



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2014  
Beauty Therapy**

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

Centres delivering the SVQ awards have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. All the centres have delivered SVQ Beauty qualifications for several years and receive an annual external verification visit; therefore, they are very familiar with the Assessment Strategy and awarding body requirements.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The centres were very familiar with the Unit specifications and instruments of assessment since this was their third year of delivering the current National Occupational Standards.

Staff continued to take time to look at the Units they had delivered last year and to streamline and integrate their instruments of assessment to enhance the delivery of the Units and assessments.

Some centres provided feedback regarding a small number of questions and issues relating to the SOLAR online assessments. Centres were advised to contact SOLAR directly in order to resolve technical issues.

## Evidence Requirements

Centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements and their candidates were providing sufficient evidence to meet the requirements. The use of SQA portfolios guides them clearly to the necessary Evidence Requirements and suggested types of evidence.

Some centres provide additional guidance to candidates to allow them the opportunity to monitor their own Evidence Requirements.

## Administration of assessments

Centres generally have administration rights within the Beauty departments in order for the teams to generate the SOLAR assessments when they require them. This can be a speedier process rather than always having to go through the college administration system/team. This provides a very user-friendly but secure system for centre staff and candidates.

Assessors are carrying out remediation using various methods to ensure the candidates achieve 100% as required by the Assessment Strategy.

Many centres have adopted the procedure where a new assessor of a Unit would go through a Unit induction with an experienced assessor to ensure a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit. Often a mentor can

provide support to a less experienced assessor regarding the assessment process and recording methods.

Assessors continue to be innovative by cross-referencing candidate evidence where they can, which helps reduce over-assessment for the candidate.

Some assessors carried out a mapping exercise to discover similar essential knowledge and understanding within each Unit, then developed either an integrated written workbook/assignment or a bank of oral questions along with suggested responses. If this type of oral question was asked the assessor was not required to record the candidate response.

Also noted this year were centres cross-referencing where Level 2 evidence led towards Level 3 evidence.

Centres' internal verification procedures and documentation were being used appropriately. This included pre-delivery internal verification of instruments of assessment and samples of candidate evidence internally verified throughout the year. In some centres, the element of practical assessment was sampled by an internal verifier to ensure standardisation and consistency across all assessors.

Some centres' internal verification activity can be end-loaded at the end of the academic year — where, ideally, best practice is that there should be continuous internal verification throughout the year.

### **General feedback**

Generally, there was evidence during external verification of assessor feedback to candidates for practical observations and written assignment/workbook activities. This could vary from assessor to assessor and centre to centre. Some assessors provided feedback orally to candidates rather than a written record.

Candidates who were interviewed seemed to really enjoy the practical aspects of these awards and, in particular, the additional opportunities for training in contemporary treatments/products provided at the centre. Providing these additional industry/commercial enrichment activities seems to be a growing trend within centres. This also allows assessors to access CPD opportunities.

Centres recognise the importance of giving candidates the opportunity to further develop their employability skills.

Assessors and candidates commented that they liked the SOLAR online assessments, especially the instant marking which gives them their result. They also commented favourably on the variety of questions provided within the assessment.

Many centres are continuing to provide teaching/learning materials on their centre VLE and/or on memory pen drive. This allows an alternative resource and easier access for candidates. If candidates can access the underpinning

knowledge from their VLE, then centre staff can concentrate on the practical skills when candidates are in class.

## **Areas of good practice**

A 'buddy' system was in place for Level 2 and Level 3 candidates, which not only provided support for the Level 2 candidate but also provided evidence for Unit F472 04 for the Level 3 candidate.

Candidates were being encouraged to enter national competitions, to participate in community events and to attend additional industry training. These were thought to further develop their personal development and employability skills.

A centre was developing innovative communication techniques to be used with their candidates — including audio feedback, wikis and social media such as Twitter. The audio feedback method used by the centre has been a case study for JISC.

Level 3 candidates within one centre included a generic Volunteering Unit within their course to provide an opportunity to volunteer during their time at college and to give something back to their local community.

Centre teams attend SQA network events and Habia Scottish meetings to keep up to-date with the qualifications.

Candidate rewards and certificates are used in centres to motivate and encourage candidates to aspire to greater achievements, eg Student of the Month and Student of the Year.

Providing course material, open-book assessments, workbooks and assignments on a memory pen or college VLE allows candidates easier access.

One centre was involved in candidates performing treatments within the Commonwealth Games village, allowing the candidates a very special and unique experience.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Assessors need to ensure they indicate the number of hours of CPD activity on their annual CPD record. There is a requirement within the Assessment Strategy for all full-time assessors/internal verifiers to complete 30 hours CPD between 1 September and 31 August.

Internal verification should include pre-delivery checks of instruments of assessment and continuous internal verification activity throughout the academic year.

Continue to cross-reference evidence across Units and awards where appropriate to avoid repetition and over-assessing candidates.