



Scottish Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2015 Plumbing

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

SVQ awards

General comments

At the commencement of G9W923 SVQ Plumbing, the National Occupational Standards were formed into syllabus documents covering identifiable Plumbing subject areas, eg Hot & Cold Water Systems. These syllabus documents give centres a clear indication of the learning and teaching route to assessment.

From External Verifier (EV) reports it would appear that centres have a clear and accurate understanding of these syllabus documents and how they are structured. For certification purposes centres are reminded of the relationship between syllabuses, eg the Installation Practice document although set out separately is part of the Hot & Cold Water Systems, Central Heating Systems and Above Ground Drainage Systems documents.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centre assessors and verifiers are familiar with the Unit specification and instruments of assessments. Instruments of assessments are set out within the Unit, however the actual assessments are very prescriptive, eg using SQA's SOLAR online method, which reinforces a national standard.

Summative Practical and Assignment assessments have model answers and exemplar models that ensure uniformity.

Evidence Requirements

The evidence requirements of practical and theoretical Units and the way this evidence is presented is widely understood by the centres. Accurate visit plans and subsequent dialogue between the centre and EV has ensured this.

Centres have identified from the syllabuses the summative assessment materials that have to be kept with supporting paperwork.

Keeping practical evidence can tie up material and storage resources, however it is generally accepted that centres can contact their allotted External Verifier to make an arrangement as to what has to be kept for verification.

The administration of evidence of online SOLAR assessments is presented either as a hard copy or on computer. Assignments have to be kept and evidence of presentations shown.

Administration of assessments

SOLAR online assessments were centrally devised by SQA which when undertaken by candidates generates results and evidence.

Centres have their own administration arrangements for booking assessments and invigilation which can vary between centres, eg at some centres the Plumbing lecturer invigilates the assessment which has the advantage of the lecturer being able to answer any queries relating to the questions. While in other centres a non-subject related person invigilates the assessment which emphasises impartiality. One EV report from a centre suggested strict impartiality hindered student achievement due to the candidate not being able to seek clarification.

Guidelines for assignments and practical assessments appear to have bedded-in with each centre adapting areas to suit.

Internal verification is centre devised in line with SQA criteria, with policy and administration. The application of internal verification within Plumbing sections in centres can range from very good to just acceptable standards.

General feedback

Reports suggest that candidates across the centres are aware of what is expected of them and have regular feedback on their performance/achievement. Recorded feedback can be from a short statement, eg 'achieved standard' to comments of a paragraph in length. Number of candidates and time constraints appear to be factors in how assessors respond to this.

Discussions with candidates imply that their part-time attendance at a centre is beneficial to their training as an apprentice plumber, giving breadth and depth. Most discussions mentioned the encouragement and support that candidates receive from centre staff.

Access to assessment is appropriate to the teaching programmes and centres have adapted to suit their candidate attendance and teaching facilities.

Areas of good practice

Areas of good practice can be difficult to quantify due to the area it can cover. Statements ranged from teaching and learning to administration processes and procedures. The statements are often about something that is done very well, or innovative or simply an enhancement of the teaching and learning process.

Shown below are all the good practice statements from this session's EV reports:

- ◆ All staff have an annual CPD programme
- ◆ Candidates have access to a comprehensive teaching portal both on and off site during their attendance at college. If used this would enhance the learners' knowledge and increase their chances of passing during assessment as discussed with candidates
- ◆ The college are implementing a college-wide internal verification portal to allow shared good practice across various campuses and qualifications

- ◆ The centre has a very well developed workshop area to provide candidates with the full scope and more with regards the teaching and assessment requirements
- ◆ The team always endeavour to verify all Units annually
- ◆ Candidates' work was of a very high standard in both theory and practical areas
- ◆ Candidates are given a training and assessment plan at the start of each academic session indicating assignment hand-in dates and projected SOLAR e-assessment dates
- ◆ Candidates have access to an online MOODLE learning portal with additional teaching and tutorial notes
- ◆ The department provides candidates with an enrolment code for the college I-Learn system that contains additional teaching notes and presentations that candidates can access outwith college
- ◆ Within the workshop area candidates are given access to online videos and college learning discs via a large TV screen with practical demonstrations and realistic work situations relevant to the work in progress
- ◆ Proper planning and discussion of CPD required ensures that the course team are familiar with all changes and current practice in industry
- ◆ The upgrading of cubicles with plans to use more modern systems will benefit the candidates
- ◆ The centre is well equipped with appliances for renewable energy courses
- ◆ The inclusion of minutes of meetings and a monthly update ensures that staff are kept up to date and focused in this area
- ◆ The Installation Practice area is a flexible space. It is used by other building trades, eg the painting candidates work in the bays and when they are finished the Plumbing candidates commence their installation work. This creates an environment of working in a potential customer's property
- ◆ The internal verification procedure is well documented and systematically covers a three-year period
- ◆ Candidate portfolios which are well set out show progress through the three year period at college
- ◆ The centre has adopted a 'lead lecturer' role. Each member of staff is responsible for a number of Units. He is responsible for ensuring the teaching materials are available and individual candidate progress is monitored
- ◆ A standardisation meeting agenda item 'distance travelled' is seen as an additional means of pinpointing specific support requirements for candidates
- ◆ Candidates are actively encouraged to upskill to a level above that required to complete the Practical Installation (increased skills in forming copper tube), this is seen as being most beneficial to the quality of work carried out on site
- ◆ Good use of quality formative assessments prior to summative work being undertaken, this is seen as a good method in promoting candidate confidence
- ◆ The centre has an ELS framework which is extremely well structured and monitored to ensure an excellent level of support is in place should candidates require it. A candidate with ELS requirements was tracked

showing a very clear pathway as to the agencies, both internal and external to the centre, involved in the individual's required level of support

- ◆ Staff presented full CPD records and certification within a folder which assisted greatly
- ◆ Centre provided copies of qualification certificates within a CPD folder which eased the verification process
- ◆ Staff had arranged a 7 week site experience programme with the local authority to complement the training delivery. This will have greatly enhanced the learning experience and prepared the candidates for employment. In addition, the inclusion of the CSCS cards for candidates will enhance their chances of employment opportunities
- ◆ Candidate scripts were completed using coloured pencils and rule assisted. The submitted responses also clearly showed a good understanding of the subjects which, considering the inclusion of two Units previously used in the Level 3 qualification, demonstrates the high quality of training provided this session
- ◆ Staff had meticulously prepared the assessment, internal verification, and quality materials which eased the process greatly
- ◆ Staff also included photographic evidence of practical activities being undertaken to support the assessment decisions and processes completed on the course
- ◆ Staff discussions and team meeting documentation clearly demonstrate training and assessment environments are continual reviewed and improved wherever possible to improve the learning experience for candidates

Specific areas for improvement

Specific areas for improvement can be centre-related and are stated in individual reports, with these centres dealing with the issues. Listing the good practice statements in the last section of this report may support centres.

Discussions suggest an area for improvement would be reviewing the SOLAR online question banks for certain areas.