Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017
Childcare

Introduction

The following qualifications were sampled this session:

Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 9 (GH5X 24)
Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7 (GH5W 23)
Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 6 (GH5V 22)
SVQ Children's Care Learning and Development Levels 2 (G81Y 22)
SVQ Children's Care Learning and Development Levels 3 (G81X 23)
SVQ Children's Care Learning and Development Levels 4 (G81W 24)

Category 2: Resources

Criterion 2.1: Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.

(This criterion should be completed for regulated qualifications only.)

Staff at almost all centres fulfilled this criterion. Almost all staff are professionally competent and qualified to deliver the awards, and almost all also hold the relevant assessor/verifier qualifications. Staff information and evidence of competence and qualifications was available for external verifiers to review. CPD records were also available, and demonstrated recent and relevant activity. CPD records are — in the main — good, and examples within reports have been highlighted as good practice.

In more than a few centres, there have been issues with unqualified assessors signing off units without a qualified assessor's countersignature. This can be difficult in small centres where there is only one assessor and one internal verifier. This issue will be discussed at the Scottish Awarding Body Forum in November 2017, to find a solution and support centres' efforts to meet assessment strategy requirements.

It may be useful for assessors and verifiers to complete the CPD toolkit, showing how they are working to and understand the current national standards of assessment/verification (L&D9Di/L&D 11).

One external verifier commented on an early years' setting where the centre is the actual working nursery, noting that assessors and verifiers showed a commitment to career-long professional learning for their CPD, and the fact that they are work-based seemed to make this a natural occurrence.

Criterion 2.4: There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments and equipment, and reference, learning and assessment materials.

Almost all centres comply with this criterion. In the reports reviewed this year, there is clear evidence that assessment environments, equipment, reference, and learning materials are reviewed regularly. Centres' frequency of review cycles varies; some are annual, while others are longer. External verifiers are required to ensure they are aware of the review timescales the centre has decided to adopt before giving feedback about compliance.

Centres appear to be using the SQA-preferred, 3-stage model of verification; however, there is some variation in its implementation, and this will be explored in a workshop at the SVQ updates in November 2018.

There is a difference between assessment environments within early years and residential settings; however, the assessment practice is relevant to the specific setting. Within residential/secure accommodation, the limited number of unit options still causes some difficulty. The Sector Skills Council (SSC) is presenting a paper at the Scottish Awarding Body Forum in November 2017 that will address this issue. The sector will be informed of any changes to the SVQ frameworks.

Category 3: Candidate support

Criterion 3.2: Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.

Centres demonstrated different methods for recognising prior achievements, including the use of a separate form to claim these, and to ensure candidates receive credit for recent courses/certificates they have completed.

External verifiers' reports clearly show that almost all centres deliver an induction process for candidates that explains what they need to do to complete their qualification. Feedback from external verifiers confirmed that the candidate induction process within centres covers areas such as Quality Assurance, the SCQF Framework, levels of the awards being assessed, and roles and responsibilities of each person in the assessment process. In some centres, this induction process involves candidates completing an induction checklist.

In one centre, it was noted that 'the readiness for assessment documentation is mapped to the SCQF level of the award being assessed. The SVQ team work very closely with the training facilitators within the organisation to ensure standardisation of training materials and approach, to help identify any courses that the candidates have completed and where relevant can be mapped to their SVQ.'

Criterion 3.3: Candidates must have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly.

All centres comply with this criterion. Where a centre uses an electronic system, eg 'Proof Positive', the degree of scheduled and regular contact between assessor and candidate is clear.

In those centres that use paper portfolios, assessment plans and records of contact contained within candidates' portfolios clearly showed scheduled and regular contact between the assessor and candidate. This frequency of contact ensured that candidates had clear expectations of what they had to complete before their next meeting with the assessor.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

Criterion 4.2: Internal assessment and verification procedures must be implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.

External verification reports sampled this session clearly detailed good use of the Assessment Strategy in conjunction with the 'Guidance to Assessment' document. Candidates' evidence is of a good standard in almost all centres verified. The SCQF level of awards has changed the standard of written work produced by candidates and one of the most frequent quotes from external verifiers has been that the work sampled meets the SCQF level of the award.

Internal verification clearly happens in centres and each has its own sampling strategy. Centres appear to be using the SQA-preferred, 3-stage model of verification; however, there is some variation in its implementation. This will be explored in a workshop at the SVQ updates in November 2018.

As noted above, it may be useful for centres to review CPD for assessors and internal verifiers to ensure that they are working in line with current national standards for assessment and verification (L&D9di and L&D 11).

Criterion 4.3: Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable, and fair.

All centres use a range of appropriate evidence-gathering methods, and adhere to the Assessment Strategy. Candidates have produced highly detailed, reflective accounts and products of practice.

One report notes that a centre's internal verification has included feedback on assessment evidence being valid, reliable, practicable, equitable, and fair; this allows the internal verifier to identify that these are being implemented across all candidates' work.

Where candidates require additional support during assessment, centre staff make extensive use of professional discussion, questioning, and observation to support candidate requirements.

Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.

Almost all centres complied with this criterion. In reports reviewed, candidates sign declaration forms and the centres have clear policies to combat plagiarism and malpractice.

External verifiers noted that observation, witness testimony, and expert witness methods of assessment have all been used to confirm the authenticity of candidates' work. This criterion will be discussed during our next standardisation meeting for external verifiers, to clarify that, while we would prefer candidates to use an academic referencing system within their reflective accounts, we cannot find a centre non-compliant for this criterion for not ensuring that this is the case.

Criterion 4.6: Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements.

External verifiers reported that they had sampled candidates' evidence across almost all units within all awards being delivered by centres.

For almost all centres external verifiers confirmed that the candidate evidence was clearly at the required SCQF level of the awards being assessed, and that this was consistently the case.

The assessment cycle is being followed within centres, with evidence of planning, giving feedback and making judgements/decisions.

Subsequent to a workshop presentation about holistic planning at a recent customer support event, there is now evidence of a holistic approach to assessment planning. This has been implemented by centres through different mediums, eg mind-mapping.

In almost all centres, the standard of candidate evidence is discussed and agreements reached during standardisation meetings, for which minutes are available. This clearly demonstrates that standardisation adds to the quality of assessment delivery. External verifiers reported that consistent and accurate judgements and decisions are being made within these centres.

In a very few centres, some development work is still required in relation to the standardisation of candidate evidence. Standardisation will be explored in a workshop at the SVQ updates in November 2018.

Criterion 4.7: Candidate evidence must be retained in line with SQA requirements.

All centres comply with this criterion although they do not all have the same policy. Some centres retain candidate's evidence for longer than SQA requirements and this is down to other mitigating circumstances, eg funding issues or other organisational reasons.

In order ensure standardisation across centres, we would suggest that centres include a section about SQA retention requirements in their data cleansing and record and retention policies

Criterion 4.9: Feedback from qualification verifiers must be disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

All centres comply with this criterion. Evidence from reports reviewed showed that centres disseminate feedback to assessors and verifiers. Some centres also send reports to directors or chief executives to inform them of candidates' achievements.

Some assessors and verifiers have included these reports within their CPD records, through discussions with external verifiers' assessors and internal verifiers confirmed that they received and discussed the external verifiers' reports.

Areas of good practice report by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2016–17:

♦ The linking of some examples of CPD activity, such as the internal verifier observing the assessor and feedback, to L&D9Di standards

♦ An improved standard of candidates' written work, thanks to the inclusion of the SCQF level of the award

♦ The use of detailed assessment plans to help candidates write holistically from the start

♦ Use of a separate form for candidates to claim prior achievements, so that candidates can get credit for courses they have recently completed

♦ Maintenance of a decision log from standardisation meetings, providing excellent information on assessors' consistency of judgements and decisions

♦ The archiving of external verification reports in one central folder in which action points are noted, along with information on who carried out the action and when

♦ An outstanding level of commitment and support to candidates from assessors

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2016–17:

♦ Implementation of the SQA-preferred, 3-stage model of verification

♦ Standardisation

♦ CPD toolkit for assessors and verifiers who do not hold the current standards for assessment and verification. (L&D9Di/L&D11)