# National Certificate and Higher National Qualifications

## Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022

# Professional Cookery

**Verification group number: 615**

# Introduction

The academic year 2021–22 identified further challenges for centres following the re-opening after COVID-19: there was uncertainty in relation to the limited access to professional facilities and resources, including both in house and external commercial premises.

Centres continued to use alternative assessment arrangements and the decision tree mechanism to meet these ongoing challenges however, this resulted a very mixed picture in relation to the solutions implemented to ensure candidates met key critical competences.

## Professional Cookery

Four centres were identified for virtual qualification verification activity.

### National Units

**SCQF level 4**

D263 10  Food Preparation Techniques: An Introduction
D264 10  Cookery Processes: An Introduction
J1NJ 44  Food Hygiene for the Hospitality Industry
D9NL 10  Hospitality: Organisation of Practical Skills

**SCQF level 5**

J1NJ 45  Food Hygiene for the Hospitality Industry
J1X4 45  Pastry
J1S5 45  Professional Cookery: Practical

**SCQF level 6**

J1S5 46  Professional Cookery: Practical
J1S6 46  Professional Cookery: Knowledge

# 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.

Delivery and assessment of the SCQF level 6 units was carried out by staff who had current CPD, including professional training, participation in workshops and attendance at conferences.

It was noted in some instances that the SCQF level 4 and level 5 National Units were delivered and assessed by academic staff with little or no experience of current professional/commercial hospitality industry standards and requirements of the technical skills and knowledge sought by employers.

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

All centres provided evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of the assessment requirements including assessment environments. SQA devised learning and assessment materials were recorded as current.

Standardisation and pre-delivery meetings and minutes were provided by all centres — confirming discussion and review for this criterion. One centre, through discussion, identified the lack of access to appropriate assessment environments. This resulted in the decision to remove the award from the portfolio and replace it with another for which the facilities and equipment are more suited.

It is reiterated that a robust pre-delivery procedure for each academic year significantly contributes to successful outcomes of qualification verification activity.

## Category 3: Candidate support

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

In all centres evidence of support mechanisms were provided. This ranged from pre-course interviews and induction programmes to established in house guidance systems which provide support to candidates.

In almost all centres the candidates have undertaken multiple courses over several years. As a result, any additional academic or pastoral support is known and provided on a weekly or monthly basis.

During 2021–22, centres continued to offer increased support as restrictions were lifted. This resulted in an increased demand on services as the anxiety level of candidates was identified as a primary concern.

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

All centres provided evidence of scheduled contact between candidates and their assessors on a weekly basis.

Additional timetabled meetings between the assessor and candidates were evidenced. These provided an opportunity for discussion of progression and feedback in relation to assessment requirements and general oversight for candidate wellbeing.

In all centres candidates were able to contact their assessors outwith timetabled classes.

# Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

External verifiers confirmed all centres have appropriate procedures in place and that they were being implemented effectively to ensure standardisation of assessment through internal verification activity.

One centre that was new to delivering the SCQF level 6 award recognised the value of each stage of the procedure to ensure compliance with the revised conditions of assessment for each unit. They decided to undertake 100% internal verification activity in this first year.

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

All centres selected for verification activity used SQA devised unit specifications and ASPs appropriately. For the practical units this included the correct use of observation checklists which were fully completed by the assessors. Additional support materials in the form of a logbook and/or worksheets to digitally record performance evidence were also made available during this activity.

One centre has utilised an online platform to enhance teaching delivery during COVID-19 restrictions. This enabled candidates to access supporting materials and record performance of assigned tasks when unable to access the facilities. This did not compromise the integrity of the assessment requirements.

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

All centres have clear policies and procedures in place for the identification of malpractice.

Due to the practical nature of these awards, there is a requirement for practical performance to be observed by the assessors. This ensures the veracity of the candidate's work as well as adherence to the standards expected at each SCQF level.

All centres have procedures in place to ensure conditions of assessment are met for any written evidence required by the units.

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

All units selected for this verification period have SQA exemplars available to support the assessor judgements. All centres ensured through team meetings or the use of internal verification activity that a consistent approach to assessment was undertaken.

Candidate evidence confirmed a consistent standard was applied across all centres. In one centre additional evidence of practical performance of technical skill was required to meet the demands of the award. All centres use digital photographic evidence of candidates' work.

One centre raised a question in relation to the currency of unit specifications and NABs at SCQF level 4. Following investigation by SQA, it was confirmed that the content and context of the units at SCQF level 4 remain valid and that the units had been transferred to the current specification template. However it was agreed that the National Assessment Bank material for these units would be transferred to the current ASP format to provide consistency.

Some assessors had trouble in meeting the conditions of assessment for units at SCQF level 5 — including product standards and commercial quality and assessment of the technical skills required for a Professional Cookery group award. Delivery and assessment of the standards can be enhanced through partnership arrangements, including access to professionally qualified assessors and commercial premises.

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

In all centres the retention of candidate evidence complied with SQA requirements. In many centres samples of candidate work are retained for longer periods as part of their individual policies.

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

All centres selected for verification were familiar with SQA protocols for the distribution of external verification reports. In all instances the report is received by either the SQA co-ordinator or the quality assurance team within the centre and then passed to the relevant people within each department for discussion at scheduled team meetings. All centres provided evidence of minutes of team meetings where these reports were discussed, and actions raised and implemented where appropriate.

## Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The restricted qualification verification activity undertaken during 2021–22 did not highlight any specific areas of good practice. However, general commentary highlighted the following practices which would support centre assessors for future delivery.

♦ Collaboration with other centres assists a deeper understanding of the award requirements in relation to the resources required for delivery and assessment.
♦ Industry partnerships are critical for centres that do not have access to commercial standard equipment or facilities for the assessment of candidates.

♦ Pre-delivery/standardisation meetings reinforce understanding of the conditions of assessment for the award and ensure currency of unit specifications and assessment support packs.


# Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2021–22:

♦ Enhance knowledge and understanding of current industry practices through CPD, visits to industry providers or online research.
♦ Review knowledge and understanding of the group award specification to ensure compliance with the specific aims of the qualifications.
♦ Develop industry partnerships to facilitate candidate development of technical and employability skills.
♦ Develop tertiary/higher education links to provide candidates with career progression opportunities.
♦ Review and implement the conditions of assessment for each unit.
♦ Identify means to record candidate performance of product production. Digital photography or short video clips would evidence development of technical skills.