



**National Qualifications 2011
Internal Assessment Report
Skills for Work: Uniformed and
Emergency Services**

Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)

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

Skills for Work: Uniformed and Emergency Services (Intermediate 1, SCQF level 4)

Units included:

Uniformed and Emergency Services: An Introduction (F38R 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Health, Safety, Fitness and Wellbeing (F38S 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Engaging with the Community (F38T 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Working in Teams (F38V 10)

General comments

All of the centres visited showed a clear understanding of the national standard. The assessment judgements throughout were consistent and at the correct SCQF level.

Discussions with tutors and assessors added to the view developed by the External Verification (EV) team that centres had a well defined understanding of the Course rationale and requirements. It is particularly encouraging to note that all visits were successful, and there were no 'Hold' recommendations.

All centres are using SQA's NAB material, and have a clear picture of the Course requirements as set out in the Arrangements documentation. The Course is now in the third year of delivery, and centres are starting to 'personalise' their assessment material. In all cases where this was seen by External Verifiers, the material was of the correct standard and was well suited to use in the individual centres. Although instruments of assessment are without exception derived from the NAB material, centres are in some cases developing extended and/or centre-specific marking criteria — again in all cases this was at an appropriate standard and level.

In some instances the materials produced by the Scottish Further Education Unit (now Scotland's Colleges) was being used, or had been adapted to local circumstances. A number of centres were using Uniformed and Emergency Services (UES) personnel for the delivery of some of the more context-specific activities, though they were at all times interacting with, or working beside, centre staff. This is viewed by the EV team as a particularly effective method of delivery, as it uses 'real' situations and standards, and allows candidates to find out from service personnel the realities of working in the UES.

Centres have also developed underpinning knowledge questions and answers, and built excellent links with their local communities. It is encouraging to see innovative work being done to broaden the scope and appeal of the Course.

Evidence Requirements

Candidate folios were seen by External Verifiers for all live enrolments at centres. They were universally well presented and it was generally easy to track material and assessment progress. In all of the centres visited, delivering staff and assessors showed great enthusiasm for the Course, and had developed centre-specific, and frequently innovative, methods of generating evidence (though care should be taken that assessment remains at SCQF level 4). Where third-party evidence had been collected (for example, witness testimony from service personnel) this was at the correct level. Third-party evidence had

been developed by personnel from the Fire Service, the Territorial Army, Ambulance Service, RAF, and Navy.

Evidence presented was in all cases provided in an organised and accessible manner. Evidence sampled had, in general, been verified by the Internal Verifier as required prior to the visit, and all paperwork completed where appropriate.

Administration of assessment

The majority of centres deliver the programme in a holistic manner, so assessment material is generated throughout the Course in a variety of different formats. This means that tracking of evidence is extremely important, both for staff so that individual candidates can be kept on track, and candidates so that they are aware of their own progress within the qualification.

Some centres have more efficient tracking methods than others, and in some instances the External Verifier was able to suggest improved methodology and/or a proforma which might aid this process. Assessment material is generated in a wide variety of formats to ensure that all candidates have equal access to the qualification — oral, practical, project, supervised, written, group, individual, electronic, video and photographic to name but some. Frequently, members of the delivering staff team are ex-UES personnel, which allows them to bring a high level of context-specific knowledge and personal experience to the delivery of the Course.

Marking schemes, as stated previously, were in all cases derived from the NAB material but had in some cases been extended or contextualised to the individual centre — in all cases the External Verifier was able to determine that this had been done appropriately. Assessment judgements throughout were consistent and at the correct SCQF level.

Feedback to candidates was variable, but in general adequate. Some centres noted that the individual review interviews (while valuable) were extremely time consuming and often difficult to timetable, especially where only one member of staff was timetabled. This meant that on some occasions feedback tended to be slightly subjective, however Verifiers were able to discuss the need for objective and individualised feedback on activities and assessment.

Ultimately, all centres visited were able to show clearly how candidates were assessed and the progress of all at each stage of the Course. In all cases, the internal verification processes proved robust, with minutes available at all centres to show evidence of standardisation meetings and Course development being an ongoing priority. Internal verification samples varied from 20% to 100%, largely dependent on the number of candidates — all samples were in line with the IV policy of the presenting centre. Verification samples seen by the EV team showed a wide range of candidate ability, and it was clear that assessors were taking time to ensure that all candidates were being assessed in the most appropriate manner.

Areas of good practice/areas for improvement

A wide variety of examples of good practice were observed:

- ◆ Using an appropriately qualified ex-student to assist in delivering work on the nutrition aspects of the Health, Safety, Fitness and Wellbeing Unit. Peer-assisted learning of this kind is excellent practice and the centre's candidates found the experience very motivational.

- ◆ Development of an effective holistic delivery pattern, where candidates examine a broad range of UES in the first year of their Course, narrowing down the focus to their own specific area of interest in the second year. Unit 1 (An Introduction) is delivered over the two years with reviews spaced out enabling a longer time to identify specific candidate areas for improvement.
- ◆ Candidates undertaking a short placement as part of the Course (in one case this involved a one-week placement with the Army).
- ◆ Inclusion of an 'Emergency First Aid' qualification.
- ◆ An impressive selection of visits to UES facilities — overnight stays and residential exercises; a visit to a nuclear submarine; Prison, Police, Fire and Ambulance Services including 'unforeseen situation' exercises in service facilities.
- ◆ Partnership working between delivering centres.
- ◆ Tutors with personal experience of UES including the Fire Service, RAF, Army, and Police.
- ◆ All centres visited were keen to start developing e-portfolios.

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ All centres should have a clear proforma for assessments so that results, feedback and remediation information for candidates and Internal Verifiers/ External Verifiers is clear.
- ◆ It is important that where NAB material asks for candidate and assessor signatures these are completed as required. Assessors should be vigilant to ensure that this is done.
- ◆ There is occasional misunderstanding of the role of sampling in the assessment process — centres are reminded that all aspects of the Evidence Requirements must be successfully completed.