



**National Qualifications 2017
Internal Assessment Report
Skills for Work: Early Education
and Childcare**

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

National Courses

Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare at SCQF level 4 (C221 74)

Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare at SCQF level 5 (C246 75)

General comments

The Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare courses develop employability skills in candidates. They focus on the practical and personal skills required to work with children and young people in the childcare and playwork sectors. These courses provide an experiential route to candidates who wish to progress to further study or to move into employment.

This area continues to grow with a number of additional centres adding the Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare courses to their SQA portfolio.

In session 2016–17, external verifiers reported very positive outcomes from their visits.

Course arrangements, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Course arrangements

Candidates study the Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare courses in schools, training providers and colleges.

Centres have various partnership approaches in place to share teaching and learning or to provide candidates with practical experiences. These partnerships are between schools, colleges, other training providers, local authorities and employers. They support course delivery and enhance the learning experience for candidates by providing opportunities for them to hear from guest speakers or participate in workplace experiences that link theory with practice.

Unit specifications

Over this academic session, external verifiers confirmed that centres were working competently with current unit specifications. Assessors had a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards and the appropriate SCQF level. External verifiers found that centre staff, assessors and internal verifiers, understood the process and practice required to deliver these courses well, while complying with course arrangements and unit specifications.

External verifiers noted that centres were using innovative approaches to learning and teaching to cover all criteria and knowledge within unit specifications comprehensively. Centres were focusing on experiential learning, learning through practical experience, and learning by reflecting on experience. These approaches extended and expanded the learning experience and met all the requirements of the unit specifications. Centres provided excellent materials, resources and experiences to support these learning and teaching approaches.

Instruments of assessment

The majority of centres were using National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials, which incorporate a number of assessment methods and cover all evidence requirements in the unit specifications. External verifiers found that assessors download these from SQA's secure website as required and therefore use the current instruments of assessment. Many centres have adapted the format of the NABs (font or style) while maintaining the rigor of the assessment instrument.

Evidence requirements

During session 2016–17, centres delivered all units within the Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare frameworks. Centres presented evidence for external verification for the following units.

National 5 Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare framework:

- ◆ Child Development and Health (F19L 11)
- ◆ Play in Early Education and Childcare (DM41 11)
- ◆ Working in Early Education and Childcare (DM84 11)
- ◆ Care and Feeding of Children (DM60 11)
- ◆ Parenting (DM86 11)
- ◆ First Aid (F19M 11)

National 4 Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare framework:

- ◆ Child Development (DM83 10)
- ◆ Play in Early Education and Childcare (DM41 10)
- ◆ Working in Early Education and Childcare (DM84 10)
- ◆ Care of Children (DM85 10)
- ◆ Parenting (DM86 10)
- ◆ Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children (DM5V 10)

External verifiers found that candidates were meeting the evidence requirements of these units. They were encouraged to find evidence of candidates reflecting on assessment tasks in a coherent and meaningful way.

Administration of assessments

External verifiers found that centres were using NAB materials and these were being administered according to the required assessment conditions. Assessors' judgments met the requirements of the units, and were valid, fair and internally verified to ensure consistency of practice.

From the evidence presented, it was clear to external verifiers that most candidates had received very positive and constructive feedback from assessors, which supported their learning and the development of the skills and knowledge required by the course.

Most centres were following SQA guidelines for re-assessment, and where required, remediation was carried out appropriately.

In most centres, external verifiers found evidence of robust verification, with effective internal verification policies, processes and paperwork in place. Internal verification records and minutes from standardisation meetings were detailed, clear and accurate and contained constructive feedback for assessors.

Some centres use online internal verification systems to keep accurate verification records. Internal verifiers used these systems effectively to support assessors and assessment practice.

Areas of good practice

Professional partnerships

Across centres, external verifiers found evidence of strong professional partnerships. Assessors and internal verifiers have developed strong links with local professionals, organisations and agencies and this has had a positive impact on learning.

Centres are also liaising with one another about learning and teaching, assessment practice, and internal verification. This helps to inform their processes and develop quality and standardisation.

Learning experience and employability

Centres have demonstrated that they have a clear understanding of, and commitment to, developing their candidates' employability skills. External verifiers highlighted many excellent examples of experiential or enhanced learning opportunities that have supported employability attitudes and skills. They identified learning experiences, practical activities and placement opportunities that have developed the skills and attitudes of candidates for employment. Centres have developed candidates' understanding of the workplace and their responsibilities, self-evaluation skills, team-working skills and a positive attitude to learning.

Co-operative learning environment

External verifiers noted the co-operative learning environment in many centres, for example:

- ◆ In one centre, staff encouraged candidates to pair up outside their friendship groups and walk a mile to get to know each other.
- ◆ Another centre developed a social media page for all staff and candidates on the course to support and develop team-working and communication skills. Staff post course materials, classwork examples, and evidence of practical workshops to the page. Candidates reported that this had allowed them to get to know other members of the class and to use social media to support their learning. Staff reported that candidates responded to the page very effectively and that it supported relationship building among staff and candidates.

These, and many other examples, have had a positive impact on peer relationships within class groups.

External verifiers also found that many centres were committed to the development and aspirations of individual candidates. External verifiers commended the commitment of assessors and internal verifiers to their candidates.

Professional development

External verifiers found that centre staff had completed various professional development opportunities to ensure they had the sufficient knowledge, skills and experience across the sector to enhance the course delivery.

Specific areas for improvement

Assessment practice

External verification highlighted that some centres need to ensure consistency of approach to assessment practice. Assessors should have the opportunity to engage with quality assurance before completing unit assessments to ensure they are making valid, reliable and fair assessment decisions, compliant with the SCQF level of the units.

Candidate feedback

Many centres provided excellent feedback to their candidates; however, a few have been providing regular undocumented verbal feedback after each assessment. Candidates and assessors find written feedback useful when identifying and discussing areas for remediation or re-assessment. Internal verifiers find written feedback about assessment decisions valuable during internal verification.

Internal verification

In session 2016–17, external verifiers continued to see improvement in internal verification practice. Some centres still need to develop internal verification procedures that provide formal evidence of support for assessors, recording of internal verification decisions, and standardisation of assessment practice. These centres should develop clear and accurate records of internal verification activity, and formalise reports of meetings and standardisation activities, to ensure support for assessors and the reliability and validity of their assessment decisions.