



Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Senior Verifier Report

2008

Subject: HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

**Sector Panel or SSC: SKILLS FOR HEALTH AND
DEVELOPMENT**

Date: 5th August 2008

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification which has taken place within Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

SVQ AWARDS

TITLES/LEVELS OF SVQ AWARDS VERIFIED

SVQ Health and Social Care Level 2

SVQ Health and Social Care (Adults) Level 3

SVQ Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) Level 3

SVQ Health and Social Care (Adults) Level 4

SVQ Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) Level 4

SVQ Registered Manager Health and Social Care Level 4

SVQ Leadership and Management for Care Services Level 4

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

Holistic Assessment - Centres have become more familiar with the importance and the benefits of taking a holistic approach to evidence gathering for the health and social care qualifications. There is increasing evidence of cross-referencing core and mandatory units across observations and reflective accounts. The verification team continues to encourage centres to maximize opportunities for cross-referencing in pieces of evidence, as this reduces the volume of evidence within candidate portfolios and reflects the complex and interrelated skills that candidates use in their practice.

For example, candidates do not just 'communicate' or just focus on 'health and safety' in isolation, communication is a foundation to all aspects of their role and healthy and safe work practices permeate all activities within a work setting. Therefore to gather evidence and assess these units in isolation does not provide an accurate window through which to view the candidate's practice.

Some centres are still finding their way with the holistic approach, often due to initial fears candidates may have, however with support and guidance provided early on this can allay fears and develop candidate confidence. The feedback from candidates, who have been interviewed during verification visits, reflects the initial apprehension felt but also clearly identifies the increased confidence and sense of achievement as candidates have progressed through the qualification to completion.

Centres have sought clarification in relation to the role of units 24, 34, 35, 44 and 45 across the respective qualifications they are located within. The unit guidance for these clearly shows they cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the candidate's portfolio and candidates are encouraged to link these units, where relevant through other pieces of evidence within the portfolio. This therefore means that these units may well be the last ones to be completed. This approach ensures that candidates are constantly reflecting on their practice to ensure the well being and protection of the service users they work with which is pivotal to all aspects of the candidate's practice.

SVQ Leadership and Management for Care Services – This new SVQ was available to centres from 1st April 2008 and replaces the SVQ Registered Manager for Health and Social Care. SQA will provide additional support and guidance for delivery of this new SVQ through a quality network planned in the autumn. Dedicated members of the verification team will be assigned to visit those centres approved to deliver this qualification and to provide specialist guidance and support.

Registered Manager Health and Social Care

The final date for registration of this qualification was 31st March 2008. Candidates who have been registered have until 31st March 2012 in which to complete this qualification. The majority of centres visited in this academic session are working with candidates who are coming to the end of their RMA.

Areas of good practice

- The overwhelming feedback from candidates interviewed during verification visits this session has been the quality and volume of support and guidance they have received from staff within the centres they are associated with. There is also clear evidence of centre staff working together as a team to support the quality delivery of the qualifications.
- Candidate inductions seem to have been well received by the candidates who have spoken of the value they have found in this initial input from their centre. Assessors have also spoken of the importance of a strong induction programme which enables candidates to engage with the qualification in a safe and supportive environment.
- The Quality Network event in February 2008 was well attended and feedback from centres was that centre staff had found the day extremely beneficial. For many it consolidated what they were already doing and reassured them that they were complying with SQA guidance for the delivery of the Health and Social Care qualifications. For others it served as a refresher in relation to the central importance of the group award assessment strategy and compliance with this. For a number of centres it brought to light areas which had been overlooked and enabled the teams to take the learning from the day and review their centre delivery in order to make positive changes. For centres in this last category verification reports reflected the effort and dedication of centre staff to make the necessary quality improvements following their attendance at the Quality Network Event.
- A number of centres have begun to use colour coding when cross-referencing several units in a piece of evidence. This has made it easier for both assessors and IVs to track evidence against the unit and provides a clear audit trail for external verifiers.
- Centres have demonstrated how they have taken development points on board constructively. Follow up visits to centres have shown how these development points have been actioned effectively and the standard of SVQ delivery enhanced as a direct result.

Areas of Further Development

External verifier reports highlighted that the most developmental feedback is given in relation to the following areas (in order of frequency)

- 1) Application of knowledge to practice – specifically:-
 - a) Theory related to practice
 - b) Legislation related to practice and contextualized to individual units
- 2) Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- 3) Assessment Planning
- 4) Internal Verification Sampling
- 5) Holistic evidence gathering
- 6) Appropriate use of products
- 7) Standardisation meetings
- 8) Unit HSC33
- 9) Observation
- 10) SVQ Suitability

1) Application of knowledge to practice

This was focused on during the Quality Network event in February and has proved to be an ongoing issue for centres. The frequent questions verifiers are asked are in relation to what level of detail is required and how to support candidates to articulate this knowledge when they have never had experience of doing this before. Centres are being asked to ensure candidates make this knowledge explicit and provide examples of what **relevant** theory and legislation mean for them in their work role.

Where knowledge points relating to legislation are repeated across a number of units candidates must show the relevance of that piece of legislation in the context of that unit e.g. how does a knowledge of the Data Protection Act 1998 influence the way you record and report on a health and safety incident (HSC32K4a)? How does a knowledge and understanding of the same piece of legislation influence you when carrying out a care plan meeting with a service user? (HSC328K6a)

This also applies to knowledge points relating to theories which appear in a number of units e.g. how does a knowledge of human growth and development theories provide insight and understanding in relation to how service users communicate (31K8a)? How does a knowledge of human growth and development theories provide insight and understanding when promoting choice, well-being and protection of individuals (35K12a)? It is likely for these areas candidates will need to carry out some research or be provided with guidance and possibly workshops to support them express these parts of the knowledge requirements.

(This has been less of an issue for those candidates who have effectively used HNC Social Care assignments such as ‘Social care Theory for Practice’ as evidence for their SVQ units.)

2) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – Centres differed in the quality and quantity of CPD records available. Some centres held no records and others had very detailed comprehensive records. Verifiers have stressed the importance of centres being able to access assessor and verifier CPD records which demonstrate recent activities they have undertaken and how this has enabled them to develop in their role as an assessor/verifier. This information must be available for scrutiny to confirm assessors and verifiers are working to A1/V1 standards.

3) Assessment Planning – Whilst there is evidence of planning taking place in centres, often what is available to view in the candidate’s portfolio does not accurately reflect the planning dialogue which takes place between assessor and candidate. The result is that assessment plans do not contain sufficient detail to enable candidates to clearly follow a path for evidence gathering. Centres are encouraged to explore how they plan for assessments and provide candidates with feedback to ensure it is a useful tool to guide them as they focus on evidence gathering. Also centres are encouraged to plan with candidates to cross-reference evidence as they progress through the award as this reduces the volume of evidence produced at the end.

4) Internal Verification Sampling – many centres appear to have chosen to sample 100% of the evidence within portfolios. This is time consuming and is second stage assessment. Centres are encouraged to regularly review their sampling policy and ensure it reflects the holistic nature of evidence gathering e.g. not necessarily following a unit by unit approach. A unit by unit approach to sampling means that portfolios may not be seen until they are close to completion as the holistic approach to evidence gathering focuses on pieces of evidence rather than individual units. If portfolios are sampled on an evidence basis rather than a unit basis a sample can take place at an early stage in the portfolios development and any potential issues addressed so they do not reoccur throughout the portfolio.

5) Holistic evidence gathering – Some centres are still working towards this approach and are encouraged to continue to maximize the claims that can be made across units in a piece of evidence.

6) Appropriate use of products – Candidates have not always been including products when these have been mentioned as part of a reflective account, and where they can be used as supporting evidence for some performance criteria. Also candidates have included downloaded articles from the internet and photocopies as products to claim knowledge, when this is not possible as products must be the candidate's own work. If candidates include certificates from training as products they must support this with an explanation of learning.

7) Standardisation meetings – Holding standardisation meetings/activities is a requirement of being an approved centre with SQA. In a number of centres standardisation meetings have become centre business meetings and standardisation of units or specific parts of units does not take place. Verifiers have encouraged centres to ensure standardisation activities take place and recorded minutes of the meetings disseminated to relevant parties.

8) Unit 33 - Centres need to pay attention to the evidence requirements for the SVQ units as HSC33 has a requirement that assessment should be done over time.

9) Direct Observation– Assessors need to ensure adequate visits take place to observe candidates actual work practice over a period of time (see comment re:HSC33)

10) SVQ Suitability – A number of issues arose in relation to the level of SVQ that a candidate was undertaking and their work role. It is important that candidates are in a work role (or work placement) that matches the level of SVQ they are undertaking. Candidates need to be carrying out work tasks in a real work environment that matches the standards they are working towards.