



**National Qualifications 2015
Internal Assessment Report
Skills for Work: Uniformed and
Emergency Services**

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

National Courses

Skills for Work: Uniformed and Emergency Services (C251 74)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: An Introduction (F38R 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Health, Safety, Fitness and Wellbeing (F38S 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Engaging with the Community (F38T 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Working in Teams (F38V 10)

General comments

Three centres were visited for external verification during this academic session. All centres were delivering and assessing material in an appropriate manner, and it is pleasing to see that the commentary in the previous internal assessment reports regarding understanding of the required standard has been taken on board. A number of new centres were approved to deliver the Course, and one had a post-approval development visit.

All of the centres selected for external verification made use of the assessment material generated by SQA. The centre subject to a post-approval development visit had a clear vision on how the Course could be delivered in an effective manner.

A number of centres continue to work in partnership with the Army Cadet Force, and whilst they are delivering a programme which draws heavily on the cadet introductory course, the centres have taken care to ensure that the Evidence Requirements of the SQA Units are met. As has been stated in previous internal assessment reports, this method of delivery is clearly beneficial to candidates, but centres need to ensure that the activities undertaken allow the opportunity for the evidence required for SQA Units to be generated.

Discussions with tutors/assessors/internal verifiers confirmed a clear understanding of the Course rationale, assessment requirements, and the underlying ethos of the Skills for Work portfolio. No 'hold' recommendations were made.

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

External verification, approval, and development visits indicate that staff responsible for delivery, assessment and internal verification are familiar with all aspects of the Course (see also comments above). Centres that were approved this session are primarily using (or intending to use) SQA-produced assessment support packs. All centres were aware of the SQA prior verification service. When conducting visits, External Verifiers made a point of discussing the issue of additions or amendments to existing material, and that these should be consistent with Evidence Requirements of the Unit and appropriate to SCQF

level 4. This is particularly important for centres that have been delivering the Course over a number of sessions, and may be considering adapting some of the assessment material.

Evidence Requirements

Verification reports on the centres selected highlight an improving standard of candidate evidence in terms of the quantity, presentation and clarity. Candidate folios contained evidence, including tutor checklists and self-reviews. Centres commented on the difficulties sometimes encountered in the conduct of the individual reviews, especially when larger cohorts are concerned.

The development report for the centre which had previously been subject to a 'hold' showed that considerable thought had been put into the suggested delivery pattern and learning activities. Similarly, a number of centres applied for approval to deliver the Course, and the approval officer commented in all cases that significant preparation had gone into the production of context-specific and appropriate teaching material. All new centres plan to use the ASP material.

Administration of assessments

Almost all centres externally verified, and many of those coming forward for approval, are using (or plan to use) a holistic delivery pattern for the programme. This results in assessment material being generated throughout the Course in a variety of different formats. As stated previously, centres integrating their delivery with the Army Cadet Force are reminded to ensure that assessment is appropriately mapped, and at the correct SCQF level, where it has been adapted from existing material. Assessment evidence should always be logged correctly in order that staff and candidates are aware of progression, and to enable effective internal and external verification.

The commitment of teaching staff is commendable, and visits show evidence of varied and interesting delivery, utilising where possible members of the Uniformed and Emergency Services — in some instances these persons have been able to assist (where appropriate) in the administration of assessment. Putting the candidates through context-specific interviews, along with the introduction of application forms and questionnaires has in some instances helped to make the delivery highly effective. This in turn means that assessment material generated by candidates draws from a wide range of sources.

In the majority of centres assessment material is generated in multiple formats: this is good practice to ensure that all candidates are able to maximise learning and skill transfer. The majority of centres are delivering the programme using a member of staff with specific current or recent UES experience — this is good practice, allowing a high level of context-specific knowledge and personal experience to enhance delivery of the Course.

Internal verification processes were discussed at length in all centres visited, and it is encouraging to see the use of standardised paperwork and internal verification standardisation, particularly in schools.

Areas of good practice

Although there has been a limited number of external verification visits this session, a significant number of centres have come forward for approval: visits to those have demonstrated some excellent ideas and developments. In addition, centres continue to contact the SEV for advice, and it is once again encouraging to note widespread good practice:

- ◆ Time and resource allocation in centres continues to give candidates excellent opportunities for success, especially in view of the wide variety of complex issues faced by candidates. Many centres have allocated additional time to the UES Course, and when speaking to candidates in centres it is clear that they enjoy the Course and view it as a great benefit to them.
- ◆ Tutors in centres show current or recent direct experience of working with the uniformed and emergency services.
- ◆ Centres have carried out much work to develop local links, especially in the context of the 'Engaging with Communities' Unit.
- ◆ A wide variety of learning and teaching styles are used and assessments have been developed and progressed to include all candidates.

Specific areas for improvement

Previous points where improvement is needed have clearly been taken on board by centres; however, one or two points remain of concern:

- ◆ Centres delivering the Course in a holistic manner should ensure that candidates have an awareness of their own progression — recording of results, areas where cross-assessment is used, and assessment material in general, should highlight the importance and targeting of learning transfer.
- ◆ Centre reports of all types (verification, approval, and development) indicate effective practice in most aspects of delivery, but it remains vital that centres retain a clear focus on effective assessment and verification.
- ◆ Schools delivering the Course should give careful consideration to the requirements of the internal verification process, and ensure that paperwork is standardised.