



Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2012
OPITO and Oil Related Awards

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

SVQ awards

General comments

The centres that were externally verified were generally well established and so had a good common understanding of the requirements relating to national standards and the SVQ provision. This was helped by the centres participating in the incremental review of the standards and in the various contextualisation and mapping exercises that had been undertaken.

It was normal for several of the centres to hold 'away days' for the assessment and verification teams and the External Verifiers were given the opportunity to participate in these. Discussions and any queries raised by centres with the External Verifiers indicated a good common understanding of the requirements.

The centres were well established and the effective standardisation processes adopted had led to an incremental improvement in the quality of delivery.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It was common practice across the centres that assessors were very much supported and encouraged to review, and remain involved in, the determination of the requirements of the overall SVQ provision. There was strong evidence of dedicated meetings for the purposes of standardisation and to establish and develop familiarity of the requirements amongst the delivery teams. Assessors, as subject-matter experts, continued to be invited on to industry working groups by the standards setting body in order to support the incremental review of the standards. These events were generally well attended.

Evidence Requirements

The External Verifiers continued to comment upon the effective levels of understanding relating to the quality requirements within and across the centres. Many sites accessed several SVQs depending on the disciplines catered for. When this was compounded by the significant number of assessment sites some centres have to manage then the level of common understanding was considerable. The experience of the centres and the regulatory aspects contributed to the formation of this common understanding.

Administration of assessments

It is unquestionable that Duty Holders and their contractors had a legal responsibility to ensure that only competent people were deployed in the workplace. Given this, then the assessment and verification processes tended to be well scrutinised and managed in order to ensure that the assessment and verification processes were effective, robust and at the right level — and could be seen to be so. The requirements extended to both the assessment and verification processes.

The sector recognised the differences in the assessment processes when applied to trainees and experienced candidates, especially where the experienced candidates were already deemed to be competent in the job role. For instance, the assessment of experienced candidates for the Process Operations: Hydrocarbons levels 2 and 3 SVQs was more integrated and reflected the processes and activities that took place in the oil and gas industry where continuous production was normally maintained.

General feedback

The feedback provided to candidates by assessors, and additionally by Internal Verifiers in some instances, was effective and well recorded. Due to the nature of the sector, the opportunities for contact between assessors and candidates were generally high and there was evidence of regular feedback being provided. There were no instances of appeals being lodged against assessment decisions.

Candidates enrolled on the Upstream Oil and Gas Industry Technician Training Scheme (UOGITTS) were also interviewed every three months by OPITO Reviewers in order to ensure quality was being maintained. OPITO managed the UOGITTS Modern Apprentice programme and the programme was steered by industry.

Highly positive responses relating to the SVQ provision were received during interviews with candidates.

Competence assurance was a high priority for the sector and Duty Holders had to be able to demonstrate that their workforces, whether their own staff or contractors, were competent to perform their job roles. SVQ programmes provided a means of demonstrating workforce competence and capability. Access to assessment opportunities was therefore readily available.

The issue concerning the proliferation of guidance material relating to the Process Operations: Hydrocarbons SVQs remained. However, this was to be resolved during the incremental review of the standards. Industry was fully on-board with this process.

Areas of good practice

The External Verifiers for verification group 52: OPITO and Oil Related Awards continued to note and register good practice in all the centres that were verified.

The management of centres with multiple assessment sites continued to provide the main theme for good practice. Standardisation processes had become more elaborate over time and this was effected by a range of initiatives such as assessor and verifier away days, video conferencing and individual interventions.

Following the efforts of implementing the systems, the centres had turned their attention to the review, updating and improvement of scheme documentation.

Evidence of continual or interim internal verification of candidate portfolios had improved considerably although, in some cases, this was down to more effective recording of internal verification activities.

Internal auditing of the programmes was also on the increase as was management reviews of external verification reports. Several centres were looking for non-compliances and corrective actions rather than additional development points.

The increased levels of investment in plant and equipment by the colleges delivering G8LY 21 Process Operations: Hydrocarbons SVQ level 1 for the Upstream Oil and Gas Industry Technician Training Scheme was also considered to be good practice as it provided candidates with a real insight into the processes involved and experience on the plant and equipment they would come across during work placements.

Specific areas for improvement

A recurring theme was the need for Internal Verifiers to record their activities throughout the assessment cycle. They were evidently intervening during the assessment process but, in some cases, were not effectively recording the proceedings or outcomes.

Many of the development points registered by the External Verifiers were of a minor nature and no adverse trending was noticeable.