



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2013
Construction
(Plant and Operations)**

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

SVQ awards

General comments

The number of verification visits carried out during this reporting period was slightly down on the previous year due to the number of centres which did not run the SVQs. All verification visits carried out resulted in positive outcomes with only minor recommendations made to some centres to help them improve their own procedures.

The economic situation in the construction industry has ensured that companies (where potential candidates would have been drawn) have continued to go out of business. This has resulted in centres reporting a decrease in the number of candidates they were able to assess throughout the year.

In last year's report it was apparent that some centres were registering candidates for Plant Operations, but some were not coming forward for assessment. This was due to a loophole that was being exploited by candidates in order to get a one-year extension to their Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) cards. Now that qualification G898-22 has ended (as of September 2013) it should become clear how many of those already registered candidates will be re-registered for a new award. This will then show those who are committed to getting fully certificated rather than using the system to gain extra time for their CPCS cards.

During this year, the Plant Operations qualification (GD44-22) lapsed for registrations, and so candidates still registered for this award now have until 31 December 2014 to gain their qualification.

The new Controlling Lifting Operations suite of qualifications was verified for the first time during this period, and uptake on the qualifications has been steady considering the current difficult situation within the industry.

As with previous years, the evidence verified and the interviews conducted with centre staff over the reporting period confirmed that centres understand what is required from them with regards to interpretation of the National Occupational Standards (NOS). Centres are ensuring that the quantity and quality of evidence gathered meets the levels required for the awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Verifiers' reports continue to show that the assessors and verifiers interviewed during verification visits understand the content of the Unit specifications across all of the awards within the verification group. This is confirmed by the standard of supporting evidence generated/gathered by the candidates and the assessors.

Centres continue to use a variety of assessment instruments and checklists which comply with the awarding body requirements.

Evidence Requirements

The assessment guidelines give examples of both the primary and secondary evidence required for the awards. Centres generally follow what is required and this is confirmed in the standard of candidate portfolios presented for verification.

Administration of assessments

Discussions with centre staff during visits continue to reflect that not much has changed in the methodology that centres use to ensure that they schedule visits for assessors to realise the best opportunities for the collection of evidence.

Centre administrators and assessors remain active in contacting employers and candidates to arrange site visits which correspond with live work activities being undertaken by candidates. This ensures that the best evidence-gathering opportunities are being provided for assessors, so allowing them to make the best judgement on the competency of their respective candidates against all of the award specifications. As in previous years, this is quantified by the fact that almost all assessment of candidates continues to be based on live work activity in real-time working environments.

With the introduction of the Experienced Worker Practical Assessment Route (EWPAR) in early 2013, centres now have an alternative assessment route which allows candidates to be assessed away from live sites. Here the centre can give those candidates who do not have access to a live site (eg for reasons of unemployment, lack of machinery on site, etc) the opportunity to do their assessments elsewhere. This helps lift potential barriers to achievement and allows candidates to enhance their qualifications and possibly gain employment.

Internal Verifiers continue, where required, to provide constructive feedback to assessors, and verifiers confirm that assessors act upon the comments given to them.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates — Candidates are advised to gather as much supporting evidence as possible, and get it endorsed by a supervisor or manager to support its authenticity. This assists assessors in supporting their direct observations so as to ensure that all the Evidence Requirements for the award are met as quickly as possible.

Feedback from candidates — Candidates interviewed during this reporting period continue to comment that they are more than happy with the support they have received from the centre staff throughout their assessment process.

Access to assessment — As with previous reports, no centre or assessor has reported any difficulty in gaining access to candidates who are in employment for the purposes of carrying out live assessments in the workplace.

Areas of good practice

The general areas of good practice commented on in previous reporting years have continued to be the same this year, indicating that centres are consistent in their approach to the assessment and verification process. These areas are as follows:

- ◆ the use of good, comprehensive additional supporting evidence such as operator log books, timesheets, photographs of work processes, relevant course certification, and site documents
- ◆ good, descriptive and detailed observation reports
- ◆ positive candidate feedback records
- ◆ good, comprehensive internal verification recording procedures

Particular areas of good practice where centres have continued to show forethought are:

- ◆ the continued use of centre-adapted job sheets which have been developed to bridge the gap where candidates do not complete industry-issued log books. These job sheets are issued to candidates and in some instances actually have specific tasks detailed on them for the candidates to complete and get countersigned by an approved person from the candidate's employer
- ◆ the use of candidate handbooks detailing the whole assessment process and supplying the candidate with contact details of assessors, verifiers, etc so that the assessment process runs smoothly
- ◆ the use of video evidence to support observation reports

In last year's report it was reported that there were several specific areas where further improvements could continue to be made, these were:

- ◆ cross referencing of evidence
- ◆ recording of standardisation events
- ◆ individual continuous professional development (CPD) records
- ◆ observation report writing

Specific areas for improvement

The following are points where improvements can still be made by centres:

- ◆ cross referencing of evidence — progress continues to be positive however there is always room for improvement and centres are advised to look at standardising the cross referencing of evidence in their portfolio layouts to make it easier for the assessor and candidates
- ◆ individual CPD records — improvement continues in this area however there is still room for more, and centres need to ensure staff record how the CPDs they carry out improve overall performance

- ◆ observation reports — this is an area where improvements can still be made; reports need to be prescriptive in the detail of the activities the candidate is being observed carrying out and ensure the performance criteria is sufficiently covered in the report