# Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2012

# Plumbing

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:

SVQ Plumbing Level 3

## General comments

Centres have a clear and accurate understanding of national standards. External verification reports confirm this.

Three centres were externally verified using SQA's 'New Approach to Quality Assurance: Guidance on Higher National (HN) and Vocational Qualification (VQ) Visiting Verification'. Preparation of centre candidate lists was difficult due to the way in which the form has to be completed, and the fact that the Course has been running for three years. The categories in the form, 'just started', 'halfway through' and 'near completion', do not work for a three-year Course.

External verification feedback from one centre, noted that before the event: 'Preparation of candidate details, etc required a significant amount of work'.

The new SVQ has introduced the use of SOLAR e-assessment which is marked automatically by the electronic system. Assessors have welcomed this as it reduces the amount of marking required.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The SVQ Plumbing Level 3 has only been running for two years (of three). External Verifier visit reports show that assessors are familiar with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials. Assessors have expressed concern that the Units for year three are not yet available.

### Evidence Requirements

There were no reported issues with compliance to evidence verified.

### Administration of assessments

Centres all had central policies for assessment and internal verification. Reports stated that these complied with SQA requirements. Records of internal verification were contained in section folders.

All centres use assessments produced by SQA, which include model answers or checklists. This ensures compliance with standards.

Some centres used folders containing Unit evidence. Others used candidate portfolios.

**General feedback**

Candidates received feedback on the forms provided in the assessment for each activity. These were, with a few exceptions, completed correctly. SOLAR e-assessment was used in most centres and provided a breakdown of candidate achievement. This allowed for effective review of weak points and revision prior to re-assessment. Candidates would benefit if all centres could adopt the use of SOLAR.

Candidates stated that they had received adequate notice of assessment, remediation and reassessment as required. A few candidates stated that they had problems using the SOLAR e-assessment software. (SQA is presently developing formative assessments to address this issue.)

Some assessors alleged that there were mistakes in the SOLAR e-assessments. SQA co-ordinators should report these errors to SQA who will address them.

Some centres complained they had not received a reply to such queries. SQA confirmed they had replied by automated email, however this may have been sent to the spam folder.

# Areas of good practice

A few centres had prepared folders that contained all policies and procedures required by the External Verifier during the visit.

A number of centres are now using virtual learning environments (VLEs) to prepare their candidates for assessment. These also allow the candidates to access information when out of the centre.

Some centres have developed realistic working environments that allow for the integration of more than one assessment.

One centre produced a very detailed candidate report form. It was split into class groups and Units, and showed assessors and Internal Verifiers. The same centre also provided an assessment plan. This information allowed the External Verifier to produce the visit plan without further contact.

### Specific areas for improvement

Most centres provided copies of staff vocational qualifications in their continuous professional development (CPD) folder. Centres which do not already do this should provide them on the day of the external verification visit.

Assessors who are not completing feedback forms should do so.