Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Retail

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

SVQ awards

General comments

There was a full programme of 20 external verification visits during 2013–14. All of the visits were successful with all centres being rated as having Significant Strengths and two rated as Strengths Outweighing Weaknesses. This is to be commended in the current difficult trading environment for centres.

The qualification is very familiar to both assessors and internal verifiers and they have a clear understanding of the national standards. There were no reports from the EV team of any deviations from the requirements of the awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The current Retail awards are now very familiar to assessors and internal verifiers.

Portfolios were well presented and External Verifiers agreed with all assessment decisions sampled.

While observation remains the most important source of evidence, a good range of evidence was presented.

Evidence was well matched to the standards and easy to track. Evidence-tracking checklists similar to the SQA matrix are being used in most centres.

Observations were comprehensive and holistic with good use being made of other evidence.

The stages of planning, assessment, review and feedback are evident in portfolios.

Evidence Requirements

The Evidence Requirements are clear to assessors and are being met by the centres.

Administration of assessments

The centres all meet the key requirement that candidates work in retail environments, with assessment being carried out in the workplace. Portfolios were well presented and assessed. The range of evidence presented was wide and the quality was high. Evidence was well matched to the standards and easy to track. In most cases, assessment was holistic with effective use being made of the evidence to match to all relevant areas of the standards. The assessment methods were varied and suitable for the level of qualifications being undertaken.

All centres have robust assessment and internal verification systems, which are regularly reviewed and updated. Standardisation meetings are held to ensure a consistent approach across the Units, assessors and workplaces.

Internal verification strategies were checked and found to be suitable for the award. Internal verification was planned and was being carried out appropriately. Internal verification activity was tracked and internal verification reports contained clear constructive feedback. Any actions were agreed and acted on by the assessors.

General feedback

All centres are delivering these qualifications very well. The assessment process follows the planning, assessing, review and feedback route.

All candidates who were interviewed were familiar with their award and were happy with the support being given by their line managers and their assessors. Candidates were able to show a good understanding of the retail sector.

A range of strategies were used to ensure candidates have access to assessment. These included provision for extended learning needs, flexibility in assessors' working arrangements, willingness to travel to workplaces, and use of the internet and e-mail.

Areas of good practice

Examples of good practice included:

♦ Individual CPD folders were available for each staff member, well catalogued, current, specific, and up to date
♦ Assessors were fully aware of the centre quality standard and work towards that standard at all times
♦ Procedures that were well documented and available to all
♦ Very good systems to ensure that portfolios are safe, that they are accessed only by authorised personnel, and that confidentiality is maintained
♦ Every workplace is risk-assessed, including the centre's own working facilities, and reports are made to the centre manager on a regular basis to effect any changes which may be required
♦ Employer involvement in the course process helping to identify the suitability of the Level 2 or 3 SVQ for individual candidates before registration
♦ Use of follow-up questioning by assessors to confirm candidates understanding and to check authenticity of evidence as the candidates' own work
♦ Activities that include 'in-store days' for candidates to gain industry knowledge and to become familiar with the daily routines of the stores
♦ Continued learning that is passed down to staff who complete 12 online Units for legal and information parts of the business

- ♦ Standardisation meetings that are held quarterly, plus informal information exchanges
- ♦ Assessors working closely with candidates to understand the differing learning styles and needs of candidates
- ♦ Clearly written observations with good triangulation of evidence types
- ♦ SQA candidate declaration signed on paper and scanned into portfolio
- ♦ New assessors and internal verifiers who are working towards their L&D qualification and who are given good support from experienced staff with 4/8/12 week reviews
- ♦ CPD activities that were well formatted to include what the assessor/verifier learned and how they use this information
- ♦ Monthly CPD discussion that adds information that might have been overlooked
- ♦ The traffic-light performance monitoring system is useful in targeting any training and support needs of the assessors
- ♦ Use of a quality log for any informal issues that may arise outwith standardisation meetings
- ♦ Regular use of SQA's website to keep up to date
- ♦ Use of the facility within OneFile to help candidates with dyslexia and colour blindness

Specific areas for improvement

The following recommendations were made by External Verifiers:

For regulated qualifications there must be documented evidence of CPD activities.

Include some CPD activities relating to updating assessor and IV practice to align with requirements of current assessor and IV Units. The SQA toolkit is appropriate for this purpose.

Members of staff who hold old assessor and/or IV units are presently updating to current units. It is recommended that the updates appear on CPD records, which will confirm assessment and IV practice is in line with current Units.

Be mindful of overuse of witness testimonies and do not use as replacements for observations on all Units.

Site selection checklists could be amended to suit the retail sites more appropriately (at discretion of centre).

For centres using Learning Assistant: internal verifiers could utilise Learning Assistant for feedback and to pick up inconsistencies such as missed ticks by assessors.

Using the candidate declaration on Learning Assistant — if candidates do this at induction it creates an entry in the contact diary.