

Systems Verification

Key Messages January 2023

Introduction

As we enter 2023, we understand that centres are continuing to recover from the difficulties and obstacles that the pandemic created.

It has been inspiring to learn about the ways you have adapted your methods and approaches to continue delivering SQA qualifications since returning to our 'new normal'.

We have seen and heard many good examples of innovative practice, including:

- ◆ the introduction of virtual verification meetings over 2020 and 2021
- ◆ developing software and digital learning and assessment platforms to enable candidates to continue their qualifications
- ◆ using a variety of communication technologies

We are pleased to report that many of these examples have been implemented permanently.

Over the past year our teams in HNVQ have worked to continue and improve our support for you by:

- ◆ Making improvements to the Centre Hub, where many centres now upload their systems and qualification verification evidence.
- ◆ Taking part in the week-long SQA Quality Network Event, delivering a webinar on preparing for systems verification.
- ◆ Publishing a 'New SQA Co-ordinator Induction Guide' and 'Guidance on CPD for co-ordinators'.

Visiting verification

In 2022, our team of Quality Enhancement Managers returned to visiting verification wherever possible and appropriate. Meeting centre staff and candidates face-to-face again has been a very positive experience. We conducted a total of 349 systems verification meetings, and the majority were in-person visits.

One of the changes we made to the systems verification process was to request key documents from centres. We reviewed in advance of the verification meeting. This enabled us to formulate constructive feedback on good practice and note potential required actions. This has helped to reduce the time spent doing this during the meeting, which has improved productivity.

We have continued this practice since returning to visiting systems verification and assessing compliance against all our quality assurance criteria. This has provided us with more time to offer you support where needed and engage in valuable conversations about how you implement your systems in practice.

Centre Hub

We are delighted to announce that the new Centre Hub launched on Thursday 2 February.

- ◆ The new hub works with document libraries. Your centre has its own folder that you can upload their documents to. You can now upload multiple files and review the documents in your folder.
- ◆ Your existing log-in will still be valid for the new hub.
- ◆ You cannot delete or move files once you have uploaded them. However, we've built a 'Delete Yes/No' box that you can check to advise us that you would like a document deleted. This will be useful if you have uploaded documents to the wrong folder or have duplicated documents.
- ◆ Full guidance and supporting documentation are available.

Systems verification outcome statistics

In 2022, the number of centres reporting high or broad confidence from their systems verification was 65%, which is an increase on last year's 56.7%

Only 1.4% of centres reported an outcome of minimal or no confidence.

This is very positive and we hope it is due to centres being familiar with the quality assurance criteria which, apart from updates, have largely remain unchanged in seven years.

Top six non-compliant criteria

We consistently recognise similar criteria as the highest areas for non-compliance and requiring action after system verification. Please see below for 2021 and 2022 information in relation to quality assurance criteria:

2022	2021
1.5 Malpractice Policy	1.5 Malpractice Policy
4.8 Internal Assessment Appeals Procedure	6.2 Candidate entries / Data Management
6.2 Candidate entries / Data Management	6.1 GDPR / Data Management
3.6 Complaints Procedure	6.1 GDPR / Data Management
6.1 GDPR / Data Management	3.6 Complaints Procedure
3.5 Assessment Arrangements Procedure	3.5 Assessment Arrangements Procedure

Since 2021, two criteria related to data management have continued to be an area of non-compliance for some of our centres.

To help centres with the requirements in criteria 6.1, we have added a field to SQA Connect for centres to input a valid candidate contact detail (a personal phone number or email address) at the point of entering them for qualifications. This is particularly helpful for centres

who wish to use the centre address instead of the candidates' home address on the candidate record.

Tips for maintaining effective data management

Here are our 'top tips' for data management:

- ◆ Watch the SQA Webinar 'Making SQA Connect work for you'.
- ◆ Ensure that data cleansing is a scheduled activity and that whoever is responsible for this has the time, resources and information to do it.
- ◆ Communicate with your assessors and candidates regularly to determine their situation and whether achievement is on track, or circumstances have changed. Following this, either result, withdraw or extend candidates' projected completion dates to ensure that their data is current and accurate.

How to achieve and maintain a High Confidence outcome

In order to achieve and maintain a high confidence outcome, we recommend that you watch the SQA Webinar 'Making Systems Verification Work For You'.

Although we notify centres about changes to our requirements via emails and the weekly SQA News bulletin, it is your responsibility to review quality assurance policies and procedures against our published [SQA Systems Verification Criteria: Guidance for centres](#). This guide includes a 'change log' to summarise where we have made changes to our quality assurance requirements. You can use this log to check your own documents against the requirements.

If your centre delivers regulated qualifications, ensure you take note of the 'Additional requirements for regulated qualifications' paragraph under each criterion eligible (1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 3.6, 4.7, 4.8, 6.3 and 6.4) and incorporate this into your policy and practice.

Remember — review regularly, update where required, and share updated information with relevant centre staff.

The future

Our aim is to continue visiting systems verification where appropriate, as we believe there is real value in face-to-face interaction. At the same time, we welcome the growing use of technology to aid communication and efficiency.

We will continue to improve our guidance and sources of information for centres and ask that you give us constructive feedback on your systems verification experiences. A link to a feedback form is included in the email attaching your systems verification report.