



National Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022–23

Skills for Work: Engineering Skills

Verification group number: 412

Skills for Work Courses

Skills for Work: Engineering Skills (National 5)

A mix of visiting and remote verification took place this year. Despite centres experiencing difficulties during the post-pandemic, all centres were found to be satisfactory.

General comments

All centres verified this year were delivering the National 5 qualification.

Two schools were registering candidates for the first-time following approval early in the session.

The other centres have a comprehensive understanding of national standards as they have been offering the courses for a few years.

Candidates in this session were from a mix of S4–S6. The schools put a lot of effort into developing unit assessment tools that are relevant and practical. The review of the assessments for the 'Mechanical and Fabrication' and 'Fabrication' units shows this.

We would emphasise the importance of the visit plan, which is sent to centres before the visit date. This document explains that the external verifier will wish to meet with a centre representative before the visit commences and that they will need to access evidence relating to:

- equal and fair access to assessment
- assessor standardisation arrangements
- internal verification strategy/ procedures and sampling

The pre-visit information has been provided by the centres using either SQA systems or centre systems.

As in past years, it should be emphasised that the external verifier bases their report on centre staff adherence to centre procedures in their standardisation and recording of assessments, sampling, and internal verification decisions.

It is clear that centres are taking heed of this report to plan for external verifier visits either on-site or remote. This enabled the external verifier to quickly understand centre procedures before beginning the verification process.

Skills for Work: Engineering Skills courses require partnerships with industry or colleges to enable candidates to develop an understanding of the workplace. Centres often find difficulty in this important aspect of candidate development of

employability skills. This can be successfully overcome by centres simply inviting industry and/or college experts to visit the centre and offer a question-and-answer session to candidates.

One centre has developed excellent links with a college to deliver outstanding practical skills for work in engineering.

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

As most centres visited have all been offering these courses for many years (two centres offered for the first time), they are demonstrably familiar with the course arrangements and record the requirements from the unit specifications in their internal verification procedures.

The one exception to this was one of the recently approved schools. It did not base its scheduling of units in-line with course arrangements guidance, and this resulted in candidates attempting the 'Design and Manufacture' unit before two skill acquisition units. A discussion was held regarding the development of interactive tools to help students in the assessment process. Another discussion point was 'how to introduce the National 4 Skills for Work: Engineering Skills course for future cohorts', potentially third and fourth year, and use the National 5 for senior school allowing for a progression pathway. Also, a discussion was held around developing a more formalised internal verification plan so that units are internally verified shortly after they are completed.

All centres visited were using the SQA-produced National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials for candidate assessment.

Evidence requirements

Most centres have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the units.

The interpretation of the assessment for employability skills in the National 5 'Design and Manufacture' unit (where candidates should prepare a short written report on their activities followed by a presentation to their peer group) was problematic in one centre with candidates struggling to comply with the evidence requirements but still being marked as successful. As engineering is a communication process, centre staff should explain that if candidates decide to follow this route, they will be asked constantly to justify choices of processes, etc. Centres may use staff as a peer group if this would help, but the requirements must be completed to be successful.

There are some inconsistencies in approach to employability skills in general. It would be beneficial for all centres to develop meaningful partnerships with local engineering employers, if possible, at the outset of the course to encourage

candidate understanding of good working practices. Satisfactory completion of the skills sections of the units should enable candidates to monitor their progress and allow them to record development. Assessor written feedback on employability skills to candidates should always form part of an individual unit feedback session with targets mutually set.

Administration of assessments

Centres are reminded that the sample should follow the centre policy (where the procedure should be stated).

Centres can make use of the SQA-produced Internal Verification Toolkit as a means of checking their existing internal verification processes to ensure that they are appropriate. For example, centres could keep a record justifying their rationale for an assessment decision.

Learning and teaching

Assessor feedback was evident on all employability review sheets submitted. Employability review sheets were signed by the assessor.

Candidate review sheets were completed by candidates and comments by the assessor were evident. In one candidate employability review sheet, page two had not been signed and dated by the assessor. Comments on this have been given in feedback meetings with the centre.

Overall assessment

All centres made use of the SQA-produced NABs that have been subject to strict scrutiny, so all assessments approaches were appropriate.

Verification

Centres can make use of the SQA-produced Internal Verification Toolkit as a means of checking their existing internal verification processes to ensure that they are appropriate.

In many situations, internal verification processes were working well. One example of this was a master folder containing the internal verification procedure, staff qualifications, sampling process, and internal verification schedule.

Areas of good practice reported in 2022–23

The following areas of good practice were reported during this session.

- More centres are continuing to invest in modern technology resources and encouraging candidates to make use of this in their completion of practical tasks.
- Candidates stated that they really enjoyed the units and found them challenging but very enjoyable. One commented he had learned so much in one year and that this course was the reason why he had applied to college to undertake an NC Engineering course.

Specific areas for improvement reported in 2022–23

The following areas for development were reported:

- Centres should understand that the visit plan requests that internal verification procedures be presented and explained to the external verifier at the start of the external verification visit, and centres must make arrangements for this to take place.
- One centre needed to formalise standardisation course team meetings and provide formal feedback to the candidates.
- It is good practice for internal verifiers to sign and date candidate materials as they are assessed and internally verified.