



**National Qualifications 2018
Qualification Verification Summary Report
Skills for Work: Rural Skills**

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified:

Skills for Work: Rural Skills (National 4)

General comments

Twenty centres were selected for routine external verification visits for Skills for Work: Rural Skills during the past academic year. One of these was recorded as 'not running'. The remaining 19 centres were visited by the external verification team.

All external verification visits were successful and none resulted in a hold on certification. A single centre was required to submit further evidence by way of an action point. National Assessment Bank materials (NABs) were in use throughout. Delivering centres complied with the national standards. Course provision was generally of a good or very good standard. Examples of good practice were widespread and are recorded in full in the 'Areas of good practice' section (below).

Skills for Work: Rural Skills (National 4) is clearly increasing in both in popularity and extent. Visits covered the full geographical extent of the nation. The course continues to provide students with a quality learning experience and a clear vision as to where their further career ambitions might lie.

There is an increasing interest amongst centres to provide progression routes to Skills for Work: Rural Skills *via* the National Progression Award Rural Skills options. The arrangements (flexibility) for the NPA units are currently under review by SQA and the EV team.

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

Centres had a good grasp of the standards required. Almost all centres had developed master files containing all necessary course documentation.

The NABs were in use throughout. Some centres had contextualised the NABs specifically for students with additional support needs. Student support was generally of a high, or very high, standard.

The Colleges Scotland support materials are still widely used, although these are becoming a little dated.

Evidence requirements

All evidence requirements for the course were met or exceeded by all of the centres visited. Quite a large number of minor issues were identified and these are listed in full in the 'Areas for improvement' section (below).

There is a general improvement in the quality and frequency of internal verification. A majority of centres now employ second marking as standard.

Administration of assessments

Record keeping was generally good and assessment was conducted in accordance with the NABs and SQA policies and procedures.

Areas of good practice

Good practice was observed in a majority of centres visited. This is outlined below:

- ◆ A dedicated work placement provider — without people like this, the course might lack a real work-based focus. The centre was working with two practising farms (goats and sheep) to deliver and assess the animal units. The centre made effective use of practitioner feedback in employability reviews that are in full context of the tasks being undertaken, and which gave encouragement to the candidates about their future employability within land-based industries. The assessor also gave full and effective feedback on the employability reviews, which were carried out at appropriate intervals during the delivery model (1 year).
- ◆ Pre-course verification was comprehensive, effective and responsive — recommendations had been implemented as a result of observations made at the planning stage.
- ◆ Photographic evidence was very well presented. It was not simply a collection of photographs, but one page per task, with a series of pictures showing the different stages in the task being completed.
- ◆ Very constructive and useful written feedback is given to candidates in the Employability unit in relation to their communication and team working.
- ◆ The assessor has done some standardisation with other centres through Glow and meeting other centres.
- ◆ The assessor asks all candidates to do small risk-assessment tasks before going out for practical tasks, thus emphasising the importance of health and safety in the land-based industries.
- ◆ The use of vocational experts, such as the ranger at the local country park for fence construction, is ideal in ensuring assessment work is carried out to appropriate industry standards.
- ◆ The assessor has undergone a significant amount of CPD in relation to the delivery of the award, including Royal Horticultural Society awards in Grow, Cook and Eat, The Edible School Garden and Secondary Science Teacher meetings.
- ◆ Card sorting assessments for ID assessments have been developed for students with additional support needs.
- ◆ Vocational education contract — signed by students — was in use to ensure no plagiarism or bad behaviour.
- ◆ Enlightened timetabling enhances the student experience — two hours of classroom-based theory plus one day carrying out practical tasks on the farm.

- ◆ The facilities for the delivery of the horticulture option are exemplary and the course has a real community 'feel'.

Specific areas for improvement

A substantial number of areas for improvement were recorded during the academic year:

- ◆ Areas of concern or opportunities to improve standards should be more robustly noted and actioned during the internal verification process.
- ◆ It would be useful to use a summative sheet which identifies when all assessment tasks are completed for each candidate, to ensure that assessor and internal verification can take place effectively for all candidates (especially important with larger numbers).
- ◆ Centres should keep a master folder (paper or electronic) with the up-to-date units, their assessment instruments and all internal verification information.
- ◆ There is no requirement to include formative assessment tasks as evidence for the external verifier — it would be useful to separate the formal and non-formal assessments or mark them clearly (eg Estate Maintenance unit used the NAB but also had a further tool identity sheet).
- ◆ It is recommended that the risk assessment for the Employability unit is done close to the start of the course and reinforced throughout all practical work.
- ◆ Centres may wish to consider the use of alternative ways of capturing evidence for those with writing difficulties, eg oral recorded or transcribed evidence.
- ◆ Centres may wish to consider using oral recording for written work.
- ◆ Centres could consider developing a progression route to National 5, eg the National Progression Award in Rural Skills.