



Regulated Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Licensed Trade Qualifications

Introduction

Regulated Qualifications

GG7T 46	Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders
GG7N 46	Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher)
GG7R 45	Scottish Certificate for the Safe Sale and Service of Alcohol
GA8F 62	Award for Personal Licence Holders (QCFVRQ) Level 2

Where practicable, arrangements for verification visits had been organised throughout the year in order to observe the course delivery, the examination, and complete a systems check. Verification activity confirms that the majority of centres which were involved in verification activity were compliant with visit plan requests for records and documentation.

SQA allocated 27 centres to visiting verifiers, at which 20 successful visits took place. A few centres informed the verification team that they were not currently running courses, had stopped offering the courses, or had ceased trading. Six new centres have come forward for approval to deliver the awards during this session.

It is important to remind centres that visits may be made without prior notice, in accordance with the Operational Handbook, and SQA reserves the right to deploy its verifiers in any way which might help to uncover malpractice.

The main programme being delivered this year was Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (SCPLH), followed by Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher) (SCPLH-R) and limited uptake of the Scottish Certificate for the Safe Sale and Service of Alcohol (SCSSSA) course.

Group sizes varied, and the maximum number has generally been 12. The training and delivery strategy is based on an interactive model for delivery and, as such, the maximum group size for course delivery is 18 and the minimum is 2.

It is important to reiterate that compliance with the Operational Handbook is mandatory and group sizes outwith this recommendation should be approved by SQA before course delivery.

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.

It was apparent during visits that staff are appropriately qualified, and the majority of staff recorded relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity in an appropriate manner.

There were recommendations to improve the recording of CPD activity in some cases.

Candidates have again been complimentary of the course tutor in some centres, and highlighted that their knowledge of the industry and legislation proved useful in helping them understand the facts and information being presented to them.

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

SQA course materials were being used in most cases. Centres are reminded that any centre-devised learning materials need to be prior approved by SQA.

All legislative updates provided by SQA had either been added to the Licensing candidate handbook at the time of postage, or provided as a handout during course delivery.

Some tutors used a variety of industry props including spike stoppers, posters, centre-devised hands-on activities and industry related apps, which proved popular with candidates during the course delivery.

Site selection checklists have been made available during verification visits in the majority of visits this session. Each centre used premises for the delivery of the course according to the group size and their location. Tutors often travelled distances to provide the course in locations away from their own centre.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

The qualifications within this verification group support candidates attending a short programme of study, and development needs and prior achievements are reflected upon for suitable admission to the correct programme of study only.

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

These programmes are delivered as a full-day or half-day session, and therefore the centre is only required to schedule contact in accordance with the Operational Handbook requirements.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Environment

Centres have used a combination of their own premises and carefully selected venues to host delivery of the qualifications. Site selection checklists have been made available during the majority of visits to ensure compliance with SQA standards and to ensure the exam environment is compliant with the conditions set out in the Licensing Operational Handbook.

Assessment material

Centres have complied with the requirement to ensure candidates have access to the Candidate Handbook seven days in advance of the course on most occasions. Late enrolment on the course had on occasion meant handbooks had been hand delivered.

During verification, most centres demonstrated a clear understanding and commitment to ordering exam papers using the correct SQA secure system.

Candidate instructions

Joining instructions for the candidates have, in most cases, been provided and confirmed by candidates. In some instances, the candidates were not aware they had to bring a form of identification with them, and had to return home before the examination.

Visiting verifiers made recommendations for instruction letters to be updated for future delivery. There have been no restrictions or barriers highlighted that would prevent any candidate joining these programmes. The majority of centres confirmed that they held a discussion either face-to-face, by e-mail or by phone prior to placing the candidate on the course, to ensure that the appropriate course was selected and the candidate was available for the course date.

Examination conduct and instructions

It was apparent through verification reports that most centres were compliant regarding examination conduct, room layout and sufficient spacing between candidates.

It was noted that the verification team had to remind centres to display appropriate exam signage and ensure a clock was visible during the examination. Centres also needed to be reminded that no unauthorised personnel should be entering the examination room and that candidates should not be leaving the examination room until 20 minutes had passed. These are both mandatory requirements within the Operational Handbook, and verifiers checked that tutors and invigilators were aware of these procedures.

There was evidence of marker reports being completed for the majority of examinations; however, feedback from SQA suggests that not all marker reports are submitted to SQA or sent in a timely manner.

Centres are reminded of the requirements to adhere to the Operational Handbook, which clearly states that examination papers must not be copied at any time. Centres must inform SQA before any attempt is made to copy an examination paper under special circumstances.

Independent Invigilation

In the majority of circumstances, the final administration of assessment was compliant with the Operational Handbook.

It is important to ensure that SQA is notified if tutors will be invigilating the examination, and notification can be made at the time of ordering exam papers, using the appropriate online system.

Candidate identity checks

A variety of methods have been used to record the identification of candidates, including course enrolment forms and separate identification checklists. It is essential that centres ensure that an appropriate identification is validated, preferably by the course tutor and the independent invigilator (if applicable). Centres are encouraged to reflect on the guidelines within the Operational Handbook.

Examination marking

Some centres marked the examination papers following the examination, and the marker provisionally intimated their mark before leaving the premises. During discussion and observation during verification it was apparent that the answer key for the question paper was kept separate and secure. Other centres marked the paper once they had returned to the centre address. Candidates were generally notified of their mark within 24 hours.

Internal verification

It was evident to visiting verifiers that internal verification/second marking had taken place on exam papers, and these were being signed and dated appropriately and in accordance with the Operational Handbook.

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

Assessment instruments

SQA-devised examinations are the only allowable method of assessment for the awards within this subject area.

Centres are able to choose assessment through SQA Solar, an option which only one centre has used this session, as the majority of centres favour paper-based assessment.

SQA question packs for paper-based assessment have, in the majority of instances, been ordered through the correct channels on the SQA Licensing website. Visiting verifiers highlighted the need to follow the correct procedures for the award to avoid delays in delivery.

It has been highlighted on several occasions that some centres are leaving the course notification and question paper ordering very late. In some instances, this has not allowed assessment papers to be posted in time for the examination or to be sent them to the registered address. It is important to reiterate that compliance with the Licensing Operational Handbook is mandatory, and to ensure that centres' exam paper control documents are updated appropriately and accurately.

Methods of delivery

Programme delivery and assessment is regulated and is part of the visiting verification review. Verifiers confirmed that only a small number of centres were not structuring the course in an appropriate manner and disadvantaging candidates by rushing through the course.

As part of verification activity, verifiers check to ensure that the course materials are suitable and structured to facilitate learning, are up to date with necessary legislative amendments, and meet the requirements of the Operational Handbook. In most cases, these procedures have been followed. Group size has been one issue raised, as it is a requirement to ensure sufficient candidates are present. Another area that was highlighted was course delivery schedules. Timings for delivery should ensure the appropriate length of time is allowed. This should be consistent with the mandated course length set out in the training and delivery strategy for the courses.

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

Assessments undertaken by centres have not highlighted any areas of malpractice during this session. There was however evidence to suggest that centres had experienced problems with candidates leaving the exam room before the 20-minute period stipulated in the Operational Handbook. It is important that centre staff report these incidents to SQA in the appropriate manner.

Centres are reminded that access to mobile phones during the examination is absolutely prohibited.

Centres visited had not used readers or scribes or prompters, although this may have been beneficial for some candidates. Effective candidate joining instructions should help centres put appropriate systems in place.

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

SQA marking grids have been used correctly by centres to ensure the accuracy of marking. It has been confirmed during verification visits that these marking grids have been kept separate from the exam papers and retained in a secure location.

Second marking/internal verification was demonstrated by most centres and this varied according to centre policy. Some centres completed 100% internal verification, and others sampled borderline pass/fails, or randomly selected a sample for second marking purposes.

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

The retention of examination papers was compliant in the majority of centres. It was apparent that some centres kept used exam papers for longer than the prescribed six-month period from the exam date.

Most centres kept copies of their exam paper control document, candidate ID checklist, and marker reports. Centres are reminded that procedures for retention of examination papers and associated documentation must be followed.

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

Most of the larger centres have provided evidence of standardisation meetings taking place to discuss course delivery, assessment, verification and any actions arising. The minutes of meetings highlighted the key personnel, and who was responsible for any actions arising. It was clear that smaller centres may not hold standardisation meetings. However, it is important to remind centres that they should continually reflect and review on programme delivery as part of their SQA approval status, in addition to meeting the requirements of the Operational Handbook.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following examples of good practice were reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ Tutor experience, real-life examples and current industry knowledge was reflected in the overall course delivery and positive feedback from candidates.
- ◆ The rapport between tutors and candidates proved positive, and aided questioning from candidates.
- ◆ The use of industry props was found particularly useful for people with limited knowledge of the industry.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Centres are reminded that all course tutors should have access to the Operational Handbook and the Training and Delivery Assessment Strategy
- ◆ It is important to ensure that all evidence detailed on the verification visit plan is available for verifiers to view during visits
- ◆ It is important to remind centres that due to the regulatory requirements of the programmes, staff files which demonstrate competence of staff, occupational expertise, qualifications and CPD will be requested at each visit, and should be presented to verifiers as clearly requested on the visit plan.
- ◆ CPD activity varied, and staff should clearly record the activity undertaken and its relevance in keeping up to date with licensing legislation, eg reading trade journals, reviewing licensing websites, talking with the LSO etc — please refer to the Operational Handbook for possible CPD activity.
- ◆ Exam paper version number should be clearly recorded against each course delivery. Often this is recorded on the candidate register/ID checklist to clearly identify the version of the paper that was completed by each candidate and ensure that any candidate requiring a resit does not take the same version again. It may also be of renewed importance, as some candidates may retake the refresher course to meet the 2019 relicensing requirement recently announced by the Scottish Government.