



**National Qualifications 2019
Qualification Verification Summary Report
Skills for Work: Early Education
and Childcare**

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

Skills for Work Courses

The revised Early Learning and Childcare courses were delivered in the majority of centres in this academic session.

C782 74 Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare (National 4)

SCQF credit points: 24

Mandatory units

HX1L 74 Child Development — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1R 74 Play in Early Learning and Childcare — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1V 74 Working in Early Learning and Childcare — 6 SCQF credit points

Optional units

HX1M 74 Contemporary Families — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1K 74 Care of Children — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1T 74 Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children — 6 SCQF credit points

C783 75 Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare (National 5)

SCQF credit points: 24

Mandatory units

HC3C 45 Development and Wellbeing of Children and Young People — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1R 75 Play in Early Learning and Childcare — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1V 75 Working in Early Learning and Childcare — 6 SCQF credit points

Optional units

HX1M 75 Contemporary Families — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1J 75 Care and Feeding of Children and Young People — 6 SCQF credit points

HX1W 75 Introduction to First Aid — 6 SCQF credit points

HC38 45 Children and Young People: Rights and Protection — 6 SCQF credit points

A few centres are continuing to deliver the old awards. In order to support the transition, the new units were added to these frameworks to allow centres to mix old and new units and still achieve the group award. However, these courses and units will lapse in July 2020.

General comments

The revised Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare courses continue to reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. The revised courses have been designed to offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, focus more on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice. External verifiers have identified that centres are starting to embrace this flexibility and choice within their delivery this session.

There remains an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills for working with children and young people. External verifiers have found that many centres are providing their learners with opportunities for developing core skills and skills for learning, life and work, with a strong focus on enhancing skills and attitudes for employability within the early learning and childcare sector.

In most centres, the samples were selected across assessors and internal verifiers and covering the progress of learners through their National 4 and/or National 5 Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare course.

External verifiers found that centres were delivering the units through a combination of experiential learning, developing the learner's subject knowledge and embracing generic employability skills.

Course arrangements, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

External verifiers found that the majority of centres were positive about assessment support packs and are appreciative of the flexible approach offered to assessment methods, meanwhile ensuring robust coverage of all evidence requirements in the unit specifications.

Instruments of assessment

Centres are using the appropriate National Assessment Bank materials and assessment support packs, which incorporate a number of assessment methods and cover all evidence requirements in the unit specifications. These have been downloaded as required and are therefore current for assessment.

External verifiers found that many centres are putting these into an accessible house style to suit the needs of learners. Assessment approaches are fit for purpose and promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

Evidence requirements

In the revised units, evidence requirements and assessment materials encourage creativity and flexibility of assessment approaches. For each of the units, evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria, but the method of generating this evidence can be varied and adaptable. Evidence is gathered in a range of ways to assess learners' knowledge, understanding, and application across the learning outcomes and performance criteria.

External verifiers identified that assessors are using their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used to best suit their learners.

Evidence presented

The majority of centres presented evidence as requested by the qualification verifier. This evidence was completed, marked and internally verified, or some evidence was in progress.

Administration of assessments

Marking schemes

Assessment support packs have marking schemes for the revised units. Some centres have adapted these to suit, ie developed assessment records trackers to support the marking and internal verification process.

Assessment judgements

In the majority of centres, assessors' judgements of learner evidence was valid, reliable, equitable and fair. External verifiers found that their decisions were based on the requirements in the units and marking guidance in the assessment support packs. There was evidence of double-marking/cross-marking which supported consistency of assessment decisions across assessors.

It is clear that in the majority of centres sampled this academic session, the revised assessment support packs are working well, but some support may be required to help centres develop the flexible and creative approaches to assessment that were envisioned when writing unit evidence requirements and assessment guidance.

Effectiveness of internal verification

Most centres had a clear internal verification policy based on SQA's Quality Framework. This usually included documentation for prior verification, internal verification sampling and review, standardisation meetings, assessment and re-assessment conditions, evidence retention and malpractice.

Areas of good practice

External verifiers highlighted several areas of good practice across centres in this academic session:

External verifiers were delighted to find the number of centres who were providing opportunities for occupational experience for their learners. Many learners were in placements within early learning or playwork settings, including nurseries, primary schools, out of school care, or forest schools. These placements allowed learners to work across a full range of age groups specified with the courses.

There were a vast range of partnerships in place, such as health visiting and maternity services, school nurses, playworkers, community learning development workers, sports coaches, family support staff, early years expansion teams, etc. All of these support the depth of learning experience provided.

External verifiers identified the positive feedback and support being provide to learners. Assessor feedback to the learners was clear, highlighted positive aspects of the assessment, and identified next steps. They highlighted that enthusiastic staff had a very positive impact on the learners undertaking the courses.

External verifiers were positive about the creative approaches taken towards the presentation of assessment evidence, for example, floor books being developed, photographic evidence to authenticate learner evidence of the play activities, etc. Centres offered variety and choice of assessment format, while ensuring the assessment was accessible to all learners who have the potential to be successful in it.

Specific areas for improvement

The following areas for development were reported:

Some centres still need to focus on ensuring more formal internal verification procedures, systems and records are in place. This is required to capture the verification and standardisation that is being undertaken but not recorded.

External verifiers suggested that assessors should have opportunities for industry experience within the sector and this could mirror what learners do. Professional development should reflect the age range and complexity of the workforce within early learning and childcare.

External verifiers found that, in some centres, there needs to be a wider range of learning materials alongside online resources to broaden the research opportunities for learners, and to ensure that the focus is on early learning and childcare in Scotland.