



National Qualifications 2007

Skills for Work Courses

Lead Verifier Report

**SfW Course: Rural Skills
Intermediate 1**

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

TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS EXTERNALLY VERIFIED

DVOA 10	ESTATE MAINTENANCE
DXOV 10	LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES: AN INTRODUCTION
DXOW 10	EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN THE LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES
DXOX 10	ANIMAL HUSBANDRY: AN INTRODUCTION
DXOY 10	ANIMAL HANDLING: AN INTRODUCTION
DX12 10	CROP PRODUCTION: AN INTRODUCTION
DX13 10	SOFT LANDSCAPING: AN INTRODUCTION

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

- Eleven pilot centres were subject to external verification visits between February and June 2007
- The mix of delivery models included: Seven School/College partnerships and four School/Industry partnerships
- In all but one centre the award was being delivered over 2 years with S3 pupils
- Several centres are delivering both the Crop and Livestock optional units to provide a wider learner experience and utilise allotted time fully
- All but one centre were using NABS, but practical observation checklists had still to be prepared in a few centres
- The number of units verified at centres ranged from 2 to 5 Units. This reflected the assessment stage of the centre candidates and the availability of candidate evidence
- The three most common units where assessment evidence was available were: Estate Maintenance, Land-Based Industries: an introduction and Employability Skills in the Land-based industries. In most centres some additional evidence from one crop or livestock unit was also available
- Evidence of Internal verification varied considerably across centres, some had undertaken none while others had sampled 2-3 units.
- In a few cases no robust IV system was in place, and further consideration was needed as to the selection of technically competent internal verifiers.
- Where unit assessment evidence was available, all centres had these units accepted and the evidence presented was of a good standard
- Practical assessment facilities available to candidates were of a high standard and reflected the real working environment required in the award

Integration and assessment of employability skills:

- Almost all centres had successfully completed the 1st individual Self Evaluation Review, some had completed the 2nd. The initial grading by candidates was high at some centres as both staff and candidates got to grips with the assessment grades and improvement approach.
- Where the assessor recorded a low review grade and this is accepted by the candidate, the action points recorded should reflect these key areas for improvement (generally 3-4 as a maximum)
- It is important that the Employability Unit assessor has regular dialogue with partners and other staff who are delivering the Units linked to employability, to enable them to draw all the evidence together
- The use of observation checklists and records of practical tasks undertaken within the crop or livestock Units, will support dialogue with candidates and ensure 'the distance travelled' by the candidate is accurately assessed
- It is important that candidates are clear as to which integrated Units and tasks are being used to measure their employability, particularly at centres who are delivering additional optional Units.
- Some good practice identified included: embedding employability into each practical delivery session- with candidates involved in, planning, preparation (tools/equipment, health & safety), then undertaking practical session, followed by an evaluation of tasks at the end of the session. The use of Time sheets by candidates when undertaking practical activities was also considered to be useful.

Internal Verification

- It is essential that all centres have a clear and documented approach to the internal verification of this award. This should include an IV sampling schedule and sampling rate for the Units and evidence of meeting where the assessment process is discussed
- Evidence of Unit Internal Verification in the form of a checklist with recommendations and closure of any actions should be available to the External Verifier
- Internal Verification staff must have appropriate assessment and technical subject knowledge for the Units they are internally verifying. This may necessitate the use of more than one IV. This can be an issue for School/Industry partnerships delivering the more specialist crop and livestock units

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Assessment by almost all centres was at an early stage however, opportunities for assessment, recording of results and candidate progress could be improved.

- The use of a candidate assessment tracking sheets to monitor progress was found helpful by several centres. These also included completed weekly recording of individual practical tasks undertaken by candidates. This allowed staff to keep candidates informed of their progress in practical work, an area for improvement highlighted by some candidates
- The seasonal nature of many crop and livestock tasks does mean that these will have to be well planned particularly with centre partners. To ensure such opportunities are not missed it would assist centres if a monthly delivery and assessment planning schedule was prepared. This should include both planned formative and summative assessment. centres would not be held rigidly to its implementation by External Verifiers but it would assist the assessment process

- Some candidates indicated that they found the initial grading of themselves and writing action points difficult. Additional tutor support may be useful here to establish a performance baseline.
- The assessment of practical skills in the real working environment requires the preparation (if not supplied in the NABS) and use of observation checklists. These should be used to ensure the consistency of assessment decisions and provide a source of candidate feedback.
- Where a centre is currently delivering two additional optional Units, all of which are being assessed, it must clarify during an External Verifier visit which units are to be linked to the SfW award (4 credits)