Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017
SVQ Management

Introduction

This verification group covers the following awards:

GC49 22   SVQ 2 in Team Leading at SCQF level 5
GC46 23   SVQ 3 in Management at SCQF level 7
GC47 24   SVQ 4 in Management at SCQF level 9
GC48 25   SVQ 5 in Management at SCQF level 11

plus several Professional Development Awards, each of which consists of two units drawn from the management standards.

Centres have been very comfortable with the awards, the standards and the assessment strategy over the years. The awards have now been revised and the new revised awards went live at the beginning of May 2017 and the SVQs above entered their lapsing period at the end of May 2017. However, there will be plenty time for current candidates to complete their SVQs. The lapsing (or run out) period is two years for SVQ 2 in Team Leading and four years for the other SVQs in Management, ie the current SVQ in Team Leading will finish on 31 May 2019 and the current SVQs in Management on 31 May 2021. The new titles and codes are as follows:

GM28 22 SVQ in Team Leading at SCQF level 6
GM26 23 SVQ in Management at SCQF level 7
GM27 24 SVQ in Management at SCQF level 9
GM25 25 SVQ in Management at SCQF level 11

It is not anticipated that the new revised awards will create difficulties for centres as the underpinning assessment strategy and approach continue to be the same and any changes made to the standards are relatively minor and straightforward. Work has been carried out to update the web page, assessment guidance, and candidate recording forms and these are now available to centres. Work continues on updating the support materials and should be available at the end of 2017.

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.

The majority of assessors and internal verifiers have been involved with SVQ Management for some time and, in addition to knowing the standards well, are also used to working with the portfolio method of assessment normally used for SVQ Management.

The occupational competence of all centre teams that were verified fully met the requirements of the assessment strategy, as did their assessment and verification competences. While there have been limited changes in assessment/verification teams, where there have been changes centres have strong recruitment and selection procedures and induction arrangements for new members. These processes include a range of good practice, such as: new assessors being

shadowed by existing assessors; allowing new assessors to make provisional assessment decisions which can then be formally discussed with experienced assessors and internal verifiers; and sampling plans which reflect the level of risk associated with new assessors.

A few centres have developed performance management systems designed to provide support to new and existing assessors and internal verifiers. Such approaches ensure that the delivery team is fully aware of the requirements of the standards, and knows of any changes to those standards or, of course, to the assessment strategy for Management SVQs.

CPD arrangements in centres are generally strong, and the majority of internal assessors and verifiers fulfil the requirements of three management-related entries, and have maintained familiarity with the assessment strategy.

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

It is encouraging to note that the majority of centres continue to refine, rework and continually improve their approach to SVQ Management. Centres use site selection checklists, and many use the SQA pro forma, to ensure that the assessment environment is safe and appropriate to the awards. A key driver for change is technology, and the use of e-portfolios to support delivery of the awards is now a key feature of the Management SVQs. Centres continue to develop their own systems, documentation, learning resources, induction materials and handbooks, and the majority show significant evidence of ongoing review. The development of updated resource materials to reflect the changes in the standards scheduled for the end of 2017 should help centres to ensure that their provision is up to date.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Qualification verification reports confirm that all centres carry out initial interviews. In some instances, candidates may have been pre-selected by employers, but where this does occur there is a clear understanding of the standards and the requirements of the awards. The majority of centres use diagnostic checklists to ensure that candidates can meet the requirements of the awards and are in a position to generate appropriate evidence. All centres have in place induction arrangements for candidates, and these appear to work well. Overall, it is felt that centres are complying well with this requirement.

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

Feedback from candidates continues to be very positive, reflecting the hard work being carried out in centres by internal assessors and verifiers. The majority of centres demonstrate robust systems to ensure that candidates are appropriately supported, and this includes clear assessment planning, regular meetings, e-mail, telephone and Skype. Assessment planning records, which in the main are good, could at times be more rigorously maintained, as on

occasion agreements made by phone or in discussion are not logged, and in some cases centres are doing themselves a disservice by not recording the good work that is being done. Contact diaries and logs, where maintained, provide excellent evidence of support to candidates, and centres are encouraged to maintain these.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres have in place appropriate assessment and verification procedures that fully meet the standards, and in general these are implemented appropriately. Many of these procedures are captured within the e-portfolio systems being used, and consequently provide a track of the assessment plans, assessor decisions, assessor and internal verifier feedback, and sampling. In many cases standardised templates are used, eg witness testimony, observation reports, and storyboards, and these are useful. Sampling tends to be strong across assessors particularly new assessors, however, sampling of more specialised units is not so robust. It is important when sampling to ensure that less popular units are sampled, and that sampling covers all units over time.

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

All centres are fully aware of the assessment strategy, and feedback from qualification verifiers indicate that these are working well. All centres have a strong understanding of how to build and reference work in candidate portfolios and in the main this is reflected well in the candidate evidence sampled. Centres should encourage candidates to use a range of assessment gathering approaches to evidence their work; not only is this good practice, it also enriches the portfolios for both the candidate and the assessment and verification team.

The thorny issue of reflective accounts continues to arise — the position regarding these has not changed over the years, yet qualification verifiers continue to comment on their incorrect use as performance evidence in qualification verification reports. Reflective accounts are not performance evidence; however, they may provide strong support for performance evidence, and may refer to performance evidence in the portfolio. They may be used as evidence of knowledge and understanding, and may provide a useful narrative which enables the assessor or verifier's understanding of the performance evidence provided, but they are not evidence in their own right.

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

All centres have in place appropriate malpractice procedures which help to ensure that the work is indeed that of the candidate. The nature of the SVQ and the one-to-one relationship between the candidate and the assessor also helps to ensure the authenticity of any evidence provided. As discussed earlier, using a range of evidence-gathering approaches ensures the quality and authenticity of candidate portfolios. The practice of candidates using, for example, blank pro

formas and/or other organisational documents, which cannot be directly attributed to the candidate, is declining, and centres should continue to ensure that this is the case.

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

Overall, qualification verifier reports confirm that the majority of centres are accurately and consistently judging candidate work. However, there are areas that still give some cause for concern and centres are asked to be mindful of these.

Sufficiency

While there may be a few situations where one or two pieces of evidence may well cover the requirements of a particular unit, it has to be said that these are few and far between. On all occasions there must be sufficient robust evidence to show that the standards are met in their entirety.

Signposting

It is important that candidates are able to demonstrate how the evidence provided meets the standards against which proficiency is claimed. This may be through statements, annotation or professional discussion and must be clear to the assessor and internal verifier. This is particularly important where evidence is claimed against more than one unit.

Reflective accounts

Please see earlier comments.

Knowledge and understanding

It is important that candidates demonstrate an underpinning knowledge which reflects the level of the award being undertaken. In some instances the knowledge and understanding may be self-evident from the evidence, but this is not always the case. Support materials are available for a number of units and candidates should be encouraged to use these. On occasion there is very little evidence to suggest that this is happening, and centres are reminded of the importance of the need for candidate to show that they have the knowledge to support their practice.

Specialised units

The principles underpinning specialised units (eg Manage Budgets, Manage Projects, and Manage Knowledge in Your Area of Responsibility) are no different from the other units within the awards. However, it is important that centres ensure that the requirements of the specialism are fully met to the depth outlined in the standards. On a few occasions this has not been the case, and it has not been clear whether the assessor or internal verifier is sufficiently comfortable with these 'less travelled' units. Centres must ensure that assessors are fully conversant with all the units for which they have responsibility.

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

Centres on the whole are compliant with the requirements here in terms of the length of time evidence must be held, and the requirements relating to security and data protection. Where centres are using e-portfolios, these requirements are in the main relatively easily attained.

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

Qualification verification confirms that centres have appropriate arrangements for the dissemination of qualification verification reports and the actioning of any recommendations. More often than not they are disseminated electronically to staff on receipt via SQA co-ordinators, and are discussed and actioned via standardisation and/or team meetings. Where actions are raised these are dealt with quickly and there is evidence from the minutes of standardisation meetings that the qualification verification reports are used to inform centre practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ use of standards to help build an assessor competence matrix across all units, and to help identify CPD requirements
♦ candidate support and direction in portfolio building enabling candidates to take early ownership of the process
♦ flexible contact regimes, eg e-portfolios, e-mail, phone, Skype
♦ use of mobile technology, which further enhances and widens the opportunities to gather evidence
♦ the innovative use of technologies to help bridge links between evidence and standards, eg video and voice recording
♦ use of standardisation meetings to support CPD, eg identifying new and current management topics or unit areas for research and discussion
♦ the use of decision and action logs
♦ strong and flexible support models for candidates

Specific areas for development

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

♦ develop ideas on sufficiency through standardisation
♦ clearer signposting across the standards
♦ ensure that sampling plans reflect the range of units being delivered
♦ finally, probably most importantly, familiarisation with changes to the new standards