



National Qualifications 2015 Internal Assessment Report Practical Craft Skills

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified:

X034 Engineering Craft Skills (Intermediate 2)

General comments

This year, only one centre was the subject of visiting verification. The fact that only one centre was visited reflects the fact that the vast majority of centres have now moved over to the new National 4 and National 5 qualifications and the SQA policy on verification, which prevents centres being overloaded with external verification for various subjects within a single department.

The centre that was visited was Accepted.

Throughout the years, the vast majority of centres have demonstrated an understanding of the standards expected and have maintained a high and consistent level of verification. This level of consistency between centres and their understanding of standards is largely due to the experience and professionalism of the team of verifiers who have worked on Practical Craft Skills Courses over the years.

Recently there has been a real improvement in the internal verification procedures within centres. To further enhance these procedures, we recommend the use of the SQA Internal Verification toolkit.

Practical Craft Skills Courses consist of three Units and the Course Project. To achieve a Course award, it is mandatory that all three Units and Course Project are completed. Centres are well aware that to achieve a Course award at a specific level, eg Intermediate 2, all Units and the Course Project for the Course must have been entered and passed at Intermediate 2.

The following are areas which could lead to a Not Accepted decision during an external verification visit.

- ◆ Insufficient evidence
- ◆ No evidence for specific Outcomes
- ◆ Inconsistent marking/judgement
- ◆ More than 1/3 disagreement in the verification sample
- ◆ Instrument of assessment not reliable or valid
- ◆ No internal verification process in place
- ◆ Candidates presented at the wrong level

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

The vast majority of assessors, within centres, are very familiar with the Course Arrangements, and are clear on Unit content. They are competent in the use of appropriate instruments of assessment to assess prescribed Outcomes. Most centres have used exemplar materials and SQA NABs, thus ensuring consistency. Although some centres have chosen alternative projects (which have been prior-verified), it should be noted that the majority of centres have used one of the SQA-devised instruments of assessment and this is an indication of their popularity among candidates and deliverers.

Evidence Requirements

For Course Project verification, centres are familiar with Evidence Requirements, namely: Course Project, Course Summary Assessment Sheet, Verification Sample Form and Internal Verification procedures.

There have been no major concerns concerning evidence for the Course Project, other than on the odd occasion when centres did not have candidates at a sufficient stage of completion for verification to take place. The centre should ensure candidates are near completion before agreeing a date with the visiting External Verifier.

Although no centres were verified for Units in this session, it should be noted that almost all of the past concerns with Unit verification were due to issues concerning retention of evidence by centre.

- ◆ All evidence for each Unit had to be retained for three weeks after the submitted completion date.
- ◆ It should be noted that no Unit Project or Course Project should have been painted prior to verification. This applies to both Metal and Wood.
- ◆ Thermal fusion joints should not have been dressed with grinder prior to verification.

Administration of assessments

All centres were advised to refer to the grade descriptors issued by SQA. These were available from the secure area of SQA's website. This ensured consistency and allowed all centres to assess work, at the appropriate level, with regard to: processes undertaken, tolerances applied, and quality of finish.

Although there has been improvement in the quality and reliability of internal verification procedures within a number of centres, there were a few centres that needed to formalise their procedures to ensure that reliable, robust evidence of internal verification was available to an External Verifier.

Areas of good practice

Over the years, the quality of work produced by candidates has demonstrated improvement.

There has been a growing trend within centres to issue individual student logbooks/handbooks which outline specific requirements of all aspects of the Course, Units and Course Project. These booklets specify the Outcomes and expectations within the Course, while encouraging self-, peer- and teacher assessment; in some centres this also incorporates target setting involving student, teacher and parent/carer. This is an initiative which should be commended and built upon.

The majority of centres have taken on board the need to evidence all areas of individual student input and design.

Good internal verification procedures involve a clear policy statement, sampling and feedback with a detailed record kept (policy into practice). The internal verification procedures should reflect the procedures of visiting External Verifiers.

A few centres now work in partnership with other local centres to carry out verification. This is particularly beneficial for centres that have only one member of staff within the department and is a good method of sharing good practice and strengths between practitioners.

In many cases, Course Summary Assessment Sheets are being extended to give more individual candidate detail with reasons for grades applied. This assists greatly during external verification.

Specific areas for improvement

Although the general improvement in internal verification procedures over the years has been noteworthy, there was still scope for improvement in a small number of centres.

Any alterations to overall dimensions or dimensions of materials used in the construction of artefacts must be reflected in all working drawings.

Centres have been reminded that widths of materials should not be reduced, as this compromises the effectiveness of the Project as an appropriate instrument of assessment for joint gap tolerances, etc.

When welding, centres must ensure continuous runs, not tacking. Centres should ensure that care is taken when setting up for welding to ensure square.

Finish is an area where there was still some scope for improvement. Centres have been reminded that the difference between a good grade and a very good grade is often down to the finish.

At times there was still evidence of pencil lines, poor finish to end-grain, lack of de-burring, rounded edges and poor filing.

If centres feel they are unsure of any aspects of the Course and require support then they should consider arranging a development visit through SQA.