



**National Qualifications 2015  
Internal Assessment Report  
Skills for Work: Rural Skills**

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

# National Courses

Skills for Work: Rural Skills

## **General comments**

The number of centres in Scotland offering Skills for Work (SfW) Rural Skills (National 4) continues to increase.

The verification team carried out a number of external verification visits for SfW Rural Skills during the last academic year.

All external verification visits were successful and none resulted in a Hold on certification. Course delivery teams had a clear idea of the national standards and provision was generally of a high or very high quality. Instances of good practice were widespread and these are documented in the 'good practice' section below.

In addition, the team conducted a number of approval visits for Skills for Work National 4 and one for the National Progression Award (Gamekeeping).

Several development visits were also carried out.

## **Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

Generally there is a wide appreciation within centres of the standards required. The majority of centres had developed master files containing the Arrangements document, Unit specifications, National Assessment Bank materials (NABs), verification procedures, etc.

The NABs were in use at all centres delivering SfW Rural Skills and the majority of these centres continue to use the SFEU Course support resources. Centres modified NABs for students with additional support needs, where appropriate.

## **Evidence Requirements**

Centres were generally well acquainted with the Evidence Requirements for the Course. This is evidenced by the fact that all external verification visits were successful and no 'Holds' were issued. Some minor issues were identified and these are listed in the 'areas for improvement' section below.

Documented and, routinely applied, internal verification procedures are improving year upon year. The vast majority of centres are fully aware of SQA internal verification requirements and these are fully implemented.

## **Administration of assessments**

Generally, record keeping was good and assessments were carried out in accordance with the requirements of the NABs.

## **Areas of good practice**

Areas of good practice identified during external verification visits are detailed below:

- ◆ 'The materials presented were of a very high standard and clearly laid out. This was the centre's first external verification after approval for delivery of the award and it was good to see everything being done to such a high standard with great attention to detail.'
- ◆ 'The centre has developed a course which allows the young people to easily achieve the outcomes of SfW Rural Skills, the chickens give plenty of opportunity to develop skills and responsibility.'
- ◆ 'The visits for the Land-based Industries Unit have exposed the young people to a range of career paths and all have positive destinations to go on to.'
- ◆ 'The enterprise opportunities opened up have allowed the young people to develop a wide range of employability skills as well as the potential for self-employment.'
- ◆ 'The centre was clearly committed to making a very positive learning experience for the young people.'
- ◆ 'The centre has a particularly clear way of recording evidence for each candidate that was easy to follow in an electronic system. This was the case for both candidate work and verification records/summative resulting.'
- ◆ 'In the Estate Maintenance Unit, the centre had adapted the requirement of the NAB to identify tools and supplemented this with photographic evidence of the candidate actually using some of the tools. This was a useful way of demonstrating the authenticity of the pupils' work.'
- ◆ 'The feedback given to candidates in the Employability Skills Unit was constructive and useful for the candidates' development.'
- ◆ 'The use of live verification for the practical activity is a useful way of standardising approach and authenticating evidence.'
- ◆ 'The real work environment provided by the riding centre was excellent and provided candidates a perspective on a future career in the land-based industries and opportunities in the equine sector.'
- ◆ 'There are clear progression routes and articulation with further education.'
- ◆ 'A high proportion of candidates will be progressing to the NPA in Rural Skills (Equine) next academic year.'
- ◆ 'Excellent time-tabling — a whole day per week is set aside for course delivery — this is an enlightened approach to the delivery of vocational qualifications in the school sector.'
- ◆ 'Good use of cross-verification between the two assessors and internal verifiers with easy-to-follow verification paperwork which was complete and comprehensive.'

- ◆ ‘Good use of supplementary photographic evidence of practice for the crop production, estate maintenance and soft landscaping activities.’
- ◆ ‘There was strong evidence that candidates were engaging with the investigation sheets of the Land-based Industries Unit and also the employability reviews — and reflecting on their activity from the evidence presented.’
- ◆ ‘Good use of partner expertise (land engineering) to deliver some of the assessment activity in estate maintenance and soft landscaping.’

### **Specific areas for improvement**

There were a number of areas for improvement. Recommendations to specific centres are listed below:

- ◆ ‘The centre should ensure that full-time candidates are aware of their assessment progress and attainment within the SfW Award they are undertaking.’
- ◆ ‘The centre should share good practice with delivery staff in relation to risk assessment, employability reviews and general completion of paperwork and recording of candidate work.’
- ◆ ‘Staff should take the opportunity to attend CPD courses in the land-based sector, particularly practical skills to build confidence.’
- ◆ ‘The centre should ensure that Unit assessment criteria are correctly adhered to in relation to the quantity of evidence to be produced and avoid over-assessing candidates.’
- ◆ ‘The centre should ensure that it implements more robust internal verification procedures, to support the assessment process and meet SQA centre approval requirements.’
- ◆ The centre should review the chosen crop used within the Crop Production Unit. A crop that can be more easily scaled-up to reflect commercial practices and which can include practical visits to local commercial sites would be more appropriate.
- ◆ ‘In the Land-based Industries Unit there could be evidence of seeking ‘deeper’ responses. For example, when asked about seasonality, they could be asked to explain more thoroughly what happens to beef cows at different times of the year etc.’
- ◆ ‘The candidates produced a wealth of formative and summative evidence in the form of posters, presentations and photographic materials for many of their assessment tasks. It would be worth considering helping the candidates to produce their own portfolios independent of the summative evidence.’