



National Qualifications 2007

Skills for Work Courses

Lead Verifier Report

**SfW Course: Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering
Access 3**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to participating centres on external verification which has taken place within phase 2 of the Skills for Work pilot.

SKILLS FOR WORK COURSES

Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering

TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS EXTERNALLY VERIFIED

Practical Experience in Construction	Access 3
Practical Experience in Engineering	Access 3
Developing Employability Skills in Construction and Engineering	Access 3

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

With regard to the Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering course, during Session 2006 – 07 SQA external verifiers undertook external verification visits to ten centres. Each centre was visited twice: firstly in March/April and secondly in June/July. SQA deployed three external verifiers to undertake this external verification activity.

It was pleasing to note the good level of candidate entries into the Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering course especially given it was the first year the course was on offer. External verifiers found that in general centres enjoyed good relationships with their school partners. Staff in centres are to be congratulated for the high levels of commitment and enthusiasm they have given to the delivery of the course. During visits external verifiers observed that many young candidates were fully involved in the course producing some very good construction and engineering practical work.

Integration and assessment of employability skills:

External verifiers saw clear evidence that employability skills were being delivered and assessed. For example, most candidates completed first review forms including identifying an action (s) for improvement. Some candidates followed through on the action and were able to state some improvements in the action as part of the second review process.

Centre staff have observed that candidates tend to grade themselves better on employability skills than staff would do themselves. Some candidates fail to make the link between those employability skills which they grade as only satisfactory or requiring action and any action (s) for improvement.

Centre staff have noted that the standard of candidate written Communication work is generally poor.

Internal Verification

External verifiers noted that in almost all cases centres were using National Assessment Bank materials. External verifiers reported that in all ten centres internal verification was effective in terms of ensuring that candidate work met the standards set out in unit specifications and that there was consistency of assessment judgements between different assessors. During visits external verifiers saw evidence of IV documentation including sampling records and feedback on candidate evidence moderated. There was also evidence of internal verification meetings for standardisation purposes.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

The following good practice points were noted during external verification visits:

In one centre candidates were introduced to painting/stencilling to give them a broader insight into construction trades.

In another centre candidates were allowed to converse with employers and apprentices that gave them valuable insights into the world of work.

In another centre candidates produced comprehensive portfolios including tutorials, assessments and photographic evidence.

In another centre the lecturer asked candidates to complete a self-evaluation of their employability skills using a centre devised form at the start of the Construction unit. This gave the candidates a 'bit of a head start' when it came to the first employability skills review.

In another centre an induction programme has been introduced, including an aptitude test, to support the recruitment of future candidates.

In another centre lecturers recognised that candidates were having difficulties spelling tool names. They photographed tools, assigned each photograph a letter and then asked candidates to complete a table in which they matched letters to photographs.

The main area for development relates to employability skills. Candidates need support in terms of making a more realistic assessment of their employability skills. They also require help with making better linkages between areas where they or they and the lecturer have graded an employability skill (s) only satisfactory or requiring action and an action (s) for improvement.

Candidates should be encouraged to provide evidence that they have improved an employability skill identified as an action point. It may be worthwhile adding a box into the second review form to allow lecturers to comment on whether they think the candidate has made improvements in an employability skill identified as an action point.