



Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019

Life Sciences

Verification group: 462

Introduction

Three external verification visits were carried out by the team this session. All centres had a clear understanding of the standards required. Overall, it was a highly successful year for centres and centre delivery staff, ensuring a quality learning experience for candidates within a significant scientific sector.

The units externally verified were as follows:

- H6G2 04 Analysis of Samples Using High Performance Liquid Chromatography in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6F9 04 Carry Out Sampling Operations in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6F8 04 Carry Out Testing Using Manual or Automated Equipment in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6FL 04 Demonstrate Techniques and Skills in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6FM 04 Diagnose Faults, Repair and Maintain Equipment in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6F2 04 Maintain Effective and Efficient Working Relationships in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6FJ 04 Maintain Health and Safety Procedures in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6F5 04 Maintain Stocks of Resources, Equipment and Consumables in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6G0 04 Plan and Collect Samples for Testing in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6FC 04 Preparing Reagents in Life Sciences and Related Industries
- H6F6 04 Use Information Recording Systems in Life Sciences and Related Industries

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 visited were fully aware of the Cogent Skills Assessment Strategy standards for assessors and internal verifiers. All delivery staff sampled were fully competent in this regard and met the academic and vocational requirements.

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

All centres visited had established internal quality control procedures. These were robust, effective, and routinely applied. Pre-delivery internal verification was generally of a high standard. Centre staff demonstrated a good understanding of the resources required for each of the units verified, and there was documented evidence of effective and ongoing reviews. Good practice identified during the verification visits included detailed evidence of communication between assessors and internal verifiers regarding continual improvement and addressing any concerns raised by staff members involved in delivering the 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 candidates sampled were in full-time employment in a science-related industry. Employers therefore had a considerable input into their selection. All centres visited had processes in place to ensure that candidates' development needs and any prior achievements were taken into consideration during the induction process.

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

Regular contact between assessors and candidates was found to be consistent across centres and periodic reviews were carried out. All candidates were work-based and met with their assessor on a regular pre-planned basis.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres visited have developed robust, effective, and routinely-applied internal quality control procedures. Recorded standardisation meetings were held, as routine, by all centres visited.

Good practice identified during the verification visits included clear guidance of specific requirements/criteria that the external verifier would examine during the external verification visit.

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

Assessment instruments were derived directly from the National Occupational Standards. All centres were fully compliant with the Cogent Skills Assessment Strategy in this regard and assessments were found to be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair. In general, knowledge questions had been developed to cover units being assessed.

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

All candidates at all centres visited were required to sign a standard SQA disclaimer which specified that all work was the candidates' own. Given the diverse nature of workplaces and candidate job roles, opportunities for collusion are extremely limited. All centres visited were highly effective in ensuring the authenticity of submissions.

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

Most centres visited had arrived at clear, consistent and accurate judgements of candidate performance. Candidate submissions were generally of a high or very high standard.

Centres should ensure that candidate evidence is legible to allow it to be externally verified.

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

All centres visited complied with SQA policies and procedures regarding the retention of candidate evidence.

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

All centres visited had policies and procedures to ensure that feedback from qualification verifiers was disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice. Centres have developed timely and effective systems to ensure that feedback from qualification verifiers is disseminated to all course delivery staff.

Areas of good practice

The following areas of good practice were reported:

- ◆ There was detailed evidence of communication between assessors and internal verifiers regarding continual improvement and addressing any concerns raised by staff members involved in delivering the qualifications.
- ◆ There was clear guidance of specific requirements/criteria that the external verifier would examine during the external verification visit.

Specific areas for improvement

The following areas for improvement are recommended:

- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidate evidence is legible to allow it to be externally verified.