



**Higher National Qualifications**

**And**

**Scottish Vocational Qualifications**

**Senior Verifier Report**

**2007**

**Subject: SVQ Management 247**

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

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## SVQ AWARDS

### TITLES/LEVELS OF SVQ AWARDS VERIFIED

G5TR 22 SVQ Team Leading Level 2 (new standards)  
G81T 23 SVQ Management Level 3 (new standards)  
G81R 24 SVQ Management Level 4 (new standards)  
G820 25 SVQ Management Level 5 (new standards)  
G47B 23 SVQ Management Level 3 (old standards)  
G4GB 24 SVQ Management Level 4 (old standards)  
G4L5 25 SVQ Management Level 5 (old standards)

### FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

#### General comments:

Verification activity covered both the old and the new standards although most centres have now fully completed the transition to the new standards. Overall the new standards appear to have been well received and centres seem to have been able to adapt well established systems and procedures to them without any great difficulty.

Once again, the main conclusions from verification are that centres are able to deliver the awards effectively with the result that candidates continue to produce work of a good standard. The move to the new standards has provided an opportunity for centres to review their systems and procedures for these awards and many reports commented favourably on the actions that centres have taken. Overall, therefore, these awards and the centres that deliver them seem to be in good health.

The most significant move has been the use of electronic delivery methods. Centres have adopted a variety of approaches to this including purchasing dedicated portfolio building software (of which there are several different types) and tailoring commonly used presentation and word processing software to the requirements of the SVQ Management. Modern ICT equipment is also widely used to facilitate communication between candidates and assessors and to record and store discussions between assessors and candidates. As technology improves video evidence seems likely to become more common.

These developments are welcome and contribute to improved quality and availability of candidate evidence. However, they also raise some issues. Electronic systems help candidates to structure and organise their portfolios but they also highlight the need for candidates to make sure that others can track the layout of the portfolio. The need for a suitable index and/or list of contents becomes particularly important while it is also vital to make sure that matrices used to record evidence are fully and accurately completed.

While electronic portfolios can make it easier to include evidence which is available in an electronic format, there can be problems with evidence which is not readily available in a suitable format. In cases where evidence cannot be included (for these technical reasons or because it is confidential) candidates must provide a clear and verifiable audit trail for the evidence. This must include a precise and accurate description of what the evidence is and how it demonstrates that the candidate acts in accordance with the relevant part of the standards. There must also be a precise statement of where the evidence is located so that, if necessary, it can be accessed by an assessor, IV or EV.

The main difference between the old and the new standards is probably the greater emphasis on knowledge requirements in the new standards. Most centres seem to have adjusted well to this but not all candidates provide evidence of the level of understanding required. The SQA have commissioned some support material to assist centres in meeting the knowledge requirements. It covers the mandatory Units at levels 3 and 4 and can be downloaded from the SQA website.

There are two other points which deserve mention as part of the general comments about the SVQ Management, both of which have been mentioned in previous reports. The first is making sure that candidates are at the right level. This tends to arise more at Level 3 where candidates who have a job role which is largely administrative still come forward for SVQ Management. However, it can also apply at Level 4 usually where candidates (or their employer) mistakenly believe that their job role warrants a higher level of award. In both cases candidates struggle to produce suitable evidence for the level of the award. Some centres have developed quite sophisticated skills assessment tools which help to eliminate this problem. They have the added merit that they give candidates a clear idea of what will be required of them in order to successfully complete the SVQ Management.

The second point is the importance of ensuring that portfolios are 'candidate led'. There is a danger that assessors assume control of portfolios so that candidates do not take ownership of what they are doing. More importantly candidates do not fully understand the requirements of the standards. Page 12 of the SQA Assessment Guidance for SVQ Management states that candidates must show how their evidence relates to all parts of the standards and that they must demonstrate that they are "aware of how the evidence submitted proves that s/he does work in accordance with the standards and understands why the standards represent good managerial practice."

### **Advice on good practice and areas for further development:**

Much of the good practice which has been apparent in previous years has continued. With the advent of the new standards this is particularly encouraging. All the following examples of good practice have been mentioned in previous reports but all bear repetition. Some of them are enhanced by the development of electronic portfolios and by developments in ICT. Some examples of good practice are:

- Transparent and clear systems for tracking the progress of candidates
- Specific and detailed feedback to candidates by assessors
- Signed agreements between candidates and their manager to reinforce the commitment of managers to support and help candidates
- Availability of web based resources to support portfolio building
- Regular, minuted standardisation meetings between assessors and internal verifiers – the use of examples of candidate work (e.g. different attempts at the same Unit) continues to be a good way to promote discussion on assessor judgements and, from this, develop a common approach across assessors.
- The use of modern equipment to record and store professional discussion – professional discussion increasingly tends to be relatively short and closely focused on specific aspects of the standards. Good practice requires that professional discussion allows candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the standards and explain why the evidence they have submitted shows that they have met the standards. Professional discussion works less well when candidates just describe evidence they have submitted.
- An emphasis on naturally occurring performance evidence – this continues to be the foundation of good portfolios for SVQ Management.

A critical element in good practice is the commitment of assessors, IVs and others in centres to the SVQ Management. This contributes significantly to the general good quality of work which is undertaken. External Verifiers frequently comment on this and it is one of the most common remarks in EV reports.

### **Further development**

For the most part, future development for the SVQ Management will come from the spread of good practice and from dissemination of improvements made by centres. Many of these have been mentioned already in this report. Much of this section, therefore, highlights those aspects which seem to be most important in enhancing the delivery of the award in the future. The points below summarise the main areas where development is likely to be most valuable. Some of them have been mentioned in previous reports. In this sense the points are factors against which centres can benchmark their work.

The main development points are:

1. Making sure that candidates provide a clear link between their evidence and the standards – this enables portfolios to be candidate led. The relevant sections of the SQA Assessment Guidance have been referred to above. They go on to point out the importance of doing this by providing a reflective account, annotation of evidence or a professional discussion or any combination of the three. Candidates should also make sure that pieces of evidence referred to in reflective accounts, professional discussion or observation are included in portfolios.
2. Currency of evidence - evidence in portfolios should normally not be more than 2 years old. Centres continue to submit portfolios with evidence which is older than this. This may be justified where candidates have taken some time to complete their work (e.g. through illness).
3. Ensuring that evidence submitted is attributable to the candidate and demonstrates what the candidate actually did in order to meet the standards - it is not sufficient for candidates to say what they might have done or intend to do; evidence must show what the candidate actually did. For this reason, company information and other procedural documents are not usually good evidence since they do not show how the candidate made use of them in order to meet the outcomes and behaviours in the standards.
4. Avoiding the use of blank forms – this is an aspect of 3 above. However, there have been a large number of examples of this during verification in 2006 – 2007 and it, therefore, deserves a separate mention. Unless the form has been developed by the candidate **and** there has not been an opportunity for it to be used, there is no justification for the inclusion of blank forms in a portfolio for SVQ Management. There have been examples also of forms which have been completed to exemplify what the form would look like if it had been completed. This is simulated evidence which is not acceptable in the new standards.
5. Where evidence cannot be included for confidentiality reasons, it is insufficient for assessors to say they have seen it. This has been mentioned earlier also – a full audit trail of the evidence is required. Whatever the evidence it must be available for inspection by an assessor, IV or EV – if this cannot be guaranteed, assessors should advise candidates to find alternative evidence.
6. Holding regular standardisation meetings – many centres do this (as noted in the good practice above) but there have been some instances this year where meetings have lapsed or where full minutes have not been kept.
7. Making sure internal verification is effective – internal verification should be a critical part of the quality assurance procedures adopted by centres. There is a danger, however, that it becomes perfunctory and amounts to an automatic confirmation of assessor judgments. There is a strong case for carrying out internal verification during the development of a portfolio and when it is complete (although not for the same Unit or Units). Interim internal verification can help to identify issues with a portfolio at a stage when it is often a relatively straightforward task to address them.
8. Ensuring that candidates meet the knowledge requirements of the new standards – this has also been referred to earlier in this report.

Overall, however, external verification has confirmed that, generally, the SVQ Management is working well and is being delivered effectively. Centres are becoming familiar with the new standards – procedures for the assessment interview are now well-established for example. Those involved with this award deserve credit for their effort and commitment.