Scottish Vocational Qualification

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019
Playwork

Introduction

Lapsing Qualifications

G8WE 22   SVQ 2 Playwork at SCQF level 6
GD1V 23   SVQ 3 Playwork at SCQF level 7
GD1T 24   SVQ 4 Playwork at SCQF level 9

Revised Qualifications

GP1G 23   SVQ Playwork at SCQF level 6
GP1H 23   SVQ Playwork at SCQF level 7
GP1J 24   SVQ Playwork at SCQF level 9

Over the academic session 2018–19, external verification has taken place for all centres delivering the SVQs in Playwork. Most are completing the lapsing SVQs in Playwork and are starting delivery of the revised qualifications. Most centres are developing their revised courses to reflect the diversity of the playwork sector and the employability needs of their candidates.

Qualification verifiers sampled across all levels of SVQs delivered, for all units and across all assessors and internal verifiers. All centres verified had robust processes for ensuring staff were occupationally competent in playwork and complied with SQA and Skills Active (sector skills council) requirements for assessors and verifiers. Staff went to considerable lengths to ensure the courses were suitable for their candidates and provided excellent support for candidates undertaking their vocational qualifications in playwork.

During external verification in this academic session, internal assessment and verification was sampled to ensure standardisation of assessment. In almost all centres visited, assessments sampled were valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair, and candidates' work was judged consistently against SQA's requirements. In all centres, evidence was retained in line with SQA requirements, and the outcome of the verification visits disseminated to staff to inform future assessment practice.

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.

All centres verified had robust processes for ensuring staff were occupationally competent in playwork and complied with SQA and Skills Active (sector skills council) requirements for assessors and verifiers. Centres had policies in place for the ongoing training and personal development of assessors and internal verifiers. All assessors and internal verifiers have qualifications and occupational competency to meet assessment strategy requirements for the SVQs in Playwork.

Evidence was provided to external verifiers of the staff qualifications and professional development for all assessors and internal verifiers. All centres had documented professional development planning that identifies areas of development planned for 2018–19. These focussed on playwork occupational competence, currency of professional knowledge and SQA requirements for assessment and verification practice.

All centres had documentation for recording these professional development activities. Some provided more detail than others, but in every centre, some professional development was recorded. For example, in one centre after completing an activity, staff write a report with details of knowledge gained and how this will be used to enhance their assessment or verification practice.

Many centres have systems in place to support the assessor including an annual observation of assessment practice by the internal verifier, which is recorded as professional development.

These professional development logs show a commitment to ongoing professional development and keeping up to date with developments in the playwork sector.

External verifiers found that centres provide specific support for new assessors and verifiers with detailed induction checklists to confirm occupational competency, compliance with systems for assessment, and verification and confirmation of competence and confidence.

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

All of the centres visited in 2018–19 had effective ongoing processes and procedures in place to review assessment accommodation, assessment procedures, and learning resources. These processes and procedures were being implemented effectively at almost all centres visited by qualification verifiers and there was evidence of improvements resulting from these reviews.

In the majority of centres, there was evidence of updating learning, reference and assessment materials to meet the needs of the revised SVQ in Playwork and the corresponding SCQF level, ensuring the currency and consistency of evidence gathered. This was usually recorded in the minutes of standardisation meetings, though some was recorded in decision logs.

These provided good evidence of centres ensuring that their learning and reference materials are current and include information about changes in playwork sector policy, process and theoretical perspectives. These also provided evidence that most centres are undertaking regular reviews of approaches to assessment, for example by reviewing and updating the digital technologies used by the team.

In all centres, assessment site checklists were completed and discussed with assessors and verifiers, which ensured that the workplace environment was appropriate for the assessment of playwork qualifications.

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 centres had processes and procedures in place to allow candidate development needs to be identified and appropriate support provided. These procedures were being implemented effectively at almost all centres.

External verification identified clear interview and induction processes for all candidates, which included opportunities for candidates to identify their current job role, prior achievements and any candidate support needs they might have.

Candidates were provided with guidance covering: support provided; roles and responsibilities; assessment and verification practice; assessment appeals; complaints procedures, etc. They were also provided with detailed information on the process and content for SVQ delivery. In some centres, this information was provided to their employers.

In the majority of centres, there was documentation supporting any accreditation of prior learning and the impact on the candidate and the delivery of their SVQ in Playwork. There were also documented candidate support plans on allowing access to fair assessment, and how centres can offer support to candidates with additional needs.

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

In this academic session, external verifiers found confirmation of regular contact between assessors and their SVQ candidates. This was evidenced in assessment planning and feedback between the assessor and candidate, and also confirmed by conversations with SVQ candidates.

Within the portfolios sampled, there were documented assessment plans for the development of reflective accounts and planned observations. Feedback on candidate assessment identified standards achieved and any areas to develop.

There was also evidence of regular contact with candidates by email and phone to review progress.

In the many centres that use e-portfolios, most have a section for messages between assessor and candidates, development plans that list actions to take and record when evidence is complete — this enables candidates to see clearly which standards are finished and which ones are still to be worked on.

For those centres that continue to use paper-based portfolios, this information is usually documented on assessment plans, or portfolio logs.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

The majority of centres have well established assessment and verification processes and procedures in place. External verification confirmed that assessors and internal verifiers at most centres implemented centre assessment and verification procedures efficiently and effectively.

Most SVQ Playwork centres have assessment and internal verification (IV) policies and procedures, which clearly set out the process for assessment and verification. In many centres, these include pro formas for prior, interim and summative verification, and for quality review and assessor observation, if required.

It was clear from external verification that assessment evidence (reflective accounts, observations, etc) was in line with the Playwork units being delivered, with Skills Active's assessment strategy and with SQA guidance, and that assessors and internal verifiers were applying their centre's assessment and verification procedures robustly.

Within the minutes of standardisation meeting or in decision logs, external verifiers found evidence of discussion of assessment practice and verification, and this demonstrated an ongoing commitment to standardisation within the SVQ Playwork teams.

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

SVQ Playwork portfolios sampled during external verification had evidence of assessment planning which covered units to be assessed, assessment methods and description of the planned assessment. The portfolios sampled by external verifiers used clear, straightforward assessment methods, were mapped to the SVQ standards and ensured the validity, practicability and reliability of assessments.

The majority of centres used a range of assessment methods and instruments, in line with the assessment strategy. The assessment methods used are appropriate for playwork, such as observation or reflective account. Assessment practice sampled ensured that candidates had equal opportunities to succeed with their qualification development.

In most cases, assessor feedback focussed on the performance criteria and knowledge requirements in the units, and in supporting the candidate to reflect in more depth on their playwork knowledge and practice.

Most centres demonstrated a commitment to fair and equitable assessment methods and have clear procedures to follow should a candidate require any additional support.

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

All centres provided information to SVQ Playwork candidates on plagiarism and malpractice, and their responsibilities, and action taken in the case of plagiarism or collusion. All SVQ Playwork candidates have signed a candidate declaration to confirm that the contents of the portfolio is their own work.

External verifiers found that all SVQ Playwork candidates' practice is observed by their assessor, and supporting evidence is used to authenticate practice evidence that has not been observed by the assessor. This complies with Skills Active assessment strategy, which requires observation in every SVQ Playwork unit being undertaken — this ensures that the candidate is meeting the required standards through their own work.

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

External verifiers confirmed that from the evidence presented in the SVQ Playwork portfolios, the judgements made by the assessors are based on the Playwork National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the requirements of Skills Active assessment strategy. These remained focussed and accurate across the evidence in different portfolios sampled.

In the majority of centres, candidates' work was clearly mapped to the SVQ Playwork NOS and accurately assessed, and appropriate to the awards and the SCQF level.

Most centres' documented procedures for IV supported this, and a high percentage of verification was undertaken with supportive and developmental feedback to assessors. The IV and standardisation processes ensured that the assessment decisions were accurate and consistent across assessors and SVQ levels. IV also identified when the accuracy of assessor judgement did not meet SQA requirements or assessment strategy, and appropriate action was taken.

Records of standardisation meetings showed regular discussions around assessment practice, and external verifiers confirmed this supported accuracy and consistency of assessment practice.

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

In all centres, there were procedures and policy on the security and retention of assessment evidence. Most were based on the most recent guidance from SQA on the retention of evidence.

In all centres, SVQ portfolios were available as requested by external verifiers.

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

In all centres, there was evidence that SQA external verification reports are passed to the SVQ team. Within the minutes of meetings, there was evidence that staff have discussed these reports and appropriate actions were taken, if required.

In some centres, there was a procedure on external verification visits, including guidance on disseminating reports and identifying good practice and development points. In some centres, information from SQA and feedback from external verification visits was a standing item on the agenda for standardisation meetings.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

Many of the SVQ Playwork centres have teams that are experienced in the delivery and assessment of the SVQ Playwork awards. Generally, centres have policies and procedures in place to support the assessment and verification process and they demonstrate a consistent approach across assessors and verifiers, with evidence of developmental standardisation. There was good evidence of a supportive, individual approach to working with the candidates, and all assessment evidence sampled was of a high standard. There is considerable evidence of planning and feedback with the candidates.

The following good practice was reported during session 2018–19:

♦ The SVQ Playwork teams have positively embraced the new standards for the Playwork awards.
♦ The SVQ Playwork teams are enthusiastic and committed to offering high quality SVQ awards and are keen to develop and enhance their playwork programmes.
♦ There was some excellent practice in relation to IV, such as the tracking sheets for each unit containing a checklist for assessors to review and ensure that the VARCS (validity, authenticity, reliability, currency, sufficiency) criteria have been met prior to verification of assessment evidence.
♦ One centre has a series of documents (the SVQ Process Rationale), which give straightforward and practical guidance on all aspects of the assessment and verification procedures for staff to follow.
♦ The record keeping at one centre is robust, ensuring an audit trail to follow — this includes planning and feedback with candidates, and IV feedback to assessors, providing a clear record of procedures being put into practice.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported in only a few centres in session 2018–19:

♦ Use witness testimonies more consistently to confirm reflective accounts on occasions not observed by an assessor — this will help to ensure validity.
♦ Identify a method to capture informal discussions that take place as additional evidence of ongoing reviews.
♦ Continue with completing professional development specific to Playwork, including reading and research to ensure current knowledge of the sector. Assessors and verifiers could undertake some work experience in a playwork setting to ensure occupational knowledge is current and consistent.
♦ Implementation of new standards for SVQ Playwork is an ongoing area for development across all Playwork centres. SQA will endeavour to continue to provide support and guidance to all Playwork centres, as we seek to deliver and sustain high quality SVQs in Playwork to our candidates across Scotland, and into the next academic session 2019–20.