



National Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018
Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil
Engineering

Verification group: 161

Introduction

This report is for the Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering: GL51 46 within verification group 161: Construction Technician. Four centres were externally verified by two external verifiers (EVs).

Delivery of the Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering was provided by several colleges in Scotland. The qualification is relatively new to the verification group 161 portfolio and there has been significant growth in the uptake and delivery by centres in 2017–18.

The following units from the Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering were externally verified during session 2017–18:

H65W 46	Construction Project Management: An Introduction
F3JC 12	Mechanics for Construction: An Introduction
F3J6 12	Civil Engineering Site Work
F3J7 12	Civil Engineering Technology
H66H 46	Civil Engineering Materials
H669 46	Health & Safety in the Construction Industry
H3AP 04	Develop and Maintain Working Relationships and Personal Development in Construction

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.

Almost all assessors and internal verifiers have extensive and relevant occupational experience and have sufficient competence related to the qualifications delivered. Almost all assessors and internal verifiers have gained the required training and development qualifications as required by the assessment strategy for the qualifications. Only two assessors were working to the standards and both provided evidence of registration for the qualifications with completion dates.

All staff provided very good records of recent and relevant continuing professional development (CPD) activity, and in all cases, centres presented CPD records in a very good format.

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

All centres demonstrated very effective ongoing reviews of assessment procedures. This was evidenced through minutes of standardisation meetings, assessment reports, internal verifier reports, and candidate feedback.

For the units within the National Certificate in Civil Engineering, the assessment environments are the college classrooms, laboratories, workshops, and fieldwork areas. For the SVQ units, site selection checklists are used to confirm that the environments are safe prior to candidate work placements.

Centres use SQA-devised assessment support packs (ASPs) and centre-devised re-assessment instruments for the NC units and use assessment instruments from the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for SVQ units.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

EVs confirmed that all centres demonstrated that candidate needs and prior achievements are matched against the requirements of the qualification. All centres set minimum pre-entry qualifications requirements at SCQF level 6 and worked closely with school partners to ensure that candidates' needs were matched and suited to the qualification. All candidates were interviewed by the centres prior to enrolment on the foundation apprenticeship, and there is clear evidence that candidates were provided with very good information and guidance prior to entry.

All centres have developed excellent handbooks for potential candidates, for school guidance, and for employers. The handbooks provide information on the type of evidence required by candidates, the foundation apprenticeship frameworks, typical support provided by lecturers/assessors, work placements, and employer engagement.

All centres provided evidence of excellent partnerships and good working relationships with local employers. The local employers support candidates by providing work placement opportunities to enable candidates to gain the SVQ work-based unit/s that form part of the foundation apprenticeship.

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

EVs observed that all centres provided regular timetabled contact between assessors and candidates for NC unit study. The centres also provided timetabled assessor support to candidates during the SVQ unit/s development and to review progress. There was also an opportunity during this time for the assessor and candidate to revise assessment plans.

All candidates are school based at years S5 & S6. All attend college on a day release basis from school, and study NC units in S5 only, and a combination of NC units and the required work-based (work placement) unit/s in S6.

In some cases, assessors visited candidates on site to provide additional support to candidates and to liaise with employers on the performance and input of candidates during their work placements.

EV reports commented upon the positive feedback received from candidates that had been interviewed during the EV visits. Candidates confirmed that they had received excellent pre-course guidance, ongoing assessor support, and stated that studying alongside employed candidates brought many benefits, including a further insight into the typical job roles undertaken by employed candidates.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

In all cases, centres demonstrated robust quality assurance of the assessment and internal verification process through assessment and internal verification policies, procedures, assessment, and internal verification reports. All centres have very clear and supportive guidelines for assessors, internal verifiers, and candidates to follow and advise on their responsibilities.

It was clear in all cases evidenced by both assessor and internal verifier reports as well as candidate feedback that policies and procedures are being applied by centres.

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

All centres use the SQA-devised ASPs as the assessment instrument for the NC units being delivered and centre-devised re-assessment instruments were also available within all centres externally verified. All centres use assessments in line with the NOS for the work-based SVQ unit.

All assessors used a variety of assessment methods to generate evidence, including direct observation, questions and answers, product evidence, and witness testimonies.

In all cases, the EVs confirmed that all assessment instruments and methods were valid, reliable, practicable, equitable, and fair.

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

All centres have developed clear policies and procedures on malpractice and plagiarism and in most cases, candidates were required to complete candidate declaration forms to confirm that only their own work will be submitted as evidence.

EV reports confirmed that all centres conducted assessments under the conditions of the unit requirements for all units verified.

Assessors meet with candidates each week during timetabled lessons and are fully aware of candidates' strengths and areas for development. This enabled assessors to ensure the authenticity of candidate evidence. In most cases, employers provided witness testimonies as part of candidate evidence for work placement activities.

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

Assessor reports, internal verification report, and EV reports confirmed that, in almost all cases, candidates' work had been accurately and consistently judged by assessors. In most cases,

assessor reports were comprehensive in nature and provided good quality and supportive feedback to candidates. Internal verifier reports for many centres provided good, clear, and comprehensive feedback to assessors with action points where required to confirm accurate and consistent assessor judgement.

All centres adopted a range of strategies to mitigate risk and to confirm accurate and consistent judgement by assessors. This included double marking of assessment scripts, standardisation meetings to review marking standards, and robust internal verification of assessment scripts.

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

All centres demonstrated a thorough knowledge of SQA requirements on the retention of candidate evidence and associated documentation. Some centres retain documentation electronically and the candidates' hard copy scripts and portfolios are stored securely.

There were no issues reported relating to the retention of evidence for the purposes of external verification review.

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

All centres that were subject to external verification provided suitable and well documented minutes from standardisation meetings to disseminate feedback from EVs to all relevant staff on assessment practices.

Minutes from standardisation meetings included required actions, the person responsible to undertake the actions, and completed action timescales.

Three out of the four centres that were externally verified were delivering the foundation apprenticeship for the first time. There were no previous recommendations from previous visits, nor any major issues arising from the delivery of the qualification.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ High quality of documentation developed by centres to support the assessment and internal verification process, including course handbooks.
- ◆ The use of electronic portals to provide evidence for the work-based unit.
- ◆ Excellent partnership arrangements with employers.

Specific areas for development

The following area for development were reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ A wider range of evidence types should be used for the work-based unit.
- ◆ Time-allowances for NC units should be accurate and consistent across centres.