



# **Internal Assessment Report: SfW Practical Experience – Construction and Engineering Access 3 (411)**

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

# National Qualifications (NQ) Awards

## Titles/levels of NQ Awards verified

SfW Practical Experience: Construction and Engineering

## General comments

Four centres offering the award were subject to an External Verifier visit this session: one in north Scotland and three in the Central Belt. With only one exception, centres clearly understood the requirements of the national standards, mainly through previous experience and/or EV visits.

One centre, which did not realise that an industrial/educational partner was a crucial element of a SfW Course, was offering the Course for the first time. On reflection, they withdrew it from future programmes.

The majority of centre assessors had a wide knowledge and experience of using and interpreting the Course documentation and materials. Centres relied on staff with previous experience to cascade knowledge to those who were new to the Course.

Most centres had regular Course meetings for staff to share ideas and good practice.

Many centres used the support network meeting, held annually in June, to clarify any issues with the documentation.

No centre visited this session was subject to a hold on certification, due to assessors making valid assessment decisions.

All centres visited were using the SQA-produced National Assessment Bank materials for assessing candidates, which specify the evidence requirements.

Centres are using the SFEU-produced support materials, resulting in all candidates being suitably prepared for assessment.

The majority of centres were offering this Course to S3/S4 school candidates who would benefit from the basic level required for teaching/learning and assessment. Only one centre was offering the Course as an introduction to the trades to those who had left the school system.

One centre commented that they found the allocated time that the class attended was low, and that an increase would be beneficial as the level of candidate required more individual staff input.

A few centres had slightly altered the practical artefact specified in the relevant NAB, with some failing to record the changes in their Internal Verification documentation.

All centres were able to produce relevant IV procedures at EV visits.

## **Areas of good practice**

The centre which has candidates from outwith the school system arranges for local/charity work to be undertaken by candidates as part of the Course, while still observing the requirements of Course assessment. Evidence from this activity is recorded for use in Employability Skills. This centre has volunteered to host the annual support network meeting in June 2011 to share with others its approach to this innovative idea.

In the north Scotland centre, candidate progress is clearly recorded on a checklist which is used to provide comprehensive feedback to the candidate and the parent school.

The standard of candidate practical work, when provided at the visit, was very high, providing evidence that candidates had been subject to excellent teaching and learning.

## **Areas for improvement**

Employability Skills are the one thing that makes SfW Courses 'different' from others, by incorporating areas identified by employers as crucial for progression into the workplace. Assessors often treat the Employability Skills element of the Course as secondary to the practical aspects, and often rely on late assessment of this element. It is essential that progression is shown **and** recorded for each individual candidate and that each candidate receives individual **recorded** feedback on progress. Some centres fail to complete individual reviews and rely on group discussion.

Where a centre decides to alter any part of the SQA-published NAB to suit their needs, this must be recorded formally on their IV documentation.

Centres should consider preparing alternative assessments for the written/oral assessments to allow candidates who require remediation after the initial assessment to be fully re-assessed.

All centres would benefit from close links with other delivering centres to share good practice and innovative ideas. This is provided by the support network meeting held annually in June and facilitated by SQA. Notice of the meeting is sent to all SQA contacts at the presenting centres.