Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Customer Service

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

SVQ awards

General comments

This internal assessment report covers the following qualifications:

GA39 22: SVQ 2 Customer Service SCQF at level 5
GA52 23: SVQ 3 Customer Service SCQF at level 6

We have had a full programme of visits during 2014–15. The visits were all successful and indicated significant strengths.

The SVQs are, in the vast majority of centres, delivered effectively and candidates produced work of a good standard that was presented in a clear, accessible format.

External Verifiers' (EV) reports commented on the high level of commitment of the staff at centres. It is encouraging that centres generally responded well to development points in previous EV reports and this also contributed to the good standard of delivery of the SVQs.

The trend towards e-portfolios has continued, even where electronic systems are not used directly for delivery, considerable use is being made of electronic methods to record candidate progress and to enhance communication between the assessment team members and between candidates and their assessors.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The current SVQs are now very familiar to assessors and internal verifiers. Even where centres are newly approved most assessors and internal verifiers have had some experience with the SVQs.

Portfolios were well presented and EVs agreed with all assessment decisions sampled.

A wide range of evidence was presented and the quality was high. Evidence was well matched to the standards and easy to track. Evidence tracking checklists similar to the SQA matrix are being used in most centres.

Observations were comprehensive and holistic with good use being made of other evidence.

The stages of planning, assessment, review and feedback were evident in portfolios.

Evidence Requirements

The current SVQs are now very familiar to assessors and internal verifiers; the evidence requirements are clear to assessors and are referenced in the portfolios.

Administration of assessments

EV reports showed evidence of assessment planning and review, with the assessment process being split into the stages of planning, assessment, review and feedback.

EV reports also showed evidence of good documentation in place to support the internal verification process. Internal verifiers are often selected from the team of experienced assessors. There is also evidence of good feedback being given to assessors by the internal verifiers with robust internal verification systems in place.

For internal verification, it is good practice to spread the activity evenly throughout the life of the portfolio. It is also useful to carry out internal verification soon after assessment decisions have been made. This allows candidates and assessors to respond to any feedback and referrals from the internal verification process.

General feedback

The evidence from EVs shows that assessors and internal verifiers were appropriately experienced and had the correct qualifications to support the SVQs in Customer Service. All carry out a customer service remit as part of their job role.

Well-documented CPD logs were available in centres, linking knowledge and skills acquired and how they will be implemented within the context of the assessor and internal verifier roles. It is important that CPD records indicate what was gained from the CPD activity and how this will be implemented.

It is clear that candidates had fair access to the assessment process. There was good evidence of assessment planning and review.

Centres hold regular meetings to discuss issues relating to the standards. Both formal and informal arrangements are in place for assessors and internal verifiers to meet to discuss issues relating to the SVQ and to the assessment and internal verification process. This encourages the sharing of good practice and helps with the standardisation of assessment methods and documentation. Centres continually review documentation, processes and resources to improve delivery of the qualifications.

Portfolios of evidence were well presented and well assessed. Assessment decisions were seen to be valid and reliable. There were excellent examples of evidence-referencing systems being used to track evidence against the standards.

Portfolios were easy to follow with good tracking systems used. Centres were aware of the requirement to follow the Customer Service Assessment Strategy and the Assessment Strategies relating to any imported Units.

There was a good mix of evidence which was appropriate to the level, the candidate, the workplace and the particular Unit being assessed. Product evidence was well annotated or explained in candidate statements. Assessors used a holistic approach to assessment.

Areas of good practice

As can be seen from the above there are many aspects of good practice that were apparent during external verification visits in 2014–15. This confirms the high level of commitment shown by centres and their staff.

The following points summarise some of the main aspects of good practice identified from the EV visits and subsequent reports.

♦ Almost all centres appreciate the importance of good communication between all levels of staff involved in the SVQs. Their commitment to the qualifications is also apparent through the help provided by assessors to candidates, who on occasion can struggle to understand the requirements of the SVQ.

♦ Well-documented CPD logs were available in centres, linking knowledge and skills acquired and how they will be implemented within the context of the assessor and internal verifier roles.

♦ The addition of 'planning' in CPD records was highlighted as good practice. The following aspects of planning were included in one centre's CPD record:
   — Planning for the next year
   — Best ways of achieving my target
   — Learning opportunities I can access over the next 12 months
   This approach to CPD was seen as an excellent method to ensure staff keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

♦ Standardisation meetings with all assessors provide good opportunities for CPD and show a centre's commitment to meeting SQA's requirements.

♦ Materials produced to support the SVQ in Customer Service by one centre's head office were of a good quality and ensure all staff across the organisation use reliable learning and reference materials which meet the requirements of VARCS (Validity, Authenticity, Reliability, Currency and Sufficiency).

♦ Staff in the training department of one centre are required to work for two weeks each year within another department to ensure they maintain their occupational experience. Other centres may be able to offer similar work placements to assist full-time assessors to maintain their subject-specific occupational expertise.

♦ One centre's Individual Training Plan together with the Client Registration Form ensures that candidates' development needs are identified and addressed accordingly whilst maintaining confidentiality. The Client Code of Conduct covers various areas such as equal opportunities, data protection,

together with numerous support arrangements etc ensuring that candidates understand the requirements of undertaking the SVQ.

♦ E-portfolios are used in many centres for the purposes of assessment and verification. These can often enable EVs to view all aspects of the assessment and verification requirements. Candidates benefit also — they can be very effective for induction, discussion and feedback and for submission and assessment of evidence. Candidates find them easy to understand and they make the assessment process easier for all.

♦ Candidates' reflective accounts are very thorough and provide good quality cross-referencing. This also applies to the Assessor Observation Reports.

♦ The assessors complete a pre-internal-verification checklist which ensures that all paperwork has been completed and included in portfolios.

Specific areas for improvement

The following recommendations were made by EVs:

♦ It would be beneficial if a record of internal verification was included in CPD records, together with a note of discussions held regarding the Customer Service SVQs. These would show that the internal verifier has been active during the year.

♦ The evidence requirements for each Unit should be highlighted to reflect where these have been met.

♦ SQA's recording forms do not include specific columns for recording the achievement of evidence requirements. It is therefore recommended that centres using SQA assessment recording forms show where evidence requirements have been met either by highlighting the description in the evidence section or by using the comments box to describe how they have been met.