



Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Workplace Core Skills:

**Problem Solving and Working with
Others**

Introduction

External verification of workplace assessed Core Skills units in Problem Solving and Working with Others revealed high confidence ratings in almost all centres. Visiting verification reports revealed a good overall standard in the delivery of these units.

Centres delivered the units alongside a range of learning programmes such as:

- ◆ SVQ in Hairdressing levels 2 and 3
- ◆ Social Service Child and Young People levels 3 and 4
- ◆ Employability Award EF stage 2
- ◆ Certificate of Work Readiness

The Core Skills units were delivered as an integral part of the Modern Apprenticeship frameworks.

Visiting verification activity highlighted the importance being placed on holistic approaches to learning assessment in centres. Here are some comments from verification reports:

‘Almost all centres deliver Core Skills using a holistic approach, using instruments of assessment: observation, work product, photos and questions.’

Centres use ‘a holistic approach to the Core Skill whereby SVQ evidence is cross-referenced into the assessment support packs’.

SVQ Core Skills

Problem solving

F42H 04	Problem Solving SCQF level 3
F42J 04	Problem Solving SCQF level 4
F42K 04	Problem Solving SCQF level 5

Working with others

F42M 04	Working with Others SCQF level 3
F42N 04	Working with Others SCQF level 4
F42P 04	Working with Others SCQF level 5

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.

External verification activity reported on the dialogue with centre staff and the procedures for assessment and internal verification. Workplace Core Skills delivery is directly linked to the development of CPD. This was explained in one verification report in the following terms:

‘CPD for assessors and ways of collecting the evidence to support the process was evident. There was good evidence of standardisation activities and working together showing CPD again. The centre has development days, which include the development of Core Skills Problem Solving and Working with Others.’

All centres were compliant and staff were appropriately qualified and competent to assess and internally verify workplace assessed Core Skills. All staff held relevant assessor/verifier qualifications and a few were undergoing the process of achieving L&D 9DI and/or L&D 11. Evidence of staff occupational/subject-based competence and qualifications was readily made available and revealed an impressive array of professional standards.

External verifiers continue to recommend the use of the SQA CPD toolkit and point out how this can support the mapping of assessor verifier awards to subject workplace Core Skills competence.

External verifiers identified good practice in more than a few centres, as highlighted in the following quotes from their verification reports:

‘The centre CPD records are simply outstanding and evidence current professional workplace developments as well as other aspects of training undertaken and associated with the delivery of the Modern Apprenticeship awards.’

‘Observation of internal verifier roles occurs twice a year and the centre provided detailed records of verifier performance and qualification standards.’

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

Almost all centres provided evidence of systematic initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; reference, learning and assessment materials. Basic risk assessment procedures were in place to record the testing of equipment, annual checks and ‘spot’ checks.

Health and safety procedures were robust and fit for purpose and applied rigorously in the workplace environments. Many centres supported work-based learning ‘on the job’ and ‘off the job’, allowing learners to return to the learning base to support the achievement of the MA award and other qualifications, especially the Core Skills.

SQA assessment support materials were routinely in use and assessors and internal verifiers were competent in their delivery. Internal verification systems were in place to support initial and ongoing checks, eg unit specifications, assessment instruments, candidate checklists, and learning and reference materials.

Almost all centres used digital technology to support the delivery of Core Skills units, eg computers, laptops, tablets, iPads, Smartboards, WIFI, internet. Learning and teaching materials were customised and contextualised to the delivery of workplace Core Skills. Initial and ongoing reviews of learning and assessment materials would be aided by use of an easily visible version control footer on documents, with the current version indicated on an audit checklist which would be reviewed on an annual basis.

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 routinely matched candidate development needs and prior achievements against the requirements of all awards using SQA Connect. External verifiers were able to see how SQA approved centres supported the needs of candidates using established recruitment, induction, training and development systems and procedures.

All centres provided well established pre-entry and induction training to identify individual development needs. An individual learner action plan was in place to support candidate progression.

Action plans included scheduled structured reviews aimed at supporting learners to address development points, such as oral and/or written communication skills, attendance, health and safety, reviewing workplace tasks and reflecting on progress to inform next steps.

Candidate development needs are wide ranging: literacy and numeracy; specific learning difficulties; mental health and wellbeing issues; medical conditions; personal and/or welfare issues. Workplace providers continue to address the multiple complex development needs of learners and to provide advanced systems of recording learner progress.

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

All centres had well-established systems and procedures in place to support candidates, with scheduled contact to review progress across various stages of the programme delivery.

There was consistent evidence of scheduled contact with assessors and systematic reviews to support candidate progression. Assessment plans were in place and information was being recorded and acted upon in line with SQA and other awarding body requirements. Verification reports revealed the true extent of robust systems and procedures, for example:

'The centre has a procedure in place for assessors and candidates to meet on a regular basis, this is every 6 weeks where they complete a detailed assessment plan indicating the purpose of the review meeting, progress to date and overall outcomes of units including the candidate's next steps. The centre also reviews the candidate every 13 weeks to discuss progress to date, then next steps, this is part of the SDS contract that the centre holds.'

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Internal assessment and verification procedures were routinely implemented in almost all centres and this ensured standardisation of the assessment process. The adoption of the three stage model further supported the standardisation of assessment judgements.

Internal assessment and verification decisions in almost all centres were carried out prior to external verification visits. Assessor and internal verifier judgements were mainly supportive, but could have been more informative to support candidates and to show the internal verifier how decisions had been reached. Internal verifiers need to provide constructive feedback to assessors, especially where candidate responses fall short of the unit standard. Remediation can be used to further support and enhance the quality of candidate folio evidence.

Centre assessment and internal verification procedures and policy documents were routinely made available, and qualification verifiers were able to see the cycle of verification activity within a centre.

There was consistent evidence of scheduled standardisation meetings, for example:

‘Internal verification endorses a 100% sampling policy year on year. This is further supported by scheduled observation of internal verifiers which occurs twice yearly. Standardisation minutes of meetings are comprehensive and cover assessment, verification and programme delivery. Standardisation minutes record meticulously action points and decisions.’

However, more than a few centres need to consider the use of decision logs to record decisions made.

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

SQA assessment exemplars for workplace assessed Core Skills units in Problem Solving and Working with Others were routinely in use in all centres and contextualised to workplace tasks.

Core Skills evidence was gathered using tasks associated with workplace activities in the context of the overall programme design, for example: stock taking tasks associated with Business Administration programmes; tasks associated with Food and Drink Operations — customer service; distribution and production processing skills.

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

SQA candidate disclaimers were routinely in use within all centres. Centre policies and procedures were in place to ensure candidates understood the importance of ensuring the authenticity of their own work. Centre induction programmes highlighted the individual responsibilities of candidates. Malpractice and plagiarism was explained and candidates clearly

understood the importance of abiding by SQA requirements throughout the assessment process. Assessors and internal verifiers had carried out assessments in accordance with the required conditions.

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

Assessors consistently judged candidate evidence against SQA's requirements in almost all centres. Candidate evidence revealed a consistently high standard and it was clear that Core Skills requirements were being met using the development of knowledge and understanding and performance.

External sampling revealed many assessors were providing accurate and consistent assessment judgements. A very few assessors were inconsistent in their judgement of candidate evidence, and this was often attributed to poor tracking or tasks where there were limited opportunities to generate appropriate evidence of the Core Skill, eg a lack of depth of evidence of the problem solving approach.

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

All centres retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements, and longer if necessary. Candidate evidence is retained for longer periods by some centres due to the requirements of other awarding bodies and/or funding requirements. This can vary from a minimum requirement of three weeks to three years and beyond.

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

Feedback from qualification verifiers is routinely disseminated to staff within centres and recorded in standardisation minutes and action logs.

External verification reports indicated where centres had acted positively upon previous non-compliance issues and within agreed deadlines.

Records of standardisation meetings were made available but there was limited use made of decision logs in order to keep track of actions taken. Centres need to consider how the use of decision logs can support the standardisation of assessment judgements.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ CPD records contained current professional qualifications and training undertaken to enhance individual professional development.
- ◆ Core Skills activities continue to evidence ‘naturally occurring’ evidence of problem solving and working with others in the workplace.
- ◆ Centres continue to observe assessor observations in the workplace to standardise assessment judgements and assessment practice.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ It is recommended that assessment materials should have a ‘front cover audit checklist’ which indicates that an annual review has taken place of all the learning and assessment materials.
- ◆ More than a few centres need to make use of a decision log to record standardisation decisions.
- ◆ Assessors and internal verifiers need to challenge candidate responses that do not meet the national standard. Greater use should be made of ongoing remediation and support to enhance the quality of candidate responses.