



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2014  
Core Skills Information  
Communication Technology (WA)**

Verification Group Number: 341

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The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National and Scottish Vocational 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 Higher National and/or Scottish Vocational 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

### 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').

# SVQ awards

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

Information and Communication Technology F42D 04

Information and Communication Technology F42E 04

Information and Communication Technology F42F 04

Information and Communication Technology F42G 04

## General comments

Most External Verifiers indicated, within their reports, that they were appreciative of those centres employing the integrative approach to the delivery of Core Skills units together with the main SVQ within modern apprenticeships. This approach gives the Core Skills units a better standing in that they relate to the whole process and are not seen by the learner as an unnecessary add-on which has no relation to the rest of the qualifications.

The structure of the present Core Skills ICT unit specification was welcomed by most centres as it allowed a wide range of software/hardware to be used rather than the older versions which could only be completed using a very narrow range of software some of which was not used by the learners in their main award area.

Centre should note that it is not mandatory to use the ASPs for assessment purposes. I would however urge centres to use the checklists within the ASPs to ensure complete coverage of the range required by the Core Skill specification.

I would also urge centres delivering the Core Skills units as part of a modern apprenticeship to treat them as an additional unit within the main SVQ and not as a separate unit to be delivered at the end of the year after the “main” work has been completed as is the case with a small number of centres.

Although the Workplace Assessed Core Skills units do not have their own Assessment Strategy they take on the Assessment Strategy of the SVQ within the modern apprenticeship of which they are a part.

It should be noted that staff must include the correct minimum number of hours of CPD as stated within the assessment strategy of the relevant SVQ. Failure to adhere to this in future will result in a RED compliance level within the External verifiers Report.

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

A number of assessors and other staff had made the assumption that the ASPs were the unit specifications and were unaware that the unit specification was the main document for these units (and in a few cases did not know it existed). It should be remembered that the ASPs are merely an example of one way of assessing the unit.

Many centres used the SQA published ASPs as the basis for assessment however it was pleasing to note that most centres had at least contextualised these to suit the learners work experience and the learner's associated SVQ qualification.

Some centres had submitted their instruments of assessment to the SQA for prior verification to ensure they were complying with unit requirements.

### **Evidence Requirements**

All of the centres selected for external verification this year had provided sufficient competent evidence which met with the requirements of the unit specifications. This had been assessed either by using the ASPs or contextualised versions of the ASPs and in some cases by centres generating their own assessment instruments.

### **Administration of assessments**

All centres externally verified this year demonstrated that the administration of assessments was of a good standard.

In most cases it was obvious that learner's evidence had been closely scrutinised by assessors indicated by annotations/comments that had been added as feedback to learners.

In the majority of cases internal verification was robust and very good feedback had been given to assessors.

#### **General feedback**

In the majority of centres, externally verified this year, feedback from assessors to learners and internal verifiers to assessors was good to very good.

Many centres are now collecting recording documentation including CPD records, staff qualifications and procedures etc. in electronic formats. Most

External Verifiers found this to be preferable to having these supplied in paper format.

## **Areas of good practice**

In some centres, where learners were attempting multiple core skills units, integration between units and the main SVQ was being carried out. This leads to improved learner motivation by making the core skills activities as relevant as possible to the learners.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

In a few centres that had a number of satellite premises spread over a wide area, it was noticed that assessment documentation and learning material was not standardised across the various sites. In these cases the internal verification system should strive to ensure standardisation of documentation across all sites.

Where assessors (and in some cases Internal Verifiers) are spread over a large area, centres should ensure that all assessors are given the opportunity to meet together for at least one quality meeting each year (a few centres use video conferencing for this.)

As stated earlier within this report I would urge centres delivering the Core Skills units as part of a modern apprenticeship to treat them as an additional units within the main SVQ and not as a separate unit to be delivered at the end of the year after the “main” work has been completed as is the case in a small number of centres.