



Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017

**Core Skills: Information and
Communication Technology**

Introduction

The units listed below were verified.

F42D 04	Workplace Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 3)
F42E 04	Workplace Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 4)
F42F 04	Workplace Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 5)
F42G 04	Workplace Core Skills: ICT (SCQF level 6)

Almost all centres visited during this session were able to demonstrate appropriate evidence for all quality criteria with very few concerns raised by verifiers. 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 consistency of assessment decisions. Internal assessment and verification procedures across almost all centres was robust and there was almost always clear evidence of standardisation. Continuing professional development (CPD) records were evident in the majority of centres.

The Workplace ICT Core Skills units are predominantly delivered as part of Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. As most Modern Apprentices are recent school leavers they have a Core Skills profile which frequently includes the Core Skill of ICT. This has an impact on candidate numbers which, particularly with employment and training providers, are usually low.

As the Workplace Core Skills are generally delivered as part of a Modern Apprenticeship, often they do not receive the same focus as the vocational element of the framework. They are frequently left to the end of the course, and may be a source of frustration to the candidate and the assessor. However, this does not mean that special arrangements should apply and the Core Skills ICT team are very clear with centres where there is any evidence of this approach.

Category 2: Resources

Criterion 2.1: Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.

All centres provided evidence of staff competence in assessment and verification. All were able to provide evidence that staff either had or were working towards an appropriate qualification.

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, although largely based around the assessment support packs, were very good and provided relevant contexts for candidates.

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 (often by way of a Navigator report) and identified their development needs. Many centres had their own candidate action/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 this was clearly set out in the candidate action/training plans or in the assessment planning documentation. Staff within centres used a range of ways to communicate with candidates and sometimes this was quite innovative, particularly in rural areas, where e-mail or social media was used in 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.

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

The majority of centres used the SQA assessment support packs. 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. In a small number of centres, consistency was harder to measure due to the lack of detail provided, but in general terms there were no issues with consistency.

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 centres, minutes of meetings were provided to demonstrate that feedback had been disseminated. In other centres, procedural guides or internal documentation had been amended as a result of 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 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.
- ◆ Innovative and interesting approaches being taken to contextualise learning and assessment materials.
- ◆ Good use of e-portfolios in some centres.
- ◆ Good centre documentation, which 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.
- ◆ Assessing of the Core Skill of ICT could be better integrated with the vocational element of the MA.
- ◆ 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.)