



**National Qualifications 2013
Internal Assessment Report
Practical Craft Skills**

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified:

X035 Woodworking Skills	(Intermediate 1 and 2)
X034 Engineering Craft Skills	(Intermediate 1 and 2)

General comments

This year in excess of 120 external verification exercises were carried out, with 85 centres visited.

Two centres initially received a Not Accepted decision and were placed On Hold until a further visit resulted in an Accepted verdict for both centres.

These figures confirm that the vast majority of centres are comfortable with, and have a clear understanding of, the national standards required for assessment at Intermediate 1 and 2 for both Woodworking Skills and Engineering Craft Skills. Over the years, the percentage of centres where internal assessment was deemed to be Accepted, with no discrepancies, during the verification process has been improving. Where there were any discrepancies between levels, the External Verifier addressed this and agreement was reached with the centre. Although there has been an improvement from last year's exercise there still is a need, within a large number of centres, to improve internal verification procedures, as was emphasised in a significant number of External Verifiers' reports. This information has been fed-back to centres.

Practical Craft Skills Courses consist of three Units and the Course Project. **To achieve a Course Award, it is mandatory that all three Units and Course Project are completed.**

Centres should be well aware that to achieve a Course Award at a specific level, eg Intermediate 2, all Units and the Course Project for the Course must have been entered and passed at Intermediate 2.

The following are areas which could lead to a Not Accepted decision during an external verification visit.

- ◆ Insufficient evidence
- ◆ No evidence for specific Outcomes
- ◆ Inconsistent marking/judgement
- ◆ More than 1/3 disagreement in the verification sample
- ◆ Instrument of assessment not reliable or valid
- ◆ No internal verification process in place
- ◆ Candidates presented at the wrong level

Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The vast majority of assessors, within centres, are very familiar with the Course Arrangements, and are clear on Unit content. They are competent in the use of appropriate instruments of assessment to assess prescribed Outcomes.

Most centres are using exemplar materials and NABs issued by SQA, thus ensuring consistency. Although some centres are choosing alternative projects, it should be noted that 80% of centres are using one of the SQA-devised instruments of assessment, an indication of its popularity among candidates and deliverers.

This move towards alternative models has been more obvious in Engineering Craft Skills, where, centres are using a variety of the SQA-devised instruments of assessment.

Where a centre has been using an instrument of assessment of their own design, it has been prior verified and is consistent with exemplification materials.

Centres are advised to ensure any alterations they make to instruments of assessment do not invalidate them as valid assessment tools, eg do not reduce widths to an extent that they can no longer allow assessment of tolerances etc.

If centres wish to change the instrument of assessment being used then they are reminded to refer to SQA's secure site where a number of projects are available.

Evidence Requirements

While most centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements and the retention of evidence, some do not. As highlighted in previous years, evidence retention is governed by the Unit completion dates.

Each centre should submit its completion dates for all Units to SQA.

All centre departments, and staff involved in delivery, should be made aware of the completion dates which are being submitted by the centre.

All evidence for each Unit must be retained for three weeks after the submitted completion date.

99% of concerns with Unit verification are due to the centre failing to retain evidence.

There are no major concerns concerning evidence for the Course Project, other than on the odd occasion when centres do not have candidates at a sufficient stage of completion for verification to take place. This is normally because verification takes place too early and results in a second visit. The centre should ensure candidates are near completion before agreeing a date with the visiting External Verifier.

It should be noted that no Unit Project or Course Project should be painted prior to verification.

Thermal fusion joints should not be dressed with grinder prior to verification.

Administration of assessments

All centres must refer to the Grade Descriptors issued by SQA. These are available from the secure area of SQA's website. This ensures consistency and allows all centres to assess work, at the appropriate level, with regard to: processes undertaken, tolerances applied, and quality of finish.

Although there has been improvement in the quality and reliability of internal verification procedures within a number of centres, there are a number of centres that require to formalise their procedures to ensure that reliable, robust evidence of internal verification is available to an External Verifier.

Although cross-marking and collaborative marking form part of good quality assurance, they do not on their own constitute internal verification. The policy for internal verification should reflect the exercise as carried out by the visiting External Verifier and **records of this exercise must be kept.**

Areas of good practice

As commented upon in previous external assessment reports, the quality of candidate work has improved year after year and this is regularly highlighted in External Verifiers' reports.

Many more centres are now issuing individual student logbooks/handbooks which outline specific requirements of all aspects of the Course, Units and Course Project. These booklets specify the Outcomes and expectations within the Course, while encouraging self-, peer- and teacher assessment; in some centres this also incorporates target setting involving student, teacher and parent/guardian.

The majority of centres have taken onboard the need to evidence all areas of individual student input and design. This is reflected in External Verifiers' reports.

Good internal verification procedures involve a clear policy statement, sampling and feedback with a detailed record kept (policy into practice). The internal verification procedures should reflect the procedures of visiting External Verifiers.

A few centres now work in partnership with other local centres to carry out verification. This is particularly beneficial for centres that have only one member of staff within the department and is a good method of sharing good practice and strengths between practitioners.

In many cases, Course Summary Assessment Sheets are being extended to give more individual candidate detail with reasons for grades applied. This assists greatly during external verification.

Specific areas for improvement

The main area of improvement lies in the implementation of internal verification procedures and policy, to ensure a robust system is in place. Centres should be aware that if there is no internal verification then the result of future verification visits will be 'Not Accepted'.

Although cross-marking and collaborative marking form part of good quality assurance, they do not on their own constitute internal verification. The policy for internal verification should reflect the exercise as carried out by the visiting External Verifier, ie an appointed Internal Verifier sampling the assessment of teacher/lecturer at regular intervals with **records of exercise being kept**.

Some centres are not adhering to the completion dates they are submitting to SQA. Centres must ensure that Unit completion dates submitted to SQA correspond with actual Unit delivery dates. As stated earlier, departments and deliverers must be aware of the completion dates being submitted by their centre to SQA.

In a few centres visited there were discrepancies between working drawings and the actual finished Project. Any alterations to overall dimensions or dimensions of materials used in the construction of artefacts must be reflected in all working drawings. Centres are reminded that widths of materials should not be reduced, as this compromises the effectiveness of the Project as an appropriate instrument of assessment for joint gap tolerances, etc.

When welding, centres must ensure continuous runs, not tacking. Centres should ensure that care is taken when setting up for welding to ensure square.

Centres should not undertake processes they are poorly equipped to deliver.

Centres are reminded that the difference between a good grade and a very good grade is liable to be down to the finish. Finish is an area where there is still some scope for improvement. At times there is still evidence of pencil lines, poor finish to end-grain, lack of de-burring, rounded edges and poor filing.

If centres feel they are unsure of any aspects of the Course and require support then they should consider arranging a development visit through SQA.

National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

D182 Bench Skills 1 — Wood Flat Frame Construction (Intermediate 1 and 2)
D183 Bench Skills 2 — Wood Carcase Construction (Intermediate 1 and 2)
D184 Machining and Finishing — Wood (Intermediate 1 and 2)
D180 Fabrication and Thermal Joining Techniques (Intermediate 1 and 2)
D179 Machine Processes — Metal (Intermediate 1 and 2)
D178 Bench Skills — Metal (Intermediate 1 and 2)

General comments

The vast majority of presenting centres are comfortable with, and have a clear understanding of, the standards expected for assessment at Intermediate 1 and 2 in the Units contributing to Woodworking Skills and Engineering Craft Skills Courses.

Centres, in the main, are adhering very closely to the guidelines and criteria issued by SQA to ensure consistency when assessing Unit work.

There are concerns with a small number of centres on the retention of Unit evidence. It should be clear that **all** evidence must be retained for three weeks after the completion date submitted to SQA, unless otherwise advised by SQA.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The vast majority of assessors are very familiar with the Unit specifications, are clear on Unit content, and are competent in the use of appropriate instruments of assessment to assess prescribed Outcomes.

The vast majority of centres are using exemplar materials and NABs issued by SQA, thus ensuring consistency across the country.

Where a centre has been using an instrument of assessment of its own design, this has been prior verified and is consistent with exemplification materials. When submitting work for prior verification, centres should refer to existing NABs for guidance on material cross-section to ensure that the proposed artefacts are appropriate for purpose and they are a reliable instrument of assessment.

Evidence Requirements

As with previous years, most centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements and the retention of evidence, with only a few unclear. As highlighted in previous years, evidence retention is governed by the Unit completion dates.

99% of concerns with Unit verification lie with the centre not retaining evidence. The individual centre should submit completion dates for all Units to SQA.

All evidence for each Unit must be retained for three weeks after the submitted completion date.

The evidence retained must cover all the Unit Outcomes; and records and instruments of assessment must be provided for each Unit.

Administration of assessments

All must refer to the Grade Descriptors issued by SQA. This ensures consistency and allows everyone to assess work at the appropriate level, with regard to processes undertaken, tolerances applied and quality of finish.

There are many centres that have good internal verification procedures in place, which are consistent and available for scrutiny. This, however, is not universal and there are still a number of centres which require to formalise their procedures to ensure reliable, robust evidence of internal verification is available.

There has been a definite improvement in the quality and quantity of evidence available to assist in external verification.

Although cross-marking and collaborative marking form part of good quality assurance, they do not on their own constitute internal verification. The policy for internal verification should reflect the exercise as carried out by the visiting External Verifier and **records of exercise should be kept.**

Areas of good practice

As with the work at Course Project, the quality of student work at Unit level continues to improve.

The quality of record keeping and individual student profiling is continually improving and staff, in these, centres should be commended.

More and more centres are issuing candidates with Course Arrangements and log book/diaries to record their individual progress and by doing so are able to set meaningful and appropriate personal/individual targets. Centres which have not as yet developed these areas should now be taking this onboard.

Good internal verification procedures are evident in some centres. Those centres have clear policy statements with records of 'policy into practice', which evidences method and timing of internal verification.

Some centres work in conjunction with nearby centres which allows for sharing of good practice and assists in verification, particularly in single-person departments.

Some centres are supplying evidence of practice materials, particularly in welding, which is useful for the verification exercise.

Specific attention has been drawn to the good use of jigs within centres and some excellent use of lathes, both in Engineering and Woodworking.

The quality of finish is improving in some centres, but there is room for further work in this area.

Specific areas for improvement

As highlighted throughout this report, there is a real need for some centres to improve their internal verification procedures.

Delivering departments must ensure that they are giving completion dates to their SQA Co-ordinators and that these are the dates being submitted to SQA. By doing this we should be able to eliminate the issue of evidence not being available for external verification visits. This is a concern when Verifiers contact centres to arrange Unit verification, and a Unit was completed months previously and candidates have taken home the evidence.

A logical spread of completion dates should help reduce a problem which is shared by all centres — storage of evidence.

Most centres use written tests supplied in NAB exemplars which have cut-off scores for different levels. If, however, a centre has developed its own test, cut-off scores must be made available.

Centres are reminded that it is the responsibility of the individual centres to ensure that they can evidence all Outcomes for each of the Units.

Welding still lacks consistency from centre to centre and this tends to tie in with time spent practising the skill.

Centres should refrain from applying paint finishes prior to verification.

Thermal fusion joints (welds) should not be dressed using grinder prior to verification.