



Internal Assessment Report: Learning and Development

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

SVQ Awards

Titles/levels of SVQ Awards verified

SVQs

Direct Training and Support Level 3
Learning and Development Level 3
Learning and Development Level 4
Management of Learning and Development Provision Level 4
Co-ordination of Learning and Development Level 4
Learning and Development Level 5

PDAs

Certificate in Assessing Candidates Using a Range of Methods
Certificate in Assessing Candidates through Observation
Certificate in Conducting Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process
Certificate in Conducting External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process
Certificate in Supporting Learning in the Workplace
Certificate in Delivering Training in the Workplace

Units

Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods
Assess Candidates through Observation
Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process
Conduct External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process

General comments

External verification of the Assessor and Verifier Units

The standards and Evidence Requirements for the A1 Unit are now fairly well understood and implemented by centres. The performance evidence supplied by assessor-candidates tends not to pose any great difficulties for evidence gathering and assessment. However, some assessor-candidates still struggle with the explanations they have to provide of the methods of assessment they have selected and the evaluation they are required to provide in light of having assessed candidates. (Please refer to comments under 'Areas for further development' in this report.)

In V1, many centres have addressed the difficulties in achieving several of the Evidence Requirements by updating their internal verification system. This has allowed all internal verifiers within a centre (including verifier-candidates) to work more closely to the V1 Standard.

Verifier candidates still report challenges in achieving some aspects of V1.3. These aspects are:

- ◆ planning
- ◆ reaching the appropriate levels of involvement in External Verifier visits (V1.4)

Planning need not be covered in a single planning document. The plan (which could be in the form of a summarised oral agreement) will relate to how the internal verifier-candidate will monitor/verify the work of two assessors. This naturally brings into the plan the use of all of the relevant internal verification documentation used by the centre.

Some centres report that the requirement for the internal verifier-candidate to become involved with planning external verification visits impinges on the role of the centre co-ordinator somewhat.

Centres will have the opportunity to express their concerns about this and any other requirement as part of the review process which is taking place across the UK in 2009/10.

Feedback suggests that the majority of centres do not feel the current model of independent assessment enhances or improves the overall quality assurance of the A and V Units.

The external verification group has recommended to LLUK that the requirements of the V1.3/4 elements and the role of the independent assessor be subject to wide consultation as part of the review process.

The key message about the assessor and verifier Units being Units/awards in their own right has evidently filtered through and is having a positive impact on assessment practice. As per other occupational areas, assessors of the A and/or V Units are more consistently providing an audit trail of their planning and review activities and records of standardisation meetings.

External verification of SVQs in Learning and Development

Feedback from centres suggests that the Evidence Requirements for the L Units at times overly complicate the Unit/element requirements, in that they tend to reiterate the criteria and knowledge specifications. Time is then spent trying to work out the differences so that there are no remaining gaps in the evidence. Centres will be given the opportunity to give feedback on this issue when the qualifications frameworks for the new Learning and Development S/NVQs are developed in 2010, after the review of the National Occupational Standards.

Enrolments for the Learning and Development SVQs at Levels 4 and 5 increased this session. The Unit standards were generally well interpreted by centres. Some still have difficulty identifying the most appropriate SVQ for their candidates as some of the mandatory Unit combinations restrict access. For example, some managers do not have a responsibility for reviewing individual candidates and some trainers do not select and recruit learners for programmes. As above, this point will be included in the review process.

Areas of good practice

Some A and V Unit approved centres have a policy to seek a referral from the subject-specific internal verifier before enrolling the assessor-candidate for the A1 Unit. This arrangement confirms that the assessor-candidate has developed in their role to a stage where they are ready to be summatively assessed to the A1 Standard. This is a good example of using subject-specific internal verification to provide a formative assessment decision to inform assessor-candidates' readiness for assessment.

Some centres conduct initial assessment to enable them to identify the most appropriate Units/awards for their candidates to take. This is a good foundation practice which takes some time at the beginning of the assessment process but can save time in the long run.

Some centres build review sections into their assessment planning documents. This logically keeps records of tracking progress and forward action planning together in one place.

Areas for further development

The following areas for further development remain prominent in External Verifier reports:

- ◆ assessor-candidate explanations (A1)
- ◆ continuing professional development
- ◆ using pre-typed evidence matrices

Assessor-candidate explanations and links to training and development

In the first instance, it is recommended that new assessors are given some development on the quality assurance principles of reliability, validity, fairness, etc.

If assessor-candidates have a firm understanding of these principles, then they will have less difficulty in bringing them into their explanations of the methods of assessment they have selected. SQA's *Guide to Assessment* includes information relating to these principles.

For the explanation covering 'evaluation' (A1.2), some assessor-candidates find it easier to reflect on the methods they have used on a per-candidate basis. That is, they reflect in the context of the whole assessment process, as opposed to each method.

Assessor training that stays away from the 'evidence required for A1', and focuses initially on the skills that an assessor requires to become a competent assessor, tends to produce better results. Training programmes that include methods and principles of assessment, equal opportunities and feedback skills help provide a sound foundation. The subject-specific internal verifier, and other experienced assessor colleagues, should where possible be involved in the development plans of new assessors, providing a practical network of support.

Continuing professional development

Assessors and internal verifiers, as a requirement of the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy, have to undertake at least two updating activities per year. For assessing and verifying the A and V Units, CPD records should make a clear link to this requirement. Some centres use colour coding or sub-headings to show how their CPD

activities link to various assessment strategies, which can be useful when assessors and verifiers work across a number of occupational areas.

Where staff not employed by the centre are used as independent assessors, it is still the responsibility of the enrolling centre to ensure those assessors maintain and record their CPD in relation to the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy requirements.

Using pre-typed evidence matrices

There has been a considerable growth in centres in using evidence matrices that include pre-typed evidence items in the left-hand column. This is perfectly acceptable as there are clear minimum evidence requirements for the A and V Units, and this kind of assistance can help take the bureaucracy out of evidence recording for assessor/verifier-candidates. The following should be noted when using this type of system:

- ◆ Evidence should be referenced to Performance Criteria, Knowledge and Scope on an individual candidate basis. It should not be assumed that all candidate evidence will always cover the same Criteria, Knowledge, etc.
- ◆ The assessor is responsible for making the final decision in terms of the accurate referencing and sufficiency of evidence.