



Internal Assessment Report: Business and Administration

Sector Panel or SSC: Council for Administration

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

SVQ awards

Titles/levels of SVQ awards verified

SVQ Business and Administration

G7Y3 22

G7Y5 23

G8LH 23

Feedback to centres

General comments

The information provided below relates to the majority of centres selected for external verification in 2008–09.

Within centres, assessors and internal verifiers were appropriately experienced and had the correct qualifications to support the SVQs in Business and Administration. All carry out an administrative remit as part of their job role.

Procedures were in place to support the induction and ongoing training of assessors and internal verifiers. Any new assessors normally shadow experienced assessors and receive sufficient support and guidance, with internal verification at 100%, reducing as the assessor gains the relevant experience and demonstrates their competence to the IV.

A number of well-documented CPD logs were available, linking knowledge and skills acquired and how they will be implemented within the context of the individual's role.

It is important that CPD records indicate what was gained from the CPD activity and how this will be implemented. Some centres had incorporated an 'impact column' in their CPD documentation, and this is good practice.

From the sample taken, all candidates had fair access to the assessment process.

There was good evidence of assessment planning and review, with the assessment process being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback.

Within centres, regular meetings take place to discuss issues relating to the standards. There are both formal and informal arrangements in place for assessors and internal verifiers to meet to discuss issues relating to the award and relating to the assessment and internal verification process. The process of feedback from the internal verifier encourages assessors to share good practice and ensures standardisation of assessment methods and documentation. Most centres continually review documentation to improve delivery of the qualifications.

There was evidence of good documentation in place to support the internal verification (IV) process. Internal verifiers are normally selected from experienced assessors. There is also evidence of good feedback being given to assessors and candidates with robust IV systems

in place. For internal verification, it is best practice to spread the activity evenly throughout the life of the portfolio. It is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after assessment decisions have been made. This allows candidates and assessors to respond quickly to any feedback from the internal verification process.

All requested evidence was available for verification. Candidate evidence was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable. There were excellent examples of evidence-tracking checklists which were used to track evidence against PIs and knowledge. Portfolios were easy to follow with good sequential numbering systems employed. Centres were aware of the requirement to follow the main Administration assessment strategy and the assessment strategies relating to any imported Units.

There was a good balance between performance evidence and supporting evidence with good use of storyboard/personal statements to place the evidence in context — good annotation of evidence. There were also examples of good triangulation of evidence and holistic approaches to assessment.

The observations selected were comprehensive, with the PIs and knowledge and understanding covered shown clearly in the margin opposite the statement to which they referred. Centres should continue to indicate coverage of PIs and knowledge against the relevant point in the evidence as this ensures that the internal verifier and External Verifier can quickly see exactly where the assessor judges coverage of each PI and knowledge statement.

Many centres were making use of an evidence gathering form which clearly highlights the PIs and knowledge and understanding met, as well as the assessment method used.

Evidence in the portfolios was clearly structured with cross-referencing from the optional Units into the core Units.

Where possible, centres should obtain evidence for the underpinning knowledge from performance evidence rather than a bank of questions. Although those 'why' questions will have to be covered by actual questions — it is unlikely that competence in this area can be inferred through performance.

There was evidence of good use of professional discussions. One centre had excellent 'voice files' to record Professional Discussion. These were very informative and demonstrated good interaction between assessor and candidate.

Witness signatory lists were used well to help identify those who interact the portfolios.

Level 3 candidates were in appropriate and relevant job roles to support the collection of evidence.

There has been an increase in the use of e-portfolios — in the main, Learning-Assistant free and Paper free.

Centres should make themselves familiar with the new assessment guidance produced by SQA — available on SQA’s website, which contains a variety of information and resources to support these awards.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

All of the above offers advice on good practice. This section will address areas of development and point out any issues that resulted in a hold.

Some development issues:

Performance evidence (observations and work product) must be referenced against all PIs that are not contingencies. Evidence must be clearly annotated at relevant points to show precisely where it covers PIs. There were instances where some of the evidence covered PIs by implication. Where this is the case, assessors must ensure that where evidence is referenced against a PI, it fully meets that PI.

Evidence needs to clearly show competence over time and breadth of scope.

Centres should make use of the subject page of SQA’s website and the resources contained there.

If a candidate is doing three IT-based Units — this may limit the breadth of evidence that can be cross referenced to the core Units.

It is useful to encourage a candidate’s line manager/supervisor to review the candidate evidence and write a comment to endorse the evidence. This reduces the need to ask/wait for a specific witness testimony.

Care must be taken to ensure that documents produced for Units such as Unit 314 Word Processing Software 3 meet the requirements of a level 3 award, ie the tasks covered are ‘performed in a wide variety of contexts, most of which are complex and non-routine’.

It is good practice for centres to encourage a holistic approach to assessment, where possible.

There were less holds than the previous year — however, holds did result from the following criteria:

- ◆ inappropriate assessment instruments
- ◆ insufficient evidence of candidate performance
- ◆ inappropriate judgement of candidate performance
- ◆ ineffective internal verification
- ◆ lack of performance evidence/primary evidence

On occasions some PIs had not been referenced at all. Candidates had been assessed using inappropriate assessment instruments. The assessment strategy requires that only work product or assessor observation is acceptable, unless a contingency applies. Some candidates were considered competent on the basis of candidate statements, reflective reviews, questioning and witness testimony. Some of the sample had insufficient work

product and assessor observations, resulting in insufficient triangulation of evidence. Due to lack of appropriate evidence, there was difficulty in confirming candidate competence over a period of time.

Two centres were using the wrong standards. Matrices had not been updated with incremental change.

Evidence presented did not always demonstrate competence over time and breadth of scope. This can be achieved by increasing the use of evidence triangulation (observation, work product and supporting evidence) to ensure the PIs are met over a period of time. Also candidate statements, assessor observations and work product could be annotated by the supervisor to confirm competence over time and a wider selection of work products can be used to confirm breadth of scope.

Centres who use an internal hold process are displaying good practice. However, it is important to note that if the External Verifier concurs with this, then an external hold will take place.

Where holds occurred, centres very quickly generated appropriate evidence and the holds were lifted in a timely and effective manner.