



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Business and Administration**

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

SVQ awards

General comments

This report covers the following areas:

- ◆ Types of evidence
- ◆ CPD
- ◆ Assessor/Internal Verifier qualifications
- ◆ Candidate support
- ◆ Assessment planning
- ◆ Internal verification
- ◆ Standardisation
- ◆ Administration systems
- ◆ Network meetings

In the sample of centres visited during external verification the following was observed.

Types of evidence

There was evidence that centres were well aware of the national standards and the Assessment Strategy relating to these awards. Candidate evidence in the portfolios was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable. There were very good audit trails of evidence and the audit trails were easy to follow.

There was a good balance between performance evidence (observation and work product) and supporting evidence (professional discussion, witness testimony, questions). Observations were holistic in nature and well annotated against the Performance Indicators and Knowledge & Understanding. Work product was also well annotated to help place the evidence in context. The annotation was documented in a variety of ways such as the use of a 'storyboard', 'personal statement', 'actual annotation on the evidence', 'post-it notes attached to the evidence'. All are considered acceptable — the important thing is that the evidence is placed in context.

Portfolios also included a variety of supporting evidence including personal statements, professional discussion and witness testimonies. There was an increased use of voice files to record professional discussion. These were very informative in showing competence with good interaction between assessor and candidate.

Centres also made good use of questions relating to Knowledge and Understanding. Most evidence for Knowledge and Understanding was gained through performance. Questions were being used to gain further depth of knowledge or to seek clarification. Questions were incorporated into observations and professional discussions — if this was appropriate. Where possible, centres should obtain evidence for this underpinning Knowledge and Understanding from

performance evidence rather than a bank of questions. Witness signatory lists were used to identify those who interacted with the portfolios.

All of the above accounted for good triangulation of evidence using both performance evidence and supporting evidence. All evidence was well tracked against Performance Indicators and Knowledge and Understanding.

Centres are continuing to use good cross-referencing between Optional Units and between Optional Units and Core Units. Feedback from centres about the current standards seems very positive. The variety of Units appears to suit job roles very well. Centres also like the fact that each award can be made up of Units from different levels. Centres feel that they can now more accurately tailor the award to suit the job roles of their candidates.

Rules of combination were causing no concern.

There was a growing use of e-portfolios seen across centres. One main advantage of e-portfolios was the availability of evidence online to the assessor at any time and this can be viewed prior to meeting candidates. Also, there can be an increased variety of evidence including photographs, video files and voice files.

Where Holds occurred, centres very quickly generated appropriate evidence and the Holds were lifted in a timely and effective manner. There were only a few Holds this year resulting from the following criteria:

- ◆ Inappropriate assessment instruments
- ◆ Insufficient evidence of candidate performance
- ◆ Inappropriate judgement of candidate performance
- ◆ Ineffective internal verification

Continuing professional development

There were very good CPD records available for assessors and internal verifiers. Best practice with CPD records exists when they contain not only what has been undertaken but also the impact of this learning on the assessment process. The EV team is now seeing this best practice across most centres.

Assessor/Verifier qualifications

Assessors and internal verifiers were appropriately qualified and experienced. Assessors were recruited primarily for their occupational competence. If they do not already hold Assessor qualifications, they will be mentored through L&D9 D1. Internal verifiers were recruited from existing, experienced assessors who have occupational competence in Administration. Very good induction training programmes for both new assessors and internal verifiers were in place.

Candidate support

Candidates were well supported by assessors and received regular visits from their assessor. This was augmented through additional telephone and/or e-mail contact throughout the course of the awards. Candidate feedback indicated that they were very well supported by assessors.

Assessment planning

There was good evidence of assessment planning with assessment being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback. This was very supportive to candidates and provided very good feedback on the quality of the assessment evidence.

Internal verification

Centres had very good internal verification procedures in place providing good feedback to assessors and candidates. These procedures were well documented. Internal verification sampling procedures and documentation provided a robust quality assurance system. Feedback recorded on internal verification paperwork was clear and encouraging for assessors and candidates. Internal verification documentation offered structured, helpful feedback to assessors and candidates. There was evidence of regular internal verification taking place throughout the life of the portfolio. For internal verification it is best practice to spread the activity evenly throughout the life of the portfolio. Centres should note that it is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after an assessment decision has been made. This allows candidates and assessors to respond quickly to any feedback from the internal verification process.

Standardisation

There were regular, formal standardisation meetings between staff and these meetings were minuted. In addition, there were many opportunities for informal discussion between staff relating to candidates and Units.

Administration systems

Excellent administration systems were in place to support the assessment and internal verification procedures.

Network meetings

Two networking meetings were held earlier the year. Both were well attended with positive evaluations. Centres felt that they would really miss out if there were no Quality Network meeting for Business and Administration.

SQA and the EV team also conducted a piece of work with the centres during the network meetings. As a result, a summary of Frequently Asked Questions with appropriate responses is now available on SQA's website for use by centres.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Unit specifications

There was evidence that centres were well aware of the national standards and the Assessment Strategies relating to these awards. Centres were applying these national standards consistently across candidates.

Instrument of assessment

There was a good balance between performance evidence (observation and work product) and supporting evidence (professional discussion, witness testimony, questions).

Candidate evidence in the portfolios was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable. There was a very good audit trail of evidence.

Exemplification of materials was enhanced by the following:

- ◆ The Understanding Standards material produced by SQA which is currently available on the website highlights the type of evidence promoted as best practice. It uses material from a variety of centres.
- ◆ Assessment Guidance for the new standards was prepared and is also available through SQA. The Assessment Guidance developed by SQA has helped centres gain an accurate understanding of the National Standards. Centres have found this material very useful.

The Frequently Asked Questions document is also available.

Evidence Requirements

Good evidence of assessment planning with assessment being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback.

Candidate evidence in the portfolios was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable. There was a very good audit trail of evidence. There was a good balance between performance evidence (observation and work product) and supporting evidence (professional discussion, witness testimony, questions). There was good triangulation of evidence using both performance evidence and supporting evidence. All evidence was well tracked against Performance Indicators and Knowledge and Understanding. Very easy audit trails to follow.

Centres are continuing to use good cross-referencing between Optional Units and between Optional Units and Core Units. This helps avoid the duplication of evidence.

Feedback from centres about the current standards seems very positive. The range and variability of Units appears to suit job roles very well and centres like

the fact that each award can be made up of Units from different levels which allows them to more accurately tailor the award to suit the job roles of their candidates.

Administration of assessments

Excellent administration systems were in place to support the assessment and internal verification procedures.

General feedback

See comments in the General Comments section above.

Areas of good practice

Very good CPD records available for assessors and internal verifiers. Best practice CPD records contain not only what has been undertaken but also the impact of the learning on the assessment process.

Witness signatory lists were used to identify those who interacted with the portfolios.

Good evidence of assessment planning with assessment being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback. This is very supportive to candidates and provides very good feedback on the quality of the assessment evidence. Candidate feedback indicated that they felt that they were very well supported by assessors. Most centres provided ongoing additional support between assessor visits via telephone and e-mail correspondence.

There was evidence of regular standardisation meetings taking place in centres in addition to continuous informal discussion between staff relating to candidates and Units. Centres had very good internal verification procedures in place providing good feedback to assessors and candidates. These procedures were well documented.

For internal verification it is best practice to spread the activity evenly throughout the life of the portfolio. It is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after an assessment decision has been made. This allows candidates and assessors to respond quickly to any feedback from the internal verification process.

There was a good variety of assessment evidence with a good balance of performance evidence and supporting evidence. Performance evidence included observation and work product. Observations were tracked down the side of documents and records against Performance Indicators and Knowledge and Understanding.

Work product was also well annotated to help place the evidence in context. The annotation was documented in a variety of ways, all of which are acceptable such as the use of a 'storyboard', 'personal statement', 'actual annotation on the

evidence', 'post-it notes attached to the evidence'. The important issue here is that the evidence is place in context.

Centres also included a variety of supporting evidence – personal statements, professional discussion and witness testimonies. There was an increasing use of voice files to record professional discussion. These were very informative in showing competence, showing good interaction between assessor and candidate.

Centres also made good use of questions relating to Knowledge and Understanding. Most evidence for Knowledge and Understanding was gained through performance. Questions were being used to gain further depth of knowledge or to seek clarification. Questions were incorporated into observations and professional discussion. Where possible centres should obtain evidence for this underpinning Knowledge and Understanding from performance evidence rather than a bank of questions.

All of the above accounted for good triangulation of evidence using both performance evidence and supporting evidence. All evidence was well tracked against Performance Indicators and Knowledge and Understanding. Very easy audit trails to follow.

Specific areas for improvement

Always try to ensure that there is a good balance of performance evidence and supporting evidence.

Evidence presented did not always demonstrate competence over time and breadth of scope. This can be achieved by increasing the use of evidence triangulation (observation, work product and supporting evidence) to ensure the Performance Indicators are met over a period of time.

A second observation against 'action' Units where work product evidence is not easily obtained for example mail, office equipment, filing etc, would strengthen claim to competence as it helps to confirm competence over time.

Also assessor observations, work products, personal statements and professional discussions could be annotated by the supervisor (witness) to confirm competence over time and a wider selection of work product can be used to confirm breadth of scope.

For internal verification it is best practice to spread the activity evenly throughout the life of the portfolio and it is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after an assessment decision has been made thus allowing candidates and assessors to respond quickly to any feedback from the internal verification process.

Where Holds occurred centres generated appropriate evidence and the Holds were lifted in a timely and effective manner. There were only a few Holds this year resulting from the following criteria:

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