



August 2021

Subject guidance for internally assessed qualifications in 2021–22

Please read this document in conjunction with [guidance for the assessment of internally assessed qualifications](#) issued to centres in August 2021.

Group award titles:	NPA Horse Care at SVQF level 4 NPA Horse Care at SCQF level 6 NC Horse Care
Group award codes:	GF4J 44 GF4H 46 GD2M 45

Introduction

We have produced this subject-specific supplementary guidance to help centres deliver the above-named NPAs, at SCQF levels 4 and 6, and NC *Horse Care*, and to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. In this guidance, we focus on supporting achievement of the NPAs while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

Summary

This document provides information on the following:

- ◆ guidance on delivery and assessment
- ◆ planning for assessment
- ◆ course planning and timetabling
- ◆ specific group award aims
- ◆ general advice

Adaptations to evidence requirements to help manage assessment

National units

Centres can use the flexibilities we introduced in August 2020, including integrating assessment and changing closed-book assessments to open-book assessments.

Please refer to the document, [*Supporting the delivery, assessment and verification of SQA units, session 2020–21: Information and guidance for centres*](#) published in August 2020, and contact the qualifications team if you wish to discuss specific units.

These adaptations will help maximise time available for learning and teaching, ensure that the validity and integrity of the NPAs and the NC *Horse Care* are maintained, and help protect lecturers and learners.

Additional guidance

Adaptations have been agreed for the following units and will be available throughout session 2021–22:

Unit code	Title
FV9P 11	Horse Care: Horse Fittening
FV9M 11	Horse Care: Lungeing
FV74 11	Horse Care: Preparation for Ridden Work
FV76 11	Horse Care: Stable Routine

This guidance will be updated as required.

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- ◆ general advice

Delivery and assessment

The qualifications manager and qualifications officer received feedback from delivering centres regarding the impact and continuing disruption caused by the ongoing restrictions.

We are very grateful for the contributions and cooperation of our college colleagues in the production of this guidance. From the discussions, it is clear that all delivering centres share similar issues on how and what can be delivered to new and existing students. These issues include:

- ◆ timetabling
- ◆ access to colleges and specialist equipment
- ◆ logistics involved in managing student numbers in classroom/studio settings
- ◆ compliance with government guidelines
- ◆ health and safety requirements — both general (ie college-wide) and specific to these qualifications
- ◆ course planning and assessment

The application of practical skills underpins the philosophy of the awards and is central to their delivery. Nevertheless, the nature of the units enables the assessments to be carried out within a simulated work environment or an actual working scenario. We recommend that all units are delivered in the context of the awards. You should give learners the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in realistic and practical settings. The awards also aim to prepare learners for progression to a range of programmes of study, either in higher education or workplace qualifications. The awards are designed to facilitate articulation routes to a number of roles, both nationally and internationally. The units have all been written to allow centres to assess learners in simulated environments as well as the workplace, depending on the model of delivery. The only exception is the unit *Riding Racehorses to Improve Performance*, which requires learners to be able to ride racehorses as a piece of work and necessitates employer feedback.

Planning for assessment

The following section is a summary of the guidance we issued in August 2020. Learners must generate evidence that demonstrates they have met all the unit outcomes. The emphasis is on planning and taking a whole course team approach to implement a combined approach to the collection of evidence generated by the learner. This means we can address duplication or overlapping assessments, and should result in reduced assessment requirements.

Centres can:

- ◆ make use of combined instruments of assessment
- ◆ adapt current instruments of assessment

In addition, centres can opt for free prior verification. This ensures that any combined assessments that centres create, or adaptations they make, meet SQA's core principles of assessment:

- ◆ valid
- ◆ reliable
- ◆ practicable
- ◆ equitable and fair

This guarantees that the National Standards will be upheld during COVID-19 restrictions.

If a centre has not made use of the free prior verification service, then it should clearly record all the adaptations it makes to any instruments of assessment or combined assessments it creates.

If centres use none of these options, they should take the following actions:

1. Mandatory units:

- ◆ review unit evidence requirements closely
- ◆ review and adapt instrument of assessment
- ◆ remember that guidance on delivery assumes studio and/or college-based delivery and access to resources

Assessors should consider carefully if delivery and assessment can be adapted in the current circumstances to allow the candidate to meet the mandatory evidence requirements.

2. Optional units:

- ◆ review unit evidence requirements closely
- ◆ review and adapt the instrument of assessment where possible
- ◆ where possible, swap unit for alternative that is less reliant on access to specialist resources

3. Remove the Graded Unit to allow for the additional time required to be utilised across all other units within the award

4. Grade holistically based on all group award course aims: *Broad, General and Specific*

Aims of the group awards

The principal aims of the NPA *Horse Care* at SCQF level 4 qualification are to:

- ◆ provide candidates with skills and knowledge for working with quiet horses safely
- ◆ provide employees and those who carry out duties voluntarily within the horse industry with a qualification
- ◆ prepare candidates for progression to further studies in education or undertaking work-based qualifications
- ◆ develop candidate skills and knowledge of horse care workplaces
- ◆ standardise the content of a qualification to meet and satisfy employer needs
- ◆ provide the opportunity to develop core skills in a vocational context

The principal aims of the NPA *Horse Care* at SCQF level 6 qualification are to:

- ◆ provide candidates with skills and knowledge for working with horses safely
- ◆ provide existing employees in the horse industry with a qualification, which formalises their experience and provides them with a route to further education and increased employment opportunities
- ◆ provide volunteers within the horse industry with a qualification
- ◆ provide candidates with an understanding of the different disciplines that exist within the sector
- ◆ prepare candidates for progression to further studies in education or work-based qualifications
- ◆ develop candidate skills and knowledge of horse care workplaces
- ◆ standardise the content of a qualification to meet and satisfy employer need
- ◆ provide an opportunity to develop core skills in a vocational context

The principal aims of the NC *Horse Care* at SCQF level 5 are to:

- ◆ rationalise existing learning and teaching provision into a nationally recognised programme across Scotland
- ◆ provide candidates with skills and knowledge for working safely with horses so that they can consider the area for future employment and study
- ◆ prepare candidates for progression to further studies in education
- ◆ develop candidate skills and knowledge of horse care
- ◆ develop candidate skills and knowledge of horse care enterprise operation
- ◆ develop candidate skills and knowledge of horse care workplaces
- ◆ provide opportunities to develop candidate skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- ◆ provide a qualification to meet and satisfy employer need

We recommend that you record all holistic approaches to assessment in a matrix style format, which clearly maps each unit to its corresponding group award course aim.

Course planning and timetabling

The general guidance provides detailed information on this. Nevertheless, in addition, you should consider the potential impact of delivering individual units in the current circumstances. This may affect learners who are unable or choose not to continue after Year 1. It is, therefore, important that all learners have the opportunity to meet the conditions of award for the NPAs.

Appropriate action if existing conditions of assessment cannot be met

Restrictions on access to placements or workplaces and other sector-related sites, coupled with school and college closures, have had a significant and adverse effect on delivery and assessment. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions and public health advice have made it difficult for learners to gain practical experience. Nevertheless, we hope that a return to school and college in the coming weeks will make it possible for learners to undertake practical activities.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education. Learners can use a variety of methods to present their findings. Teachers and lecturers, where possible, should give learners the choice as to their preferred method.

Delivery and assessment have been severely affected by COVID-19 restrictions and extended school and college closures, and this may continue in session 2021–22. Centres should work towards completing knowledge-based outcomes and deliver practical components whenever possible to enable learners to generate evidence of practical activity. They can then use appropriate evidence to infer knowledge and skills across other outcomes and units.

Where it is not possible, in session 2021–22, for learners to generate evidence from hands-on practical experience through placement or visits, a range of approaches could be explored, including:

- ◆ remote, virtual visits with practitioners demonstrating the activities
- ◆ expert speakers
- ◆ videos
- ◆ internet research
- ◆ simulated activities to offer the opportunity to experience a range of practical activities remotely

This will give learners the opportunity to witness demonstrations of, for example, caring for and feeding horses, use of equipment, and health and safety procedures.

Assessments could then focus on projects, case studies and questioning. In addition, you could use existing checklists to facilitate assessment.

Where on-site practical activities are limited or not possible, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may be possible for learners who have work experience or have previously undertaken related qualifications; for example, National Certificate (NC) *Horse Care* at SCQF level 5 (GD2M 45), or equivalent. The following units may provide additional evidence of competence across the three awards:

Horse Care: Equitation 1 (FV9R 11)

Horse Care: Safe Working Practices (FV9L 12)

Horse Care: Safe Horse Handling (FV5K 11)

Horse Care: Preparation for Ridden Work (FV74 11)

Horse Care: Tacking up for Ridden Competition Work (H1LN 12)

Further guidance on RPL is available here: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/67029.html>

Sequencing/integration of units

The structure of the qualifications allows for a high degree of flexibility in the delivery mode. The awards could be offered on full-time, block-release, day-release or evening modes. A distance-learning delivery mode is possible, providing adequate materials, tutorial support and assessment facilities exist. You could also consider a combination of delivery modes to make up for time lost due to COVID-19 restrictions. Such combined modes of study may enable learners to complete the awards once they return to school or college. There are many opportunities for integrative delivery of units within each of the awards.

The combination of units in the NPA at SCQF level 4 is designed to provide the basic skills for candidates to assist in working safely with quiet horses. Health and safety aspects of working with horses are at the forefront of the design of the units. The unit content reflects the basic skills required by the equine industry at this level. All units in the NPA *Horse Care* at SCQF level 4 facilitate progression to the National Certificate *Horse Care* at SCQF level 5, and are designed to correspond directly to some of the mandatory units in the level 5 award.

The combination of units in the NPA at SCQF level 6 is designed to further develop skills for candidates who have completed the NC *Horse Care* at SCQF level 5, employees looking for industry CPD or progression to other work-based qualifications, and people with experience of working with horses who wish entry to HNC *Equine Studies*.

For the NC *Horse Care*, the unit specifications propose a wide range of assessment methods including oral, written, video and photographic evidence, short reports, portfolio and the observation of practical tasks. Practical assessments within the units are designed so that they can be completed within the centre training facility, where appropriate.

Units where teaching and learning can be integrated

Note: *Horse Care: Safe Working Practices* (FV9L 11) may be integrated with all units.

Unit title	Can be integrated with
Horse Care: Care of the Horse at Grass (FV75 11)	Horse Care: Grooming and Clothing (FV9J 11)
Horse Care: Watering and Feeding: An Introduction (FV9H 11)	Horse Care: Stable Routine (FV76 11)
Horse Care: Stable Routine (FV76 11)	Horse Care: Watering and Feeding: An Introduction (FV9H 11) Horse Care: Yard Maintenance (FV9R 11) Horse Care: Watering and Feeding (FW00 12)
Horse Care: Safe Working Practices (FV9L 12)	All units
Horse Care: Grooming and Clothing (FV9J 11)	Horse Care: Care of the Horse at Grass (FV75 11) Horse Care: Trimming, Turnout and Clipping (FV9K 11)
Horse Care: Preparation for Ridden Work (FV74 11)	Horse Care: Equitation 1 (FV9V 10) Horse Care: Equitation 2 (FV9W 11) Horse Care: Equitation 3 (FV9X 12)
Horse Care: Employability Skills for Working with Horses (FV9N 11)	Work Experience (D36H 11)
Horse Care: Trimming, Turnout and Clipping (FV9K 11)	Horse Care: Grooming and Clothing (FV9J 11)
Horse Care: Equitation 2 (FV9W 11)	Horse Care: Preparation for Ridden Work (FV74 11)
Horse Care: Yard Maintenance (FV9R 11)	Horse Care: Stable Routine (FV76 11)
Work Experience (HF88 45)	Horse Care: Employability Skills for Working with Horses (FV9N 11)
Horse Care: Equitation 3 (FV9X 12)	Horse Care: Preparation for Ridden Work (FV74 11)
Horse Care: Watering and Feeding (FW00 12)	Horse Care: Stable Routine (FV76 11)

Support notes in each of the unit specifications identify specific opportunities for integration with other units.

Specific advice

Group award code	Title	Issues	Guidance
GF4J 44	NPA Horse Care SCQF level 4	Practical activities need to be completed.	<p>Use of formative observations and previous performance to provide evidence is encouraged. Some centres may have completed or partially completed practical activities, which could be used to infer competence and/or knowledge. This could be supplemented by questioning. Setting up individual COVID-secure assessment sessions to complete specific tasks (eg build bridle) could also be used. For those with their own horses, video evidence and reliable witness testimony can be used.</p> <p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL) or experience can also be used to evidence knowledge and competence.</p>
GF4H 46	NPA Horse Care SCQF level 6	Practical elements need to be completed.	<p>Please see table 'Units where teaching and learning can be integrated'.</p> <p>Online demonstrations covering specific aspects, such as identification of health and shoeing, would allow for restricted response questions. Witness testimony is also acceptable for learners with access to their own or someone else's horse. Use of formative observations and previous performance to provide evidence is encouraged. Some centres may have completed or partially completed practical activities which could be used to infer competence and/or knowledge. This could be supplemented by more</p>

Group award code	Title	Issues	Guidance
			<p>detailed oral assessment of theory to provide reassurance that simple practical elements can be completed ('how to' not just 'why').</p> <p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL) or experience may also be used to evidence knowledge and competence.</p>
GD2M 45	NC Horse Care	<p>Learners will have very limited time to practice and develop their skills. Practical elements need completing. Racing students will struggle to achieve the practical elements of intro to racehorse care, and escorting racehorses to races. These are very practical units and students will need additional time to complete them.</p>	<p>Consider combining assessment to increase flexibility. For example, evidence for Horse Care: Employability Skills for Working with Horses (FV9N 11) may be generated by Horse Care: Watering and Feeding: An Introduction (FV9H 11), Horse Care: Yard Maintenance (FV9R 11) and Horse Care: Watering and Feeding (FW00 12).</p> <p>Please see table 'Units where teaching and learning can be integrated'.</p> <p>Some practical assessments may be able to be converted to a knowledge-based approach using case studies and/or restricted response questions. Online discussions and demonstrations, 'visiting' virtual speakers, online 'site visits' could all help generate evidence.</p> <p>SQA will consider flexibility in the group award frameworks to allow some mandatory practical units to be replaced by theory-based optional units. For example, riding units could be replaced with a theory-</p>

Group award code	Title	Issues	Guidance
			<p>based racing unit for all learners so that time on campus can be more directed to mandatory practical elements. Centres should contact the qualifications team to discuss specific units where appropriate.</p> <p>Extra time on campus may be required for students to develop the necessary skills.</p> <p>Some centres were able to offer practical activities from August–December 2020 and can utilise these to infer knowledge and/or competence for assessments in 2021–22.</p> <p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL) or experience can also be used to evidence knowledge and competence.</p>

Additional guidance and information

If you have any questions, please contact operationshmvq@sqa.org.uk.