**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015**

Hospitality and Professional Cookery

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

SVQ awards

General comments

Since the addition of SVQ 4 Hospitality Management Skills in 2013, SVQs in Hospitality and Professional Cookery are now available for basic skills through to management level.

Centres have generally been well prepared for qualification verification visits, with all documentation, candidate evidence and interviews arranged as requested.

While it is easier for work-based candidates to achieve where job roles are carefully matched to the National Occupational Standards (NOS), there can also be opportunities for learning and development, which in turn will enhance career progression. Support from employers is key to success, at all levels.

NOS can be mapped into the everyday operations of realistic work environments (RWEs), usually in colleges. It is generally recognised that this approach is successful in developing knowledge and skills, particularly in food preparation and food service.

Level 1 tends to be assessed in RWE environments. SVQ 3 Hospitality, Supervision and Leadership and SVQ 4 Hospitality Management are more easily assessable in the workplace.

Day-release opportunities are also successful, with a balance of work-based assessment combined with knowledge and skills support in an RWE or training centre.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Most centres use recording materials which have been devised or approved by awarding bodies, and these include clear guidance on the scope and range of assessment required. Centre-devised materials have been carefully matched to the standards and evidence requirements, and usually contain additional information that is relevant to the assessment environment.

A wide range of support materials are available; including the SQA Assessor's Guidelines, online guidance (usually through shared college or training provider facilities) and textbooks.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence requirements are generally mapped into candidate recording materials, and are generally interpreted correctly.

In addition to direct observation and questioning, centres are increasingly using additional sources and methods of recording evidence, such as: online portfolios;

digital recordings; video; photographs; witness testimony; assessor/candidate communication using text, e-mail, Facebook and Skype; candidate statements, professional discussion and authenticated products of work.

Administration of assessments

The administration of assessments can vary depending on the qualification, candidate and assessment environment. The People1st Assessment Strategy recommends that the majority of assessment is based on performance evidence. As a general rule, this is applied as direct observation of performance for more practical skills-based qualifications, such as food preparation, food service, housekeeping and reception services. Supervisory and management candidates often take more ownership of providing evidence, and present products of work and written statements — which are then authenticated and backed-up by some assessor observation.

Knowledge requirements are usually assessed using the SQA multiple choice question bank or other online, pre-prepared papers; again, with candidates taking more ownership at supervisory and management levels, by providing more detailed statements to confirm their knowledge against each criterion.

It is generally reported that most centres recognise the validity of direct observation, that this is the preferred method of assessment, and is carried out for more than the minimum requirements.

General feedback

SQA advises that each assessment should cover the full assessment cycle to include planning, judging evidence, providing feedback and recording the decision (see 'Frequently asked questions on SCQF and QCF assessor/verifier provision'). While the judging and recording of evidence sampled has shown consistency and a good understanding of requirements, the recording of planning and feedback to candidates can be less robust.

Planning in RWE environments can be more rigorous, due to the nature of the assessments and prior matching to the standards, and students are often provided with detailed training plans for a complete qualification. Work-based assessment opportunities can be less predictable and while observations can be scheduled to observe specified skills, these need to be flexible to respond to the day-to-day pressures of the business.

The use of an ongoing training plan, which incorporates planning and feedback, has been found to help candidates, assessors and employers focus on what is required. It has been confirmed by candidates that they are motivated by receiving positive feedback on their achievements.

With few exceptions, candidates are assessed regularly, receive excellent support from their assessors, and appreciate the opportunity to achieve a qualification to help them to progress and develop their skills. Candidates have appreciated additional support, eg for special learning needs, English as a

second language, or 'returners' who feel nervous about how their qualification will be completed.

Areas of good practice

Some areas of good practice have been reported that show particular innovation, creativity, integration and/or adaptation, by:

♦ Organising placement opportunities, some overseas, for college-based candidates

♦ Joint assessment by two assessors to ensure best practice observed and to ensure consistency and standardisation

♦ Maintaining active and comprehensive CPD logs, including attendance at SQA meetings, work placements such as the Commonwealth Games and local businesses, regular legislative updates for hygiene, health and safety and licensing, working with international chefs at world trade fair, L&D9D1 and L&D11 refresher training, reading SQA material, cafe supervision, reviewing hospitality-related websites, attending courses and workshops and reading trade magazines, attending standardisation meetings, completion of qualifications and workshops, SQA and People 1st updates and reading relevant literature, reviewing course material and reviewing assessment techniques

♦ Using skill scans and interviews to ensure each candidate is matched to the appropriate level and discipline, and to create an individual training plan which includes previous achievements

♦ Using centre-devised candidate declaration forms to encourage personal responsibility, authenticity and ownership for the content of portfolios

♦ Planning the use of witness testimony to match evidence requirements in support of assessment decisions. The provision of sample signatures for purposes of external quality assurance is invaluable for identifying the authors of both witness statements, and assessors and internal verifiers

♦ A commitment and willingness to adapting assessment practice to meet students' needs, rather than vice versa. This has resulted in assessors travelling to outlying areas to deliver theory and practice sessions to students who may struggle to travel to centres. Delivery has also been adapted to suit local industry employers, where the students are in workplaces, working around key local events, Easter and summer holidays, etc

♦ Colleges establishing strong links with local employers; which results in course delivery being strongly student and industry centred, and maintains current and up-to-date practices — such as a demonstration in the preparation of lobster and langoustines by a local fishmonger

♦ Including an individual training plan and record of achievement at the start of portfolios to help candidates see how they are progressing

♦ Developing packs for candidate induction, which can include checklists for centre policies and procedures, guidance on topics such as plagiarism, qualification structure and assessment procedures

♦ Providing an online library which caters for different learning styles

♦ Accurately cross-referencing evidence within portfolios; which supports the integration of assessments

Specific areas for improvement

Some specific areas for improvement have resulted in required actions being identified on qualification verification reports; others have been recorded as recommendations.

1 Assessment and internal verification

These can be loosely categorised under the VARCS principles of assessment, and have included:

Valid
♦ There is still some more work to be done in ensuring that evidence is captured efficiently and that assessors are comfortable in using a more holistic approach when assessing
♦ Marking knowledge questions to confirm that they have been correctly answered and indicating by signature/initials where remediation has been required

Authentic
♦ Although the majority of assessment is carried out on a one-to-one basis; candidate statements and products of work should also be authenticated

Reliable
♦ Regular standardisation activities should be carried out to ensure a consistent approach. These can vary from meetings and discussions, to specific Unit standardisation which can be carried out remotely
♦ Records should be stored for assessors to refer to
♦ Internal verifier observations of assessors and candidate interviews can also help to achieve consistency within a team

Current
♦ Most candidates are assessed by direct observation; however, evidence from the workplace that is presented by supervisory and management candidates may need authentication

Sufficient
♦ Minimum evidence requirements have not always been met, and this has caused particular concern when Units have been signed off as complete, and it has not been picked up during internal verification. Although this is sometimes found to be a lack of cross-referencing and the evidence is present, there have been other gaps where supplementary questioning is required to ensure all the 'what you must cover' have been completed

♦ Standardisation activities should include agreement on appropriate and sufficient evidence for each Unit, and be monitored as part of internal verification procedures

2 Assessor competence

Qualifications and experience

♦ Centres are reminded that the qualifications and experience required for potential assessors and internal verifiers can be found in the People1st Assessment Strategy. Not only must they have 'a good knowledge and understanding of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) and competence-based Units and qualifications being assessed or verified', they must also have 'relevant occupational expertise and knowledge. This should be at the appropriate level of the occupational area(s) they are assessing and verifying and should have been gained through 'hands on' experience in the industry.'

CPD

♦ The Assessment Strategy also includes details of the People 1st requirements for all internal verifiers and assessors in maintaining a record of their continuous professional development. It has been reported that CPD records in a large proportion of centres could be improved by recording all relevant activities to meet individual development needs. They should also be able to demonstrate that they are working in line with current assessor and internal verifier standards. A CPD toolkit is available on SQA's website, which provides a useful template to update records as required.

Counter signatures

♦ In the case that an assessor or internal verifier is working towards Units L&D9, L&D9D1 or L&D11, a representative sample of assessment decisions must be countersigned by a colleague who has achieved the relevant Units, and who has the same occupational expertise. It is also important to note that assessor and internal verifier awards should be achieved within 18 months.