Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
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
♦ Continuing professional development (CPD)
♦ Assessor/internal verifier qualifications
♦ Assessment planning
♦ Internal verification
♦ Standardisation
♦ Network meetings
♦ Re-accreditation of Business and Administration SVQs

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

Types of evidence
There was evidence that centres are 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 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). This led to good triangulation of evidence. Observations were holistic in nature and well annotated against the 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 including:

♦ storyboards
♦ personal statements
♦ actual annotation on the evidence
♦ sticky notes attached to the evidence

All are considered acceptable — the importance here is that the evidence is placed in context.

Portfolios also included a variety of supporting evidence including personal statements, professional discussion and witness testimonies.

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.

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. Witness signatory lists were used to identify those who interacted with the portfolios. Rules of combination were causing no concern. The team observed a continuing increase in the use of e-portfolios.

The issue of *in situ* evidence arose this year and it was important that the EV team standardised how they would respond if they encountered *in situ* evidence and the advice they would give centres. The following statement has been incorporated into the new Assessment Strategy related to the re-accreditation of Business and Administration SVQs — operational start date 1 August 2015.

'There may be situations where evidence cannot be stored in a candidate's portfolio. In such cases evidence may be kept in situ — that is, stored in its original location in the workplace rather than the candidate's portfolio.

In the context of Business and Administration, SQA would normally expect this to be used in situations where there is a compelling need for confidentiality, and where redaction of sensitive data would remove too much of the context of the evidence for robust assessment judgements to be made with confidence.

Such evidence should be referenced appropriately to provide a robust quality audit trail.

Evidence held in situ must be made available to Assessors/Internal Verifiers and External Verifiers as required to ensure the validity of the assessment process.'

CPD
All centres were able to show updated CPD records 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 and internal verification processes. The EV team is now seeing this best practice across most centres.

Assessor/verifier qualifications
Assessors and internal verifiers were appropriately qualified and experienced. They also have good occupational competence in the area of Administration.

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 which is a good way of 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 activity 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. 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.

Network meetings

Two networking events were held during the year. Both were well attended with positive evaluations. The events were led by the SQA Officer and included input from Skills CFA and the Senior External Verifier. The main workshop was a standardisation exercise in relation to the three word processing Units.

Re-accreditation of Business and Administration SVQs

SQA has been successfully re-accredited as an awarding body for SVQs in Business and Administration, incorporating incremental changes to Levels 1, 2 and 3 and the Assessment Strategy.

The operational start date of the new SVQs will be 1 August 2015. There is no change to the Level 4 Business and Administration SVQ at this time; however, the new Assessment Strategy also applies to this qualification. Changes to the Assessment Strategy are limited to clarification and additional guidance.

Skills CFA will be leading a review of the Level 4 Business and Administration SVQ later in the year which will result in a revised structure and SCQF credit rating. SQA's website will be updated with the new Qualification Structures, Units, Assessment Strategy and guidance documents. As this is an incremental change, the vast majority of Units remain unchanged.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

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 variety of assessment evidence — with good triangulation of evidence. There was also a good balance between performance evidence (observation and work product) and supporting evidence (professional discussion, witness testimony, questions).

Exemplification of materials was enhanced by the following:

♦ Understanding Standards material
♦ assessment guidance material
♦ frequently asked questions material

All of the above are available on SQA's website and centres reported that they found the website and its contents helpful.

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 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.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence was well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were valid and reliable. There was good triangulation of evidence using both performance evidence and supporting evidence. There was a good balance between performance evidence (observation and work product) and supporting evidence (professional discussion, witness testimony, questions).

All evidence was well tracked against performance indicators and knowledge and understanding.

In addition there was good evidence of assessment planning with assessment being broken down into the stages of planning, assessing, review and feedback and well documented audit trails that were easy to follow.

Centres are continuing to use good cross-referencing between optional Units and between optional Units and core Units.

Administration of assessments

The assessment and internal verification procedures reviewed were all supported by excellent administration systems.

Areas of good practice

There were 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.

There was 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.

In addition, there was evidence of regular standardisation meetings are taking place 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 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 including:

♦ storyboards
♦ personal statements
♦ actual annotation on the evidence
♦ sticky notes attached to the evidence

All are considered acceptable — the importance here is that the evidence is placed in context.

Centres also included a variety of supporting evidence — personal statements, professional discussion and witness testimonies.

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.

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.

Candidates should be discouraged from putting policy documents in their portfolios. A suggested method is to use a photocopy of the cover of the document. The assessor questions the candidate on the contents of the policy document then the candidate and assessor sign and date the cover, confirming the candidate's knowledge of the contents of the document.

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.

Where action points arose centres generated appropriate evidence in a timely and effective manner. Action points were in response to the following criteria:

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

There were only a few centres that incurred action points.