



**National Qualifications 2017  
Internal Assessment Report  
Skills for Work: Uniformed and  
Emergency Services**

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

# National Courses

Skills for Work: Uniformed and Emergency Services at SCQF level 4 (C251 74)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: An Introduction (F38R 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: An Introduction (Scotland) (H6SE 74)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Health, Safety, Fitness and Wellbeing (F38S 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Engaging with the Community (F38T 10)

Uniformed and Emergency Services: Working in Teams (F38V 10)

It should be noted that unit H6SE 74 forms a part of group the award Scottish Studies (GG64 44). It is identical to unit F38R 10, with the proviso that it should be delivered and assessed in a Scottish context. Centres are advised to ensure that they deliver the unit appropriately.

## General comments

Five centres were visited during session 2016–17, which is fewer than last year. A number of centres previously presenting candidates were unable to run the course this session. Regrettably, in one instance the verification visit resulted in a hold being placed. This was due to the centre misinterpreting the role of the support documentation produced by Scotland's Colleges. Additionally, one development visit took place. It is encouraging that centres perceive this service as a valuable way to enhance their delivery.

As has been reported previously, a number of centres are delivering the course in conjunction with the Army Cadet Force (ACF). The processes used in these cases have become much more robust over the last two sessions, with ACF activities used to feed into the assessment process suggested in SQA produced exemplar material. As previously mentioned this is good practice as it allows a more rounded approach in keeping with the underlying ethos of the Skills for Work programme.

Discussions with tutors/assessors/internal verifiers generally confirmed a clear perspective of the course rationale and requirements. External verifiers have discussed with all centres the scope of the SQA prior verification service.

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

External verification, approval, and development visits indicate that staff responsible for delivery and assessment are generally familiar with all the documentation relating to the course. Centres approved this session are using SQA developed assessment support pack (ASP) material. The ASP for Unit *Uniformed and Emergency Services: Health, Safety, Fitness and Wellbeing* (F38S 10) contains reference to the Food Pyramid. Food Standards Agency guidelines have replaced this with the 'Eatwell Guide' (note this is an additional update to the 'Eatwell Plate' mentioned in previous reports). This has been discussed in detail with centres during approval and verification visits. Centres

are reminded that it would be appropriate to update their assessment materials accordingly.

### **Evidence Requirements**

In the previous report, comment was made regarding issues with the standard of candidate evidence in terms of the quantity, presentation, and clarity. It is pleasing to note significant improvements across all centres visited during the current session. Candidate folios generally contained adequate evidence, including tutor checklists and self-reviews, though in some instances it was necessary to reinforce the evidence requirement that some activities should take place in a 'specific service environment'. It remains essential that all delivering staff familiarise themselves with the full scope of the unit specifications prior to delivery. Whilst this is a condition of pre-delivery internal verification checks, it appeared that minor changes to some centre assessment processes had caused a small amount of 'drift' in terms of the way that evidence requirements were met. This was highlighted in previous internal assessment reports.

Once again, reports for centres requesting development visits showed that considerable thought had been put into the delivery pattern and suggested activities. A common point of discussion centred on the difficulties encountered in the conduct of the individual reviews, especially when larger cohorts are concerned. A number of strategies were discussed with centres to help alleviate this issue.

### **Administration of assessments**

See also comments above regarding the evidence requirements for units, and the FSA Eatwell Guide. Centre visits indicated a holistic delivery pattern is common, with assessment material generated throughout the course in a variety of different formats. Centres are reminded of the importance of ensuring that candidates have a clear picture of their progression through the various units where this approach is taken. As stated in previous internal assessment reports, centres using additional material (for example, Army Cadet Force, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Heartstart/Emergency First Aid), are reminded to ensure that assessment activity is appropriately mapped against the outcomes and evidence requirements of the units, and at the correct SCQF level. The issue highlighted above regarding 'specific service environments' is also instrumental in ensuring the underlying ethos of this award is maintained. Assessment evidence presented during verification visits was generally logged effectively, allowing the verifiers to easily follow the material presented. This also helps delivering staff and candidates track progression, and enables effective internal and external verification.

The SQA unit specifications and assessment support material enables a variety of formats to be used to generate evidence. Centres have developed effective individual approaches to ensure that all candidates are able to maximise learning and skills transfer. Many centres use staff with contacts or experience in either uniformed or emergency services — this is good practice, allowing a high level of context-specific knowledge and personal experience to enhance delivery of the

course. Many centres have developed extensive contacts in order to enhance delivery.

Internal verification processes, assessment and recording processes, and the development of centre-devised assessments were discussed at length in all centres visited.

## **Areas of good practice**

Examples include:

- ◆ Multiple delivery options are in use, influenced in part by the variation of different cohorts. This is particularly true in schools looking to develop a variety of experiences for candidates in different year groups: the course delivery in schools ranges from S3 to S6. The emphasis on the development of personal reflective skills which underpin Skills for Work programmes is encouraging
- ◆ Tutors/assessors, internal verifiers and support staff in centres frequently have personal experience of uniformed emergency services (UES), giving significant authenticity to the teaching process.
- ◆ Local links continue to form the major curricular input for many centres, with activities and visits utilising UES personnel and environments predominant. One centre had produced high quality evidence using the local Mountain Rescue Service for a search and rescue exercise for the *Uniformed and Emergency Services: Working in Teams* unit.
- ◆ A wide variety of learning and teaching styles promoting inclusion for all candidates are evident. A number of centres used innovative delivery and planning to enhance candidate experience.
- ◆ The use of mock interviews as part of the teaching input utilising materials mirroring Army and Police requirements is adding significant value for candidates.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Areas for improvement include:

- ◆ Centres should be aware that if delivering the course in a holistic manner it is important that candidates have an awareness of their own progression and target achievement. Different approaches to logging this tend to be somewhat constrained by centre processes. Centres are reminded that reproducing unit specifications for candidates is not helpful due to the complex language and terminology used. It is beneficial for candidates to have the requirements/briefs for assessment and formative work in appropriate language.
- ◆ Centre reports indicate effective practice in some aspects of delivery of the award, but it is important that once a centre has gained approval for delivery that a clear perspective is maintained on all aspects of delivery, assessment, and verification (see comment on assessment drift above). This relates not only to ensuring that evidence requirements are adhered to, but also basic

centre recording process such as signatures, dates, candidate achievement, and effective internal verification.

- ◆ As previously stated, centres delivering the award should give careful consideration to the requirements of the internal verification process, and ensure that paperwork is standardised and completed timeously. This is particularly important where alternative assessments are developed.
- ◆ Centres using external providers or other courses to enhance/support/underpin the course must ensure that assessment is appropriately mapped against the unit requirements, and that cognisance is given to the appropriate SCQF level. It is not appropriate to simply indicate where criteria might be met: there needs to be a clear statement. Should any centre be unsure of how to carry out this process they should contact SQA to request a development visit.