



Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2012

Wood Machining

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

SVQ awards

General comments

There is still at present only one centre delivering this award.

The centre had a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the National Standards. The centre was using the most current version of the nationally-devised assessment instruments and Unit specifications effectively.

The centre was recording candidates' achievements by means of an individual portfolio system, as well as appropriate documentation to support the process. This linked in with Construction Skills recording/reporting mechanisms and was proving to be very effective.

Discussions with the assessor and Internal Verifier confirmed that the centre was very conversant with the requirements of the award, and any development points noted were more about fine tuning as opposed to a significant lack of knowledge.

Comments from the EV regarding the quality of the work presented for sampling also confirmed that the centre was fully conversant with the requirements of the award.

It is encouraging to note that the centre had acknowledged the importance of concentrating on the quality of the finish of the practical work in the early stages of the award. The need to fully develop candidates' skills at this stage is critical, as it prepares candidates for the more demanding criteria at later stages in the Course.

An essential part of this process, which has been highlighted, is the need for timely and 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.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The centre visited was familiar with the Course structure and documentation. The centre was delivering the award to satisfy the requirements of the Unit specifications in a range of different ways which were maximising the candidates' experience.

Candidates were gathering evidence from a range of activities and 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 from the assessors to be able to track candidates' progress across a range of disciplines.

Last session 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 to ensure that opportunities were not lost in recording evidence for the generic Units. The EV reported this session that there has been a lot of work done in this area and the situation is improving all the time. The centre was putting more responsibility onto the learner to gather and record this type of evidence.

In the current climate of falling numbers and composite groups, it is essential that centres ensure all of the Course content is fully covered. To maintain viability, more than a few centres are continually developing learning materials that are more student-centred (rather than all lecturer-led) to assist in the delivery with an ever-increasing amount of intranet and VLE-based materials.

Evidence Requirements

The centre continued to demonstrate a vast and innovative range of approaches to gather evidence for this award, creating an assessment environment conducive to gathering the required evidence in terms of standard, amount, relevance and reliability.

The assessor should be proud of his continuing ability to interpret standards, create a positive learning environment and provide the opportunity for candidates to generate evidence in increasingly challenging situations.

Administration of assessments

The centre was using the nationally-devised assessment materials, which ensured the assessments were at the appropriate level and met all the Performance Criteria for each Unit. Through discussions with candidates, the EV confirmed that, in all cases, assessments were being administered at an appropriate time during the delivery of the Course. There were some good examples of an integrated approach being adopted for the more generic-type Units/assessments.

Candidates were given responsibility for tracking their own progress through a portfolio approach, and were provided with good, clear constructive feedback on an ongoing basis which helped them develop confidence.

The assessor was making fair, reliable and consistent decisions across the range of Units being delivered.

Internal verification was taking place and was proving to be reliable and effective. In this centre, specific mention was made of the efficient systems in place, which mostly included electronic documentation and recording systems. Centre staff were all working to the V1 standards.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates

The EV commented very positively on the quality of feedback given to candidates.

As previously mentioned in this report, the centre has acknowledged the importance of feedback in the formative and summative assessment process and is using it to good effect.

Feedback from candidates interviewed

Discussions with candidates confirmed that feedback was very beneficial to them and had formed an important part of their Course. They commented on how feedback was seen as a positive element of their Course and that the support they received from their lecturer(s) was very good.

Candidates felt that the structure of the Course was good and well managed. The knowledge and understanding element of a Course such as this can sometimes prove to be a challenge for some candidates, but almost all of the candidates interviewed could see the relevance and future benefits of core skills.

Access to assessment

There were no barriers to assessment, and under the continuing poor economic climate the centre was demonstrating an even greater than usual amount of flexibility to ensure candidates were not disadvantaged in any way.

To accommodate employers' and managing agents' requirements, centres were amending attendance patterns and providing, in some instances, additional time outwith the normal working day to allow candidates to prepare for or attempt assessments. Candidates in this situation were very appreciative of this approach, which allowed them to keep on-track with their studies as well as satisfying their employers' demands.

In more than a few cases there were examples of additional support being provided for candidates with additional needs, which ensured they had fair access to assessment.

Areas of good practice

The two areas of good practice noted on this visit were:

- ◆ comprehensive records of team meetings, demonstrating ongoing dialogue between the assessor, IV and curriculum quality leader (CQL)
- ◆ the appointment of a lead lecturer to be responsible for a group of Units was seen to be very effective

Specific areas for improvement

The following points were identified on this visit:

- ◆ Consider including on the IV record of sampling sheet a tick response to confirm candidates' records are kept up-to-date.
- ◆ Develop a system to ensure the assessor signs off the workshop rods and identifies candidates' work (sticker system as discussed).