



Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2013 Childcare

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 is the final year for this award and, as very few new centres have come forward for approval, the centres visited had considerable experience of delivering the award. As a result, the external verification reports indicate that all centres visited had a clear understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Children's Care, Learning and Development as the majority of centres are now established and have been working with the standards for some time. Most centres were complying with the assessment strategy for the award in that they were taking a holistic approach to the delivery of the standards and encouraging reflective practice through robust assessment planning based on candidates' own workplace practice.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

With a very few exceptions, all assessors are familiar with the Units for the levels of the award which they deliver. Instruments of assessments are appropriate and assisted in the production of evidence at the correct SCQF level. An appropriate range of instruments of assessment is being used.

Exemplification materials are not being used as they are very outdated. However, this will be resolved with the implementation of the new Social Services Children and Young People (SSCYP) award in November 2013.

Evidence Requirements

The majority of assessors and Internal Verifiers are experienced in delivering the award, over many years and they have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for all Units they are responsible for delivering.

There had been a difficult issue of centres offering very specialist Units to inexperienced candidates. Concerns had been expressed by External Verifiers that some centres were not producing robust evidence for these Units. In the vast majority of centres, it was not possible to generate evidence that met the Evidence Requirements and some assessors and Internal Verifiers were not clear about the criteria.

However, after highlighting this issue at SQA customer support days and during EV (External Verifier) visits, most centres no longer offer these Units. Where the Units are still being offered, the evidence is more appropriate and robust.

Administration of assessments

In the majority of centres, standardisation meetings are ensuring a consistency of approach to the delivery of the award. Internal verification is robust and Internal Verifiers are highlighting areas of strengths and areas for improvement. More centres are now recording when issues, highlighted by Internal Verifiers, are

addressed by assessors. This more standardised approach is ensuring that all evidence, created by candidates, meets the requirements of the SCQF levels and covers the knowledge and practice elements of the award.

General feedback

The vast majority of candidates interviewed felt that they were offered very good support from their assessors and that they had developed professionally and personally throughout the award.

This is supported by the feedback to candidates in the portfolios and the care that is taken, in most centres, to give candidates ownership of the planning process. This is resulting in reflective accounts based on realistic, everyday work with children and families, as required by the assessment strategy.

Candidates with additional support needs appeared to be very well supported with some centres making a great effort to ensure fair and equitable access to assessment for all candidates.

Centres are reminded that it would be helpful to the external verification team if they completed the Evaluation of Visit form after a visit.

Areas of good practice

Some centres are ensuring assessor and verifier currency by carrying out a matching exercise between the existing assessor/verifier qualifications, held by staff, to the Learning and Development Units.

As stated in last year's report, there is a difficulty with the funding for Level 2 of CCLD and as a result very young inexperienced candidates are accessing the award at Level 3. Following the highlighting of this issue by External Verifiers, some centres are being innovative in their approach to these candidates and are 'front loading' the necessary knowledge and understanding or are delivering some of the Level 2 Units to allow the candidates to gain knowledge before starting the award at Level 3.

It is recognised that, due to funding restraints, this approach is not possible for all centres. However, most centres affected by the issue of Level 2 funding are supporting the young candidates well.

It is noticeable this year that centre staff who attended the SQA customer support days have improved the evidence presented for Reflective Practice and Children's Rights and are supporting candidates to reference theory in their accounts of practice.

The external verification team has reported that they have found many positive examples of support to candidates, to reach the required SCQF levels and to promote appropriate literacy skills. This support has resulted in many examples of very good portfolios of evidence.

Specific areas for improvement

There is still room for improvement in the inclusion of current initiatives, guidance and policy such as Parenting Strategy, Curriculum for Excellence, and Pre-Birth to Three, in the candidates' evidence. Candidates should be supported, at the planning stage, to reflect their knowledge of legislation, policy, guidance, codes of practice and current theory in their practice and to integrate this knowledge into their reflective accounts of practice. Candidates should also be expected to provide evidence, at both Levels 3 and 4, of the inclusion of children in their planning of appropriate developmental activities.

These areas of improvement will be of crucial importance as we move to the new SSCYP vocational qualification this year as there is a Compendium of Knowledge to be achieved which requires all candidates to be up to date with all Scottish guidance, policy, legislation and codes of practice for the sector.

There is still an issue with some centres using textbooks and resources which relate to English legislation. Assessors and Internal Verifiers must ensure that this does not happen and also take responsibility for ensuring that they keep up to date with the many changes to Scottish guidance, policy, and legislation. They must further consider how candidates can be supported to include appropriate national and local policy, guidance and current ideas and theory in their portfolios of evidence and in their practice.

Referencing and use of a bibliography is improving especially amongst Level 4 candidates. However, improvement in referencing, especially in the Level 3 portfolios, could still be achieved.