



**National Qualifications 2014
Internal Assessment Report
Skills for Work: Rural Skills**

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified:

Skills for Work: Rural Skills Intermediate 1 (436)

National Progression Award: Rural Skills Intermediate 2 (437)

General comments

Nine centres were selected for external verification of Skills for Work: Rural Skills in 2014. The team carried out six external verification visits. A total of three centres were recorded as 'not running'.

No routine external verification visits were conducted in relation to the National Progression Award in Rural Skills Intermediate 2.

All of the external verification visits resulted in an 'Accepted' decision. There was a good awareness of national standards at all centres visited and Course delivery was generally of a high, or very high, quality.

Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Assessors generally had a good understanding of standards required for successful completion of the qualification, although at some centres there was a rather poor appreciation of the requirements for internal verification. Most centres had developed comprehensive Course documentation and some had contextualised national materials to their own institutional/geographical needs.

The National Assessment Bank materials and the SFEU Course Support Resources were used by the majority of centres visited.

Evidence Requirements

Assessors were generally well acquainted with the Evidence Requirements for the Units and Course as a whole. Generally, Evidence Requirements were satisfied at all centres visited. Some minor issues were identified and these are listed in the 'Areas for improvement' section (below).

Administration of assessments

Centres were fully aware of SQA policies and procedures in relation to the administration of assessments and adhered closely to these. External verifiers were provided with all of the information that was required to complete their verification tasks. Records were retained in accordance with SQA requirements.

Areas of good practice

Skills for Work qualifications in general, including Rural Skills, are awards that embody the principles of a Curriculum for Excellence, allowing learners to trace a vocational route through their secondary education. Uptake has been good throughout Scotland, particularly in the Highlands and now more learners receive formal recognition for their effort than was previously the case. Participating students build employability skills and develop a clear idea of a possible career trajectory.

This year areas of good practice were identified at all centres visited. There is no doubt that the quality of teaching and learning was good or excellent, as was the learner experience. I have included team comments in full (below):

- ◆ The school has recently signed up to become an Eco-school. Both assessor and verifier were enthusiastic and imaginative with regard to possible projects associated with this.
- ◆ The SfW Rural Skills Course is integrated with other awards delivered by the centre, eg Construction; Hospitality. In this way an internal enterprise activity has been created.
- ◆ First-rate student support services.
- ◆ Good use of photographic product evidence.
- ◆ The school has outstanding physical resources on-site to cover all aspects of the award.
- ◆ The centre has devised a series of student log books customised to meet centre and candidate needs — these were exemplary and supported the assessor checklists and other formal evidence.
- ◆ The school was working in partnership with a team of volunteers to create woodland trails and cycle ways. This community aspect is to be commended.
- ◆ The internal verification procedures have been devised specifically for the Rural Skills award. These are detailed and have been followed with pre-delivery verification, sampling of candidates' work and observation of live assessment taking place.
- ◆ The centre makes good use of external employers to help with delivery and assessment of specialist areas, eg plumbing. The specialist works with the assessor to ensure appropriate standards are maintained during the assessment process.
- ◆ The employability reviews contain detailed feedback from the assessor to the learner to allow them to work on improving specific areas of their employability skills.
- ◆ Candidates are well prepared by staff for their practical learning and assessment experience at Blair Drummond Wildlife Park. This has instilled a real work ethic in candidates who take a pride in tasks they are asked to undertake. The application of internal assessment within the practical park setting is well integrated into the routine work context, and not seen as a separate activity that must be undertaken.
- ◆ The students fully engaged with the school's Eco-schools / Green Flag activities — assessment was integrated with this.

- ◆ Assessment was integrated with SfW Construction. This is best practice and is to be commended.
- ◆ Students were pursuing a vocational route through their secondary education — this had been commented on favourably by Education Scotland inspection.
- ◆ The school had excellent resources on-site for practical student activity and environmental interpretation.
- ◆ The centre has produced two workbooks for the delivery of the award, one for candidates' use and one for assessors. The assessor workbook contains observation checklists and detailed information on the delivery and assessment of the Units.
- ◆ The candidate workbook contains expanded information on the tasks such as the Estate Maintenance tasks.
- ◆ The internal verification procedures are detailed and implemented rigorously.
- ◆ The centre was making good use of embedding employability skills and tool recognition into the delivery of Crop Production and Soft Landscaping Units with their assessment approach.

During several visits this year it was noted that schools could enhance their on-site resources with grants available through SNH, Grounds for Learning, see: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/about-scotlands-nature/resources-for-teaching/learning-outdoors/school-grounds/>

Specific areas for improvement

The external verification team recorded a number of minor areas for improvement. For the sake of completeness, these are included below:

- ◆ The centre should ensure that some technical equine internal verifier support, is used to undertake at least one observation of a practical candidate equine assessment activity.
- ◆ The centre should ensure that all candidate written evidence is clearly marked and contains an appropriate re-assessment trail and feedback comments.
- ◆ The centre should review how livestock identification assessments are undertaken and introduce a more formal and recorded approach which ensures that documented candidate evidence is available.
- ◆ The observation checklists for Soft Landscaping and Crop Production should have the date and assessor initials added.
- ◆ Estate Maintenance — The checklist for tool identification needs to include the tool details. The centre should be aware that to achieve the Unit the number of tools required to be correctly identified is 10 and the number of tasks to be undertaken is four.
- ◆ Crop Production — Task sheet 3 should be marked in accordance with an assessor-devised marking scheme.
- ◆ The centre should ensure that all instruments of assessment are prior verified and meet the standard of the NABs. Formative assessment material which goes beyond the requirement of the NAB does not need to be included for

review by the External Verifier. Ensure that the assessment of this Unit is standardised with the assessment of the same Units in the centre's other sites. Sign and date completed assessments consistently (including the Land Based Industry Unit).