



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Construction (Plant and
Operations)**

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 year saw a slight overall increase in the number of verification visits undertaken by the team, although Scottish visits were down there was an increase in the number of centres in England and Wales. All verification visits resulted in positive outcomes with only a few action plans being issued to centres which were all completed accordingly.

Centres reported that they were feeling positive that the upturn in the construction sector would see an increase in the number of candidates being registered especially for the general Plant Operations qualification.

There have been some changes to the qualifications within the group, the new qualifications for Plant Mechanics is now available and has already seen recommendations for the framework to allow candidates to achieve the award where they are employed within smaller organisations where it could be difficult for some candidates to achieve. The Lifting Operations Award has seen the levels re-assessed with Planning Lifts now being a Level 4 Award and all candidates who had achieved at Level 3 being re-certificated.

As with previous years, the evidence verified and the interviews conducted with centre staff over the reporting period confirmed that centres understand what is required from them with regards to interpretation of the national standards. Centres are ensuring that the quantity and quality of evidence gathered meets the levels required for the awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The verification reports submitted throughout this reporting period clearly indicate that centres and their staff have a good working knowledge of the contents of the Unit specifications across all of the awards within the verification group. This is confirmed by the standard of primary and supporting evidence generated by the candidates and gathered the assessors.

Centres continue to use a variety of centre-devised assessment instruments and checklists that they use, and which comply with the awarding body requirements.

Evidence Requirements

The assessment guidelines give examples of both primary and secondary evidence that is required for the awards. Centres generally follow what is required and this is confirmed in the standard of candidate portfolios presented for verification.

Administration of assessments

Discussions with centre staff during visits continue to reflect that not much has changed in the methodology that centres use to ensure that they programme visits for assessors to realise the best opportunities for the collection of evidence.

Centre administrators and assessors remain active in contacting employers and candidates alike to arrange site visits that correspond with live work activities that the candidates are undertaking. This maximises evidence-gathering opportunities thus providing assessors with the best scenarios to make judgements on the competency of their respective candidates against all of the Unit specifications.

As in previous years this is quantified by the fact that almost all assessment of candidates continues to be based on live work activity in real-time working environments.

The Experienced Worker Practical Assessment Route (EWPAR) offers centres an alternative assessment route where the centre can give those candidates who for some reason or other do not have access to a live site (because of unemployment, lack of machinery on site, etc) the opportunity to get their assessments done. This can enable candidates to either gain employment or to enhance their qualifications by lifting potential barriers to achievement.

Internal verifiers continue to provide constructive feedback to assessors where required, and verifiers confirm that assessors act upon the comments given to them.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates — Assessors continue to advise candidates to gather appropriate supporting evidence and to get it endorsed by a supervisor or manager to support its authenticity. This supports the assessor's direct observations and helps to ensure that all the Evidence Requirements for the award are met in as short a time as possible.

Feedback from candidates — Candidate interviews conducted during this reporting period confirm that candidates are happy with the support they receive from all members of centre staff throughout their assessment process.

Access to assessment — As with the previous annual reports, no centre or assessor has reported any difficulty in gaining access to candidates who are in employment for the purpose of carrying out live assessments in the workplace.

Areas of good practice

The general areas of good practice commented on in previous reporting years have continued to be the same this year, indicating that centres are consistent in their approach to the assessment and verification process required. These areas are as follows:

- ◆ use of good comprehensive additional supporting evidence such as operator logbooks, timesheets, photographs and/or video footage of work processes, relevant course certification, and site documents
- ◆ good descriptive and detailed observation reports
- ◆ positive candidate feedback records
- ◆ good comprehensive internal verification recording procedures

Particular areas of good practice where centres have continued to show forethought are:

- ◆ continued use of centre-adapted job sheets that have been developed to bridge the gap where candidates do not complete industry-issued logbooks (These job sheets are issued to the candidates and some instances actually have specific tasks detailed on them for a candidate to complete and get countersigned by an approved person from the candidate's employer.)
- ◆ use of candidate handbooks that detail the whole assessment process and supply the candidate with contact details of assessors, verifiers, etc so that the assessment process runs very smoothly
- ◆ use of video evidence to support observation reports

Specific areas for improvement

The following are points where improvements can still be made by centres:

- ◆ **Cross-referencing of evidence** — Progress continues to be positive, however there is always room for improvement. Centres are advised to look at standardising their portfolio layouts even more, ensuring that cross-referencing of evidence is standardised and made easier for the assessor and candidates.
- ◆ **Individual CPD records** — Improvement continues in this area, however there is still room for further improvement. Centres need to ensure staff record how the CPD they carried out improved their overall performance.
- ◆ **Observation reports** — This is an area where improvements can still be made. Reports need to describe in detail the activities that the candidate is being observed carrying out and ensure that the Performance Criteria (for which the report is claiming to be evidence for) are sufficiently covered.