



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications, Higher National Qualifications and
National Qualifications Units and Awards**

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Customer Service

Introduction

There were 46 visits to centres for the academic year 2017–18, and verification covered a variety of customer service units and qualifications in verification group 297 Customer Service:

SVQs in Customer Service

GL0E 21	SVQ Customer Service (SCQF level 4)
GL0F 22	SVQ Customer Service (SCQF level 5)
GLOD 23	SVQ Customer Service (SCQF level 6)

HN and NQ Units and Awards in Customer Service

GG2A 45	Award in Customer Services: Principles and Practices Award (NQ)
F38W 10	Skills for Customer Care (NQ Unit)
HIFO 34	Creating a Culture of Customer Care (HN Unit)

Of the 46 centres visited in 2017–18, 28 are very experienced, established and competent and have well-qualified and knowledgeable staff, and deliver a sound, well-documented and organised qualification. Their candidates enjoy the training and are usually successful. Centre policies continue to be well set up and extensive, and are continually monitored and modified. The other 18 are new centres which had their first qualification visit since approval, and are well organised with either paper based or online assessment material for the candidates.

There is an ongoing issue relating to the number of registered candidates for some of the SVQ centres. The majority of these centres have very few active candidates at any one time, with most having only four candidates. This issue is mainly related to the introduction of the employers' apprenticeship levy (for employers with a wage bill of more than £3 million) and changes to the ground rules for funding. Many of the centres visited in 2017–18 are again not sure if further candidates will be recruited for the SVQs in Customer Service due to these factors. Despite these challenges, these centres are generally coping well and trying out other qualifications, for example, the Certificate of Work Readiness which includes the NQ customer service unit F38W 10 – Skills for Customer Care. The majority of new centres visited were delivering this unit.

Improving technology has helped, with far better broadband access and centres investing in online assessment programmes. This allows assessors and candidates more flexibility, while not compromising standards.

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.

For the SVQs, all centre assessors and internal verifiers continue to be fully qualified and have sound occupational experience, holding correct units D32, D33, A1 or L&D9 for assessor, or D34, V1 or L&D11 for verifier. CPD is well documented using a variety of recording methods, including participation in events. Some centres had used SQA's CPD Toolkit which they found helpful in ensuring assessors/verifiers were working in line with current assessor/verifier qualifications. Only four centres had a recommendation to include specific customer service activities in future CPD records.

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

All qualification verifier reports confirmed that centres were reviewing assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials for each candidate. This was recorded both at the initial stage, and during reviews throughout the qualification. Evidence was also seen of assessors and internal verifiers maintaining internal communication records of standardisation meetings and internal verification feedback. At most of the centres, the majority of assessments are carried out in the workplace, but some centres, do have access to well-equipped training rooms with IT access to simulate if required, for certain elements of the unit.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

All qualification verifier reports confirmed that all candidates at all 46 centres had undergone a full induction onto the award. This includes analysis of prior learning and the matching of this against the qualification requirements. Centres also arrange for optional units to be discussed and agreed at induction, to ensure candidates are working towards relevant units. Qualification verifiers were able to evidence these systems and processes by viewing centre induction packages, induction handbooks, candidate portfolios and assessor visit records.

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

The frequency of assessor meetings with candidates varied between centres, but in all cases were scheduled and regular, with most being between two- or four-weekly outwith the actual assessment. This information was included in the candidate assessment plans, progress reviews and e-portfolios where these were being used. The qualification verifier reports showed an increase in the number of centres using technology for recording

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All 46 centres verified have established and agreed assessment and verification procedures that are thorough and well documented and meet SQA requirements. The qualification verifiers were able to view minutes from planned standardisation activities where evidence requirements for units from the qualification had been reviewed. Assessment and internal verifier activities were recorded and signed off by the assessor and candidate, and internal verifier if sampled. Assessment evidence usually originates from the candidate's work place, and may take a variety of forms, including product evidence, question and answer, video, witness testimony, reports etc.

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

All entries use a variety of assessment instruments, including question and answer, direct observation, product evidence, witness statements, candidates' own personal statements and contact diaries/logs. All qualification reports confirmed that customer service assessments were applied fairly to all candidates. Centres provided evidence of standardisation activities which ensure reliability and consistency of assessment decisions. Qualification reports also commented on a holistic approach to assessment being used in line with SQA qualification guidelines.

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

Centres have various ways to ensure that all candidates' evidence and work is their own. Some centres require candidates to sign an anti-plagiarism pledge at induction. Some centres made their own version or used SQA's candidate declaration document. No evidence of malpractice was identified in any of the centres visited during 2017–18.

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

Based on the qualification verifier's reports and discussion with assessors and candidates, evidence of candidates' work is accurately and consistently judged at all centres and meets SQA's requirements. All centre assessment and internal verification judgements examined were consistent. At college centres this is supported by the established college systems. Where the assessment is work based, using evidence such as question and answers, report, or video, assessment and internal verification is very thorough and continues to be accurately and consistently judged against SQA's requirements.

At all centres, candidate work is assessed against the current customer service standards, and standardisation activities are carried out to ensure that all assessors are assessing to the same level, thus ensuring consistency of judgement.

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

Qualification verifier reports confirmed that all centres are aware of the SQA candidate evidence retention requirements and that centres have a copy of the SQA evidence retention policy. Some centres have e-portfolio systems to record and store candidate evidence.

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

All 46 centres use various methods and procedures, as part of the centre's assessment and internal verification procedures, to disseminate to all relevant staff the findings of qualification verifier reports. All centres share the feedback electronically, and this is normally followed up with a staff meeting where the qualification verifier report is discussed in more detail, especially if any action needs to be taken within a timescale set by SQA.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ Good use of modern technology, with more centres using e-portfolios and preparing user-friendly materials for qualification verifiers to sample when visiting centres.
- ◆ Good range of evidence submitted by candidates, including excellent use of photographs and video to confirm candidates' performance while undertaking assessment.
- ◆ A lot of SVQ centres are ensuring assessors and internal verifiers have updated their knowledge to units L&D9, D1 and L&D11
- ◆ More relevant customer service entries were evidenced on CPD records

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Centres should continue to ensure that criterion for 2.1 (Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification), 2.4 (There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials) and 4.6 (Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements) are reviewed and are in line with SQA requirements at all centres.
- ◆ Centres should continue to ensure CPD entries relate to customer service to meet the requirements of the assessment strategy.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that all centre staff have read the latest guidance on the SQA website regarding National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development for assessors and verifiers, and SQA's *Your Coursework*, which covers plagiarism and collusion, to meet all requirements to undertake the award. Also, there is a very handy Internal Verification Toolkit on the QA page of the SQA website for assessors and verifiers.