



Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2013 Administration

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

SVQ awards

General comments

In the sample of centres visited during external verification the following was observed.

Assessors and verifiers are recruited primarily for their occupational competence. If they do not already hold Assessor qualifications, they are mentored through L&D9 DI. Internal Verifiers are developed from existing, experienced assessors who have occupational competence of Administration. Induction programmes for both new assessors and Internal Verifiers are in place. Assessors and Internal Verifiers were appropriately qualified and experienced.

Candidates are well supported by assessors. Candidates receive regular visits by their assessor and this is augmented through telephone contact and e-mail contact.

There was evidence that centres were well aware of the national standards and of the appropriate assessment strategies relating to these awards.

All candidate evidence was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable and there was a good audit trail of evidence.

The development points from the previous reports had been addressed.

Centres are continuing to use good cross-referencing between optional Units and between optional Units and core Units.

Witness signatory lists were used to identify those who interacted with the portfolios.

There was good evidence of assessment planning with assessment being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback. This is very supportive to candidates and provides very good feedback on the quality of the assessment evidence.

Centres had good internal verification procedures in place providing good feedback to assessors and candidates. These procedures were well documented. Internal verification sampling procedures and documentation provided a robust quality assurance system. Feedback recorded on internal verification paperwork was clear and encouraging for assessors. Internal verification documentation offered structured, helpful feedback to assessors. There was evidence of regular internal verification taking place throughout the life of the portfolio, which is best practice. It is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after an assessment decision has been made. This allows candidates and assessors to respond quickly to any feedback from the internal verification process.

There were good CPD (continuing professional development) records available for assessors and Internal Verifiers. Best practice CPD records contain not only what has been undertaken but also the impact of the learning on the assessment process.

Two SVQ networking meetings were held by SQA in Stirling and Glasgow in January 2013. Both were well attended with positive evaluations.

A range of materials to help centres with standards has been published on the Understanding Standards section of SQA's website. This material highlights the type of evidence promoted as best practice. The Assessment Guidance previously prepared has continued to be useful to centres.

Feedback from centres indicated that they found the Understanding Standards website helpful and is a key aspect for developing the skills of staff within centres.

Where Holds occurred, centres very quickly generated appropriate evidence and the Holds were lifted in a timely and effective manner. There were only a few Holds this year resulting from the following criteria:

- ◆ Insufficient evidence of candidate performance
- ◆ Inappropriate judgement of candidate performance

There was a growing use of e-portfolios. One main advantage of e-portfolios is the availability of evidence online to the assessor at any time and this can be viewed prior to meeting candidates. Also there can be an increased variety of evidence such as photographs, video files, voice files. The subject of the SVQ network events held earlier in the year was discussed with centres and these were reported as being very informative.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In the sample of centres visited, there was evidence that centres were well aware of the national standards and of the appropriate assessment strategies relating to these awards.

Feedback from centres relating to the current standards seemed to be very positive. The variety of Units appears to suit job roles very well. Centres also like the fact that each award can be made up of Units from different levels. Centres feel that they can now more accurately tailor the award to suit the job roles of their candidates and they were of the view that the wide choice of Units was good as it allowed candidates to undertake Units that accurately reflected their job role.

Understanding Standards material was prepared this year and is available through SQA — this material highlights the type of evidence promoted as best practice. The Assessment Guidance previously prepared has continued to be

useful to centres. This guidance developed by SQA has helped centres gain an accurate understanding of the national standards.

One particular centre indicated that staff felt that the annual Quality Network meetings were invaluable. As such, they always make the effort to ensure at least one member of staff can attend and that if these were to be discontinued this would be detrimental to the sector.

They also felt the Understanding Standards website was extremely useful and they had guided colleagues from other cognate group areas to this resource as the examples shown really helped new assessors and candidates alike.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable.

A good variety of assessment evidence was observed with good triangulation of evidence and a good balance of both performance evidence and supporting evidence. Performance evidence included observation and work product. supporting evidence included personal statement, professional discussion, witness testimony, and knowledge and understanding questions.

Observations were tracked down the side against performance indicators and knowledge and understanding.

Work product evidence was well annotated to help place the evidence in context. The annotation was documented in a variety of ways – all of which are acceptable, eg the use of a ‘storyboard’, ‘personal statement’, ‘actual annotation on the evidence’, ‘sticky notes attached to the evidence’. The important issue here is that the evidence is placed in context.

Centres also made good use of questions relating to knowledge and understanding. Most evidence for knowledge and understanding was gained through performance. Questions were being used to gain further depth of knowledge and/or to seek clarification. Questions were incorporated into observations and professional discussions. Where possible, centres should obtain evidence for this underpinning knowledge and understanding from performance evidence rather than a bank of questions.

In general terms, the audit trails reviewed were very easy to follow.

Centres are continuing to use good cross-referencing between optional Units and between optional Units and core Units.

Administration of assessments

In all cases, centres had excellent administrative systems in place to support the assessment and internal verification procedures.

General feedback

Candidate feedback indicated that they were very well supported by assessors. Most centres provided ongoing, additional support between assessor visits via telephone and e-mail correspondence.

All candidates sampled had fair access to the assessment process.

See comments in the General Comments section above.

Areas of good practice

The variety of assessment evidence available was positive with centres having a good balance between performance and evidence. The performance evidence seen included observation and work product.

Observations were tracked down the side against performance indicators and knowledge and understanding.

The work product evidence available was well annotated (see Evidence Requirements). Centres also included a variety of supporting evidence — personal statements, professional discussion and witness testimonies.

Centres also made good use of questions relating to knowledge and understanding. Most evidence for knowledge and understanding was gained through performance.

Questions were being used to gain further depth of knowledge or to seek clarification. Questions were incorporated into observations and professional discussion. Where possible, centres should obtain evidence for this underpinning knowledge and understanding from performance evidence rather than a bank of questions.

All of the above accounted for good triangulation of evidence using both performance evidence and supporting evidence. All evidence was well tracked against performance indicators and knowledge and understanding with very easy audit trails to follow.

Witness signatory lists were used to identify those who interacted with the portfolios.

Good evidence of assessment planning with assessment being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback. This is very supportive to candidates and provides very good feedback on the quality of the assessment evidence.

Centres had very good internal verification procedures in place providing good feedback to assessors and candidates. These procedures were well documented.

For internal verification, it is best practice to spread the activity evenly throughout the life of the portfolio. It is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after an assessment decision has been made. This allows candidates and assessors to respond quickly to any feedback from the internal verification process.

Very good CPD records were available for assessors and Internal Verifiers. Best practice CPD records contain not only what has been undertaken but also the impact of the learning on the assessment process.

Candidate feedback indicated that they were very well supported by assessors. Most centres provided ongoing additional support between assessor visits via telephone and e-mail correspondence.

Regular standardisation meetings are taking place in addition to continuous informal discussion between staff relating to candidates and Units.

Specific areas for improvement

Always try to ensure that there is a good balance of performance evidence and supporting evidence.

Evidence presented did not always demonstrate competence over time and breadth of scope. This can be achieved by increasing the use of evidence triangulation (observation, work product and supporting evidence) to ensure the performance indicators are met over a period of time.

A second observation against 'action' Units where work product evidence is not easily obtained, eg mail, office equipment, filing etc., would strengthen a claim to competence as it helps to confirm competence over time.

Also assessor observations, work products, personal statements and professional discussions could be annotated by the supervisor (witness) to confirm competence over time and a wider selection of work product can be used to confirm breadth of scope.

Candidates should be discouraged from putting policy documents in their portfolios. A suggested method is to include a photocopy of the cover of the document. The assessor can then question the candidate on the contents of the policy document. Then the candidate and assessor sign and date the cover confirming the candidate's knowledge of the contents of the document.

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