



Internal Assessment Report 2010: Carpentry and Joinery (165)

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

G892 23: SVQ Carpentry and Joinery (level 3)

General comments

Almost all the centres visited had a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. The centres were all using the nationally-devised assessment instruments and Unit specifications effectively. They were recording candidate progress through means of a portfolio system, and candidate success on the appropriate documentation.

Where centres were not completely clear on the requirements of the award, this was in the main due to very minor details. After clarification from the EV/SQA, the centre was more than capable of delivering to the required standard.

Comments from the EVs on the quality of the work presented for sampling confirmed that centres were fully conversant with the requirements of the award. However, the standard of work presented ranged from satisfactory to exceptional.

A recurring comment across almost all the reports was on the requirement for centres to concentrate on the quality of finish of the practical work in the early stages of the SVQ. The need to fully develop candidates' skills at this stage is critical, as it will allow them to achieve the more demanding criteria at later stages in the Course.

An essential part of this process, which has been highlighted in almost all the reports, was the need for timely constructive feedback to be given to candidates. This allows the Assessor to set standards early on in the formative assessment process, and will undoubtedly help candidates achieve the required summative standards.

Of the centres visited, all the assessment teams were familiar with the Course structure and documentation, which was demonstrated by the various permutations of delivery of the award. It was clear that centres were both trying to maximise the experience of the candidate and fully utilise the resources they had at their disposal.

Candidates were moving from one activity to another, and gathering evidence from all of these experiences to satisfy the requirements of the generic Units. This in itself demonstrated a great depth of knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the award, allowing the Assessors to track candidates' progress across a range of disciplines.

However, EVs noted as a development point in a few centres that there was a requirement for Assessors to develop, or further develop, a comprehensive

tracker system. This would ensure that opportunities were not lost in recording evidence for the generic Units.

It is essential for an award like this that all of the content is fully covered and that centres have developed suitable learning materials to complement the delivery. This was in almost all centres found to be the case, with some using a range of materials which included an ever increasing amount of IT and VLEs.

As would be expected from a predominantly practical, evidence-based award, centres demonstrated a vast and innovative range of approaches for gathering evidence. This can be driven by a range of factors, including staffing resources, workshop availability, project area size, and availability. However, in all cases, centres were able to create an assessment environment conducive to gathering the required evidence in terms of standard, amount, relevance, and reliability.

Assessment teams should be proud of their continuing ability to interpret standards and provide the opportunity for their candidates to generate evidence in what sometimes can be challenging situations.

All of the centres visited were using the nationally-devised assessment materials, which ensured the assessments were at the appropriate level and met all the Performance Criteria for each Unit. The assessments were all administered at an appropriate time during the delivery of the Course, and there were some good examples of an integrated approach being adopted for the more generic Units/assessments.

In almost all cases, candidates were given responsibility for tracking their own progress through a portfolio approach. In almost all instances, candidates were being provided with good clear constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, which helped candidates develop confidence.

In all cases, the Assessors were making fair, reliable and consistent decisions across the range of Units being delivered.

Internal verification was taking place in all centres, and was proving to be reliable and effective. Verifiers in more than a few centres mentioned the efficient systems in place, which mostly included electronic documentation and recording systems.

However, in a few cases, EVs made the following development points:

- ◆ An award-specific sampling schedule should be prepared.
- ◆ Internal verification should start earlier in the session to be more effective.
- ◆ In all cases, feedback to candidates was taking place. Some centres need to increase the amount or detail given, whilst in others the feedback was perhaps excessive. However, the main point of discussion was regarding when the most effective time was to give feedback, and to use it as a formative assessment tool to improve standards.

- ◆ All the feedback received from candidates was very positive towards the award, and covered areas such as:
 - the balance between practical and technology
 - relevance to activities carried out in the workplace
 - balance of time between college and workplace
 - providing the opportunity for candidates to undertake tasks which, because of the nature of their employer's business, they were unable to cover at work
- ◆ One comment from an experienced mature learner who had returned to gain certification was that the Course had definitely filled gaps in his own skill base.
- ◆ In all cases, there were no barriers to accessing assessment; in fact, the opposite was the case. Centres were providing additional support for candidates as required, and also being very flexible in re-arranging attendance patterns to suit individual employers' needs, as well as the managing agents.
- ◆ The only recurring point was the issue of the quality of finish in the practical work, which has been dealt with elsewhere in this report.

Areas of good practice

Health and safety talk to candidates by HSE on accidents in the workplace

This was carried out in one centre as part of the candidates' induction and was fully supported by ConstructionSkills. The candidates and staff felt it was a very worthwhile exercise, and raised everybody's awareness of the potential consequences of lack of concentration and unsuitable behaviour in the workplace.

Sustainability awareness and recycling of materials

This was recorded as being evident in four centres, and is a very important part of the responsibility of staff delivering this award. The need to instil in candidates this awareness, and the role they will play in securing the future of our industry, cannot be overemphasised.

Electronic technology for teaching and assessing

More and more centres are now equipped with the technology for enhancing the candidate experience, and it was encouraging to note that this also included workshops.

Photographic evidence

One centre, in the pursuit of being environmentally friendly, kept all their photographic evidence stored electronically, rather than printed. At the end of the Course, those candidates who requested one were given a CD-ROM with all their photos.

Candidate Unit evaluation forms

These were an ideal way of gathering evidence from candidates for the centre to use in their self-evaluation processes, resulting in continuous improvement of the Course.

Personal Development and Learning Plans/Learning Agreement/Review system

This was recorded as taking place in one centre, and was found to be very useful for both candidates and staff in tracking progress and performance throughout the duration of the Course.

Induction of new Assessors by experienced Assessors

Whilst this may seem a rather obvious activity which would be routinely carried out by a manager/verification group leader, it is worthy of mention nonetheless. There are an increasing number of new Assessors in the sector who do not have the experience or depth of knowledge of an experienced Assessor. In one centre where this was recorded, a buddying/mentor system had been set up, and the feedback from the new Assessors who had been through the process was very positive indeed. In the long term, this can only benefit everybody involved in the delivery and assessment of this award.

Areas for improvement

Thirty-seven centres were visited for this award. All were successful, so anything mentioned here is really classed as fine tuning and sharing of good practice.

The main recurring theme from the reports, as previously mentioned in this report, was to continually strive to improve the finished quality of the work through the use of feedback and formative assessments.

The centres should take credit for the professional way in which they have embraced this new award and provided their candidates with a very positive learning experience.