



Higher National Qualifications
and
Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Senior Verifier Report
2007

Subject: Brickwork (171) SVQ level 2 and 3
Brickwork (171) Higher National Qualification
Construction and Civil Engineering SVQ levels 1 and 2

Sector Panel or SSC: Construction Skills

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification which has taken place within Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

HIGHER NATIONAL UNITS

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

Brickwork (171) Higher National Qualification

There has been a welcome upturn in the uptake of the Advanced Certificate Brickwork award and this probably reflects the current boom in the construction industry. Many employers appear to be taking a keen interest in the training and further development of their apprentice employees and this award develops the craft skills to an advanced stage.

Verifiers reports were positive and there were no 'holds' in certification although in a few cases return visits were requested to resolve QA issues.

Reference to good practice included: Candidates receiving structured written feedback, sensible and practical methods of remediation practical work being used, PPE being implemented, good working relationships existing between assessors and candidates and many examples of truly excellent practical work in evidence, demonstrating high levels of craft skills.

Development points included: Assessment decisions to be clearly recorded at all times, candidates drawing skills sometimes were disappointing, each plumbing point in practical work requires to be assessed and recorded as such, candidates to work in pairs only when it is appropriate eg symmetrical walling, and that product evidence (practical work) which has been assessed, requires to be available for each candidate for external verification visits.

The greatest single challenge in this award continues to be the time scales set for the course programme. It is almost universal, that candidates require to find additional time during or at the end of the course programme to enable them to complete the award.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

This award is coming up for review in 2007/08 and centres will be encouraged to feedback on the current award with a view to developing best practice and updating and modernising the award.

SVQ AWARDS

TITLES/LEVELS OF SVQ AWARDS MODERATED

Brickwork (171) SVQ at levels 2 and 3
Construction and Civil Engineering SVQ at level 1 and 2

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

In general the overall standard of work submitted for external verification remains at a consistently high level, with several centres producing excellent work. The Training and Assessment Programme (TAP) has ensured a standardised method of assessment being implemented across all centres and there is clear evidence that this bringing about quality assurance improvements in the bricklaying SVQ. There has been a significant reduction in the number of 'holds' for this award last session, with centres gradually gaining confidence in the TAP methodology of award delivery.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Brickwork awards

There continues to be a range of 'best practices' being established and these include:

- ◆ Candidates are now receiving brief and relevant written feedback for their work
- ◆ Sensible and practical methods of remediation for performance evidence being implemented
- ◆ Sensible and practical methods of remediation for knowledge evidence being implemented
- ◆ PPE being implemented in workshops in line with industrial practices
- ◆ H&S being implemented in workshops in line with industrial practices and the assessment strategy
- ◆ Good working relationships being established with assessors and candidates
- ◆ Many examples of excellent practical work in evidence

Areas which require further development include:

- ◆ The approach to the generic Units requires to be further standardised across centres. The use of the centralised developed checklists has to be encouraged. A few centres have developed over complex systems for gathering the evidence for these Units. The best advice is still to use a holistic approach and integrate these Units with the 'natural occurrences' of the practical workshop activities. This evidence should then be recorded in the checklists provided.
- ◆ The subjective type questions at level 3 of the brickwork SVQ award have caused many centres some difficulties. There were a significant number of instances where centres were awarding candidates marks which were excessively high for the standard of work being presented eg, Isometric sketches being awarded full marks when they were not even being drawn at the correct 30 degree angle. This is an area which internal and external verifiers will be required to give a high profile next session.
- ◆ Candidate's drawings and sketches were disappointing in a significant number of assessment work sampled. Many candidates did not appear to possess the basic drawing/sketching skills required to produce clear and proportional answers to assessments.

General comments:

Construction and Civil Engineering

With the implementation of the updated assessment strategy, almost all centres are delivering this award using the On Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) mode. In general terms centres continues to be many challenges in this field of verification work. There are large numbers of experienced candidates undertaking this award in an industry which traditionally has large numbers of unqualified workers. This has been brought about by the introduction of the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (C.S.C.S) card requirement to be employed in the sector.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Best practices are being developed and are gradually being implemented by many centres. These include:

- ◆ Effective internal verification systems are being developed
- ◆ Good working relationships are being cultivated between candidates and assessors
- ◆ Regular standardisation meetings are being established as the norm
- ◆ Direct observations of candidates on site locations are being clearly recorded
- ◆ Good support systems for candidates are being put in place
- ◆ CPD being carried for assessor and verifier functions.

Areas which require further development include:

- ◆ Standardisation meetings require to be recorded and minuted
- ◆ Direct observations of candidates on site require to be recorded in an evaluative manner
- ◆ All candidate evidence requires to be authenticated as being the work of each candidate
- ◆ Witness statements/testimonies require a strong IV focus
- ◆ The questions being used require to be cross referenced to scope of knowledge identified in the standards
- ◆ Assessor understanding or Primary Evidence and Secondary Evidence requires to be fully developed
- ◆ Well structured pro form systems to be set up for the use of photographic evidence
- ◆ The establishment of clearly identifiable 'cut off' scores for knowledge questions to be set up
- ◆ Evaluative assessment decision making processes to be established as the normal practice for assessor

NATIONAL UNITS

(i.e. Freestanding units which contribute to NPAs or NCs etc.)

TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS MODERATED

Scottish Progression Awards in Construction at Intermediate 1 and 2

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

The SPA in Building Crafts was first introduced 4 years ago. It is now an established prevocational construction award in most centres curriculum infrastructure, and a significant number of candidates who come through the award are gaining modern apprenticeships in construction. The wide variety of construction craft pathways available has proved very popular with candidates and centres, and has provided an appropriate option of the programmes within the award.

The SPA has now been reviewed and will be relaunched this forthcoming session (2007/08) as the National Progression Award (NPA) in Construction. The NPA is built on the successful model of its predecessor, but has now even increased the range of craft Units available and has further developed the flexibility, range and skills of the award.

The double banked visits which verify the specific craft disciplines of the external verifier and also take an informed overview of the other crafts being delivered at centres, continues to be an effective and efficient model of verification. This avoids the need for an EV. visit for each of the vocational pathways being delivered in the centre. Most centres ensure that there is practical and knowledge evidence available for each candidate during external verification visits.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Good practice

- ◆ Internal verification is being applied effectively in most centres
- ◆ Feedback to candidates in many centres is being recorded in a positive manner with an emphasis on developing candidates confidence and assurance
- ◆ SPA standardisation issues are being included on staff meeting agendas at many centres
- ◆ There was examples of good use of photographic secondary evidence being used in some centres
- ◆ The marking guidelines provided by SQA are being correctly interpreted across most centres
- ◆ Most centres are making full and thorough preparations for external verification visits
- ◆ In most centres candidates are being encouraged to produce work which is well within the minimum acceptable standards as defined in the checklists.
- ◆ Candidates are developing basic H&S practices including the wearing of appropriate PPE in most centres
- ◆ In general, standards are very consistent across centres and external verification visit reports are being very positive
- ◆ Candidate feedback was consistently positive and there were many expressions of them enjoying the learning and training experiences
- ◆ In many centres candidates portfolios were being well managed and presented

Areas for further development include:

- ◆ A few centres require to ensure that their internal verification system is being fully implemented across all of their sites/campuses
- ◆ A few centres require to ensure that their internal verification system is being fully implemented across all of the crafts being delivered in the programme
- ◆ A few centres require to ensure that assessors and internal verifiers clearly mark, sign off and date candidates checklists and scripts being presented as evidence
- ◆ Some centres require to ensure that staff meetings are held for standardisation purposes
- ◆ A few centres require to further develop their feedback being recorded for candidate's information on their acquisition of craft skills. This feedback should be as brief as possible but give the candidate the information required to make further progress. It should be presented in a positive manner in keeping with the ethos of the award.
- ◆ There were a few reports which commented on H&S not being fully complied with eg, two candidates in a class group not wearing safety footwear in a workshop. Staff require to ensure that H&S policies are implemented at all times.
- ◆ When photographic secondary evidence is being used, whenever possible the candidate should appear in the photo, with the date and their name clearly identified for authentication compliance.
- ◆ Some centres require to develop organised systems for the retention of candidate evidence needed for external verification visits.