



National Qualifications 2022
Qualification Verification Summary Report
Skills for Work: Early Learning
and Childcare

Verification group number: 416

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

Skills for Work Courses

The Skills for Work Course frameworks in Early Learning and Childcare consist of three mandatory units with one optional unit.

Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 4 (SCQF level 4)

Group award code: C782 74 (24 SCQF credit points)

Mandatory units

HX1R 74 Play in Early Learning and Childcare

HX1L 74 Child Development

HX1V 74 Working in Early Learning and Childcare

Optional units (one to be selected)

HX1K 74 Care of Children

HX1M 74 Contemporary Families

HX1T 74 Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children

Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 5 (SCQF level 5)

Group award code: C783 75 (24 SCQF credit points)

Mandatory units

HX1R 75 Play in Early Learning and Childcare

HC3C 45 Development and Wellbeing of Children and Young People

HX1V 75 Working in Early Learning and Childcare

Optional units (one to be selected)

HX1J 75 Care and Feeding of Children and Young People

HX1M 75 Contemporary Families

J54S 75 Introduction to Basic First Aid

HC38 45 Children and Young People: Rights and Protection

General comments

This year, 2021–22, has continued to pose many challenges for centres as they are continuing to deal with pandemic restrictions, the impact this has had on learning and teaching of candidates, and the on-going effect on centres and their staff teams.

Across all centres selected for external verification in 2021–22, external verifiers found delivery of high-quality Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare courses offering effective learning and support for candidates, and robust quality assurance processes. Centres continued to demonstrate flexibility, adaptability, innovation and creativity in their delivery, while maintaining the Skills for Work ethos and values.

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

It is evident from external verification in 2021–22, that assessors and internal verifiers are familiar with Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare course arrangements, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials.

All centres that were externally verified were using SQA assessment support pack (ASP) materials for units, downloaded as required from the SQA secure site. Many had adapted the style (font, size and format) of these, to meet the needs of their candidates without adjusting the content. This provided a flexible approach to assessment methods, while ensuring robust coverage of all evidence requirements in the unit specifications.

External verifiers found that assessors and internal verifiers within centres were confidently able to discuss course arrangements, unit specifications and their use of instruments of assessment, demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding across the Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare courses and units being delivered.

Evidence requirements

External verifiers identified that centre staff, assessors and internal verifiers, have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare courses and units, and the requirements of the different SCQF levels. They found that centres were implementing flexible and candidate-centred approaches to assessment as encouraged within the unit evidence requirements. Evidence was gathered in a range of ways to assess candidate knowledge, understanding and application across the learning outcomes and performance criteria — while ensuring that candidates met the evidence requirements and demonstrated that they achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

For Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare units, much of the assessment is process based, and external verifiers found evidence of observation, candidate practice, teamworking, peer evaluation, etc. The approaches to assessment were valid and the assessment judgements reliable, consistent, and in line with the evidence requirements in the units.

Administration of assessments

During external verification in 2021–22, external verifiers found that centres were administering assessments for Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 4 and 5, in an appropriate way, at the correct SCQF level, while upholding the principles of assessment — validity, reliability, equitability, fairness and practicability.

External verifiers identified that the majority of assessment judgements made by assessors were valid, reliable, equitable and fair. Their assessment judgements were based on evidence presented by candidates, on the requirements in the units and marking guidance found in the ASPs. External verifiers found there was

a consistent approach by assessors and the majority were maintaining detailed records and checklists of assessment judgements made.

The majority of assessors were also providing feedback to candidates, which was supportive and consistent of the development of the candidates, while remaining focused on the assessment content. This feedback was mainly clear, accurate and administered systematically. It was positive, supportive and constructive in nature, highlighting areas of strength and identifying areas for further development. Many used this assessment feedback to equip candidates with advice and to offer opportunities to identify the next steps in their learning.

All centres had an internal verification policy, which most assessors and internal verifiers were implementing effectively. All had quality assurance documentation for Skills for Work with guidance on internal verification process and practice. Most of these included 'pro-forma' documentation based on the SQA Internal Verification Toolkit www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit. External verifiers found documented evidence of prior verification, interim verification and post verification. This ensured a considered and robust approach to quality assurance.

There was also evidence of standardisation meetings and/or action logs to record discussions between assessors and internal verifiers. Many of these were detailed and provided clear insight into ongoing decisions and rationales for unit delivery, approaches to learning and teaching, and administration of assessments.

Areas of good practice

Learning and teaching

Throughout a very challenging year, centres have supported their candidates to achieve the units and Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 4 and 5 courses. Detailed timelines showed development of learning and teaching, resources and materials, class design and delivery of units. There were many examples of well organised and considered unit plans, with lots of fun and experiential learning which is an asset to the course delivery and the Skills for Work ethos. For example:

- ◆ Visits to a local nursery to enable candidates to experience more hands-on interactions with young children.
- ◆ Use of videos with candidates, discussing and demonstrating their practical skills as well as knowledge and understanding (which was excellent).
- ◆ Inviting guest speakers to record video clips describing their role and responsibilities, for example a midwife. This allowed the candidates to gain an insight into the vital role a midwife plays during pregnancy.
- ◆ Candidates undertook interviews with teachers with children about their choice of childcare provider and how they were supported as a family. This enabled the candidates to gain a balanced and informed view of the benefits of different childcare provision.

- ◆ Integration of outdoor learning through play sessions whereby candidates are set a challenge to find three items from nature. These items are then taken back into the classroom where the candidates are encouraged to use their imaginations to create a story using these items.
- ◆ Introducing the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to the candidates and how children's rights apply to Play in Early Learning and Childcare.
- ◆ Introduction of forest kindergarten sessions to allow candidates to engage with play and learning opportunities.

Developing candidates' skills

Candidate activities encourage group working to build team working skills but equally to provide opportunities for candidates to work on their own to build independence and responsibility for their learning, and to develop skills such as critical thinking. External verifiers found evidence of candidates beginning to develop skills of reflection and to apply these to their portfolio work and assessment practice. They also found that candidates were developing employability skills, including use of ICT, teamworking, etc.

For example, the use of peer review in the unit Play in Early Learning and Childcare (HX1R 75) brought depth and greater understanding to the play plans and allowed candidates to reflect on their own practice and the practice of others.

Many centres are providing good examples to promote learning and engagement, which includes candidates having the opportunity to meet with practitioners and managers to discuss careers and to engage in wellbeing activities, such as mindfulness.

Internal verification and collaboration

External verifiers found that the approach to verification by many of the centres was extremely effective, with a robust method of sampling and standardisation of candidate evidence. This approach to verification was valid and reliable. Detailed minutes showed progression and development of units and comprehensive approaches to assessment.

A number of centres have developed a collaborative approach to developing learning and teaching materials and partnerships are in place for internal verification across geographic areas or across subject groups.

Specific areas for improvement

There were a few centres where external verifiers identified specific areas for improvement — including specific units:

HX1R 75 Play in Early Learning and Childcare

Candidates should be given the opportunity to experience play with natural material and, if possible, to experience outdoor play in the natural world in line with current early learning pedagogy.

If the candidates are not able to access a placement, consideration should be given to identifying opportunities to engage with play in other ways, such as

undertaking play with younger pupils in a school to carry out practical play activities; engaging with online storytelling with a local nursery; etc.

HC3C 45 Development and Wellbeing of Children and Young People

Candidates are required to undertake research to generate a folio with information presented in a variety of ways. This should be used as a formative assessment tool to ensure the candidate's understanding of the principles of development and wellbeing of children and young people. The assessor should complete the Assessment Checklist to confirm this folio has been completed.

Centres are advised that the summative report for this unit should be discrete — a short written report, verbal report, short presentation or group discussion, as outlined in the evidence requirements and ASP. The summative assessment will be a report which explains the candidate's understanding of the development and wellbeing of children and young people.

A list of sources of information should be presented with the candidate's portfolio and the summative report.

The Assessment Checklist and the Summative Report should be retained as evidence for external verification. The candidate's portfolio is not required as evidence for external verification, rather it should be used as a resource for the learner.

The summative assessment will be a report which explains the candidate's understanding of the development and wellbeing of children and young people.

Assessment judgements and feedback

Centres are advised to develop a personalised style of feedback for each candidate where their strengths in the assessment or task is highlighted along with possible next steps to support their development (feed-forward). If remediation is required, it should be clear and specific, identifying what is required in order for candidates to work towards success in the assessment. Assessment feedback, checklists and tracker records should also reflect the first and second attempts, and outcomes for each submission.

Internal verification

Centres are advised to ensure all required internal verification documentation is completed and available for future verification events.

It is recommended that centres send any centre devised assessments to SQA for prior verification. A [centre guide and form](#) are available on the SQA website.

Use of photographic evidence

Centres are advised to discourage the use of photographic evidence of children. Photographic evidence can be used to support assessment practice — but should focus on the actual activity undertaken and not on any children involved.