



Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2014 Care

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

SVQ awards

General comments

This session saw the final registrations for the SVQs in Health and Social Care at Levels 2, 3 and 4 (on 31 January 2014) and the introduction of the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at Levels 2, 3 and 4 (on 1 February 2014).

The SVQ Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) was merged with the SVQ Children's Care Learning and Development to become the new award: SVQ Social Services Children and Young People at Levels 2, 3 and 4. This qualification now sits within the SQA Childcare cognate group 84.

The SVQ Leadership and Management for Care Services has been reviewed and the new qualification SVQ 4 in Care Services Leadership and Management is expected to be available for delivery during this academic session. It has been placed at SCQF level 10.

Centres have been taking time to familiarise themselves with the assessment strategy and requirements of these new qualifications before launching new programmes of delivery. A significant number of centres have requested development visits focused on developing understanding of these new awards during the 2014–15 academic session.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Whilst assessors are familiar with the SVQs in Health and Social Care, there is less familiarity with the new awards in Social Services and Healthcare.

Evidence Requirements

Centres were initially unclear about the way forward for candidates who hold the current HNC but wish to go forward and achieve the full SVQ in future. It has now been confirmed by SQA Care that candidates who have completed the current HNC can get credits for the Health and Social Care SVQ Units they completed against the equivalent Units in the new SVQ Social Services and Healthcare. Centres are advised to ensure they have a procedure in place for confirming HNC candidates' achievement of the core Units prior to registering them for the full SVQ Social Services and Healthcare Group Award and processing the result for the like-for-like Units at that stage. Evidence of this procedure having been completed should be available to the External Verifier at the external verification visits.

The new awards are not prescriptive in terms of the amount of observation required, which is a change from the previous awards. Centres have expressed concerns that they do not want to be penalised for carrying out too much or too little observation.

A section on theory is now detailed in the new awards at Level 2 but it is important to bear in mind that this is a Level 2 award where only a general understanding is required. Therefore, a named theory is not necessary at Level 2 rather a general understanding of individuals, their background and how this informs their needs is sufficient. One approach used by some centres has been for candidates to focus on an individual they work with to consider the influences in their life and how this shapes who they are and how they respond to situations. At Level 3 such an approach would be expected to refer to specific theorists and theories and how knowledge of them informs their practice when working with individuals.

Unit SCDSHC 0024 has presented some challenges as feedback from centres is that the first Performance Criteria come across as more knowledge focused than performance focused. They also highlighted difficulties with obtaining sufficient opportunities for observation.

The Social Care EV team has been working together to standardise verification of these new awards and has had a number of meetings this session, which have been held jointly with Childcare EVs to ensure standardisation across Units which are common to both verification groups. These meetings have focused predominantly on assessment of the core Units and how to approach the knowledge Evidence Requirements and Assessment Strategy requirements for those involved in the assessment and verification of these awards.

Administration of assessments

Overall, administration of assessments has been at the appropriate level for the awards verified this session. Internal verification continues to be an area where centres tend to carry out more sampling than is necessary. With the introduction of the new SVQs, centres are encouraged to use standardisation meetings to enable them to become familiar with the requirements of the qualification rather than using internal verification for this purpose. Internal verification is about quality assurance, not getting to know the new SVQ better.

General feedback

Candidates who were interviewed expressed satisfaction with the support they have received from their assessors. It continues to be difficult to have face-to-face meetings with candidates during verification visits due to workplace demands; however, interviews have successfully taken place over the phone in the majority of instances.

Reflective accounts of real work situations continue to be well written overall and show sensitive, person-centred practice across all services they relate to. Assessor observations also provide clear detailed accounts of how candidates apply their knowledge and understanding to the practical everyday situations they encounter in work.

Areas of good practice

It is reassuring to see more creative approaches to assessment planning with candidates that reflects different learning styles. Mind mapping has become a useful tool for encouraging candidates to look at the holistic nature of the delivery of these qualifications and how integration of knowledge and understanding can enhance practice in health and social care settings.

Centres continue to look at ways to support candidates in developing their knowledge and understanding prior to them undertaking assessment. This past session has seen an increase in the number of candidates completing 'pre-SVQ' and 'SVQ ready' learning programmes, with some materials from these programmes being used as evidence towards their SVQ where appropriate.

Specific areas for improvement

There have been far fewer issues arising from external verification visits during this session. The new approach to quality assurance has been beneficial in highlighting areas of concern with practice and then providing centres with specific action points to address in order to ensure compliance. One of the key areas that was highlighted from external verification (and which led to an action being required) related to documentation not being available during the visit — such as evidence of assessor occupational competence and qualifications. Other areas have been related to candidates still having difficulty with making links between knowledge and practice in relation to legislation and theory — although this has been far less than in previous academic sessions.

Candidate selection

With the Scottish Social Services Council registration agenda being a key driving force in candidates registering for these SVQs, it is imperative that centres have robust candidate selection processes. It is not an assessor's responsibility to make a candidate competent — the SVQ is an assessment of competence, which candidates should demonstrate through their work practice. Candidates should only undertake an SVQ that matches the level and type of job role they are in. Candidates need to have experience in that job role and have been suitably inducted into that role in terms of policy and procedures.

Supporting candidates with additional support needs

There have been concerns within centres about the increase in the number of candidates who have additional support needs and how to support these candidates effectively without them being disadvantaged in the assessment process.

It is important for centres to ensure they assess candidates' needs on an individual basis and put appropriate measures in place to facilitate candidates to present evidence of their competent practice. This could be through increased observation of practice, voice recording candidate accounts of practice, or additional expert witness statements. If a candidate struggles with written accounts but is able to verbally reflect on their practice then it can disadvantage

them if they are then required to produce extensive written accounts rather than provide evidence through voice recordings.

Knowledge to practice

Whilst candidates are showing better links between knowledge and practice it is still an area which needs to be monitored closely by assessors, as it is the foundation of these qualifications.

With the new SVQs in Social Services and Healthcare there is greater emphasis on holistic assessment and making these knowledge-to-practice links in an integrated way. Centres are encouraged to take time to develop materials for candidates that support them to make these links effectively.