



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications and Customised Awards
Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022
Advice, Guidance and Mediation**

Verification group number: 287

Introduction

SVQs

Advice, Guidance and Mediation (GL1L 23, GL1M 24, GL47 23, GL48 24)

Customised Awards

Advice, Guidance and Mediation (G7WJ04, GG8A 04)

Almost all awards were delivered by community based or voluntary sector agencies, and to a much lesser extent by colleges and local authorities. The SVQ in Advice, Guidance and Mediation featured more prominently with both voluntary and mainstream agencies offering this as part of a Modern Apprenticeship award. Customised Awards were delivered by small voluntary sector agencies. However, external verification outcomes showed no deterioration in standards with all centres maintaining the required levels with some recommendations for improvement.

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.

Staff at centres delivering SVQs ordinarily are required to demonstrate that they have undertaken recent appropriate professional and vocational continuing professional development. However, this requirement was waived during the pandemic restrictions period. Nevertheless, a few indicated that they had participated in inhouse training relevant to the awards while some managed to take part in external events.

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

All centres undertaking SVQs referred to the assessment strategy for the award they were delivering and demonstrated compliance with this criterion through the submission of relevant evidence. Documents such as completed site selection checklists and notes of standardisation meetings highlighting checks relating to this requirement were presented in this regard. Some centres used the latter to identify and address ongoing development needs of candidates.

All centres delivering Customised Awards also complied with the above by adopting a similar approach as those for regulated awards in terms of the submission of evidence.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

All centres demonstrated that they had robust procedures in place such as comprehensive induction programmes complemented by one-to-one skills matching sessions to ensure that each candidate was placed at the correct level within his/her chosen award. The identification of ongoing development needs such as literacy and dyslexia support and independent learning skills also featured as part of this procedure.

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

Most centres showed that they were adhering to this criterion by presenting completed and dated assessment plans as evidence to this effect. These showed that contact took place, on average fortnightly, and involved either online or face-to-face meetings or a combination of both. Almost all reflected continuity of good guidance and support with some adopting assessment planning as an effective way of developing candidates as good independent learners.

However, a small number showed that the guidance and support on offer was minimal and were advised to provide clearer instructions for candidates as to what exactly was required of them.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

As evidence of compliance with this criterion, all centres presented internal verification policies, internal verification reports and notes of standardisation meetings. These showed that standardisation meetings take place at a minimum of every three months in line with SQA requirements.

One centre with assessors spread out through a wide geographical area had adapted its standardisation approach to meet the social distance challenges of the pandemic.

A small number of centres, however, used these sessions to focus predominantly on general housekeeping issues and did not address adequately the topic of assessment and verification.

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

All centres running regulated awards presented and confirmed adherence to the relevant assessment strategy to demonstrate compliance with this criterion.

All those running customised awards confirmed that they had been guided by their centre's Equality Policy to ensure compliance with this.

However, a small number of centres were asked to review their choice of methods; for example, to provide supporting narratives and witness testimonies to validate products and complement observation notes.

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

All centres referred to their respective plagiarism policies, each of which reflected SQA requirements, to confirm compliance with this criterion. Additionally, most centres confirmed that they required candidates to sign a document to confirm that they understood the contents of the plagiarism policy and the consequences of not adhering to this. Signed documents were then stored within candidate paper portfolios.

Some centres working with online portfolios used a plagiarism detector programme to ensure compliance.

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

All candidate evidence sampled in all centres had been both accurately and consistently judged with assessors using checklists drawn from award unit specifications to ensure the maintenance of standards. Many centres also carried out cross-marking; used gap analysis procedures and referred to banks of sample answers for additional assurance of accuracy and consistency of judgement.

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

All centres referred to the evidence retention section within their internal verification policy document to demonstrate adherence to this criterion. Each reflected the current SQA requirement for retention of three weeks. Similarly, all centres confirmed that access restrictions were in place for evidence retained.

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

All centres confirmed that all reports of this nature are sent initially to the assessor and the wider assessment team. They are then subsequently discussed at the next internal verifier–

assessor meeting where issues raised within are addressed within tight timescales for the purpose of informing assessment practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2021–22:

- ◆ The assessors' approach to assessment and feedback to candidates was very thorough.
- ◆ Evidence of regular informal standardisation sessions where the emphasis is on quality improvement in relation to assessment practice.
- ◆ Use of the assessment planning process as not just a reliable tool for tracking candidate evidence but also as an effective way of developing candidates as good independent learners.
- ◆ Creative ways of maintaining links for / records of standardisation during the pandemic.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ That the centre records assessment planning sessions to provide clearer instructions for candidates as to what is required of them.
- ◆ That standardisation sessions and internal verifier comments refer to candidate evidence performance.
- ◆ That the centre reviews its observation pro formas.
- ◆ That the centre records clear links between products submitted by candidates as evidence and performance criteria achievements allocated as a result of such submissions.