



Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019

Confined Spaces (OFQUAL)

Verification group: 639

Introduction

Confined Spaces awards are undertaken by personnel who are intending to work in areas deemed to be confined spaces. There are three routes suitable for most individuals or personnel looking to upskill or enhance their qualifications. The awards all include practical activities and underpinning knowledge questions, and people undertaking them must be physically able to meet the criteria in the various awards.

Confined Spaces (OFQUAL)

The following awards were successfully verified at almost all centres:

- ◆ Working in Low Risk Confined Spaces (GK61 62)
- ◆ Working in Medium Risk Confined Spaces (GK62 62)

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.

Almost all staff at the centres held the relevant qualifications and had good industry experience, enabling them to deliver these awards. Delivery staff at the centres had undertaken various activities/courses and recorded the information meeting the requirements of continuous professional development (CPD).

Assessors/internal verifiers at almost all centres held the required qualification to allow them to deliver the awards and were found to be working to the latest assessment strategies provided by SQA.

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

These are high-risk awards and assessment materials were developed by SQA and provided to the centres to assist them in delivering the awards and in meeting the awards criteria and standards. Awards were closely monitored and reviews were ongoing both prior to assessment, during assessment and after assessment. Almost all assessors completed a risk assessment while carrying out a visual inspection prior to the practical assessment.

Equipment required is clearly detailed in the assessment standards and assessors confirmed that equipment is fit for purpose and meets the assessment criteria. Equipment is normally provided by the centre and is inspected before all assessments and again on completion of the assessments before being returned to the store.

Learning materials provided by the centres were checked to make sure that they were current and up to date.

Almost all centres complied with this criterion and reviews are normally carried out during the award due to the high-risk nature of the activity, but full reviews are still carried out during standardisation meetings.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Candidates all received a centre induction and, during this, their previous experience was discussed.

There is no credit transfer from other awards and all candidates must be assessed against the national standards by a competent assessor meeting the award criterion.

During the induction, candidates were also asked if they have any special needs that the centre may have to take into consideration prior to any assessment taking place. Any special needs identified were recorded in the assessment paperwork.

Almost all centres complied with SQA's requirements, and assessment plans were agreed with the candidates and updated as and when required.

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

Candidates are normally at the centres for a short period and have constant contact with the assessor, which could be any time between one to two days.

Constructive feedback was given on assessment completion and, if any section was failed, an action plan was put in place and recorded in the assessment paperwork.

All centres complied with this criterion and met the requirements of SQA for the awards.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

For any new awards or assessors, almost all centre policies and procedures require that they carry out 100% internal verification and give full support to new assessors until reviews have been completed. If no areas of concern are identified, they would consider reducing the support and verification to an acceptable level.

Internal verification was found to be acceptable in almost all centres, and the information referred to above was taken from almost all the centres' policies for internal verification and assessment procedures.

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

Assessment materials were developed by SQA and provided to the centre to assist them in complying with the awards and meeting the standards and requirements for the award.

Assessment materials stored on SQA's secure website were only downloaded as and when required. This helped to ensure the above criterion was met by the centres.

Checklists were used to confirm that the above listed points were being met. Assessment materials met the criteria in this section and the centres' internal verification systems and processes also confirmed that they were valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair — and evidence was seen in the internal verification reports.

All the centres met this criterion.

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

Centres covered their malpractice/plagiarism policy with all candidates during the induction and registration process. Candidates signed a declaration that they fully understood their centre's policies and that the evidence they would be providing for the assessments would be their own work.

Checks were also carried out during the centre internal verification where they looked for signs of plagiarism or malpractice.

Almost all centres complied with this criterion and the few non-compliant centres addressed the issues quickly.

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

All assessment evidence received some sort of internal verification and assessment judgements were confirmed as accurate and consistent in almost all assessment materials.

Assessments are discussed at almost all centres at their next available meeting and appear on the centres' meeting agendas and minutes.

Feedback on internal verification is given to assessors and if they cannot attend the meeting, they are emailed a copy of the meeting minutes, and a read receipt is requested.

Internal verification looks to see that judgements are accurate and consistent for all assessors.

This criterion is also part of the standardisation meeting agendas. SQA's requirements for the awards were met by almost all centres.

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

Centres were made aware of the retention of evidence requirements of SQA and informed that they must comply with the latest retention of evidence requirements available on SQA's website.

Almost all the centres keep evidence longer than required by SQA.

All evidence is securely stored at all centres.

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

When the centre co-ordinator receives an external verification report, it is checked and normally discussed with the staff involved in the delivery at the next available meeting.

Staff unable to attend will be notified by email and a read receipt requested to confirm that they have received and opened the email.

Any action or sanction discussed during visits are dealt with immediately by the centres and SQA informed when the actions have been completed. This was taken from almost all of the centres' policies and procedures.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

No areas of good practice were noted in any of the Confined Spaces reports.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2018–19:

- ◆ Next session, the team members will focus on occupation competence of assessors/internal verifiers.
- ◆ CPD in centres will be closely looked at to confirm that the activities undertaken by the assessors/internal verifiers are relevant to the awards and meet SQA requirements.

The above points were highlighted in some of the reports this session.