJ 08
Numeracy: Using Graphical Information SCQF level 2 (10hr) F3GG 08
Numeracy SCQF level 3 (40hr) F3GF 09 Numeracy
Numeracy: Using Number – Measuring SCQF level 3 (10hr) F3GL 09
Numeracy: Using Number – Calculation SCQF level 3 (20hr) F3GK 09
Numeracy: Using Graphical Information SCQF level 3 (10hr) F3GG 09
Numeracy SCQF level 4 (40hr) F3GF 10
Numeracy SCQF level 5 (40hr) F3GF 11
Numeracy SCQF level 6 (40hr) F3GF 12

General comments

The external verifier reports, of which there were 21 from 4 external verifiers, clearly indicate that all external verifiers have a clear understanding of the requirements of the National Standards and work in a professional and supportive manner.

In the majority of cases, centres had a Quality Assurance section or Department to ensure standards are maintained. This was generally coordinated by an SQA contact with responsibility for: the dissemination of information from SQA, staff induction and training in SQA procedures, CPD activities, coordination of Internal and External Verifications and internal auditing of the SQA processes.

Candidate evidence was of a consistently high standard and indicated a clear understanding of the numerical and graphical principles and the required standard for each unit. All centres had evidence of standardisation meetings.

In all cases, master files were available that contained comprehensive information relating to the systems and procedures for the delivery and quality assurance of the numeracy units. The files normally included teaching materials, assessment and reassessment materials, assignments and projects, marking schemes, checklists, internal verification procedures and documentation and student feedback sheets. The master files were usually available in an electronic format.

Assessors received induction in the range of processes and procedures involved in delivering and assessing the units.

Methods of assessment were appropriate and included assignments and projects, observation, written and calculation exercises and verbal response.

Documentation was presented in a clear and concise form that assisted the verification process.

There was good evidence that the assessment process was followed consistently and that learners were involved in the planning and identification of assessment evidence.

The external verification sample included material from different class groups and different internal verifiers across the range of units being delivered. Assessment judgements were accurate and consistent. There was good evidence of constructive feedback and effective remediation.

There was little activity in the shorter units with most centres being involved in delivering Numeracy SCQF levels 4 and 5.

From the 21 centres externally verified :

- 2 centres offered unit F3GG09 – Using Graphical Information
- 2 centres offered unit F3GL09 – Measuring
- 3 centres offered unit F3GK09 – Calculations
- 5 centres offered unit F3GF08 – SCQF level 3
- 6 centres offered unit F3F12 – SCQF level 6
- 8 centres offered unit F3GF11 – SCQF level 5
- 16 centres offered unit F3GF10 – SCQF level 4

Unit specification, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It was apparent from the external verification reports that Assessors and Internal Verifiers were familiar with the Unit Specifications and Assessment Support Packs.

The Assessment Support Packs were often used to provide information on the delivery of the units and to provide guidance on assessment and evidence requirements.

The Assessment Support Packs were often modified to reflect the vocational background of the learners. .

All centres made use of a checklist to ensure that all tasks were explicitly addressed and sources of evidence clearly identified.

This included Summary Checklists and Assessment Checklists

Candidates were judged fairly, consistently and accurately against the requirements for the award.

Some of the Assessments are still rather prescriptive and test based. Exemplars from the SQA website were recommended to a number of centres to generate ideas to interest and ~~learner engagement~~ engage learners.

Evidence Requirements

Most centres made use of the Assessment Support Packs to provide information on the delivery of the units and to provide guidance on assessment and evidence requirements.

Most centres made effective use of checklists to ensure that the source of evidence could be clearly identified.

Assessment judgements were consistent and accurate and learners received constructive feedback.

In all centres visited, regular curriculum group meetings were held to ensure that issues such as the level and the amount of evidence required could be discussed and agreed.

In most centres, the assessment evidence was contextualised and centre staff used evidence from other vocational areas, everyday experience, social contexts etc.

In the most centres, assessments were prior approved by the curriculum group team.

Administration of Assessments

Centres made deke full use of the information provided in the unit specification and assessment support packs to ensure that assessments were at the appropriate level.

Methods of assessment have been appropriate and they included assignments and projects, observation, written and calculation exercises and verbal response.

Where verbal responses or observations are used, centres must ensure that details are fully recorded

Assessors and verifiers met regularly to ensure that any new assessment material met the requirements of the unit in terms of the level and the amount of evidence.

Methods of assessment were valid, reliable and practical.

IV procedures were reviewed on a regular basis, usually at least annually.

Comments from IVs were constructive, helpful and supportive.

IV procedures were robust and effective.

In many cases the IV process was identified as an area of Good Practice in the external verification report.

General Feedback

~~Methods of assessment are appropriate and included assignments and projects, observation, written and calculation exercises and verbal response.~~

Methods of assessment were valid, reliable and practical. Where verbal responses or observations are used, centres must ensure that details are fully recorded.

Assessors and verifiers met regularly to ensure that any new assessment material met the requirements of the unit in terms of the level and the amount of evidence. The minutes of these meetings were made available to the external verifiers.

~~Methods of assessment were valid, reliable and practical.~~

IV procedures were reviewed on a regular basis, usually at least annually.

Comments from IVs were helpful and supportive.

IV procedures were robust and effective.

Areas of Good Practice

Most centres had master folders containing teaching materials, assessment and reassessment materials, assignments and projects, marking schemes, checklists, internal verification procedures and documentation and student feedback sheets. This is a valuable resource, supporting standardization, induction, training and verification. In most cases these master files were available in an electronic format.

Internal Verification procedures were fully developed and rigorously applied. Internal Verification procedures support the assessors – especially new assessors.

Regular curriculum group meetings were held to discuss standardisation and evidence requirements, and to provide a forum for the dissemination of good practice.

Comprehensive marking schemes were available in most centres.

Contextualised learning, and teaching and assessment material was being used that helped to engage the learners and to reinforce the importance of core skills in their chosen vocational area.

In a number of centres projects involving the integration of a number of core skills or integrating core skills within vocational units had increased learner motivation and engagement and staff were commended for their enthusiasm and innovation.

Specific areas for improvement

Candidates should be more engaged in their own learning. In particular, they should be encouraged to become familiar with the assessment requirements and to find sources of evidence from other sources eg other vocational areas, social activities or everyday activities. This is common practice in SVQ units and should be encouraged with the NQ units to ensure that the relevance and application of core skills is recognised.

Core skills staff should work co-operatively with other tutors to develop integrated assessments. This will demonstrate to learners the relevance and importance of core skills in other subject areas.

Candidates should be encouraged to show all working and assessors should indicate where a candidate has made a correction.

