



**National Qualifications 2015  
Internal Assessment Report  
Personal and Social Development**

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

# National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

F2FV 10 Self Awareness  
F2FV 11 Self Awareness  
F2FV 12 Self Awareness

F37W 10 Self in Society  
F37W 11 Self in Society  
F37W 12 Self in Society

F37X10 Self and Work  
F37X 11 Self and Work  
F37X 12 Self and Work

F37Y 10 Practical Abilities  
F37Y11 Practical Abilities  
F37Y 12 Practical Abilities

F78C 12 Leadership Skills: An Introduction  
F78D 12 Leadership in Practice

## General comments

For NQ external visiting verification, selected activity was sampled across 17 centres.

Centres were undertaking the National Qualifications Awards in Personal Development and Leadership: An Introduction and Leadership in Practice. The Awards are proving extremely popular in schools and continue to evolve as part of mainstream qualification provision in secondary schools.

The delivery of Personal Development and Leadership freestanding Units and Awards is on the increase as centres begin to see their relevance in the delivery of personal development programmes aimed at engaging pupils in Curriculum for Excellence and in the wider school curriculum. Learners consistently comment on the positive learning experience of effectively contributing to school life, which has a knock-on effect and a positive outcome for their own self-development and future expectations.

Personal Development and Leadership Awards and Units continue to provide a flexible coherent framework which is current and can be adapted to suit the needs of a wide range of learners.

Personal Development qualifications focus on portfolio building in the achievement of Self Awareness, Self in Community, Self and Work, and Practical Abilities Units. The framework allows the learner to develop individual self-

confidence, interpersonal and task management skills and through project-based activities to organise and participate in a range of events which will contribute to:

- ◆ the wider school community (eg fund raising/charity events, organising school discos)
- ◆ working within the local community (eg work placements, volunteering, supporting the elderly)
- ◆ community involvement activities (eg developing a sensory garden)
- ◆ providing a local service within the community (eg car washing, enterprise activities and local events)

Personal and Social Development qualifications and achievements promote the principles of lifelong learning and verification activity continues to highlight how learners have grown in confidence and have applied to go to college or university with increased self-belief about their future goals and expectations.

Verification activity was successful across the entire external verification sample; this reflects the continued high standard of delivery in Personal and Social Development Units and Awards. As more and more centres begin to engage in PSD delivery the verification team continues to carry out a wide range of visiting and postal approvals as centres seek to implement PSD Units and Awards.

A significant number of development visits were undertaken and these continue to provide centres with the support they require to deliver National Qualifications efficiently and effectively. Development issues feature during every visiting verification visit as centres take the opportunity to discuss specific features of their programme delivery. Development points will be highlighted within this report.

External verification activity in 2014–15 clearly indicates that centres do have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. External Verifiers were extremely praiseworthy of the high standards and excellent good practice featured in the visiting verification activity:

‘The centre was promoting an excellent ethos in the delivery of the Personal Development Programme and understood the importance of developing interpersonal skills in challenging and yet very relevant project activities. The candidate folio evidence revealed the various stages of the PSD process through the self/peer evaluation of interpersonal skills, the use of the SWOT analysis as a self-evaluation tool, and clear tasks which reflected the targets set.’

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

Centres are familiar with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials for the Personal Development and Leadership Awards. However, as this report indicates in the Units sampled in external visiting verification activity, there are two sets of Personal Development qualifications.

There is an original Personal Development Course and the new Personal Development Award. The old version has a limited shelf-life and centres need to be made aware of this and make the transition to the new version. This is very easy to do as the new version has been designed from the old version and is more streamlined, eg four Outcomes have become three. Outcomes 2 and 3 in the old version have been merged to create one Outcome where the monitoring is more simplified and the assessor contribution has been reduced.

Whilst centres are familiar with Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials there is a need to understand and differentiate between the levels of delivery. External verification activity year on year refers to the need to make sure that centres provide the depth of evidence required at level 6 where there is a need to link the aims of the project activity to the targets and tasks. The use of self-evaluation tools must show an in-depth analysis of the process and be linked to the project aim, targets and tasks undertaken.

Personal Development Units are available from SCQF levels 2–6. Leadership Units are available at levels 5 and 6. As the SCQF level increases so does the requirement for the relevant depth of evidence, eg levels 2 and 3 will require a high degree of tutor support and supported evidence with clear tutor direction; levels 3 and 4 are mainly routine familiar activities undertaken with limited tutor support; levels 5 and 6 are where the learner should be working independently with little or no tutor support and where learning is directed as and when required. The depth of evidence at these levels requires analysis and justification throughout the process including self-reflection and self-evaluation.

External verification reports were extremely praiseworthy of the systems delivery of Personal Development Awards and Units:

‘There was a good variety of supporting evidence as well as NAB booklets. Each candidate had their own folder which covered the requirements for the four Units. The evidence was drawn from sustainable projects.’

Centres continue to make good use of SQA assessment exemplification materials but there is a growing need to integrate assessment activities in the delivery of the National Awards as learners commented that they:

‘were very positive about the experience that they had in the course and could relate this to the contexts and principles of CfE. Learner experiences were relevant and added value to post-school destinations. However, candidates stated that they thought SQA NABs were repetitive and they didn’t value the written aspects of the course required for certification.’

Centres need to integrate Units, for example: the Personal Development Awards can be evidenced with one project activity across all the Units where the aim is clearly stated within each Unit and the tasks and targets are identified against each Unit. A simple matching exercise using the assessment instruments across all the Units can form the basis of the structure of the folio evidence.

SQA encourages centres to develop centre-devised assessment instruments and offers support in the form of prior verification. This means that assessment instruments generated by a centre can be forwarded to SQA whereby the verification team will check them and produce a report confirming their suitability and/or guidance to develop them to meet the national standard.

Centres delivering Personal Development Awards and/or Units should consider the following information that continues to be provided by External Verifiers and has been previously highlighted in internal assessment reports:

- ◆ SQA exemplification materials have been written and vetted to meet the evidence requirements of the Award/Unit specifications. Any minor changes should be internally approved within the centre and any major changes submitted for prior verification.
- ◆ Centres that produce internally devised assessment instruments should send these to SQA for prior verification. Prior verification is the process by which centres seek validation of an internally produced assessment scheme before embarking on the Unit/course to which it applies.
- ◆ All centres should as good practice consider making available a master pack which contains all relevant assessment and internal quality assurance documentation, including relevant procedures, eg Course documents, Unit specifications, assessment exemplars, internal sampling/internal verification records.
- ◆ The Unit specification determines the national standard and the evidence requirements. Centres need to ensure that they have read the Unit requirements. The exemplar is simply one version of how to deliver the assessment framework for the Unit.
- ◆ SQA assessment materials provide approved exemplification to the national standard. Whilst there is a high degree of confidence in their use, centres do need to move forward and produce assessment exemplification which integrates assessment activities and reduces the risk of over-assessment.

## **Evidence Requirements**

General feedback from external visiting verification reports was very positive indeed. Some of the points raised in external verification reports are highlighted below:

- ◆ Candidate folios contained written evidence as well as supporting evidence, eg photos, letters, witness testimonies.
- ◆ Candidate evidence clearly related to each candidate's chosen project.
- ◆ Written evidence matched the Outcomes of the Unit specification.
- ◆ Candidates were given written comments on feedback sheets. Comments were extensive and very comprehensive for all candidates. These were signed and dated.
- ◆ There was good use of peer review comments in candidate folios.
- ◆ Some centres ensure candidates undertake a thorough induction. This includes highlighting the centre policy and procedures regarding plagiarism.

- ◆ Personal Development and Leadership Units revealed a variety of evidence using portfolios, completed worksheets and project work.
- ◆ Additional support needs are underpinned by well-established support systems within centres.
- ◆ Clear written and verbal feedback was provided for candidates by assessors.

External visiting verification reports reflected a good broad understanding of the national standards. However, some development issues were highlighted and these will be reported in the section under 'Specific areas for improvement'.

Centres were fully compliant with external requests and assessment evidence was well organised and grouped according to specific levels. Assessment checklists and records were not always fully completed but centres had made good judgements regarding candidate folio evidence.

Supporting evidence was freely available and made good use of photos; printouts/letters/e-mail; artefacts; witness testimony and personal accounts.

SQA exemplar marking schemes were in use for specific Unit exemplars, Unit specification requirements and Course Arrangements documents.

Assessment folios created by the Prince's Trust were in use and network support groups provided guidance for centres and assessors on the programme delivery. However, the Prince's Trust folio evidence does not provide full coverage across Unit Outcomes in the Personal Development Award and centres need to consider using an alternative assessment instrument. (This will be further highlighted in the specific improvements section of this report.)

### **Administration of assessments**

Assessment evidence was appropriate at all levels throughout the external sampled activity. However a number of points emerged in external reporting which need to be considered in the future delivery of Personal Development and Leadership qualifications.

Assessment judgements were mainly accurate but there were consistent requests made for centres to apply more detail and depth of analysis especially at SCQF levels 5 and 6.

Clear marking schemes were available for the Units. Assessment instruments were held securely within the school system including policies and procedures which were accessible on the secure server for staff and in hard copy within the school handbook.

Assessment evidence complied with the marking scheme set by SQA and utilised appropriate templates.

Many centres have a clear system for the recording of assessment judgements, which were dated and signed with positive and constructive feedback. However,

some centres need to develop this further and provide consistency in the completion of folio checklists.

Standardisation meetings and records were made available on some occasions during the external verification visit and action points recorded. This is an area of development for many centres where no records were available.

Clear records exist for all candidates where support for learning is provided for those who need extra support. Centres are fully aware of the SQA publication for candidates with additional support needs and the provision of different forms of evidence as appropriate.

A number of points were raised regarding internal verification. Some centres have robust policy and procedures in place and follow these rigorously whilst others do not implement the internal system. There were a number of instances where there was no clear internal verification system in place and internal verification had not been undertaken. Here are some quotes from the EV reports:

- ◆ 'There was no IV policy or any evidence of internal verification taking place.'
- ◆ 'The centre is currently developing this system. The lack of an internal verification procedure has not affected the judgements of candidate work or the standard to which judgements were made.'
- ◆ 'Internal verification was evident, however evidence was limited. The centre was given advice during the External Verifier's visit regarding: policy, prior verification, standardisation, cross-marking, agenda and minutes.'
- ◆ 'There was a school internal verification policy available but no course policy. Internal verification had not been undertaken for any folio evidence.'
- ◆ 'Centres need to devise strategies and procedures for internal verification'.

## **Areas of good practice**

Candidate feedback clearly indicated the value of Personal Development Awards and Units:

'Higher candidates gave an extensive overview of their Personal Development journey. They explained a number of activities they were involved in: sports day, elderly project, World Cup project. They gave clear examples of the qualities and feelings they had developed, how they monitored projects and set personal goals. They spoke about how they had achieved places at college and attributed their success to the confidence the course had given them'.

Success is celebrated in a numbers of ways within schools — through the annual awards ceremony/group events; school assemblies and presentations; televised events; display boards and peer role models.

Good practice was highlighted where all assessment decisions were internally verified.

PSD programmes are very well established in some centres. Local network support groups are operating to share good practice and to provide external support where internal verification may be required, eg single subject practitioner.

The SQA Leadership Award at level 6 was very effective working with other practitioners to network and find out how the award was being delivered. Candidate evidence reflected a good range of knowledge and understanding of leadership, principles, styles, skills and qualities. Folio evidence revealed a high level of maturity in the analysis, reflection and evaluation of the reports and it was clear that the research undertaken had a direct impact on the self-evaluation process.

The delivery of the Personal Development Award in some local authorities utilises local network support meetings to ensure consistency and standardisation when interpreting and gathering folio evidence.

An enthusiastic approach was evident with pupils benefiting from a wide variety of suitable work placements. Work placements were enhanced with substantial support from staff to build confidence through providing awareness of skills and qualities.

Project activities were wide ranging eg charity fundraising (bingo nights and Christmas fayres), sustainable projects.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

External Verifiers commented on areas for development within external verification reports specifically in relation to various Units at different levels:

#### **Self Awareness Unit F2FV 11**

##### **Outcome 1**

- ◆ Ensure candidates identify topic
- ◆ Aim of project should be clear, it should give them an opportunity to progress their qualities and feelings
- ◆ Ensure tasks are clear and not retrospective

##### **Outcome 2**

- ◆ Monitoring should link to tasks, aim and candidates' qualities and feelings

##### **Outcome 3**

- ◆ Ensure candidates analyse progress towards their aim

#### **Self Awareness Unit F2FV 12**

##### **Outcome 1**

- ◆ Use self-development techniques, eg SWOT, Johari or Forcefield to evaluate candidates' qualities and feelings



- ◆ Explanation of aim should link to the qualities/feelings of the candidate
- ◆ Ensure four tasks are complex

### **Outcome 2**

- ◆ Monitoring should link to tasks, aim and candidates qualities and feelings

### **Outcome 3**

- ◆ Ensure candidates analyse the progress they have made towards their aim

Specific improvements were highlighted in more general comments and consisted of the following information:

- ◆ References and web links could be added to candidate resource materials to support learning.
- ◆ Schemes of work might be helpful to develop and share with any new assessors to ensure consistency of practice across the organisation in the delivery of the Awards.
- ◆ A candidate record of achievement template can provide the required evidence needed for each Unit and Outcomes. This template can also capture information relating to supporting information, eg informal meetings, a discussion log, etc.
- ◆ Internal verification checklists are helpful for assessors and internal verifiers to use. SQA provides templates which can be adapted and customised for centre use.
- ◆ Candidate reviews might be recorded in order to motivate and support individuals in their learning.
- ◆ The experience of existing candidates on the programme should be shared with peers when making Course choices.
- ◆ Candidate feedback including external verification observation feedback should be acted upon and used to make changes to the Course programme design including more integration of assessment tasks where duplication exists.
- ◆ The presentation of candidate portfolios might be strengthened by having a consistent approach with an index; individual's name; name and code number of Units; dates of production of evidence, for example.
- ◆ The current assessment instruments for the Prince's Trust Personal Development Units across all levels does not provide full coverage of the assessment requirements for each Unit. Centres must use an alternative version and/or SQA NAB exemplification materials.

The new Personal Development Awards have been available for several years now. Centres need to make the switch from the original Personal Development Courses to the new Awards. Unit assessment support materials can be found on SQA's secure website under the Awards section and these are available for all Units at all levels.