Regulated Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017
Licensing Qualifications

Introduction

Regulated Qualifications

GG7T 46   Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders
GG7N 46   Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher)
GG7R 45   Scottish Certificate for the Safe Sale and Service of Alcohol
GA8F 62   Award for Personal Licence Holders (QCFVRQ) Level 2

Where practicable, arrangements for verification visits were organised in order to observe the course delivery and the examination, and complete a systems check. Verification activity confirmed that the majority of centres were compliant with visit plan requests for records and documentation.

It is important to remind centres that visits may be made without prior notice, in accordance with the operational handbook and SQA reserves the right to deploy its verifiers in any way that might help to uncover malpractice.

Group sizes varied, with the maximum number typically being 12 candidates. SQA guidelines are based on an interactive model for delivery and, as such, the maximum recommended group size for course delivery is 18 and the minimum is two.

It is important to reiterate that compliance with the operational handbook is mandatory and group sizes outwith this recommendation should have prior approval by SQA before course delivery.

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.

It was apparent across all centre visits that staff were appropriately qualified and the majority of staff undertook relevant continuing professional development (CPD) activity. There were recommendations to improve the recording of CPD activity in some cases.

Candidates were complimentary of the course tutor in some centres and highlighted that his/her knowledge of the industry and legislation proved useful in helping them understand the facts and information presented to them.

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

Site-selection checklists were available during verification visits in the majority of visits this session. Each centre utilised premises for the delivery of the course according to the group size and their location. Tutors often travelled to deliver the course in locations away from their own centre.

It was evident that SQA materials were being used in the majority of cases. Some centres designed their own material, either for on-line delivery, or face-to-face tutorials. All legislative updates provided by SQA had either been added to the licensing handbook at the time of postage, or provided as a handout during the course.

A few centres had built up positive relations with their local licensing standards officer, who offered to present information during the course about his/her role and designated duties.

Some tutors used industry props and resources available from PASS or Drinkaware, which were well received by 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.

The majority of centres confirmed that they had a discussion with the candidate by e-mail, phone or face-to-face prior to placement on the course, to ensure availability and appropriateness of the selected course.

It is particularly important that candidates understand which course they should be on — ie the Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders course or the Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher) course. This highlights the need for clear discussion and instruction for those enquiring about these courses, to ensure that the course selected meets the needs of the candidate.

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

These programmes are delivered as a full-day or half-day session and therefore the centre is only required to schedule contact in accordance with the operational handbook requirements.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Environment
Centres have used a combination of their own premises and carefully selected venues to host delivery of the qualifications. Site-selection checklists, confirming that the examination environment is compliant with SQA requirements set out in the operational handbook, were available during the majority of visits.

Assessment material

Centres demonstrated an understanding of the requirement to provide handbooks to candidates seven days in advance of the course. However, some candidates highlighted occasions where this had not happened and they felt pressured on the day of the course.

Feedback to centres during verification activity highlighted that some candidates enrolled on the courses at a late stage, therefore not allowing enough time for handbooks to be posted. On some occasions, handbooks were hand delivered. Centres were advised to ensure they retained sufficient stocks to meet the minimum requirement of candidates receiving handbooks two working days before course delivery, (ideally seven days before course delivery).

Candidate instructions

Most centres provided clear 'joining instructions' for the candidates. Candidates interviewed by qualification verifiers confirmed this. In some instances, the candidates were not aware they had to bring a form of identification with them and had to return home before the examination. Visiting verifiers made recommendations for instruction letters to be updated for future delivery. Other centres provided key points of learning to candidates, to aid with learning prior to attending the course.

There have been no restrictions or barriers highlighted that would prevent any candidate joining the programme. The majority of centres confirmed that they held a discussion via e-mail, face-to-face, or by phone prior to placing the candidate on the course, to ensure that the appropriate course was selected, and the candidate was available for the course date.

Examination conduct and instructions

It was apparent through verification reports that appropriate examination conditions and environments were provided at most centres. On two occasions the verification team had to request a change to candidate spacing, check appropriate exam signage, and ensure a clock was visible. These are all mandatory requirements outlined in the operational handbook and verifiers checked that tutors and invigilators were aware of these procedures.

There was evidence of marker reports being completed for the majority of examinations. However, feedback from SQA suggests that not all marker reports were submitted to SQA, or sent in a timely manner.

Visiting verifiers confirmed that all those presented within the exam room were authorised and bona fide candidates, invigilators, or other appropriate person representing the centre or SQA.

Independent invigilation

Very few centres operate their assessments with independent invigilators, preferring to utilise the course tutor. In all circumstances, the final administration of assessment was compliant with the operational handbook.

It is important to ensure that SQA are notified if tutors will be invigilating the examination, and notification can be made at the time of ordering exam papers using the appropriate online system.

Candidate identity checks
A variety of methods have been used to record the ID of candidates, including course enrolment forms and separate ID checklists. It is important to ensure that an appropriate ID is shown, and a full list is available in the operational handbook.

Examination marking
Some centres marked the examination papers following the examination and advised candidates of their mark (subject to verification), before leaving the premises. The answer key for the question paper was kept separate and secure. Others marked the paper once they had returned to the centre. Candidates were generally notified of their mark within 24 hours.

Internal verification
It was evident to visiting verifiers that internal verification had taken place on past exam papers, and these were being signed and dated appropriately, in accordance with the operational handbook.

Criterion 4.3: Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.
SQA devised examinations are the only possible method of assessment for these group awards, as they are regulated qualifications.

Paper-based assessment using SQA question packs were, in the majority of instances, ordered through the correct channels on the SQA licensing website. Visiting verifiers highlighted the need to follow the correct procedures for the award to avoid delays in delivery.

It was highlighted on several occasions that some centres were leaving the course notification and question paper ordering very late. In some instances, this meant the assessment papers were not delivered in time for the examination, or SQA were unable to arrange delivery to the registered address. It is important to reiterate that compliance with the licensing operational handbook is mandatory, and to ensure that the exam paper control document is updated appropriately.

Group size was an issue on some occasions. Verification activity highlighted that some one-to-one courses had occurred (a minimum requirement for two is set out in the operational handbook). This derives from the regulated Training and Delivery Strategy which is mandatory for these qualifications.

Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.
Assessments undertaken by centres have not highlighted any areas of malpractice. There was no evidence to suggest that centres had experienced problems with late admission of candidates for assessment, leaving the exam room before the 20 minute period stipulated in the operational handbook, candidates suffering with illness or distress or any other interruption with the conduct of the examination.

No candidate was permitted to use their mobile phone or have access to learning material for the duration of the examination.

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

SQA marking sheets have been applied correctly by centres to ensure the accuracy of marking. It was confirmed during verification visits that these marking schemes were kept separate from the exam papers and retained in a secure location.

Second marking/internal verification was demonstrated by all centres and this varied according to centre policy. Some centres completed 100% internal verification, and others sampled borderline pass/fails, or randomly selected a sample for second marking purposes.

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

The retention of examination papers was compliant in all centres chosen for verification. Some centres kept old exam papers for longer than the prescribed minimum six-month period from exam date. All centres kept copies of their exam paper control document, candidate ID checklist and marker reports.

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

Centres have provided evidence of standardisation meetings taking place to discuss course delivery, assessment, verification and any actions arising. The minutes of meetings highlighted the key personnel involved and who was responsible for any actions arising.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ Tutor experience, real-life examples and current industry knowledge was reflected in the overall course delivery and positive candidate feedback.
♦ The use of industry props was found particularly useful for people with limited knowledge of the industry.

Specific areas for development

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

♦ Ensure all evidence detailed on the verification visit plan is available, whether during a systems check, before, or following course and examination, or electronically. Staff files which demonstrate competence of staff occupational expertise, qualifications and CPD will be requested at each visit.

- CPD activity varied and verifiers highlighted that staff should clearly reflect the activity undertaken in relation to licensing legislation, for example by reading trade journals, reviewing licensing websites, talking with the licensing standards officer.
- The exam paper version number should be clearly recorded against each course. Often this is recorded on the candidate register/ID checklist to clearly identify the version completed by each candidate and ensure that any candidate requiring a re-sit does not take the same version paper again.