



# **Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2016 Playwork**

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

# SVQ awards

SVQ 2 in Playwork at SCQF level 6

SVQ 3 in Playwork at SCQF level 7

SVQ 4 in Playwork at SCQF level 9

## General comments

During this academic session it has been clear that centres are committed to high quality of delivery of the SVQs in Playwork. Most have highly experienced staff teams and have been delivering the qualifications in Playwork for a number of years. The majority of centres have robust policies and procedures in place to support the assessment and verification processes. The assessing and internal verification seen has been of a high standard and there was good evidence of support for candidates and also of internal quality assurance. Overall, external verifiers were pleased with the quality of delivery, assessment and verification practice they found in centres.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The majority of centres are complying with the requirements set out by Skills Active (sector skills council) in the Assessment Strategy for the SVQs in Playwork. The assessment methods verified were relevant to this assessment strategy and were relevant to the evidence requirements for the qualifications across SVQ 2, 3 and 4 Playwork. External verifiers found the assessment methods chosen were fair and reliable. Validity of the assessments was demonstrated by the observations of the candidates by the assessors and the candidate reflective accounts written on the basis of these observations. The assessments sampled were standardised across assessment teams which highlighted the equity and validity of the assessments within each centre.

Many centres continue to use SQA's Training and Assessment Packs to enhance the delivery of the mandatory units for SVQ 3 Playwork and SVQ 4 Playwork. These are providing a useful foundation for the assessment of the units and have supported centres to ensure currency and consistency of assessment practice.

## Evidence requirements

Over this academic session, centres have been complying with the Skills Active Assessment Strategy for the competency of assessors and internal verifiers — they *'have worked with children and young people as a playworker in settings underpinned by the Playwork Principles; demonstrated Playwork experience, knowledge and skills required to make accurate judgements about others' competence; have knowledge and understanding of, and commitment to, the Playwork Principles and have actively and consistently participated in a process of current and relevant continuous professional development to keep up to date with best Playwork practice'*.

External verifiers have identified appropriately qualified and occupationally experienced assessors and internal verifiers involved in the delivery of the SVQs in Playwork. Assessors and internal verifiers have been recording their professional development for Playwork practice and knowledge in line with requirements: *'have actively and consistently participated in a process of current and relevant continuous professional development to keep up to date with best Playwork practice'*. The majority have professional development records and plans, some of which include reflective reports on development activities undertaken. Many are also seeking to comply with, or update to, the Learning and Development standards for assessment and verification practice.

The majority of centres have a policy for professional development that supports the learning and development of assessors and verifiers.

It is clear from external verification that the experience and competency of the assessors and internal verifiers involved in the delivery of the SVQs in Playwork, have a profound effect on: the quality of the delivery; compliance with the evidence requirements and the assessment strategy; meeting the appropriate SCQF level; and the support offered to candidates.

### **Administration of assessments**

External verifiers found that all centres had policies and processes in place to support the assessment and internal verification of SVQs in Playwork. The majority of centres have procedures for internal assessment and verification that set out clear roles and responsibilities for those involved in the assessment and verification of candidates.

### **Assessment practice**

From the evidence presented for external verification, candidates have individual assessment plans that relate to the SVQ Playwork standards. This assessment planning was focused, detailed and related to the SVQ standards. The assessment plans set targets and gave guidance on achievements. They provided the basis of practicable assessment which met the needs of the candidate and the requirement of the National Occupational Standards.

In line with the assessment strategy, assessors then carried out detailed observations of candidate performance to confirm they could meet the SVQ standards. Centres followed the assessment strategy guidelines on the use of direct observations and reflective accounts backed-up with robust witness statements. Competent colleagues provided statements to support any candidate reflective accounts of situations not observed by the assessor. This ensures that the candidate accounts are accurate.

Candidates' current practice observations within a Playwork workplace ensure validity and reliability. These holistic observations of Playwork practice cover all areas of the standards to ensure authenticity and consistency.

The evidence sampled by external verifiers was of a good standard with consistent assessment decisions at the appropriate SCQF level to meet the requirements of the Playwork National Occupational Standards and Assessment Strategy. They found good examples of Playwork Principles and Playwork theory embedded into candidates' reflective accounts demonstrating understanding of knowledge related to Playwork practice.

External verifiers found evidence of standardisation activities taking place on a regularly basis at team meetings and records showed discussions around the validity and reliability of candidate evidence, and the use of assessment methods. There was evidence of review of assessment practices and learning within standardisation meetings and evidence within internal verification of ensuring evidence and assessment was appropriate.

### **Internal verification**

External verifiers found centre procedures for internal verification and standardisation (records of meetings) demonstrated evidence of the team ensuring assessment methods and instruments were valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair. These procedures for internal assessment and verification set out clear roles and responsibilities for those involved in the assessment and verification of candidates.

Most centres have an internal verification schedule which indicates units that are to be verified each month with guidelines on the amount to be sampled. In most cases, there was a high percentage of candidate work verified in the paper and e-portfolios. There is good evidence of constructive feedback on assessment decisions from the verifiers to the assessors, identifying any action required.

Internal verifier observations of the assessor with candidates, and subsequent observation reports, provided clear feedback on assessment practice mapped against SQA requirements, and supported the quality assurance of the SVQs in Playwork.

### **General feedback**

Following external verification this academic session, it is clear that the majority of centres are committed to upholding the ethos of play and playwork within the delivery of the SVQs in Playwork.

Feedback from candidates interviewed during external verification highlighted the support that they had received from their assessor, and how their assessor assisted in understanding of their Playwork role. The National Occupational Standards helped them to see how their day-to-day working with children and young people can be valuable evidence for the qualification. All had undertaken an induction process and most attended training workshops which included training on current theories and Playwork Principles. All identified good communication with their assessors and were appreciative of the guidance given to them.

## **Areas of good practice**

### **Support for candidates**

External verifiers confirmed that centres are recording the matching of the candidates' learning and development needs, job role and function, and workplace compliance with Playwork Principles to ensure the candidates are on the correct level of SVQ and can be assessed within their workplace. Some centres completed a skill test for the potential candidates, as often a candidate may wish to undertake a particular level of qualification without realising that the assessments may not link fully to their job function.

Individual assessment plans for the candidates demonstrated support tailored to the individual candidate's needs. The assessment decisions sampled were valid, reliable and at the appropriate SCQF levels (6, 7 and 9). Constructive feedback to learners identified areas of achievement and areas for development.

They also identified that some centres undertook detailed reviews with candidates to identify progress as well as assessment planning. The candidates' portfolios contained many reviews between the candidates and their assessors which related to more reading, or planning, or where they were focusing on next in their qualification. These reviews were detailed and spread out across the course. Feedback and review was either within a paper or e-portfolio system.

### **Support for assessors and internal verifiers**

Many centres had excellent professional development policies and opportunities for staff to enhance their own knowledge and professional skills and competencies. Assessors and internal verifiers were able to attend conferences, join training, and undertake occupational experience within settings underpinned by the Playwork Principles.

Some centres also engaged with assessors and internal verifiers in the development of the centre and the delivery of the SVQs in Playwork. For example, one centre has an annual questionnaire for staff to identify what resources, training materials and other changes need to be made to the quality assurance manual and resources. This information is added to the data gathered throughout the year through standardisation meetings and evaluations.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

When reflecting on Playwork practice, some centres could support candidates to include more detail of theory and link this to the Playwork Principles. This integration of candidates' knowledge into reflective accounts ensures their understanding of the relationship of Playwork knowledge to their own Playwork practice.