



National Units

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017

**Core Skills: Information and
Communication Technology**

Introduction

The units listed below were verified.

F3GC 09	Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 3)
F3GC 10	Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 4)
F3GC 11	Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 5)
F3GC 12	Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 6)

A wide range of centres were visited this year for verification, although National Qualifications Core Skills units were predominantly delivered in large colleges with multiple assessors working across several campuses. Almost all centres were able to provide sufficient, appropriate evidence for all quality criteria. The main concerns continue to be around how centres are presenting candidate evidence for ICT Core Skills and in ensuring that all evidence requirements are met. However, there are many examples of good practice in relation to the instruments of assessment being used, the resources available to candidates, and the consistency of assessment decisions.

Internal assessment and verification procedures were mixed. In some instances, assessment practice was good but there was little evidence of verification aside from a signature. In other cases, assessments were on the weak side, but verifiers had not picked this up.

Standardisation continues to be a challenge for larger centres. Sometimes the concept of standardisation is misunderstood. The same assessments do not have to be used across various assessors and/or locations. Contextualised materials can still meet candidates' needs in terms of them being more meaningful and learner-centred without them being identical to materials used elsewhere. Record management of continuing professional development (CPD) was generally good in the majority of centres.

Category 2: Resources

Criterion 2.4: There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials.

There was good evidence of initial reviews being carried out. For some centres this was a more generic review which encompassed the Core Skill without it being explicit. For others the review, particularly in relation to assessment materials and learning resources, was more focused around the Core Skill. Some centres used their own materials, which were generally good. Some centres, in an attempt to provide standardisation of practice have contextualised a range of materials and then disseminated them throughout their various campuses. Others have developed a SharePoint site or document control system to ensure that assessors are using the most up-to-date materials.

Category 3: Candidate support

Criterion 3.2: Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.

All centres had taken prior achievement of candidates into account and had identified their development needs. Many centres had their own candidate training plans and these were clearly documented.

Criterion 3.3: Candidates must have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly.

All contact between candidates and assessors was regularly scheduled and timetabled. Staff within centres used a range of ways to communicate and maintain contact with candidates such as Moodle and internal college systems. In some rural colleges, e-mail or social media was used between face-to-face assessments.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

Criterion 4.2: Internal assessment and verification procedures must be implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.

In general terms, centres were applying their assessment and verification procedures appropriately. However, in a small number of centres, internal verifiers were not picking up on some minor irregularities or inconsistencies which were highlighted through external verification. Introducing tools such as a SharePoint site to disseminate detailed information from verification visits should improve this situation.

Criterion 4.3: Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.

A significant number of centres used the SQA assessment support packs, but many had chosen to contextualise and develop their own materials. In a very small number of cases, there was a slight over-reliance on the use of the assessment checklists, which were being used as instruments of assessment. However, the evidence presented by the candidates was, in these cases, sufficient to meet the requirements of the unit. As with all Core Skills, some centres were not clearly referencing candidate evidence, however, where this was the case, the candidate evidence was still sufficient. In some cases, particularly at SCQF level 5, candidates had not documented their search strategy appropriately and this was highlighted as an area for development.

Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.

All centres provided the required assessment conditions and a range of methods were used to demonstrate authenticity. Most centres had a plagiarism policy and covered this in their induction programme. There was clear evidence of assessor observation alongside candidate evidence. Some centres stored candidate evidence electronically. In these cases, the evidence had been authenticated.

Criterion 4.6: Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements.

There was sufficient evidence in almost all centres that candidates' work was being accurately judged by assessors. Following college mergers, significant work has been completed across campuses to develop better consistency and standardisation. There has been a marked improvement on previous years as a result.

Criterion 4.7: Candidate evidence must be retained in line with SQA requirements.

All centres met SQA requirements in terms of evidence retention. In fact, most centres went beyond this. All centres were aware of the requirement to retain evidence for at least three weeks after the unit is completed and that, if selected for external verification, they must retain all candidate evidence from that date until the date of the verification visit.

Criterion 4.9: Feedback from qualification verifiers must be disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

All centres complied with the requirement to disseminate feedback to staff and to ensure that this feedback was used to inform assessment practice. In some cases, minutes of meetings verified this. In others, there was evidence that procedural guides or internal documentation had been amended as a result of this feedback.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ CPD records were maintained effectively. Staff were sufficiently qualified and competent to deliver the qualification.
- ◆ Good evidence of initial assessment, prior learning needs and development needs being fully documented in a candidate learning/training plan.
- ◆ Evidence of regular, scheduled, recorded contact between assessors and candidates.
- ◆ Very good candidate evidence which continued to meet, and sometimes exceed, evidence requirements.
- ◆ Evidence of good practice being shared with other assessors/verifiers across large centres with several campuses.
- ◆ Good use of technology to support cross-campus working and to address the issues of travel and time associated with rural communities.
- ◆ Candidate-centred approach embedded in contextualisation.
- ◆ Innovative and interesting approaches to contextualising learning and assessment materials.
- ◆ Good use of e-portfolios in some centres.
- ◆ Good centre documentation that included a range of policies and procedures to support staff and candidates.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ CPD should focus more explicitly on the Core Skill of ICT.
- ◆ Referencing of candidate evidence could be clearer.
- ◆ Search strategy (SCQF level 5 and 6) could be more detailed.
- ◆ Centres should gather more contextualised or embedded evidence through naturally occurring tasks and rely less on assessment support packs.
- ◆ Centres should use the opportunity to evidence Core Skills through naturally occurring evidence where possible.
- ◆ More centres should devise their own assessment support packs.
- ◆ Centres should provide better evidence of candidate feedback.
- ◆ Centres should record more evidence of standardisation activities, specifically in relation to the ICT Core Skill. (This could include a review of candidate evidence, discussions on evidence requirements or interpretation of standards.)