



**National Qualifications 2016  
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 (NQ) units

Titles/levels of NQ units verified:

F786 09/10 Preparing for Employment: First Steps

F787 09/10 Building own Employability Skills

F788 09/10 Responsibility of Employment

F789 09/10 Dealing with work situations

F78A 11 Leadership Skills: An Introduction

F78B 11 Leadership in Practice

F78C 12 Leadership Skills: An Introduction

F78D 12 Leadership in Practice

PD Self Awareness H18X 43; H18X 44; H18X 45; H18X 46

PD Self and Work H18P 43; H18P 44; H18 P 45; H18P 46

Self in Community H18N 43; H18N 44; H18N 45; H18N 46

Practical Abilities H18W 43; H18W 44; H18W 45; H18W 46

Practical Workplace Skills H188 04

D36H 09 Work Experience

D36H 10 Work Experience

F393 11 Developing skills for Employment

EE38 12 Contemporary Issues

H1P 42 Self in Community

H18W 42 Practical Abilities

H1GY 42 Self and Work

H1GV 42 Practical Abilities

## General comments

External verification activity in 2015–16 sampled a wide range of PSD units and awards in schools, colleges, local authorities and educational training providers.

Verification activity sampled units in the following awards:

- ◆ Personal Development at levels 3–6
- ◆ Employability
- ◆ Wellbeing
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Steps to Work

Centres are well and truly embracing CfE and have a very clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. The wide range of awards and units being delivered by centres reflects the diversity in the Personal

and Social Development (PSD) curriculum with emphasis on developing in learners’:

- ◆ self-confidence
- ◆ self-esteem
- ◆ health and wellbeing
- ◆ employability skills
- ◆ vocational aspirations
- ◆ leadership skills
- ◆ self-reliance

PSD activity contributes to the development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

PSD awards and units provide a flexible and coherent wider curriculum framework which allows centres to choose units and/or awards to suit the needs of learners in different contexts.

Visiting verification activity highlighted how successful centres are in providing high quality learning experiences which enables learners to generate evidence in line with national standards.

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 proven to be very effective indeed.

External verification activity in 2015–16 clearly indicates that centres do have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. External verifiers were extremely praiseworthy of the high standards and excellent good practice featured in the visiting verification activity.

One key development in 2016 has been the creation of new Work Placement unit specifications at SCQF levels 3–6 which will be available to centres in session 2016–17. The Work Placement units have been developed in response to the *Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce* standard which aims to:

‘achieve better connectivity and co-operation between education and the world of work to ensure young people at all levels of education understand the expectations of employers, and that employers are engaged.’

### **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

Centres continue to use SQA assessment materials; however, there is a growing desire to integrate assessment activities into learning and teaching. There is

good evidence to show mapping of the evidence requirements across PSD units and the recognition that improved integration reduces duplication.

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 a folio of evidence.

SQA encourages centres to devise their own 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. The PSD verification team will check any new assessment submissions and confirm their suitability and/or guidance to develop them to meet the national standard.

Centres delivering PSD units and/or awards 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.
- ◆ Internally devised assessment instruments should 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.'
- ◆ Centres may wish to consider maintaining all relevant documentation including internal quality assurance procedures and records; award arrangements documents, unit specifications, assessment exemplars within one folder which can be made available to external verifiers during a verification visit.
- ◆ The unit specification determines the national standard and the evidence required to show that the standard has been met. Assessors need to ensure that they have read and understood the unit evidence requirements. SQA assessment materials provide exemplification which meets the national standard.

### **Evidence requirements**

Visiting verification activity clearly indicates that centres have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for PSD awards and units.

Centres responded appropriately to external verification visit requests and candidate evidence was completed to a high standard, well organised and generally fit for purpose. Internal assessment records and folio checklists were readily available and supported the external sampling process.

Candidate evidence was clearly marked in accordance with the evidence requirements and recorded on internal checklists.

Evidence was accurately judged against marking schemes which reflected unit specifications, exemplification materials and course arrangement documents.

Folio evidence was outstanding as centres continue to provide well organised and high quality evidence which included assessor observations, photographic and wall displays, e-mails, printouts, artefacts, and reflective accounts

External verification reports revealed a high level of successful visits and verifiers often commented on 'the rewarding experience' they had in discussion with staff and learners within the centres.

### **Administration of assessments**

Verification reports confirmed that centres are delivering assessments to a high standard and in accordance with the national standards.

The assessment delivery is generally very well organised, eg easy to track and the assessment evidence is gathered in accordance with the unit/award requirements.

Centres are familiar with the national standards and are consistently making valid, reliable and fair judgements.

There is an increasing awareness of the need to integrate the gathering of assessment evidence across units to alleviate duplication. 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 approaches included the mapping of several unit requirements to course activities and tasks to gather folio evidence.

Internal verification systems and procedures continue to improve 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 highlighted the following:

- ◆ Assessment decisions are generally well documented.
- ◆ All centres included in the external sample had an internal verification policy which was generally fit for purpose.
- ◆ There was evidence of some standardisation activities, eg team meetings and assessment judgements discussed and decisions recorded.
- ◆ Internal and cross-centre verification as well as local networking between centres encourages the sharing of good practice and understanding standards.
- ◆ Internal verification sampling tends to occur at the end of a unit when it can be too late to provide supportive remediation and/or re-assessment. 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 therefore early internal verification activity can help to

ensure that candidates are entered at the appropriate level able to gain credit for the work undertaken.

## **Areas of good practice**

External verification reports indicated a range of good practice across centres and these form the benchmarks for continued improvement.

- ◆ Some centres are using individual learning plans to plan, develop and review learning targets to good effect, eg to identify individual development needs and SMART targets.
- ◆ Folio evidence showcased the learning journey and represented a good compilation of evidence including innovative and enterprising project activities eg fundraising, sustainability themes, eco systems, marketing, and enterprise activities.
- ◆ There is sustained growth in the delivery of Personal Development units and awards, the direct impact of which can be seen on individual learners, eg improved self-development and self-esteem, increase in transferrable skills, developing skills for learning, life and work. Good practice tends to be embedded into course design and is symbolic of a 'can do' approach. There is a positive ethos within the centre which is reflected in strategic and operational objectives.
- ◆ Meeting schedules and standardisation activities were happening regularly to ensure consistency of understanding standards and included the sharing of good practice between centres.
- ◆ E-learning teaching and learning resources are available on secure intranet shared drives for easy access by learners, assessors and internal verifiers.
- ◆ Centres continue to provide inclusive support to learners from pre-entry through to post-exit destinations.
- ◆ Learner progress and success is being recognised and showcased at centre award ceremonies.
- ◆ Good use was made of different forms of assessment methods, eg discussion, questioning, work products, simulation, role play, case studies, skills development reviews, self-evaluation techniques, project work, peer assessment, witness testimony, and observation.
- ◆ Centre induction and pre-entry enrolment systems and procedures were inclusive, supportive and transparent.
- ◆ Systems and procedures are in place to provide systematic learner reviews to support academic progression and positive destination routes into other certificated courses, college; volunteering, and employment.
- ◆ Internal verification systems and procedures are clearer, more robust and fit for purpose.
- ◆ Learner feedback was consistently positive about the whole learning experience and how this had made a significant difference to the individual and had 'changed lives'.

## Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ In a small number of centres the level of candidate evidence was not sufficient for the level being claimed. This was only identified in the external sampling process. Internal verification sampling needs to identify where evidence has not met the required level and indicate the required action to be taken.
- ◆ Differentiation of candidate evidence between levels was inconsistent especially in Leadership at SCQF levels 5 and 6. Centres need to use the assessment exemplification marking guidelines provided for each level.
- ◆ There was inconsistent assessor judgements in the presentation of candidate CVs, eg poor layout, inconsistent spelling, and poor content.
- ◆ Unit checklists were generally in use and clearly documented learner progress and achievement records were made available. However, in a small minority of centres, assessment decisions had not been recorded and assessor feedback was not provided.
- ◆ Internal verification procedures were generally robust and fit for purpose. However, this should not be a tick-box process. Agreements and disagreements must be recorded and action points clearly stated with appropriate time schedules set.
- ◆ SQA provides guidance on the role of the internal verifier and internal verification. Centres need to encourage and support staff to read this document.