



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2013  
Catering and Hospitality**

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

# SVQ awards

## General comments

Feedback from reports of external verification activity this year has been extremely positive. This reflects the professionalism of centres in the support provided to candidates; and reinforces the strong support and guidance given by SQA's qualifications team.

The national standards are designed to reflect practices in the workplace, and are generally assessed either in the workplace, in realistic work environments (which meet Sector Skills Council criteria), or a combination of both.

The standards are clearly reflected in SQA recording materials and in some online systems, and these provide an accurate template on which to base assessments.

Assessors and Internal Verifiers are required by the SSC to have relevant occupational expertise and knowledge at the appropriate level of the occupational area(s) they are assessing and verifying, which has been gained through 'hands on' experience in the industry. While this reinforces understanding of the criteria being assessed, and generally provides a robust platform for programme delivery, there have been occasions where an additional need for CPD activities has been identified in order to update knowledge of current industry practice.

It has been noted that most candidates are working in an appropriate environment to enable them to prove competence at the level required, although this can occasionally present challenges if they wish to progress to a higher level; particularly when the demonstration of supervisory skills is required.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The assessment strategy which was developed by the Sector Skills Council, People1st, defines overarching assessment principles and the appropriate use of simulation. These are mapped into the SQA recording materials, which are used by 85% of centres. A similar format has been applied to online recording systems, and to one centre which uses assessor-devised materials.

Further guidance is available in the *SQA Assessor's guidelines for the SVQs in Hospitality and Professional Cookery at levels 1, 2 and 3*, which provides guidance on the use of valid, reliable and practicable methods of assessment and exemplar documents.

These tools have provided a sound basis, and External Verifiers have reported that standards are generally high; and that less experienced assessors have been responsive to suggestions to improve standards of assessment.

Suggestions have included:

- ◆ the level of detail required when recording observed performance
- ◆ a holistic approach to assessment, using cross-referencing between Units
- ◆ the appropriate use of products of work, which should be working documents that have been authenticated
- ◆ the use of authenticated photographs
- ◆ the recording of witness testimony, professional discussion and supplementary questioning

The majority of assessment has been based on performance evidence, as expected by the SSC; and centres have demonstrated an increasing confidence in using a variety of instruments of assessment, particularly for Hospitality Supervision and Leadership at Level 3.

Some assessors have been enthusiastic about opportunities for standardisation through 'buddying' systems, exemplar Unit records, cross-centre liaison and peer reporting (sometimes on a voluntary basis); which are all opportunities to share good practice and provide mutual support. This has been particularly evident in new centres, and has helped to familiarise them with the national standard and appropriate instruments of assessment.

## **Evidence Requirements**

Guidance on Evidence Requirements is also built into recording materials.

A good understanding has been indicated by:

- ◆ The assessment of performance at an appropriate level, such as the matching of qualifications to candidate job roles and the matching of customised menus to the national standards.
- ◆ Providing sufficient and consistent evidence.
- ◆ The questioning of topics which are not covered sufficiently by performance.
- ◆ Developing support materials such as worksheets, exemplar documents, projects and information packages.
- ◆ An increased use of indexed evidence, which can be cross-referenced to more than one Unit.
- ◆ A holistic approach to assessment, including detailed reports of observations which can provide a strong source of evidence. This is usually a result of careful planning.
- ◆ A wide variety of types of evidence collected by the candidates, which illustrates an emphasis on their workplace environment — event planning sheets, menus, photographs, recipes, delivery notes, hygiene records, etc.
- ◆ Planning workplace assessments to coincide with opportunities to maximise time spent, such as observing planning meetings. This has been achieved where there is strong support from line managers.

## **Administration of assessments**

Internal verification and reviews are generally carried out on a regular basis throughout each qualification. This allows any problems to be addressed on an ongoing basis prior to the finish of the qualification, and helps to maintain good communication between assessors and IVs

Internal verification procedures are often driven by organisational policy; however, problems concerning sufficiency of evidence have been reported when the IV sampling is only carried out on completion.

Some innovative communication tools have been developed to support assessors who operate in remote locations, such as the use of social media sites. On occasion, while internet access to candidate evidence and internal verification feedback have also been used successfully, continuing to bring teams together for standardisation activities has been appreciated by assessors in providing invaluable support.

Strong evidence of effective internal communication tends to be found in centres with structured and minuted standardisation meetings.

The responsibility for standardisation can sometimes rest with the Internal Verifier; and while this can be sufficient in smaller centres, the sharing of good practice at standardisation meetings can also have the benefit of generating a commonality of approach. Examples of this are the matching of menus and recipes, or working practices, to the national standards; devising worksheets, projects and assignments to support the assessment of Units such as HSL4 Maintain the health, hygiene, safety and security of the working environment.

There have been increased reports of regular documented observations of assessment practice as part of standard internal verification procedures; this is excellent practice and demonstrates working in line with Unit L&D11. It also provides evidence for Criteria 4.2 and 4.3 in SQA's New Approach to Quality Assurance.

The use of signatures on documented internal verification feedback to assessors has been an effective means of indicating that this has been received and that remedial action has been taken. A similar process has been introduced to electronic portfolios, which also highlights when Units are ready for internal verification; and in some cases, access to view has been given to candidates.

## **General feedback**

Good feedback from assessors to candidates was also sampled, which was clear in guidance and motivational in tone; however, this has in some cases proved to be a weak area. Centres are reminded that it is a requirement for assessors to work in line with Criteria 3(a) and 4(a) of Units L&D9D or L&D9DII 'Provide feedback to the learner that affirms achievement and identifies any additional requirements'.

All candidates interviewed were positive about their learning and assessment experience; with the motivation to progress to a higher level. Support from assessors has been strong, although guaranteeing frequency of assessments can sometimes be difficult in busy working environments. It has been reported that there have been improved relationships with employers, with resulting support given to candidates and a general recognition of added value to their business.

Candidates were particularly appreciative when additional opportunities for self-development have been offered. Examples cited are: attendance at workshops, visits by industry chefs, work placements, master classes, attending events such as ScotHot, taking part in competitions, international visits, industry visits, close links with local butchers.

## **Areas of good practice**

While areas of general good practice have been highlighted throughout this and previous reports; the following sample of comments from External Verifiers identify some which have contributed to raising the national standard during the past year:

- ◆ An approach to the provision of courses has been creative and unusual, sharing the students equally between practical and theoretical college learning sessions, and workplace experience where assessors visit to monitor and assess candidate progress. This seems like a perfect method to cover all the necessary requirements in chef training, and it appears that the students think so too. The commitment and enthusiasm of the staff is admirable.
- ◆ The centre is working to enhance the learning experience, and works closely with local specialists to help enhance candidate experience.
- ◆ Candidates complete evidence sheets which have been designed by the team to allow them to gather detailed evidence in the absence of their assessor. These direct the evidence gathering, and are signed off by the candidate's supervisor. These are sometimes supported by additional product evidence and photographs. This is an excellent source of evidence gathering and gives the candidate real personal input into their SVQs.
- ◆ All candidates have a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) where clear stages of planning, assessment, review and feedback is recorded accurately and kept up to date. Feedback is positive, constructive and documented in Unit records.
- ◆ CPD activities to meet SSC requirements have included: SDS workshops, social enterprise programme, delivering REHIS programmes, liaising with EHO, reading associated material, standardisation meetings, SQA website, People 1st update, Advanced Diploma Hygiene, Cook Safe, internal training on test VQ, demonstrations by visiting chefs, work experience, in-house development days, attendance at ScotHot, equipment updates from industry, assessor and verifier updates, online portfolio building, research using trade magazines, new catering books, mapping assessment skills against new L&D

standards, developing HACCP procedures, SSC conferences and events, and professional Qualifications eg SCPLH.

- ◆ The centre uses a traffic light system to show the status of Units, which is clear and provides an excellent visual aid for all of the team and candidates. There is documented feedback of any remedial work required after internal verification, which the assessor signs off on once complete and the IV signs off on once rechecked. This provides a clear audit trail.
  
- ◆ There has been a significant increase in the use of IT based systems:
  - **Moodle** can be accessed by candidates to find information on reference and learning materials classes, menus, videos, etc.
  - **Facebook** is used to advertise jobs, communicate with students, request information, etc and it can be used to message staff/students.
  - **Online resources** are available for candidates to access information about the Units they are completing.
  - **Remote access** to candidate files is also beneficial as it allows Internal Verifiers to view candidates' evidence anywhere, at any time, and facilitates a quick and timely flow of information from assessors to verifiers and vice versa. This is monitored by the area managers who can easily and quickly check progress and monitor all assessor and verifier activity.
  - **Online SVQ programmes** are used effectively; however, in some centres candidates can choose to use paper-based records if they prefer.
  - **Ciphernet** is used to log CPD.
  - **Electronic formatting** of SQA underpinning knowledge questions to make them readily accessible to candidates.
  - **DoJo** is used to record attendance, organisational skills, quality of work; and evidence from this contributes to a student awards system and assists with selection of Student of the Year.
  - **Edmodo** gives candidates access to a shared drive which contains all documents and support materials.
  - **PowerPoint** presentations can be a useful resource.

### Specific areas for improvement

To summarise, standards are generally reported to be high, with an increasing number of examples of innovative practice and increasing use of information technology.

Potential for improvement is sometimes identified in the detail required in records, and the following areas have been highlighted:

- ◆ the use of an index to locate portfolio evidence
- ◆ marking questions to indicate they have been assessed
- ◆ effective recording of cross-referencing between Units
- ◆ demonstrating consistency over time

- ◆ taking a holistic approach to assessment
- ◆ ongoing internal verification
- ◆ circulating minutes of regular standardisation meetings
- ◆ ensuring that products of work are attributable to candidates
- ◆ authentication of photographic evidence
- ◆ specific referencing of audio tapes to the standards
- ◆ records of CPD to match the SSC Assessment Strategy requirements must be available for EV visits