



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2015  
Core Skills: Numeracy (WA)**

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

# Workplace Assessed Units

Titles/levels of Core Skills Units verified:

F429 04 Numeracy SCQF level 3

F42A04 Numeracy SCQF level 4

F42B04 Numeracy SCQF level 5

F42C04 Numeracy SCQF level 6

## General comments

There was a total of 50 reports produced by five External Verifiers with two Holds placed on certification. The reason for the two Holds was failure to meet the standards outlined in the Unit specifications.

All centres had an induction policy, including specific induction for assessors and internal verifiers. All centres had comprehensive quality policies and procedures and the roles of the assessors and internal verifiers were clearly stated as were the requirements of the national standards. All centres had regular staff meetings to monitor and review candidate progress and to discuss standardisation. Evidence from the reports suggests that all assessors and internal verifiers are fully conversant with the range of policies and procedures put in place to support their role.

All assessors and internal verifiers have an appropriate training qualification or, in a few cases, are working towards the qualification. Internal verifiers were actively involved in the initial induction and training of assessors and in reviewing their progress. Internal verification of new assessors was generally a 100% sample, reducing to 50% or 25% once they had gained experience in assessing the award.

In most centres the quality assurance system was co-ordinated by the SQA centre contact who had responsibility for dissemination of information from SQA, staff induction and training, arranging CPD activities, co-ordination of internal and external verification events, and auditing the SQA processes.

Most centres had a master file, either in paper or electronic format, containing information relating to the systems and procedures for the delivery and quality assurance of the qualification. Assessors and candidates were involved in planning and reviewing assessments and most candidates maintained an individual learning plan.

Most centres were using the Assessment Support Packs (ASPs), but there was evidence of some contextualisation and the use of naturally occurring evidence. Comprehensive CPD records were maintained for all assessors and internal verifiers and annual personal development reviews were the norm. Documentation was presented in a clear and concise form that assisted the external verification process.

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

It was clear from the external verification reports that assessors and internal verifiers were familiar with the Unit specifications and in the vast majority of cases were making use of a checklist, in line with the ASPs; candidates and assessors could cross-reference between the evidence and the checklist to ensure that all the standards were met.

The ASPs were being used extensively to provide information on the method of assessment and the standard required. The level and amount of evidence required was discussed at standardisation meetings. Candidates were judged consistently and accurately against the award standards.

A large number of reports indicated that centre staff should try to include more evidence from naturally occurring activities in the workplace to provide evidence for the achievement of the Numeracy Units.

### **Evidence Requirements**

The Unit specification is quite clear that candidates have to show competence in a range of activities.

There is clear evidence from the reports that most assessors discuss the Evidence Requirement with candidates. This allows candidates to identify naturally occurring evidence from their workplace. However, where no naturally occurring evidence was identified, the ASPs or locally developed packs were used to provide the required evidence.

Most centres made use of a checklist, usually from the ASP, to ensure that each aspect of the Unit was explicitly achieved. Regular internal verification of the Units ensured that the level and amount of evidence was agreed and standardised. In all centres the assessment decisions of newly appointed assessors were subject to 100% internal verification.

### **Administration of assessments**

Centres made full use of the information provided in the Unit specification and ASPs to ensure that assessments were at the correct level. Regular standardisation meetings ensured that any new assessments were scrutinised by all staff and the level agreed.

Most candidates have individual learning plans and gather a portfolio of evidence. Where evidence was produced naturally, witness testimony could be used to verify the process. The evidence would then be subject to internal verification and would be discussed at a standardisation meeting.

Methods of assessment were reported to be valid, reliable and practicable. Internal verification procedures were reviewed annually by most centres. In general, internal verification procedures were robust and effective and feedback from internal verifiers was constructive and helpful.

## **General feedback**

In general the feedback to centres was positive in terms of the quality procedures in place and the decisions made by the assessors and internal verifiers. In all centres, candidates had regular contact with assessors and were supported in planning their assessments.

The majority of centres used the ASPs, or had produced variations based on the packs but contextualised for a vocational area and the evidence produced met the requirements of the standards. However, in a number of centres, staff have been advised to make use of naturally occurring evidence: this could involve cross-referencing the evidence produced in the SVQ vocational subjects with the requirements of the Numeracy Unit in an effort to cut down on assessments and to highlight the relevance of numeracy in the vocational area.

Candidates should be encouraged to identify where evidence for the Numeracy Unit could be obtained.

## **Areas of good practice**

All reports commended centres for their effective organisation and on the quality of the documentation presented. All centres had quality master files, either in paper or electronic format, containing details of the quality policies and procedures.

Most centres had an SQA master folder containing up-to-date Unit specifications, learning and teaching materials or website references, assessments and re-assessments, marking schemes, checklists, candidate registration, internal verification forms, and minutes of meetings. Most candidates had an individual learning plan and produced a portfolio of evidence. In many cases e-portfolios were produced.

There was strong evidence of effective engagement between the assessors and candidates in planning learning and scheduling assessments. Regular staff meetings took place in all centres to discuss candidate progress, standardisation and CPD requirements and opportunities. In the majority of centres robust internal verification supported the assessment process and ensured that standards were being maintained.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

As mentioned in the General Feedback section, centre staff should encourage candidates to identify naturally occurring evidence and should also identify activities in the workplace that could be generate evidence to cover the Core Skills Numeracy requirements.

Team meetings should consider cross-referencing evidence obtained from the workplace with the requirements of the Numeracy Unit. This should help to highlight the relevance and significance of Core Skills to the candidates.