



**National Qualifications 2012
Internal Assessment Report
Skills for Work — Construction**

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

National Qualifications (NQ) Awards

Titles/levels of NQ Awards verified:

Skills for Work (SfW) Construction (Intermediate 1 and 2)

General comments

There were 14 centres verified for the SfW Construction award last session and, once again, the majority of these centres demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the national standards.

However, there was one Hold visit and several 'near miss' Hold visits where centres did not have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements to meet the national standards: eg in the Employability Skills Unit (DM7C 10), the need for at least four self-reviews to be carried out and the methodology of conducting the practical scale drawing assignment.

There were also strong development points generated at several centres, owing to the lack of retention of a 'reasonable sample' of practical product evidence. This lack of evidence could compromise the external verification of the national standards.

Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Course Arrangements: In general, the majority of centres are fairly familiar with the Course Arrangements although once again some development points were generated with respect to the full implementation of the Course Arrangements: eg the recommended duration of timetabled periods for SfW practical sessions to meet candidate needs and the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the practical sessions.

Unit specifications: Assessors are sometimes unfamiliar with the Unit specifications. There were a few occasions when development points were generated because of this unfamiliarity, eg the need to retain product evidence in order to verify the national standards which are defined in the relevant PCs of the Unit specifications.

Instruments of assessment: The SfW NABS are now well embedded as the delivery/assessment materials for the award and therefore most centres are operating within this aspect of the Course guidelines.

However, some centres required prompting with regards to items such as PPE, internal verification procedures and candidate self-review requirements. There were a range of development points left with several centres on these matters, and this shall be followed up at future external verification visits.

Exemplification materials: The NABs and the learning support exemplification materials continue to be well understood and implemented in the majority of centres.

Evidence Requirements

The Evidence Requirements continue to be clearly understood in the majority of centres. However, there was one Hold and at least two 'near miss' Holds mainly owing to a lack of clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements: eg two centres had very limited evidence of products or their recorded assessment decisions for these products. Another centre had failed to present the candidate self-reviews and therefore did not meet the Evidence Requirements.

Administration of assessments

Most centres are administering and implementing the NAB assessments in an effective manner at the appropriate level. A few centres are starting to develop their own in-house assessments and some caution is required to ensure these are prior-verified by SQA before being implemented.

Internal verification continues to be effective in most centres although there were several development points generated in some centres with regards to further development and improvement of internal verification practices, eg product evidence being recycled prior to any internal verification of these products taking place.

Areas of good practice

The range of good practices identified in last session's SfW Construction Internal Assessment Report continue to be delivered and developed further in many of the centres sampled this session. These included: documented evidence of SfW standardisation meetings, innovative examples of photographic evidence, well organised candidate portfolios, evidence of strong links with local employers, high level of workshop facilities/resources being provided, SfW practical project work being included in the Course programme and full implementation of standard construction PPE being worn.

External Verifiers' reports confirmed that some centres provided further evidence of enhanced quality assurance which went beyond the national standards and these included:

- ◆ product evidence being clearly tabulated to the relevant candidate and laid out in a user-friendly manner for external verification
- ◆ a wide range of product evidence samples being presented for external verification — lots of these samples exceeded the national standards of the Unit specifications and the NABs
- ◆ candidates carrying out a weekly review of their own employability skills development after each workshop lesson

- ◆ a centre celebrating student success in the SfW Construction Crafts programme with an awards ceremony where staff, school teachers, parents, guardians and candidates are in attendance
- ◆ candidate self-checks in two separate centres (one for Brickwork and the other in Plumbing) being developed to the stage that the candidates were recording the actual tolerances they had achieved in their own self-check, eg + or –7 mm, + or –9 mm, which ensured that the candidates were developing an understanding of these employability skills as well as meeting the performance criteria
- ◆ candidate reviews being very strong and including clear information and excellent feedback from the teacher/assessors and actions clearly identified and then being followed through
- ◆ an excellent partnership with a major construction company which provided the candidates with real contact in the industry including site visits and mock job interviews conducted by the participating employer

In addition, one centre produced working drawings for the construction of a dedicated SfW construction workshop within the school grounds. These drawings have been approved by the local Building Planning Department and the concrete foundations are now in place. There are innovative plans for SfW candidate involvement in this project next session.

Although not formally reported, there is strong anecdotal evidence that centres are raising candidate awareness on sustainability in construction by re-using materials, recycling materials appropriately, minimising waste during practical work, maintaining a clean and tidy work area, and in general maintaining good housekeeping in construction workshops.

There is further scope for development on the sustainability issue and it is to be expected that external verification visits next session will give a stronger focus on the formal reporting of sustainability issues related to SfW Construction Crafts Courses.

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ A reasonable range of product samples across each craft should be retained and made available for external verification.
- ◆ Candidates' product evidence to be clearly tabulated for internal and external verification purposes.
- ◆ Product samples which are being presented as evidence for external verification require to be accompanied with the assessment decision recorded.
- ◆ The scaled measurement assessment for Unit DM7C 10 Employability Skills, requires the candidate to confirm the actual measurement (a minimum of two separate dimensions), by measuring a real object (an actual window opening, a door opening, a room dimension, etc) and recording the findings.
- ◆ Internal verification of Product Evidence must take place before these products are recycled or dismantled.

- ◆ The centre internal verification plan should include the internal verification of candidate employability skills during live workshop activities.
- ◆ SfW candidates may be disadvantaged by the timetabling of single periods for SfW construction practical work. Current best practice is for minimum timetabling of double periods for SfW Construction Crafts activities. There is clear guidance on this in the Arrangements document.
- ◆ Candidates should wear the full basic construction PPE during SfW practical lessons. There is clear guidance on this in the Arrangements document.
- ◆ Centres should provide sufficient tool and material resources to meet the needs of the full class of candidates.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to comment on employability skills in self-reviews, including their own attitudes, work practices and skills development. Sometimes there is an over emphasis on the candidate practical skills development with little reference to the employability skills development.
- ◆ Self-reviews which highlight literacy issues should be followed up by support, in terms of improving the candidate's employability skills.
- ◆ Where photographic secondary evidence is presented, ensure that full compliance with H&S and PPE requirements is shown.
- ◆ External verification visits require to sample evidence generated during the current verification session (usually from the previous August until the following May).
- ◆ All evidence-related documentation, self-reviews, and checklist etc, require to be authenticated with signatures and dates.