



Internal Assessment Report (2009): Carpentry and Joinery (including Wood Machining and Shopfitting)

Sector Panel or SSC:

ConstructionSkills

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

Higher National Units

Titles/levels of Higher National Units verified

Advanced Certificate: Carpentry and Joinery

General comments

This award is currently nearing the end of a major review and re-write of Units, which will hopefully address all the issues and concerns raised during the review process.

A total of seven centres were visited during academic session 2008/9 and all the evidence presented was accepted during the External Verification process.

The uptake for this award continues to be the highest out of all the Advanced Certificates in the sector. Candidates remained very positive towards the award, agreeing that some elements of the Units required some major modernisation. One recurring comment from candidates and staff in delivering centres was about the step up from the Training and Assessment Programme (TAP) delivery in years one and two in terms of taking responsibility for their own learning. Another concerned the level and content of responses required to achieve a pass.

One of the actions from the review of the Advanced Certificate Award was to increase the level of the Units to ensure candidates were better prepared to move onto a full HNC. Taking into consideration the previous comments regarding the step up from the TAP delivery, it is imperative that centres use the recently developed PDA awards to fully prepare their candidates for content delivery and formative and summative assessments.

The centres visited were using centre-devised assessment instruments which were valid and reliable. One of the main developments of the new award will be centrally devised training and assessment materials which will significantly assist both the internal and external verification process. The content of these centrally produced materials will be drawn from the wealth of excellent materials currently in use in the sector.

Advice on good practice

There were some very good examples of good practice noted during the EV process. These are listed below:

- ◆ Use of induction manuals for the Course and each individual Unit (two centres)
- ◆ Extensive use of ICT for both delivery and production of assessments, including CAD in one centre
- ◆ An holistic approach and integration of assessments (most centres)
- ◆ Use of centre-produced DVDs of previous candidates' work as a teaching tool (one centre)
- ◆ Use of VLE (one centre)

- ◆ Recycling of materials
- ◆ Staff visiting other delivering centres to share good practice

As previously stated in this report, examples of good practice will be disseminated to all centres through the centrally devised materials. It is encouraging to see innovative and effective approaches to delivering this award, and the newly developed award should only enhance the experience for candidates throughout the sector.

Areas for further development

As the revised award is scheduled to be offered in academic session 2010/11, further development of the existing award would be pointless. Details of the new award will be available in the very near future.

Centres should continue to deliver the existing award in the manner they have been to date, which is more than satisfactory, and look forward to the implementation of the new award and revised Units.

SVQ Awards

Titles/levels of SVQ Awards verified

SVQ levels 2/3: Carpentry and Joinery (new entrant): 26

SVQ level 2: Site Carpentry (on-site assessment): six centres

SVQ levels 2/3: Wood Machining (new entrant): two centres

SVQ levels 2/3: Shopfitting (new entrant): two centres

General comments

All of the above external verification visits were successful, with all assessment decisions being accepted. The following comments relate to non-OSAT delivering centres, which will be dealt with in a separate section of this report.

All the centres were using the Training and Assessment Programmes (TAPs) and had in the main implemented all the changes which had been made during the edit process. Feedback from centres and candidates was in almost all cases very positive, and the holistic delivery of the award was evident in all centres where resources allowed.

Candidates once again confirmed that the feedback was a very beneficial and important part of the process, which allowed them to develop their skills in an environment not driven by assessment.

The very positive relationship between EVs and centres continues to develop and is seen by all as a very positive experience. A very encouraging aspect of this was the amount of feedback centres provided during the edit process of the TAP. This was taken on board by the team and incorporated in the edited version wherever relevant.

A recurring theme last session in the EV reports was the need for centres to ensure that the core skills such as materials, science and drawing were being fully delivered. These areas had been somewhat overlooked in the past few sessions, with perhaps too much of an holistic approach being adopted. However, the inclusion of the Unit syllabus in the TAP, and now the introduction of the PDA in Carpentry and Joinery, will ensure that all of these important core subjects are fully covered. It is very encouraging to see the continuing increase in the use of ICT in centres, both for delivery and production of candidate evidence.

There was evidence in some of the reports that there are still some centres that are not entirely confident in the delivery of the generic Units, despite their now being integrated into the TAP with centrally devised checklists.

In general almost all centres had now developed an efficient and comprehensive portfolio system, with candidates taking ownership of the management and completion of the portfolio. Almost all the EVs mentioned the presentation of candidate evidence by centres, both practical and portfolio-based, which made the verification process much easier and allowed EVs to sample a broad range of evidence.

All centres visited had fully embraced the requirements of the Assessment Strategy in terms of Assessor qualifications, which EVs will continue to monitor.

It was encouraging to note the number of centres who were now occupying new premises and the amount of investment in excellent facilities for the construction sector.

The Shopfitting SVQ is still only delivered in one centre, but special mention should be made of the excellent work the centre team have done in developing a TAP for the first year of the award in conjunction with their EV. The feedback from the candidates and centre staff has been very positive on this new approach to delivering the shopfitting award and can only improve the candidate experience.

The Wood Machining SVQ does not seem to be as popular as in the past, and the number of centres offering this award is unfortunately gradually reducing. However, the centres visited were delivering the award to a high standard, with several examples of good practice and no major development points.

Advice on good practice

There were numerous examples of good practice noted in the reports. The most encouraging aspect of these was the recurring mention of the high quality of candidate evidence presented for external verification. This demonstrates the immeasurable value of a nationally devised award, with supporting materials, in contributing to a highly trained and skilled workforce for industry.

Whilst the examples of good practice were too numerous to list individually, an indicative sample includes:

- ◆ Standard of candidate portfolios
- ◆ Standard of candidate evidence
- ◆ Compliance with Health and Safety
- ◆ Positive and constructive feedback given to candidates
- ◆ The increasing use of ICT both in delivery and production of candidate evidence
- ◆ Candidate progress trackers in portfolio
- ◆ Excellent internal verification systems
- ◆ Continued creative and holistic approach to assessment
- ◆ VLEs

Areas for further development

In general there were very few major development points listed in the reports. However, there are still some aspects of the management of the candidates' portfolios which are worth re-emphasising to centres in quality assurance terms. Centres should note the following points for clarity:

- ◆ All portfolios should be kept up to date on a planned weekly/block basis.
- ◆ All portfolios must be signed and dated in the required places by both candidate and Assessor and, where appropriate, the IV.

- ◆ Portfolios must contain photographic evidence where required.
- ◆ Portfolios should only contain documentation related to the assessment process.
- ◆ Portfolios must contain signed Work Based Evidence Reports for the candidate, and a sample will be signed by the EV.
- ◆ A signature stamp is not acceptable.
- ◆ An internal verification sampling plan must be available for EVs, as well as evidence of internal verification taking place,

Whilst it is necessary to re-enforce the above points, it should be noted that in the vast majority of cases centres are complying with these issues.

On-site assessment

Six centres were visited which were offering SVQ level 2 Site Carpentry for experienced workers. All the assessment decisions sampled were recommended for certification.

There seemed to be a marked improvement in the standard of candidate portfolios presented, and internal verification was being carried out in accordance with the Assessment Strategy. However, concerns were raised regarding the non-trade-specific IVs and their depth of knowledge of the subject area. Whilst still in compliance with the Assessment Strategy, this was perhaps not as robust as using a trade-specific IV.

Concerns were also raised by the team regarding being able to differentiate between new entrant and experienced worker candidates on an SQA product list. Some of the larger and/or more remote centres offer both of these types of candidates, and obviously should all be sampled if that centre is selected for external verification.

However, it has been the case that some centres have not indicated to the EV that they have both types of candidate registered, hence the experienced worker candidates being overlooked. In terms of organising visits and determining the duration of the visit, it is critical that EVs are aware beforehand of the nature of the evidence they will be sampling, and do not rely on centres divulging this information.

An excellent CPD event was hosted by SQA to assist EVs in carrying out this challenging aspect of their role, which received very positive feedback from the team.

This method of assessment is challenging for all concerned and requires an experienced External Verifier to undertake external verification to ensure the candidate is deserving of being awarded this qualification.