National Qualifications 2014
Internal Assessment Report
Personal Social Development

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Qualifications

Titles/levels of NQ Courses verified:

C255 10: Personal Development (Intermediate 1)
C255 11: Personal Development (Intermediate 2)
C255 12: Personal Development (Higher)

Titles/levels of NQ Awards verified:

G9RW 44: Steps to Work
G9D4 46: Leadership Skills
G9D2 43: Employability Award
G9CY 44: Employability Award

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

F2FV 10: Self Awareness
F2FV 11: Self Awareness
F2FV 12 Self Awareness

F37W 10 Self in Society
F37W 11 Self in Society
F37W 12 Self in Society

F37X 10 Self and Work
F37X 11 Self and Work
F37X 12 Self and Work

F37Y 10 Practical Abilities
F37Y 11 Practical Abilities
F37Y 12 Practical Abilities

F786 10 Preparing for Employment: First Steps
F787 10 Building own Employability Skills
F788 10 Responsibility of Employment

F78C 12 Leadership Skills: An Introduction
F78D 12 Leadership in Practice

D36H 11 Work Experience
D36N 10 Enterprise Activity

EE35 09 Contemporary Issues 1

H18W 43 Practical Abilities

F57F 10 Preparing to Work

General comments

The number of Personal Social Development (PSD) qualifications being delivered in schools, colleges, local authorities and private training providers continues to grow year on year and this year is no different. There are a number of reasons for this:

♦ Growing recognition of the need to develop learner self-confidence and self-esteem

♦ The realisation that Personal Social Development Units and Awards develop the individual in personal, social and vocational contexts

♦ Recognition of the importance of putting the learner at the heart of the learning process

♦ Adopting the principles of CfE in developing confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens, and effective contributors

♦ Embracing a PSD curriculum that develops Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work

PSD Awards and Units provide a flexible coherent framework that is current and can be adapted to suit the needs of a wide range of learners: personal and social skills development; academic achievement and progression across the SCQF framework; work placements/work-based learning; school/community projects; fundraising; community involvement; the development of task management and interpersonal skills, planning, action planning, reflection and self-evaluation. Personal Social Development qualifications and achievements promote the principles of lifelong learning through self-awareness, self in community, self and work, and the development of practical abilities.

PSD activity in 2014 provided a range of certification in Personal Development Units: employability; leadership skills; enterprise skills; preparation for work; steps to work; and work placement experience. Verification activity was carried out across 21 centres including schools, colleges and private training providers. Nineteen visits were successful, which reflects the high standard of delivery in Personal and Social Development Units and Awards. One centre proved to have no live Units running during the planned external visiting verification activity. One centre did not fully meet external verification requirements on the first visit but was successful following a second visit. It was acknowledged that the centre fully grasped the need to provide corrective action in the delivery of Personal Development Units.

The verification team continue to carry out a wide range of visiting and postal approvals as centres seek to implement PSD Units and Awards.

Development visits continue to provide centres with the support they require to deliver National Qualifications efficiently and effectively. The opportunity to be able to discuss PSD qualification requirements, assessment instruments, assessor/internal verifier roles, internal verification sampling, the recording of internal decisions/meetings and standardisation activities, and above all how to integrate assessment tasks, has proved very effective indeed.

External verification activity in 2013–14 clearly indicates that centres do have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. External Verifiers were extremely fulsome about the high standards and excellent good practice reviewed in the visiting verification activity. This can best be summed up in the phrase 'going the extra mile', which centres seem to continue to do year on year and which is synonymous with innovative practice in PSD delivery. This will be featured in the good practice section of this report.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

External verification reports continue to highlight significant levels of good practice and a sound application of national standards.

Centres have a high level of confidence in the use of SQA assessment exemplification materials and readily make use of them. There is to some degree an over-reliance on the use of SQA exemplification materials and a lack of confidence to develop alternative assessment instruments. This is particularly apparent in the growing need to integrate assessment activities in the delivery of National Awards.

For example, the Personal Development Awards can be evidenced with one project activity across all the Units where the aim is clearly stated within each Unit and the tasks and targets are identified against each Unit. Similarly, the Employability Award lends itself to the gathering of information using a folio approach. A simple matching exercise using the assessment instruments across all the Units can form the basis of the structure of the folio evidence.

SQA encourages centres to develop centre-devised assessment instruments and offers support in the form of prior verification. This means that assessment instruments generated by a centre can be forwarded to SQA, where the verification team will check them and produce a report confirming their suitability and/or giving guidance on how to develop them to meet the national standard.

Centres delivering Personal Development Awards and/or Units should consider the following information provided by External Verifiers:

♦ SQA exemplification materials have been written and vetted to meet the evidence requirements of the Unit specification. Any changes should be internally approved within the centre.

♦ Centre-devised assessment instruments can be sent to SQA for prior verification. Prior verification is the process by which centres seek validation of an internally produced assessment scheme before embarking on the Unit/Course to which it applies.

♦ All centres should as good practice consider making available a master pack which contains all relevant documentation including internal quality assurance procedures, eg Course Arrangements documents, Unit specifications, assessment exemplars, internal sampling/internal verification records.

- The Unit specification specifies the national standard and the evidence requirements. Centres need to ensure that they have read the Unit specifications.

Evidence requirements

- Visiting verification activity clearly indicates that centres have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for PSD Awards and Units.
- External verification reports show that centres and staff have a good understanding of the national standards and how to generate candidate evidence using a folio approach. One EV comment captured how this was achieved: 'A variety of evidence was shown including completed Course booklets, observations, witness testimonies, DVD… [and] support needs are met by a well-established support system'.
- Centres responded exceptionally well to the requests for external sampling, and candidate evidence was well organised and fit for purpose. Candidate folios were organised and grouped according to specific levels. Assessment records, folio checklists and Outcome checklists were made available, and this enabled sampling to be carried out effectively.
- Candidate evidence was clearly marked and presented mainly in written format. Centres encouraged the use of supporting written evidence with the use of photos, printouts, artefacts, witness testimony, and personal accounts.
- Evidence was judged against the marking schemes that are available in specific Unit exemplars, Unit specification requirements and Course Arrangements documents.

Administration of assessments

- Centres have a firm grasp of the assessment requirements in Personal and Social Development Units/Awards. The majority of centres have extensive experience delivering National Qualifications and are familiar with the national standards.
- Assessment delivery is generally very well organised, and assessment evidence is very well co-ordinated against the Unit/Award requirements.
- Centres were making good use of revised assessment exemplification especially in relation to CfE Personal Development Units.
- Administering assessments on a Unit-by-Unit basis is a common approach as candidate evidence can be matched against the requirements of specific Units. Integrated assessment can be achieved, mapping Unit requirements to tasks and using this as a folio checklist.
- Internal verification procedures continue to vary across centres. Visiting verification activity confirmed that centres are very proactive and are keen to build on current practice to ensure systems and procedures are fully fit for purpose. External verification feedback provides an insight into how this can be achieved:

    — Ensuring relevant discussions and assessment decisions are clearly documented

— Implementing an internal verification policy which is clearly understood by all assessors and internal verifiers

— Ensuring regular standardisation team meetings are scheduled where discussion takes place and decisions are clearly recorded

— Cross-centre verification and local networking between centres encourages the sharing of good practice and understanding standards

— Internal verification sampling can occur at the beginning, mid-point and/or end-point of the assessment process. Candidate evidence may not be appropriate to the level entered, and it is best to sample early on so that adjustments can be made and to ensure that candidates will gain credit for the level of work undertaken

Guidance on Internal verification can be found at:
www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/InternalVerificationGuideforSQAcentres.pdf.

Areas of good practice

There was a wealth of good practice reported by External Verifiers and the following examples will allow centres to build on existing good practice and help to raise the national standard.

♦ Personal Development Portfolios were well presented with a good compilation of evidence and really showcased innovative project work, eg fundraising and charity work, marketing and enterprise activities. One centre had included excellent prompt statements for candidates 'Where are you now?' 'What do you want to achieve in the future?' 'How are you going to succeed in this?' Good practice was identified in centres where there were clear and robust support procedures in place.

♦ Candidates continue to benefit from Personal Development certification in Self Awareness, Self and Community, Self and Work and Practical Abilities. The Course allows candidates to excel within the school environment and to develop lifelong learning skills that they can apply to their own individual development, learning and vocational goals.

♦ Depute Heads in some local cluster schools are meeting regularly to ensure consistency of understanding of assessment practice and the sharing of good practice.

♦ Teaching and learning resources are being placed on shared drives for assessors and internal verifiers to access.

♦ Centres continue to show a strong commitment to ensuring pupils have sufficient support.

♦ There has been a marked increase in the consistency and application of standardisation meetings and decisions being recorded.

♦ Candidate success is showcased and readily acknowledged at internal awards ceremonies.

♦ Written work was supported with excellent photographic evidence including wall displays.

♦ There was good evidence of candidate induction.

- There was a good system to support candidate reviews and progress reports.
- Internal verification within centres is more robust and fit for purpose with more centres adopting a formal system and procedures.
- The use of video evidence prior to work placement activity helped to build learners' confidence. A wide range of innovative work placement activities took place, eg boat building, growing local produce, primary school work experience and radio presentations.
- One contextualised delivery of Self and Work exemplified good practice, and in the words of the External Verifier 'the staff had tailored the learning, collecting of evidence and the assessment to the needs of the young people. The staff had even thought of the impact comments would have on their learners. This is a fine example of fitting the qualification to the needs of the learner.'
- There was good evidence of linking the delivery of the Personal Development Course to a progression route to the leadership qualification the following year. Candidates who had undertaken the Personal Development Course would carry out a mentoring role to new candidates undertaking the Personal Development Course.

Specific areas for improvement

- Candidates' performance in Personal Development at SCQF level 6 (Higher) should be monitored to ensure they keep up with the pace and the demand of the Course.
- Assessors need to ensure that, where time allows, they comment on candidate performance indicating the positive aspects.
- The use of a Unit-by-Unit front sheet can help to show that the Unit of work has been assessed, signed and dated by the assessor, and feedback completed.
- A candidate assessment plan could be introduced to assist in the timing of the delivery and achievements of Units.
- A programme/scheme of work can be helpful and allow new assessors to ensure consistency of practice across the delivery of Course assessment.
- An internal verification schedule is recommended and can support the timeline for internal sampling.
- There is a need to tighten up the internal verification process, having more consistency between assessors and internal verifiers.
- It is good practice to ensure that candidates' folio of evidence includes a declaration that the content is their own work.
- The delivery of Leadership skills must evidence the degree of analysis required in relation to the practical task; identifying the relevant sources of information; drawing conclusions and linking skills and qualities of leaders; identifying the factors; risk assessment and ensuring the review relates to leadership.