



**National Qualifications 2017
Internal Assessment Report
Skills for Work: Engineering 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: Engineering Skills at SCQF level 4

Skills for Work: Engineering Skills at SCQF level 5

General comments

Five centres were selected for external verification this session. Two colleges and one school were delivering the National 4 course, one school was delivering the National 5 course, and the remaining school was delivering both courses.

One of the schools was offering the National 4 course for the first time and another was offering both courses for the first time. Both of these schools required extensive support from the verifier during their visits.

The other centres have a comprehensive understanding of national standards as they have been offering the courses for several years.

In one centre, a member of the quality assurance team introduced the external verifier to the centre's policies and procedures relating to assessment, standardisation, candidate evidence, sampling and internal verification decisions. This resulted in a seamless and effective verification visit. In all other centres, teaching staff delivering the courses covered this step with the external verifier.

All centres received satisfactory visits.

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

The experienced centres are now familiar with the course arrangements and record the requirements from the unit specifications as part of their internal verification procedures.

These centres were making use of the SQA-produced National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials and the support materials produced by Scotland's Colleges.

Both centres offering the courses for the first time developed their own assessment materials. One centre used various tables and checklists from other courses. This centre did not supply any marking schemes for their assessments. The other new centre produced satisfactory assessments and marking schemes.

Both of these centres had poor internal verification procedures. The external verifiers provided suggestions for improvement.

Evidence requirements

All centres had a clear understanding of the evidence requirements of the courses. A few assessors do not fully understand the importance of the employability skills integrated within each individual unit. One centre used a spreadsheet to record employability skills, but this did not monitor progression or provide feedback to candidates, which is an important aspect of these courses.

Administration of assessments

Most centres presented evidence of appropriate internal verification procedures to the external verifiers. The two centres offering the National 5 course for the first time, however, did not fully understand the difference between the internal verification requirements for National Courses and National Qualifications.

One centre registered all candidates for the National 5 course and re-registered unsuccessful candidates for the National 4 course as a fallback measure. They did not then assess these candidates using the National 4 assessment materials. The external verifier advised this centre that the National 4 units were significantly different from the National 5 units and that there was no automatic fallback.

The majority of centres do not recognise the importance of employability skills and, in a few cases, feedback to candidates was scant or non-existent.

For these courses, centres do not need to retain candidates' practical work for external verification. Candidates can take their completed work home. Centres can keep photographic evidence in a portfolio or logbook.

Areas of good practice

One centre developed a project brief for the National 5 Design and Make unit that provided an excellent interaction between the Electronics and Mechanical and Fabrication units, resulting in all of their candidates recording excellent reports of their activities.

Another centre used industrial testing methods to aid their candidates' understanding of the standards required.

One of the centres offering a course for the first time established and formalised an excellent range of industrial partners. Candidates at this centre clearly benefitted from these experiences.

The quality officer at one centre was on hand to meet the external verifier at the start of the visit to present the relevant centre procedures and policies relating to assessment and verification, before introducing the internal verifier and assessors. This ensured that the visit was straightforward and effective. The external verifier highlighted this process as an area of good practice for all centres to consider adopting.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres should identify potential weaknesses in candidates' technical and employability skills at an early stage of the course and monitor progress throughout the course by providing written feedback.

Schools that rely on internal verification procedures written specifically for National Qualifications should ensure that they are adapted for National Courses, and highlight the staff nominated as assessors and the internal verifier before the courses start. They should also formally record all standardisation decisions at this stage to prevent issues later.

Centres should make use of the recording documentation in the SQA-produced NABs even if they develop their own assessment material. These centres should develop marking schemes in tandem with their assessment materials — the external verifier should not have to make assessment decisions about candidate evidence.