



Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2012

Construction (Plant and Ops)

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 number of verification visits carried out during this reporting year was slightly greater than the previous year, but there were still a number of centres which did not run candidates. All verification visits resulted in positive outcomes, with only minor recommendations made to some centres to help them improve their own procedures.

Due to the current economic situation within the construction industry, centres reported a decrease in the number of candidates they were assessing throughout the year. It was also apparent that some centres were registering candidates for Plant Operations who are not coming forward for assessment; this is a loophole that is being exploited by candidates to get a one-year extension to their CPCS cards.

During this year the Plant Operations qualification G898 22 was replaced with GD44 22. The transition had teething problems which in general centres coped with; the main issue was that some centres did not realise that the slinger/signaller route was no longer available to them within GD44 and that they needed to apply for the new Lifting Operations qualification GC6Y 22, which was introduced alongside the Planning and Supervising Lifting Operations qualifications which will be verified in the forthcoming reporting period.

As with previous years, the evidence verified and the interviews conducted with centre staff over the reporting period confirmed that centres understand what is required from them with regards to interpretation of the national occupational standards. Centres are ensuring that the quantity and quality of evidence gathered meets the levels required for the awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

EV8a reports confirm that those assessors interviewed understand the contents of the Unit specifications across all of the awards in the verification group. This is confirmed by the standard of supporting evidence generated/gathered by the candidates and the assessors, especially in the observation reports.

There continues to be a variety of assessment instruments and checklists used by the centres, mostly based on the exemplars contained within the assessment guidelines and SQA portfolio frameworks.

Evidence Requirements

The assessment guidelines give examples of both primary and secondary evidence that is required for the awards. Centres generally follow what is required, and this is confirmed in the standard of candidates' portfolios presented for verification.

Administration of assessments

Since all verification visits resulted in positive outcomes, it is fair to say that assessment of candidates across the group is at the correct level.

As in previous years, this is quantified by the fact that almost all assessment of candidates continues to be based on live work activity in real-time working environments. Where it is not possible to observe a specific work activity then judgement is based on evidence gathered from the workplace by the candidate that is verified as authentic by Internal Verifiers.

Centres' administrators and assessors remain active in contacting employers and candidates to arrange site visits which correspond with live work activities that the candidates are undertaking. This ensures that the best evidence-gathering opportunities are being provided for their assessors, so allowing them to make the best judgement on the competency of their respective candidates against all of the award specifications.

Internal verification is thorough throughout the centres for these awards. Centres with lower numbers of candidates continue to carry out high percentage ratios of internal verification.

Internal Verifiers continue, where required, to provide constructive feedback to assessors, and verifiers confirm that assessors act on the comments given to them.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates

Candidates are advised to gather as much supporting evidence as possible, and get it endorsed by a supervisor or manager to support its authenticity, to help the assessor in supporting his or her direct observations so as to ensure that all the Evidence Requirements for the award are met in as short a time as possible.

Feedback from candidates

Candidates interviewed during this reporting period continue to comment that they are more than happy with the support they receive from the centre staff throughout their assessment process.

Access to assessment

As with the previous annual report, no centre or assessor has reported any difficulty in gaining access to candidates who are in employment for the purpose of carrying out live assessments in the workplace.

Areas of good practice

The general areas of good practice commented on in previous reporting years have continued to be the same this year, indicating that centres are consistent in their approach to the assessment and verification process required. These areas are as follows:

- ◆ the use of good, comprehensive additional supporting evidence, such as operator logbooks, timesheets, photographs of work processes, relevant Course certification, site documents
- ◆ good, descriptive and detailed observation reports
- ◆ positive candidate feedback records
- ◆ good, comprehensive IV recording procedures

Particular areas of good practice where centres have continued to show forethought are:

- ◆ the continued use of centre-adapted job sheets, which have been developed to bridge the gap where candidates do not complete industry-issued logbooks — these job sheets are issued to the candidates and some instances actually have specific tasks detailed on them for the candidates to complete and get countersigned by an approved person from the candidate's employer
- ◆ the use of candidates' handbooks, detailing the whole assessment process and supplying the candidate with contact details of assessors, verifiers, etc, so that the assessment process runs very smoothly
- ◆ the use of video evidence to support observation reports

In last year's report it was noted that there were several specific areas for improvement. It has been recognised that there has been some improvement where required on:

- ◆ cross-referencing of evidence
- ◆ individual CPD records
- ◆ observation report writing

Specific areas for improvement

The following are points where improvements can still be made by centres:

- ◆ Although progress has been made in this area, centres can further improve by ensuring that **all** evidence is fully cross-referenced against the specific Unit performance and knowledge of understanding criteria.
- ◆ Formalise and detail the recording of standardisation events and how they improve the overall performance of the assessment and verification teams.
- ◆ Individual CPD records — although improvement has been made in this area there is still room for further improvement. Centres need to ensure all staff record how the CPD they carry out improves their overall performance, ie quantify the event(s) carried out.
- ◆ Observation reports should be less prescriptive in observing candidates doing activities. The Performance Criteria are sufficient evidence.