



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2012  
Sport and Recreation:  
SVQ Playwork**

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

## General comments

The general feedback from external verification has been very positive, with the vast majority of centres providing a supportive learning and assessment environment for their candidates and adhering to assessment and evidence requirements within the national occupational standards for Playwork.

These Centres are working very well with their candidates across all levels of SVQ in Playwork. Most have experienced teams of assessors and Internal Verifiers who understand the playwork principles, theory and practice and ensure that these are integral to the work produced by their candidates.

The majority of portfolio work sampled by External Verifiers was of a good standard and demonstrated that assessment teams are supporting the assessment and verification process well.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The majority of evidence sampled by External Verifiers was of a good standard. This evidence was gathered holistically and the candidate's knowledge was integrated into the practice evidence. Assessors were supporting their candidates to make focused connections between their knowledge and their playwork practice.

The majority of evidence sampled was valid, practicable and sufficient; the assessment methods used were appropriate and met the evidence requirements set out in Skills Active (sector skills council) Assessment Strategy.

Assessors were using reliable assessment methods to gather evidence of candidates' playwork knowledge and practice. As required, the most frequently used assessment methodology was candidate reflective accounts, supported by assessor observation of practice or, in situations of the unplanned or unexpected, witness testimony.

Additional assessment methods used were oral or written questions, projects or tasks, accreditation of prior learning and experience and, for SVQ 4 Playwork, candidate research projects.

## **Evidence Requirements**

There was good evidence that the majority of centres were very effective and ensured compliance with the evidence requirements set out in Skills Active (sector skills council) Assessment Strategy.

From external verification, it is clear that assessment is undertaken in a holistic and integrated manner and is sufficiently observed over a period of time, which provided evidence that centres are complying with the assessment strategy.

There has been good evidence of discussion of the assessment strategy at standardisation meetings between assessors and Internal Verifiers, ensuring a level of consistency of assessment practice.

Generally, assessors and Internal Verifiers were competent and qualified to deliver the SVQs in Playwork, with both relevant playwork qualifications and experience, and assessor and verifier qualifications. Most teams ensured that they are complying with current competency requirements by developing good opportunities for relevant continuous professional development.

## **Administration of assessments**

From the work sampled at external verification, there was evidence of holistic assessment planning; clear, detailed and holistic assessment plans were in place in many of the candidates' portfolios.

The majority of assessors were correctly assessing the evidence presented by their candidates, based on the national occupational standards for Playwork, the evidence requirements and the SCQF level of the units. Consistent, valid and reliable assessment decisions were being made by most assessors.

There was also evidence of positive and supportive assessor feedback to candidates based on the evidence requirements of the national occupational standards (NOS).

Most centres had arrangements in place for the standardisation of assessment decisions and this is evidenced in the minutes of the standardisation meetings.

Internal verification feedback was consistent with the guidance provided in **Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications** and related to the national occupational standards for Playwork. There is current evidence of review of verification procedures. Most internal verification policies, strategies and implementation documentation contain a review date. This has meant that effective and robust systems of internal verification are in place, providing support to assessors and ensuring the reliability of assessment practice.

In some centres, the process of internal verification has highlighted issues or concerns with assessment practice; this has allowed for change and development to take place.

#### SVQ 2 in Playwork at SCQF 6 (G8WE 22)

The majority of centres are assessing this level appropriately by using PW34 (F377 04) *Work with children and young people to create play spaces and support freely chosen self-directed play* as the key unit with which to integrate the other units, support holistic assessment practice and develop the candidates' understanding of play theories related to their practice.

#### SVQ 3 Playwork at SCQF Level 7 (GD1V 23)

Most centres are using PW9 (FT4T 04) *Plan and Support Self-directed Play* as the main pivotal unit. The process of evidence gathering requires candidates to undertake PW9.1 *Collect and analyse information on play needs and preferences* - playwork research, observation and consultation prior to being observed in the play space.

These centres are supporting SVQ 3 candidates to observe children and young people's play, to identify play cues, returns and the play needs of children and young people. This provides the candidate with the information they need to develop play spaces that will meet these needs and support children and young people during play. This is seen in the candidates' holistic reflective accounts which are then focused on their knowledge of playwork theory; the identified play needs and preferences of children and young people; and an expanded description of the play space — but then the evidence for other units automatically becomes part of what the candidate will be doing.

#### SVQ 4 Playwork at SCQF Level 9 (GD1T 24)

Most centres delivering the SVQ 4 Playwork are continuing to develop the depth of knowledge required from their level 4 candidates. These centres are working to advance the theoretical and technical knowledge required about play and playwork theories and methodologies, theories from other disciplines, conflicting concepts of play, understanding of leadership and management perspectives, etc.

The pivotal units in the SVQ 4 Playwork are the research based PW16 (DV1T 04) *Work with colleagues and other partners to develop an organisational framework for play*, and PW22 (DV1N 04) *Research, design and facilitate possibilities for self-directed play*; then moving onto the managerial and organisational PW17 (DV1D 04) *Develop, manage and review operational plans for play provision*. The majority of centres are using these three units as the basis for the development and delivery of the whole qualification.

This assessment methodology allows candidates to develop their own personal research skills and advance their knowledge of play and playwork theory, alongside that from other disciplines. Candidates can then use this knowledge to

develop their own organisation and staff teams through their leadership and management skills related to operational planning; developing relationships with colleagues and other professionals; managing playwork practice and supporting personal and professional development

## **General feedback**

During external verification this session, there was much discussion about the revised national occupational standards for SVQ 3 and 4 in Playwork and the accompanying assessment strategies and evidence requirements.

External Verifiers have, in the main, had very positive feedback from candidates about the level of support and encouragement they have received from their assessors and they say they are happy with the process of assessment.

Some candidates have discussed the support that they are receiving within their workplace in relation to the playwork principles, practice and theory and how this has had an impact the assessment process.

Centres are using the SCQF level descriptors as a means of identifying the level of work to be produced by candidates. This has been especially useful for SVQ level 4 in Playwork.

## **Areas of good practice**

Over this session, External Verifiers have identified a number of areas of good practice within centres delivering the SVQs in Playwork:

### **Candidate Support**

Most assessors are providing excellent support to their candidates, through; individualised support including online and e-mail support; underpinning knowledge; regular contact and site visits; and workplace based assessment process. This support is assisting the candidates to make focussed connections between theory and practice, and has allowed candidates to generate practicable evidence.

Many centres are providing a supportive learning environment for their candidates, with workshops being provided on a regular basis to assist the development of their knowledge and understanding, such as playwork principles, legislation, health and wellbeing; play theories, leadership and management practice. Most centres have excellent learning and training materials and support systems for everyone involved in the whole assessment process.

### **Assessment Practice**

Assessors are very supportive of their candidates; they are providing individual support, holistic assessment planning and positive feedback.

Some centres have developed play observations and play types analysis to be undertaken by the candidates. These have proven to be excellent assessment tools which have assisted candidates to understand the play theory related to everyday playwork practice.

Some centres have devised assessment tasks which encourage candidates (at each level) to reflect on their practice using the playwork principles, playwork theory and the new childhood practice standards

### **Internal Verification**

The majority of centres have robust internal verification procedures. These internal verification policies and procedures provide a framework to support the delivery and verification of the SVQs in Playwork. Centres are following these correctly and as such the assessment and verification processes have been well managed.

Verification feedback is clear, considered and consistent with the verification policy. The internal verifiers are providing clear and focussed feedback to the assessors. This is particularly helpful to those Internal Verifiers in training. Internal verification policies also include opportunities for the support and development of assessors

Many teams, although some are very small, have developed effective communication strategies for the standardisation of assessment evidence. This maintains a high quality by ensuring a range of communication methods are used and recorded including e-mails, blogs, intranets and memos.

### **E.portfolios**

Many centres are using e.portfolios to assist the portfolio building process. At these centres, candidates and assessors have provided positive feedback about their experience of using on-line portfolios.

These centres have effective processes in place for internal verification of these e.portfolios that are robust, valid and consistent. Verification feedback is clear, considered and consistent with their verification policy.

### **Additional Support Needs**

The majority of centres have good systems in place to record the needs of candidates who required some additional support. This was also reflected in the portfolios and the assessors had made good use of oral questioning and effective planning for candidates with additional support needs

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Over this session, External Verifiers have identified a small number of areas of improvement within centres delivering the SVQs in Playwork:

Some centres have been asked to ensure that there is a comprehensive long-term assessment framework covering all the units in the SVQ in Playwork, to ensure that assessment is undertaken in a holistic and integrated way. This details the requirements of the playwork theory to be researched at the beginning

of the assessment process. These centres need to continue to develop holistic assessment practice and to support candidates to integrate theory into practice evidence.

Some centres have to develop processes for recording the continuous professional development (CPD) of assessors and Internal Verifiers, including evidence of keeping playwork practice current and updating knowledge through research, reading, etc.

There must be compliance with the assessment strategies for SVQ 2, 3 and 4 Playwork in terms of sufficiency and consistency of observed practice evidence required in each unit.

Centres should continue to support the development of the standard of evidence produced for the SVQ 4 Playwork through opportunities for candidates to integrate their depth of knowledge, related to their leadership and management of playwork settings, with theories of play, playwork and related disciplines.