



## **Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2012**

# **SVQs in Catering and Hospitality**

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

# SVQ awards

## General comments

The revised frameworks for Hospitality Supervision and Leadership and Hospitality and Professional Cookery SVQs were successfully re-accredited from October 2009 and August 2010 respectively. Experienced centres have now become familiar with the new national occupational standards and candidates have successfully completed these qualifications.

The People 1st assessment strategy was simultaneously revised and applied from October 2009. The most significant amendment to the strategy was the removal of the independent assessment component, which has been welcomed by assessors.

Support materials developed by SQA have been well received; notably the assessors' guidelines, candidate recording forms and the question bank which was developed as a delivery resource to cover underpinning knowledge requirements on the SVQs.

The standard of candidates' evidence presented generally reflects a good understanding of the changes. Centres have benefited from the support provided, both through the subject-specific pages of SQA's website and through dedicated networking days.

A clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national occupational standard is also reflected in cyclical menus in college realistic working environments (RWEs) and sources of evidence presented by industry-based candidates.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It has been reported that centres have got to grips with the new standards and the new recording format and are using them well and to the benefit of candidates. In most cases, the SQA candidate recording materials have been successfully introduced.

There is also evidence that where centre or third party-devised materials have been used, a mapping exercise to the new standards has in most cases been effectively carried out and made available for external verification.

Standardisation of delivery across assessors has been achieved mainly through collaborative working such as meetings, workshops and shadowing activities. An increasing use of electronic communication has been effective across more remote locations.

## Evidence Requirements

Centres have generally complied with the People 1st assessment strategy, which states that the majority of assessment of the sector's competence-based Units and qualifications will be based on **performance evidence**, ie direct observation, outputs of work and witness testimony from within the workplace or an RWE approved by an awarding body.

While direct observations are used predominantly to confirm competence within RWE environments, the logistics of peripatetic assessment tends to lead to increased use of supporting evidence, such as products of work and witness testimony.

The minimum observations required have been clearly mapped into the SQA candidate recording forms for each Unit, and acceptable forms of supplementary evidence are also listed. This is not always the case with alternative candidate recording materials, and highlights the importance of carrying out a mapping exercise — not only to the national occupational standards, but also to the Evidence Requirements.

While the assessment guidance issued by SQA has generally been interpreted correctly, there have been inconsistencies reported in the types of evidence provided:

### Product evidence

- ◆ Completed products, such as a dishes produced by a candidate or photographic or video evidence of a task, normally require authentication.
- ◆ Written evidence, such as a briefing session which the candidate then uses to inform staff or a promotional brochure or advertisement the candidate has created, should include all drafts and background research.
- ◆ Staff rotas usually require some form of authentication, such as witness testimony.
- ◆ Documents in the workplace, such as order forms, entries into accident books, requests for maintenance, the receipt of goods, the checking in of guests, must be clearly attributable to the candidate or supported by some form of authentication.
- ◆ Written evidence in the form of a project set by the assessor or candidate's organisation, such as a customer satisfaction poll or other written evidence in the candidate's portfolio, must also be attributable to the candidate.
- ◆ Certification of previously achieved competence, usually previously achieved Units, has been submitted as accreditation of prior learning.

### Questioning

**Knowledge and understanding** is specified for each Unit, and there must be clearly referenced evidence to demonstrate how each statement has been met. Most centres are now using the question bank provided by SQA.

Some of a candidate's knowledge and understanding will be apparent from what they do or produce as part of their work, but this will not always be the case, and questioning has been a useful way of confirming what candidates know and understand.

**Supplementary** questioning is generally used to provide evidence for the remaining points under 'what you must cover', and has been asked in a variety of forms (such as oral questions, short answer written questions, and multiple choice). These have not always been clearly recorded and referenced to the relevant criteria in the standards.

**Professional discussions** can also provide valuable evidence to confirm knowledge and understanding; however, care should be taken to ensure that this discussion is backed up in other ways, such as product evidence, witness testimonies, workplace documents or other material either developed through work or in other assessments.

**Personal statements** have been used very effectively, especially by Hospitality Supervision and Leadership candidates. There can, however, be a danger of these being unsupported, and care should be taken to ensure that they are not used as a substitute to a more valid, reliable and practical method of assessment.

**Witness testimony** has also been used more effectively, especially where potential witnesses have been identified during assessment planning.

### **Administration of assessments**

The general consensus of opinion appears to be that the revised national occupational standards are an accurate reflection of industry work practices, and that the frameworks are appropriate. It follows that, in most cases, good opportunities for assessment are available — both in the workplace and RWEs, where working practices (such as cyclical menus) are mapped to the standards. Problems have sometimes been reported when candidates wish to progress from Level 2 to Level 3, when their job role is no longer appropriate, and special arrangements have to be made.

Most assessors have adapted well to the new SQA recording materials, especially when they refer to the exemplar materials provided. Centres that have a strong team approach and adopt rigorous standardisation activities tend to demonstrate a holistic and consistent approach to assessment in both the level and quantity of evidence required. This, combined with rigorous internal verification, also contributes to confidence building for new assessors.

It is worth issuing a reminder that, in order to satisfy the People 1st assessment strategy requirements, new assessors and Internal Verifiers must achieve the relevant learning and development qualifications within 18 months of commencing their role; and that during that time a representative sample of assessment decisions must be countersigned by a qualified colleague who has the same occupational expertise.

Standardisation activities depend to a large extent on the scale and scope of training providers. Colleges and smaller providers tend to communicate more informally when they work in close proximity, supported by minuted meetings. Alternative communication links such as telephone calls, e-mails, conference calls and online links are also used effectively, especially between more remote assessors and their Internal Verifiers.

Regular access to candidates has been achieved through good planning and review processes.

Evidence sampled has generally been at the correct level for each award, with sufficiently detailed observation reports backed up by other sources of performance evidence. There has been an increase in the use of electronic and online recording mechanisms, particularly when questioning knowledge and understanding.

Additional support, such as the use of scribes, has been provided when appropriate.

Candidates' involvement has been encouraged by the increased use of products of work, which in most cases can be attributable to the candidate, and clearly indexed and referenced to the standards. This approach also facilitates a holistic approach to assessment when referencing evidence to more than one Unit across the award.

### **General feedback**

The depth of feedback to candidates varies considerably; while most assessors populate the appropriate section of report forms, the importance of motivational and detailed comments cannot be overstressed. There are, however, also occasions when these are delivered verbally and on every assessment occasion, and alternative records such as taped conversations have been used.

Feedback from candidates has without exception been extremely positive. While they generally report that the standards are a good match to work practices, the support and motivation provided by assessors is cited as key to achievement.

Feedback from Internal Verifiers to assessors has too often been identified as an area for improvement, with a need for a permanent record of comments and an associated action plan for any remedial requirements.

### **Areas of good practice**

While areas of good practice have been highlighted throughout this and previous reports, the following practices demonstrate exemplary innovation, creativity, integration and adaption, and provide a benchmark for colleges, training providers and employers:

- ◆ Innovative online materials have been made available to candidates, assessors and Internal Verifiers. These can include candidates' portfolios

(which can include uploaded photographic evidence), internal verification records and supporting information. In some cases, instructional videos and links to external websites support delivery.

- ◆ Exemplar materials included in induction packs for new assessors and candidates have been a valuable standardisation tool.
- ◆ Communication within teams has been strengthened by combining standardisation events with residential social events. The success of this can be measured by the consistency of candidates' evidence and the confidence of new assessors.
- ◆ Improvements in the presentation of candidates' portfolios have incorporated a good mix of types of evidence, which have been well indexed and clearly referenced. Signed and dated records have been included to track induction, achievement and internal verification. There has also been an increase in evidence from the workplace, and the holistic approach has improved the learner's experience and encouraged ownership of their qualification.
- ◆ Opportunities continue to be made available for reinforcing knowledge and experience, eg national and international work placements, industry visits, participation in national competitions, organising competitions to establish industry links, visiting lecturers and demonstrations, provision of free training courses (in Licensing, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and Hazard Analysis), and regular demonstrations and workshops in specialist areas such as chocolate work and venison butchery.
- ◆ The engagement of candidates has been achieved by using communication tools such as text, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- ◆ The mapping of company induction, training and assessment programmes to the SQA Unit records has provided valuable and robust evidence.
- ◆ Candidates' motivation and achievement has accelerated when the value of training is recognised by the employer, and a skills scan is carried out to ensure suitability, access and interest, which can create competition for inclusion in the company's SVQ programme. Considerable rewards have been offered for becoming the overall 'candidate of the year'.
- ◆ It was reported that one of a centre's overwhelming strengths is the huge range of resources it offers all its candidates to learn and develop skills. There is a wide range of courses, workshops and master classes, as well as placements, textbooks and mentors on offer for all candidates regardless of sector. The benefits of this learning are seen within the candidates' portfolios in the display of additional certificates and the enhanced answers within the underpinning and general width of knowledge of the industry and its requirements. A real strength is the ongoing connection/co-operation the centre has with industry and its local leaders.
- ◆ The use of Smart Boards for kitchen and classroom has been introduced to show videos from Flip cameras of tutors' demonstrations.
- ◆ Field trips have been organised to enhance students' experiences; examples provided include attending Hotelympia, Gleneagles, The Savoy, and allowing students to attend a lunch in the restaurant to learn about food and wine matching.

- ◆ Team participation has been reported in many community, college and industry events, at which a college is represented by the assessors and the candidates. Many of these are most imaginative and high-profile ventures, which provide excellent CPD.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Some areas for improvement have been identified in EV reports, which often reflect those listed in previous IARs. These can to a certain extent be linked to a benchmark for good practice, and centres have generally been responsive to development points suggested by External Verifiers.

### **Assessment**

- ◆ Records of site selection checklists which match job roles/assessment opportunities to the award frameworks should be retained for external verification. This can also sometimes be achieved by drafting a training plan which is linked to an initial skills scan.
- ◆ There have been instances when records have not been updated to reflect the new Unit codes in use.
- ◆ Records of the mapping of centre-devised records should be retained.
- ◆ Evidence such as products of work and reflective accounts must be authenticated and clearly attributable to the candidate.
- ◆ Standardisation activities are essential to achieve consistency in conducting and recording assessments; these can be evidenced through minutes of meetings.
- ◆ Records of internal verification should include a record of sampling, feedback to assessors and any resulting remedial work.
- ◆ The countersigning of the assessment decisions made by unqualified assessors should be clearly logged.

### **Administration**

- ◆ Candidates' evidence selected on the external verification visit plan must be provided. All evidence should be retained for three weeks after the completion date submitted to SQA, unless notified as selected for external verification, when **all** evidence should be retained until after verification is completed. Any problems in doing this should be discussed with the External Verifier before the visit takes place.
- ◆ Up-to-date CPD records to meet the requirements of the People 1st assessment strategy must be available, and the necessary arrangements made for access where these are held electronically.