



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Conduct External Verification of the Assessment Process (SCQF level 9)

Unit code: H7VG 36

Superclass: GE

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Version: 02

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to meet the needs of those who wish to gain formal recognition for the role they perform as an External Verifier for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) awarding body.

External verifier-candidates will gain their qualification by providing evidence of planning, conducting and reporting on external verification events. This evidence will be generated by externally verifying qualifications/Units that are assessed in non-workplace contexts.

Those who externally verify qualifications assessed in the workplace are expected to work towards achieving the SVQ Unit L&D 12 Externally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Workplace Assessment' (SQA code — FD44 04)

Outcomes

On completion of the Unit the external verifier-candidate should be able to:

- 1 Plan external verification events.
- 2 Carry out external verification events.
- 3 Make external verification decisions and provide feedback.
- 4 Contribute to the effectiveness of the external verification process.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 9: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9)

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the Unit

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, external verifier-candidates would normally be expected to have a broad understanding of the external verification process and should have an External Verifier contract with SQA prior to embarking on this Unit.

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment

This Unit requires external verifier-candidates to be planning for, and carrying out external verification activities as part of their agreed appointee role with SQA.

All of the evidence should be gathered from the verification visits undertaken.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of external verifier-candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Glossary of terms

Please see the pages 18–19.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

The Knowledge and/or Skills and Evidence Requirements are stipulated under each Outcome. The Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 2 and 3 have been presented together as the skills and practice required of the external verifier-candidate in relation to these Outcomes naturally happen during the same time frame.

Assessment Guidance has been developed for the complete Unit, and can be located after Outcome 4.

Outcome 1

Plan external verification events.

Knowledge and/or Skills

1 Relating to External Verifier practice

- ◆ The role and requirements of the External Verifier
- ◆ Effective Communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Quality assurance risk and risk management
- ◆ Principles of sampling, sampling strategies and techniques
- ◆ Familiarisation with standards and qualifications/Unit specification
- ◆ Awarding body procedures for planning external verification events
- ◆ Externally verifying internal assessments that are recorded and stored electronically
- ◆ Knowledge and critical understanding of SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria

2 Relating to Approved Centre practice

- ◆ The roles and requirements of Assessors, Internal Verifiers
- ◆ Required subject knowledge and skills for Assessors/Internal Verifiers
- ◆ The principles of assessment and internal verification
- ◆ Different assessment methods/instruments
- ◆ Assessment and internal verification arrangements
- ◆ Standardisation arrangements
- ◆ Assessment decisions and evidence
- ◆ Special assessment arrangements
- ◆ Equal/fair access to assessment
- ◆ Awarding Body Policies and Procedures related to assessment and internal verification

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for Outcome 1

The external verifier-candidate will provide (a) written evidence that they can plan external verification events by showing that they can:

- ◆ produce at least one external verification plan for each of three external verification events. The plans must be developed in accordance with SQA policies and procedures and sampling arrangements required for the qualifications being verified.
- ◆ communicate effectively with each centre, agreeing plans with the appropriate centre personnel and within the timescales published by SQA.

The external verification plans must conform to SQA procedural guidelines and confirm that the external verifier-candidate has agreed the:

- ◆ date and time of the event(s).
- ◆ range, quantity and type of evidence (electronic and/or hard copy) to be made available.
- ◆ assessment/internal quality assurance staff and learners to be made available during the event.
- ◆ venue(s) to be visited.

Plans must also include a request to check/sample:

- ◆ Assessment standards/Unit specifications
- ◆ Assessment methods/instruments
- ◆ Standardisation arrangements
- ◆ Assessment decisions/evidence
- ◆ Assessment and Internal Verification procedures and practice
- ◆ Reviews of assessment environments, assessment/verification procedures, equipment and learning and assessment materials
- ◆ Records relating to learner development needs
- ◆ Evidence of accommodating the requirements of External Verifier visits

The external verifier-candidate must also provide (b) written/oral evidence of knowledge correctly outlining:

- ◆ What the key principles of effective assessment and internal verification are.
- ◆ The different types of quality assurance risks that could prevail if centres are not subject to rigorous external verification checks.
- ◆ The principles of effective external verification sampling and the sampling strategies that could be adopted to manage risk and gauge quality.
- ◆ What they would do or have done in accordance with SQA policy and procedures in instances where there were:
 - 1 Difficulties encountered in making contact with the centre and
 - 2 Problems with arranging access to evidence and/or staff.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 2

Carry out external verification events.

Knowledge and/or Skills

1 Relating to External Verifier practice

- ◆ Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Awarding body policies and procedures and requirements for conducting external verification events
- ◆ How to monitor and evaluate if internal assessment and internal verification arrangements are being followed.
- ◆ Externally verifying internal assessment decisions that are recorded and stored electronically
- ◆ Sampling assessment and internal verification decisions
- ◆ How to adapt approach to monitoring and evaluation without compromising standards
- ◆ Quality assurance risk and risk management
- ◆ Familiarisation with Standards and qualification/Unit specifications
- ◆ Knowledge and critical understanding of SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria

2 Relating to Approved Centre practice

- ◆ The roles and requirements of Assessors and Internal Verifiers
- ◆ Required subject knowledge and skills for Assessors/Internal Verifiers
- ◆ The principles of assessment and internal verification
- ◆ Assessment methods/instruments
- ◆ Standardisation arrangements
- ◆ Special assessment arrangements
- ◆ Accommodating the diverse needs of learners at all stages of the assessment process
- ◆ Ensuring equal/fair access to assessment

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3

Make external verification decisions and provide feedback.

Knowledge and/or Skills relating to External Verifier practice

- ◆ Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Knowledge of standards/Unit specifications
- ◆ Awareness of requirements to check that Assessors and Internal Verifiers meet current requirements in relation to qualifications and/or experience
- ◆ Awarding Body requirements for internal assessment arrangements
- ◆ Knowledge and critical understanding of SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria
- ◆ How centre compliance levels are calculated and communicated to centre personnel
- ◆ Identifying and reporting on good practice and possible areas for development (reported under recommendations)
- ◆ Providing consistent support and advice in line with Awarding Body guidance
- ◆ Delivering constructive and objective feedback based on SQA's Quality Criteria
- ◆ SQA procedures for agreeing action points with centres
- ◆ Awarding Body report writing requirements and procedures

Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 2 and 3

The external verifier-candidate will need to provide (a) written evidence in the form of an External Verification report for each of three external verification events they have undertaken and for which they have planned in Outcome 1. External verification activities must be conducted in line with SQA policies and procedures for the qualification(s) being verified.

The external verification reports must accurately reflect reliable judgements being made by the external verifier-candidate in relation to SQA's Quality Criteria.

All sections of reports must be completed comprehensively and show through the external verifier-candidate's comments that they have an accurate understanding of:

- ◆ The Assessment Principles and how they can be applied in practice
- ◆ SQA's general requirements in relation to internal assessment and internal verification of HNs and SVQs
- ◆ The specific arrangements governing assessment and internal verification for the Units/awards being externally verified

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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The following evidence, (b) in the form of witness testimony, should also be produced as follows:

- ◆ Confirmation from an SQA representative of the external verifier-candidate's ability to produce external verification reports which meet SQA's required quality standard.
- ◆ For a minimum of at least one centre, confirmation that the decision of the external verifier-candidate is accurate, the feedback given is constructive and has been accepted by the centre.
- ◆ An observation report from an SQA representative of the external verifier-candidate conducting an external verification event confirming that the external verifier-candidate has:
 - used appropriate interpersonal skills when communicating with centre staff
 - followed awarding body procedures in external verification
 - made appropriate external verification decisions
 - provided accurate and constructive feedback

The external verifier-candidate must also provide (c) written and/or oral evidence of their knowledge of the following:

- ◆ The Assessment Principles: validity, reliability, practicability, equity and fairness.
- ◆ Externally verifying internal assessment decisions that are recorded and stored electronically, commenting on the arrangements that the external verifier-candidate may have to make to ensure they can access and navigate assessments/assessment decisions effectively.
- ◆ The provision centres are required to make to accommodate special assessment arrangements for learners who require them
- ◆ Accommodating the diverse needs of learners at all stages of the assessment process, ensuring learners have equal and fair access to assessment

The external verifier-candidate must also provide (d) written/oral evidence related to their external verification activities where they have:

- ◆ advised centres on the general requirements of the awarding body or the Unit Specifications/standards being assessed.
- ◆ provided recommendations to enhance internal assessment/internal verification practices (where the external verifier-candidate has not given any recommendations to date, he or she must provide at least one example of a recommendation they might make to a centre).

The external verifier-candidate must also provide (e) written/oral evidence to:

- ◆ explain the main difference between a recommendation and an action point.
- ◆ explain how centre compliance is calculated using the traffic light system.
- ◆ comment on the approach and interpersonal skills required by an External Verifier when advising centres they have action points and of their overall Outcome Rating. Explain at least two ways for a centre to provide SQA with evidence to close off an agreed action point(s) and comment on the strength of each way.

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Outcome 4

Contribute to the effectiveness of the external verification process.

Knowledge and/or Skills relating to External Verifier practice

- ◆ Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Processes for communicating with the awarding body
- ◆ Contributing to standardisation arrangements
- ◆ Knowledge of subject area, Standards and Unit Specifications
- ◆ Knowledge of CPD process and how it applies to the External Verifier role Awarding body policies and procedures relating to external verification
- ◆ Issues arising from conducting the external verification process and how to deal with a potentially difficult situation relating to SQA requirements. Data protection legislation and maintaining matters of confidentiality.

Evidence Requirements for Outcome 4

The external verifier-candidate will take part in at least (a) two standardisation activities with colleagues and/or SQA representatives, comprising a two-way communication process where the agreed action points of these meetings/discussions are recorded for standardisation purposes. The evidence from this process must be in the form of one or more of the following:

- ◆ Minutes/notes from standardisation meetings that have action points
- ◆ E-mails seeking clarification and responses to said emails
- ◆ Notes of conversations with SQA Staff (eg QMs, QOs, Quality Assurance Logistics staff) to show how they work with others to ensure consistency in external verification practice.
- ◆ Extracts from a Standardisation Decision Log

For each of the standardisation activities carried out in (a) the external verifier-candidate must provide (b) oral or written evidence of having:

- ◆ accurately explained the issues they have raised, outlining what the likely impact for centres and/or SQA is if the issues are not resolved.
- ◆ actively engaged in discussing the issues they have raised using effective listening skills and showing through their responses that they have given due consideration to others' opinions in helping reach a satisfactory consensus.
- ◆ discussed and agreed approaches on how information should be conveyed to centres.
- ◆ contributed to the standardisation process by confirming they have taken action in relation to previously agreed action points.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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The external verifier-candidate should describe (c) either orally or in writing how they would:

- ◆ respond to a potentially difficult situation (actual or hypothetical) where the centre had a different view of SQA requirements from that expected by the external verifier-candidate (acting on behalf of SQA). This could be for example interpretation of Evidence Requirements or Unit Specifications or some other issue associated with SQA requirements.
- ◆ communicate the following to SQA:
 - problems with the way in which Unit Specifications or Standards are written
 - difficulties encountered by the centre in fully achieving the Evidence Requirements
 - issues with the way in which centre policies are operating.
- ◆ maintain confidentiality and data protection when carrying out the External Verifier role.
- ◆ keep up to date with SQA policies and procedures. Evidence must be in the form of a record of attendance at an SQA event/meeting confirmed through minutes and/or other supporting documentation.
- ◆ identify and maintain relevant continuing professional development (CPD) activities as required by SQA. A current and appropriate CPD record in writing must be provided.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Outcome 1

The first Outcome is concerned with the preparation the external verifier-candidate needs to make to ensure external verification events run smoothly. Communication with centres and the awarding body is a key part of the planning process and there is a need to understand the type and quantity of information that is required to enable effective planning.

Each qualification type will require a slightly different approach therefore, it is important to refer to specific SQA awarding body guidance. That being said, there are some general points about the planning process that should be understood by all External Verifiers. As a pre-amble to the planning process, the external verifier-candidate should be able to confirm they have received from the awarding body, the:

- ◆ type of external verification required, ie postal, electronic, visit.
- ◆ range of qualifications to be externally verified.
- ◆ timescales by which external verification should take place.
- ◆ administrative processes and forms to be used.
- ◆ venue(s) where the event will take place.

Once in possession of all of the above information, the external verifier-candidate should be in a position to contact their centres. As a minimum, plans must confirm that the external verifier- candidate has agreed the:

- ◆ date of the event(s) which should fall in line with that required by the awarding body.
- ◆ range and quantity and type of evidence to be made available. If evidence is being provided electronically, an external verifier (EV) might consider reviewing some/all of the learner evidence prior to the visit in which case the centre would have to provide ID and/or password information. It would also be advisable for the EV to identify who from the centre could help with navigational/functional issues pre and/or during the visit. It is important that only the range of Awards/Units selected by SQA is externally verified.
- ◆ staff and learners to be made available. The external verifier-candidate will wish to speak with centre personnel such as the SQA Co-ordinator, Assessors, Internal Verifiers and learners. Centres require advance notice of this to enable appropriate arrangements to be made.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ venue(s) to be visited. This could be one or a number of venues. Again centres will require advance notice and travelling time will have to be factored into the arrangements where more than one venue is to be visited on the same day.

The external verifier-candidate should be familiar with SQA Template Visit Plans which automatically include a request to check/sample assessment standards/specifications, assessment methods/instruments, assessment arrangements/decisions/evidence, standardisation arrangements, assessment and internal verification procedures and practice review of resources, eg assessment environments, procedures, equipment and learning/assessment materials, records relating to learner development needs and evidence that centre has fully accommodated the requirements of the verification visit.

All salient points should be agreed and confirmed with the centre as part of the planning process.

The external verifier-candidate will require a comprehensive understanding of the key principles that underpin effective assessment and internal verification. SQA have a number of related resources on its website the verifier-candidate can access, including:

- ◆ *Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres*
- ◆ *Guide to Assessment*

The national standards in internal verification and assessment can be found on SQA's Website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/6861.html>

As part of the preparation process, (and throughout the external verification process), the external verifier- candidate should weigh-up any potential or known quality assurance risks.

Those risks could include for example, high learner numbers, new Assessors/Internal Verifiers, new qualifications, etc. The external verifier-candidate can manage risks at the planning stage by adopting a sampling strategy that minimises risk for example sampling the work of all new Assessors/Internal Verifiers, ensuring new qualifications/Units are sampled in the early stages of delivery, etc.

It may be that SQA should be communicated with as a result of contacting the centre before an event takes place. Instances where SQA should be contacted include where there are difficulties in making contact with the centre and/or problems with establishing access to evidence and/or staff. Both of these issues relate to access which centres are duty bound to provide.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcomes 2 and 3

These Outcomes are concerned with conducting the verification event. The external verifier-candidate has a responsibility to check that the centre has in place the appropriate assessment and internal verification arrangements to support the qualification(s) being offered and the learners who are undertaking them.

Confirmation about the external verifier-candidate's performance will be corroborated in three ways:

An Observation Report from an SQA representative. Essentially, the observation report will confirm that the external verifier-candidate is operating to the expected SQA standard when carrying out external verification duties, therefore this is a crucial piece of evidence. The report will confirm the external verifier-candidate has made an appropriate external verification decision and then communicated this via accurate feedback to the approved centre. External verifier-candidates need to apply relevant interpersonal skills (ie actively listening, positive non-verbal and verbal communication) when communicating with centre staff.

Feedback from centres that have been externally verified. This provides valuable information to External Verifiers and the awarding body. Evidence of feedback should be received from at least one centre, and if possible be communicated using official SQA feedback forms where no such form(s) exist, a supporting statement from, ie centre or SQA personnel via email would suffice.

Confirmation from an SQA representative that the reports completed by the external verifier-candidate have met SQA's quality standard in content and presentation. This ensures uniformity and quality which is important from both a centre and SQA perspective.

External Verifier reports should be clear and unambiguous to ensure that the messages they contain can be easily understood by the receiving centre and SQA.

The assessment principles - validity, reliability, practicability, equity and fairness must be fully understood and applied therefore, an explanation is required linked to documented evidence (in the form of a completed EV report Form) that the external verifier-candidate has made a judgement in relation to these principles and recorded it. These principles provide the benchmark on which external verification decisions are made therefore, carry a high level of importance. SQA's Guide to Assessment provides further information on these principles.

The use of technology — as detailed in the Evidence Requirements, relates to the external verifier-candidate having at least a broad understanding of how technology can be used in the assessment and internal verification process. In some award areas, technology will play a more pivotal role and therefore, the external verifier-candidates' knowledge may need to be more specific in these cases.

The external verifier-candidate is expected to have knowledge of equality and diversity, special assessment arrangements and for those concerning learners whose second language is English.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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SQA information sources can be found from the following links:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//25339.html>

Part of the External Verifiers' role is about providing advice and support. The last part of these Outcomes relate to the type of support the external verifier-candidate might provide (or has already provided) in relation to SQA specifications/standards and issues relating to how the centre could improve on their current assessment/IV arrangements/practices.

An understanding of how a centre's compliance is calculated using SQA's traffic light system is required of the external verifier-candidate — this is a critical part of the external verification process. SQA has specific websites and guidance documents relating to all verification processes where external verifier-candidates can find more detailed information.

The external verifier-candidate also needs to understand the main difference between a recommendation and an action point — they both directly relate to SQA Quality Assurance Criteria but only an action point requires a centre to take action within an agreed timescale. A recommendation is used to help enhance practice that is already conformant.

It is important external verifier-candidates have a clear understanding of the ways in which centres can provide SQA with evidence to close off any agreed action point(s). They should be able to describe when a follow-up visit would be beneficial and when postally/electronically delivered evidence would be the most appropriate method.

The approach and interpersonal skills required by the external verifier-candidate when advising centres of action points and their overall Outcome Rating is important in helping centres comprehend their strengths and weaknesses and ensures important messages provided by the external verifier-candidate are understood. The external verifier-candidate must be able to comment on the approach/interpersonal skills needed during this end part of the external verification process.

Outcome 4

When the external verifier-candidate conducts external verification, he/she should be consistent with their colleague-external verifiers otherwise it can disadvantage certain centres/learners.

To achieve consistency, the external verifier-candidate must standardise with her/his colleagues/SQA representatives. This last Outcome is looking for evidence of that standardisation process and in particular the specific contributions the external verifier-candidate makes to the process in terms of identifying and articulating issues and engaging with colleagues to arrive at best solutions.

The term 'two way communication' is used to describe the interactive process of discussing and agreeing a standardised approach. Interactions could include the external verifier-candidate's contribution at meetings which should be minuted, or through recorded telephone conversations, email, or through other electronic means such as the SQA Academy.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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External verifier-candidates should contribute towards the overall quality assurance of the standards/qualifications they are externally verifying, reporting any incidents that may affect the quality of the qualifications they are externally verifying to SQA. Mechanisms for feeding back would include the appropriate sections of the EV Report Form where the issues the external verifier-candidate reports back will be filtered to those within SQA with a particular remit, ie content of Standards/Units would be relayed to the appropriate Qualifications Teams; issues relating to internal verification systems would be relayed to the Quality Enhancement Managers.

In some circumstances the discreet use of email may be more appropriate for conveying feedback on some issues.

External verifiers employed by SQA have a duty to maintain their currency. They should be able to provide evidence of how they keep up to date with Awarding Body policies and procedures through records of attending SQA Meetings/Events.

SQA's requirement to maintain Continuing Professional Development is tied to the same point about keeping up to date, but more in the context of the occupational area within which the external verifier-candidate operates. The external verifier-candidate should understand the connection between maintaining his/her professional occupational practice (ie hairdressing, mechanical engineering, etc) and the impact this has on how he/she performs as an External Verifier. In this respect, SQA require all External Verifiers to provide a current and appropriate CPD record annually. This same evidence can be used by the external verifier-candidate in relation to this last Outcome.

Data Protection, legislation and maintaining matters of confidentiality — External Verifiers are expected to have a working knowledge of Data Protection legislation. External Verifiers also have a duty to ensure that all issues relating to external verification are kept confidential. Issues relating to centres should only be discussed with relevant SQA Officers

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

External verifier-candidates who are at the point of undertaking this Unit should already have an External Verifier's role as evidence is required of them applying SQA policies and procedures.

The role of the External Verifier is key in ensuring that acceptable standards of external quality assurance are maintained across assessment centres. The delivery of this Unit therefore, should focus on the roles and responsibilities of the External Verifier and the knowledge and skills required to fulfil that role effectively.

Guidance on the responsibilities of the External Verifier can be accessed directly from SQA. Development plans should be formulated (where required) to help external verifier-candidates develop the necessary skills and knowledge. This may not come under the responsibility of the assessment centre.

In situations where development is also the assessment centre's responsibility, formative assessment is strongly recommended to ascertain the external verifier-candidate's readiness for summative assessment.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Summative assessment for this Unit should take place when it is clear external verifier-candidates are performing to a competent standard (the employing awarding body, SQA, can prove to be a good source of advice in this matter).

The external verifier-candidate will be expected to submit a fully referenced portfolio of evidence covering all four Outcomes for assessment.

Once the external verifier-candidate has identified the three centres they will use to provide evidence of their external verifier competence, he/she should be encouraged to collect all relevant evidence showing an audit trail of their External Verifier activity from initiating and planning External Verifier events through to conducting events, providing feedback and submitting final External Verifier Reports.

It is important that external verifier-candidates understand the evidence they must generate at the beginning of the enrolment process to facilitate planning and to avoid delays due to missed or unidentified opportunities.

The external verifier-candidate should be given advance notice of when their explanations are required. This should assist them with the levels of inquiry they may have to conduct in advance of assessment.

Explanations should be assessed and recorded in a way that meets the external verifier-candidates' needs and could be gathered using sets of structured questions, gathered through the use of a professional discussion or a combination of both.

It is important that throughout the Unit that the external verifier-candidate's knowledge is assessed in relation to applying all relevant awarding body policies and procedures.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to external verifier-candidates.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where external verifier-candidates experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Outcome 1

This Outcome could be integrated with Outcome 2 and 3 in that external verifier-candidates will be required to complete External Verification reports covering Outcomes 2 and 3 for the three events planned for in this Outcome.

It is recommended that electronic and/or visiting verification events will provide the most appropriate performance evidence. However, postal and central verification events may be used as supporting evidence where appropriate.

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Other supporting product evidence of communication may include for example Itineraries, emails/and contact logs with centres and SQA.

Outcomes 2 and 3

Confirmation of the external verifier-candidate's ability to produce external verification reports which meet the SQA required quality standard could come in the form of an email from the SQA representative.

Confirmation of how the feedback and decision of the external verifier-candidate has been received by at least one centre could be submitted in the form of emails or the external verification centre feedback form.

An observation report from an SQA representative on the external verifier-candidate conducting an external verification event must be used to confirm that the external verifier-candidate has:

- ◆ followed awarding body procedures in external verification.
- ◆ made appropriate external verification decisions.
- ◆ provided accurate feedback.

This person(s) must be authorised to perform a monitoring event by the SQA. Although the observation report relates to Outcomes 2 and 3, it could provide evidence in part for the other Outcomes.

The SQA Representative could be either the QEM, Senior External Verifier or an experienced External Verifier.

The product evidence produced about the external verifier- candidate will come from SQA and the centres being externally verified by the external verifier-candidate. Details of who exactly will provide these endorsing reports/statements should be identified and confirmed as early in the evidence gathering process as possible.

Outcome 4

Evidence of the external verifier-candidate's contribution to standardisation can be provided in a number of forms, as described in the Evidence Requirements.

The external verifier-candidate's contribution could relate to, for example, the interpretation of Unit/Award requirements; assessment or internal verification of the Unit/Award/Standard; the quality and/or quantity of evidence. This is not a definitive list.

Evidence of how the external verifier-candidate keeps up-to-date with SQA policies and procedures could be in the form of at least one attendance at an SQA event/meeting confirming confirmed through minutes and/or other supporting documentation.

In this particular Outcome it is important that SQA procedures and forms are followed for recording standardisation, centre queries and CPD.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all external verifier-candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

As the Unit is undertaken there are opportunities to review and develop relevant elements of the Core Skills of *Problem Solving*, *Working with Others*, *Communication* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

Problem Solving skills — Critical Thinking, Planning, Organising, Reviewing and Evaluating — will be naturally enhanced as the external verifier-candidate plans, implements, manages and monitors external verification events. Awareness of a range of factors including effective time management and use of resources will underpin activities. Potential or known quality assurance risks must be assessed and decisions made in line with awarding body procedures and ethical and legal issues; matters of validity, reliability and sufficiency of evidence will have to be decided and required actions agreed. The ability to identify, manage and resolve potential or actual problems satisfactorily will be an essential aspect of professional practice. Awareness of strategies to respond to sensitive situations and promote co-operative working relationships before, during and after external verification events will also develop interpersonal skills in *Working with Others*. The formal feedback given by SQA observers and centre staff will provide the chance for review and evaluation of approaches taken at all stages of procedures, with opportunities to determine any future development needs.

Communication with centres and the awarding body is a key part of the External Verification process. External verifier-candidates need to access, analyse and evaluate a wide range of complex information sources. They must convey complex ideas accurately and effectively, in writing and orally, selecting structure and format appropriate to the needs of intended recipients. Maintaining a professional level of *Communication* skills is integral to achievement.

All centres must maintain a fully documented and effectively managed electronic data system, and e-assessment is widely available. The *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* skills of the external verifier-candidate need, therefore, to be maintained at a professional standard to ensure efficiency in access to and presentation of information; attention to security must be routine practice. The development of a competent electronic system of recording, coding and storing evidence will support portfolio production.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Conduct External Verification of the Assessment Process
(SCQF level 9)

Glossary of terms

◆ **Awarding body procedures for external verification**

Procedures contained in hard copy or in web based guidance made available by SQA to all External Verifiers

◆ **Assessment and internal verification arrangements**

These encompass a) general assessment and internal verification arrangements contained with centre policy and procedural documentation b) specific arrangements which are included in Unit Specifications, Arrangement Documents and Assessment Strategies.

◆ **Outcome Rating**

By the end of each external verification event, the external verifier-candidate is required to calculate an Outcome Rating for each category of the SQA EV Report and then an overall Outcome Rating for the complete event. Refer to the appropriate SQA Website(s) for more specific information and terms relating to Outcome Ratings.

◆ **Principles of assessment**

SQA's Guide to Assessment defines the principles of assessment as: validity, reliability, practicability, equity and fairness. Other principles that sometimes appear in SQA Units/Guidance also include authenticity, currency and sufficiency.

◆ **Principles of sampling, sampling strategies and techniques**

— Principles of sampling:

The proportionate and sufficient checking of assessment/internal verification practice and decisions to enable an accurate measure of compliance is made in relation to SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria.

Sampling strategies: SQA's base strategy for sampling is SAMPLED:

Slected Awards Units

Assessment and internal verification decisions and practice

Methods/instruments

Problematic/revised and new Units/Awards

Location (all assessment sites over time)

Evidence of learners' work

Documented evidence of procedures being followed

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Conduct External Verification of the Assessment Process
(SCQF level 9)

Sampling techniques: Using different sampling methods to bring a desired result such as sampling:

- The same Unit(s) across all Assessors/Internal Verifiers
- Different Units from each Assessor/Internal Verifier across complete qualification(s)
- Sampling a higher percentage of new Units and/or work from new Assessors/Internal Verifiers

◆ **Quality assurance risk and risk management**

Potential risks: Centres with large numbers of learners
Large number of geographically spread sites
New Assessors/Internal Verifiers
New and or problematic Units/Awards

Risk management: Gathering information to inform planning
Planning sampling to address potential risk(s)

◆ **SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria (for Qualification Verification)**

A set of criteria used by SQA External Verifiers to measure centre compliance against, and aimed at ensuring the value and integrity of SQA Higher National and Vocational Qualifications.

◆ **Special assessment arrangements**

Specific arrangements that can either be made by the centre or via a request to SQA (dependent on the type of assessment and nature of special assessment support required) to ensure all eligible learners have access to assessment.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	<p>The use of the term “external verifier-candidate” and “learner” used to distinguish between those persons involved in the external verification process.</p> <p>The word “assessments” expanded to assessment decisions to ensure correct understanding of the Evidence Requirements (page 7).</p> <p>The adjectives that follow the Assessment Principles changed to the noun: i.e. validity, reliability.....etc.</p>	12/10/17

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General information for verifier-candidates

Unit title: Conduct External Verification of the Assessment Process (SCQF level 9)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

What this Unit is about

This Unit is designed to meet the needs of those who wish to gain formal recognition for the role they perform as an External Verifier for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) awarding body in the external verification of SQA qualifications other than those assessed in the learners' workplace such as SVQ/NVQs.

You should have a broad understanding of the external verification process and be able to meet any specified SQA access requirements.

The principal context for achieving this qualification is through evidence of the External Verifier duties you are required to perform as an appointee of SQA awarding body. Therefore, all external verifier-candidates must have a contract with SQA prior to embarking on this Unit.

What do I need to do?

You need to be able to demonstrate your competence as an External Verifier in the specific areas of planning, conducting external verification events, making and communicating external verification decisions and contributing towards the overall effectiveness of the external verification process.

What you will learn about

- 1 Plan external verification events.
- 2 Carry out external verification events.
- 3 Make external verification decisions and provide feedback.
- 4 Contribute to the effectiveness of the external verification process.

How do I get this Unit?

You will be asked to provide performance and knowledge evidence directly relating to the external verification activities you have carried out. In practical terms, you will be required to plan and carry out external verification events and produce the relevant supporting documentation and reports.

You will be asked to provide a portfolio of evidence covering all four Outcomes. The evidence submitted in your portfolio should be based on real external verification activities. Simulation is not permitted in this Unit.

General information for verifier-candidates (cont)

Unit title: Conduct External Verification of the Assessment Process
(SCQF level 9)

What might this involve?

Each approved centre operates slightly differently. In learning terms, your centre may ask you to attend a training course and/or a one to one tutorial. There may also be some self-study to undertake prior to commencement.

In terms of assessment, you will be required to submit evidence of your performance and knowledge via a portfolio of evidence.