

Higher National Qualifications

And

Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Senior Moderator Report

2006

Subject: SVQ Management (MG 247)

Assessment Panel:

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

SVQ AWARDS

TITLES/LEVELS OF SVQ AWARDS MODERATED

This report covers all levels of the SVQs in Management. They are:

G5TR 22 SVQ Team Leading level 2 (old standards)
G47B 23 SVQ Management Level 3 (old standards)
G4GB 24 SVQ Management Level 4 (old standards)
G4L5 25 SVQ Operational Management Level 5 (old standards)
G4L4 25 SVQ Strategic Management (Old Standards)
G81V 22 SVQ Team Leading Level 2 (new standards)
G81T 23 SVQ Management Level 3 (new standards)
G81R 24 SVQ Management Level 4 (new standards)

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

No candidates for the new standards at Level 5 (G820 25 SVQ Management) have yet come forward for moderation.

The new standards were introduced in November 2005 and moderation activity covered both the old and the new standards. The new standards have generally been well received and the transition to them seems to have gone smoothly. A major reason for this, perhaps, is that, although the layout and wording of the standards has changed, the underlying methodology and procedures for the SVQs in Management remain much the same.

It is encouraging to report that, for both the old and the new standards, candidates at most centres continue to produce work of a good standard. Many reports commented on the commitment of centres to continuous improvement and this may explain why the move to the new standards seems to have been successful.

Centres continue to develop new means of delivery, particularly through electronic means. These do not suit every centre or every candidate but they can be very effective. Methods range from using software which takes candidates through the whole portfolio building process and where everything is held electronically to using ICT to supplement the more traditional paper based portfolios. Modern audio equipment is particularly helpful in recording and playing back professional discussions for example. At least one centre uses CD-ROMs to train candidates in portfolio building. These developments can have some drawbacks such as ensuring the authenticity of evidence but most centres seem alert to these and have developed systems to make sure that any problems are minimised.

In many ways the use of electronic methods reflects the well-established pattern with the SVQs in Management that centres use a variety of different methods to deliver the awards. These different approaches seem to have been maintained with the new standards. This is good to see as the method adopted is for centres to decide as long as they ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate that they can meet the requirements of the standards in their work as managers.

The problem of ensuring that candidates are at the right level is one that centres still have to face under the new standards. The problem is most apparent at Level 3 where there are still some candidates coming forward whose job roles are largely administrative and who, therefore, struggle to produce suitable evidence

for Level 3 Management. It may be that such candidates could be encouraged to attempt Level 2 Team Leading. Most centres are, however, aware of this difficulty and it does seem that the diagnostic tests developed under the old standards can be applied to the new ones.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Good practice

Much of the good practice which has been apparent in previous years has continued, which is very good to see. It included:

- Transparent and clear systems for tracking the progress of candidates
- Specific feedback to candidates in detailed assessor reports
- Regular standardisation meetings among assessors and internal verifiers – it is now becoming common for meetings to look at a sample of candidate work (e.g. several attempts by different candidates at the same Unit) and compare assessor views and come to a common view
- The use of reflective accounts or narratives to explain how the candidate has met the requirements of the standards

Professional discussion is becoming much more common and centres are, as a result, becoming much more effective at both using it and recording the process. Experience suggests that the best professional discussions tend to be quite short and focused on specific parts of the standards. Some of the Units in the new standards have a lot of outcomes and behaviours and professional discussion seems to work best when only related parts of these Units are considered on any one occasion.

Most centres also have developed good procedures for recording observation. Like professional discussion, these seem to be most effective when they are closely related to specific aspects of the standards i.e. actual outcomes and behaviours. They are less effective when they merely describe what the candidate has done on a particular occasion.

Most centres continue also to emphasise the importance of naturally occurring performance evidence which is good to see. This remains a critical aspect of the SVQ Management in both the old and the new standards.

The commitment of centres to the award is also a key aspect of good practice. This has undoubtedly helped the introduction of the new standards and suggests the SVQ Management will continue to be delivered successfully.

Further development

There are two aspects to this. One is about ensuring that the good practice noted above applies to all candidates and all centres. There are some points which may help centres to ensure that this is the case:

1. Ensuring that candidates provide a clear link between their evidence and the standards – the presentation of evidence is covered on page 12 of the SQA booklet at each level of the SVQ Management. This means ensuring that candidates show that the evidence they present relates to the standards and that they demonstrate that they are aware of how the evidence submitted proves that they do work in accordance with the standards and that they understand why the standards represent good managerial practice. As page 12 goes on to say, this can be done by a reflective account, annotation of evidence and professional discussion – a combination of all three is quite acceptable.
2. Another aspect of 1 above is to make sure that pieces of evidence referred to in reflective accounts, professional discussion or observation are included in portfolios.
3. Where evidence cannot be included for confidentiality reasons, it is insufficient for assessors to say they have seen it. The location of the evidence plus a description of what it entails should be clearly given (this is so that, if required it can be viewed by an internal or external verifier).

4. Making certain that evidence is current – there have been some examples of candidates using evidence which is 2 or more years old. The well established principle of no more than 2 years continues to apply.
5. Limiting the use of company information and other procedural documents – the main requirements of the new standards are what candidates achieve as managers (outcomes of effective performance) and what they do in order to gain these achievements (behaviours). Company documents do not show what the candidates actually do. Candidates should, therefore, concentrate on providing evidence which shows how they have acted in accordance with the procedures.

The second aspect of future development is about adjusting to the new standards and the associated new assessment strategy. This also covers the altered role of external moderators whose role has expanded and now includes matters like checking the occupational competence of assessors and so on.

Most of this is about making sure that the new requirements are met. In particular, this year full CPD records were not always available at moderation visits for all assessors and internal verifiers.

There are some aspects of the new standards such as the assessment interview where some centres have yet to develop suitable procedures.

Overall centres seem to have taken the new standards in their stride and continue to deliver the SVQ Management well.