



Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2015 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 verification group covers the following Group Awards, which are now in their lapsing period.

- G7LN 22: SVQ Health and Social Care Level 2 (finish date 31/01/2016)
- G7LP 23: SVQ Health and Social Care (Adults) Level 3 (finish date 31/01/2018)
- G7LT 23: SVQ Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) Level 3 (finish date 31/01/2018)
- G7LR 24: SVQ Health and Social Care (Adults) Level 4 (finish date 31/01/2018)
- G7LT 24: SVQ Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) Level 4 (finish date 31/01/2018)
- G8W8 24: SVQ Leadership and Management for Care Services Level 4 (finish date 31/01/2019)

Centres should ensure candidates complete the qualifications and results are submitted to SQA before the finish dates detailed above.

Candidates are no longer able to register for the above Group Awards and therefore we are seeing a significant drop in the number of centres that still have candidates working towards them. Centres with candidates who are still actively registered with SQA for these Group Awards will be externally verified in the 2015–16 session.

The following Group Awards are now in their second year of being offered through approved centres. This means that the majority of centres delivering these awards are now more familiar with the new standards and the requirements of the Assessment Strategy. They are also becoming more confident when planning with candidates how to evidence the common knowledge across the Units.

- GH5Y 22: SVQ 2 Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 6
- GH60 23: SVQ 3 Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7
- GH61 24: SVQ 4 Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 8
- GJ9V 24: SVQ 4 Care Services Leadership and Management at SCQF level 10

SVQs are now being referred to by their SCQF level and so centres will notice this change in documents that are produced by SQA Care in the future.

The Care and Childcare external verification teams have met together for standardisation and professional development activities on three occasions in this session. This is a significant aspect of SQA Care's commitment to consistency across the external verification teams. SQA has invested considerably in supporting the external verification team to undertake appropriate knowledge-based professional development activities in this session. This is with the aim of ensuring that they can demonstrate that their knowledge of legislation and best practice guidance is current. This has been an intensive piece of work

but a beneficial exercise for all involved. An online version of this CPD activity is planned for November 2015. The aim of this is to support centre staff to focus on consolidating, updating and developing their knowledge and understanding of legislation and best practice guidance.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

As assessors are supporting more candidates through these new Social Services and Healthcare SVQ awards they are becoming more familiar with the Unit specifications. This means that they are able to make more comprehensive knowledge and practice links across Units, particularly in relation to the common knowledge that exists in the majority of the Units.

Whilst exemplification materials have been provided for GJ9V 24: Care Services Leadership and Management SCQF level 10, to date no materials have been made available for the Social Services and Healthcare SVQs. However, centres have requested further guidance and examples of how the common knowledge can be approached and this is an area that will be focused on at the forthcoming SQA Care Customer Support Event scheduled for November 2015.

Evidence Requirements

Overall, centres are clear about the evidence requirements for the Units, as these have not altered significantly from those awards which have now lapsed. Assessors are clear that candidate evidence must be based on real work examples from their practice, where the candidate demonstrates how their knowledge and understanding informs their practice. They are also clear that each Unit requires observation of the candidate's practice in real work activities. Through the SVQ application process the majority of centres have a clear procedure in place to ensure that candidates can only undertake an SVQ appropriate to the role and responsibilities they hold in their work setting.

Assessors have been less confident in making final assessment judgements as to a candidate's competence in the absence of a prescriptive value of points to be covered by observation. This is an area that will be explored further at the forthcoming SQA Care Customer Support Event scheduled for November 2015.

Administration of assessments

Candidate evidence is being assessed appropriately across the different levels of SVQ, as assessors are becoming more familiar with the new standards and the requirements of the Assessment Strategy. From standardisation minutes viewed during centre visits there is a tendency to over-analyse and over-think performance criteria and knowledge points.

At the SQA Care Customer Support Events held in April 2015 we encouraged centres to consider performance and knowledge points in the context of the candidate's job role and not look to have a definitive, perfect understanding of

each point. This would then enable them to have the flexibility to view the standards in relation to the role and responsibilities a candidate has.

It is testimony to the dedication of assessors and internal verifiers that so much time is spent endeavouring to clarify what is required for the standards so that candidates are not disadvantaged in the assessment process.

Internal verification has been less intense than in previous years. Centres have taken on board guidance given by SQA to focus on sampling evidence at stages in the assessment process rather than on a Unit-by-Unit basis. This has enabled them to ensure assessments are holistic and integrated. Overall internal verification decisions are accurate and internal verification records are comprehensive, constructive and offer appropriate guidance and feedback to the assessor.

General feedback

Feedback from candidates who have been interviewed during verification visits has shown that centres are seeking to adapt their approaches to SVQ delivery to align it more with individual candidate learning styles and needs. Candidates have identified the commitment and support they have received from their assessors, which has enabled them to remain motivated and focused to achieve their SVQ.

This level of support has been particularly noted during the current financial climate where training departments are being restructured and efficiency of delivery reviewed. However, despite this background, centres have not compromised on the level of candidate input, which has ensured successful outcomes.

Reflective accounts of candidate practice demonstrates the complex nature of workplace situations they deal with on a day-to-day basis and highlights the knowledge and skills they employ in their work roles. When speaking with candidates it is encouraging to hear of their learning journey and their increased confidence in their work practice as a result of undertaking an SVQ.

Areas of good practice

Assessor feedback has highlighted that a significant number of new candidates coming forward for SVQs are presenting as having additional learning support needs. This has required centres to review their approach to SVQ delivery and consider how accessible it is for these candidates.

A number of centres presented External Verifiers with summary reports of their year's SVQ activity, highlighting the positives and areas for development. These have been beneficial for providing insight into the centre's practices and also highlights where they anticipate future developments will enhance learner experiences.

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ During verification visits SVQ centre staff have requested additional guidance in relation to evidencing the common knowledge, as some have struggled to avoid using a more 'workbook' approach to this area.

Providing support to centres with evidencing the common knowledge is an area that will be focused on at forthcoming SQA Care Customer Support Events planned for November 2015.

- ◆ A number of centres are unsure about how to make effective use of expert witnesses for observation evidence. Consequently, this valuable source of evidence is often avoided or used on a minimal basis. Concerns have been raised with External Verifiers as to how the centre can encourage expert witnesses to provide evidence, taking into consideration that they have other work commitments and demands on their time. The Assessment Strategy requirement of the centre to 'induct' expert witnesses and ask for evidence of CPD has been seen as prohibitive in terms of time and resources.

How to make effective use of expert witnesses is an area that will also be explored at the forthcoming SQA Care Customer Support Events.