



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications**  
**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2021**  
**Brickwork**

Verification group number: 171

## Introduction

Throughout session 2020–21 all centres delivering the SVQs in Bricklaying level 5 and 6 experienced difficulties in receiving and assessing evidence from the workplace due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing requirements.

However, only two centres asked for qualification verification (QV) visits to be deferred because insufficient evidence was available to enable external verification events to proceed. One was a college and one was an employer training provider (ETP). At the time of writing, these visits had still to be rearranged.

External verification activity therefore took place at 15 centres delivering the SVQs in Bricklaying level 5 and 6. This included one ETP and 15 colleges. The focus of external verification sampling at colleges was on fourth year or two-year candidates due to complete their SVQ level 6 in summer 2021. For the single centre delivering the SVQ level 5, external verification evidence focus was for experienced workers undertaking assessment in the workplace.

External verifiers (EVs) were able to sample and verify candidate evidence and assessment decisions at all centres through virtual verification activity. While assessed evidence was available at all centres, the majority of candidates had not provided sufficient evidence to allow them to undertake skills testing and complete their SVQ.

### GM7R 23 SVQ in Bricklaying (Construction) SCQF level 6

SQA code	SSC code	Title
HL7P 04	COSVR209v2	Confirm Work Activities and Resources for the Work
HL7Y 04	COSVR210v3	Develop and Maintain Good Working Relationships
HL7N 04	COSVR211v2	Confirm the Occupational Method of Work
HL7R 04	COSVR641v2	Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
HL59 04	COSVR40v2	Erect Masonry Structures
HL5F 04	COSVR41v2	Set out Masonry Structures
HN2G 04	COSVR48v3	Set out Complex Masonry Structures
HN2H 04	COSVR49v3	Erect Complex Masonry Structures
HN2F 04	STBL1	Bricklaying Skills Test

### Plus optional units (any one unit from the following)

SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
HL58 04	COSVR42v2	Erect Masonry Cladding	5	24
HL5A 04	COSVR44v2	Erect Thin Joint Masonry Structures	5	23
HL5D 04	COSVR45v3	Place and Finish Non-Specialist Concrete	5	12

SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
HL5C 04	COSVR47v2	Maintain Slate and Tile Roofing	5	14
HL5E 04	COSVR50v2	Repair and Maintain Masonry Structures	6	22
HL7C 04	COSVR66v2	Produce Internal Solid Plastering Finishes	5	23
HL75 04	COSVR67v2	Apply Solid Render to Background Surfaces and Produce Finishes	5	27
HL87 04	COSVR639v2	Install Drainage	5	19

### GM4C 22 SVQ in Bricklaying (Construction) SCQF level 5

**Mandatory units: Candidates must complete all units from this group**

SQA code	SSC code	Title	SCQF level	SCQF credits
HL7R 04	COSVR641v2	Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare	6	12
HL7T 04	COSVR642v1	Conform to Productive Work Practices	5	5
HM15 04	COSVR643v1	Move, Handle or Store Resources	5	5

### Bricklaying option route (total six)

HL59 04	COSVR40v2	Erect Masonry Structures	5	27
HL5F 04	COSVR41v2	Set out Masonry Structures	5	22

### Plus optional (one from the following)

HL58 04	COSVR42v2	Erect Masonry Cladding	5	24
HL5A 04	COSVR44v2	Erect Thin Joint Masonry Structures	5	23
HL5D 04	COSVR45v3	Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete	5	12
HL5C 04	COSVR47v2	Maintain Slate and Tile Roofing	5	14
HL5E 04	COSVR50v2	Repair and Maintain Masonry Structures	6	22
HL7C 04	COSVR66v2	Produce Internal Solid Plastering Finishes	5	23
HL75 04	COSVR67v2	Apply Solid Render to Background Surfaces and Produce Finishes	5	27
HL87 04	COSVR639v3	Install Drainage	5	19

## 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 all but one centre delivering an SVQ in Bricklaying level 5 and 6 deployed assessors and internal verifiers (IVs) who complied with assessment strategy and SQA requirements. Assessors and IVs were competent, qualified, had relevant industry experience and occupational currency. However, confirmation of one IV's vocational qualification was noted as a required action at one centre.

Staff at almost all centres undertook and recorded appropriate vocational and professional continuing professional development (CPD) activities to ensure they maintained occupational currency. At one centre, though, a recommendation was identified relating to staff continuing to undertake vocational CPD activity.

Good practice was identified at one centre, noting that all assessors and IVs had recently completed a site safety health and safety qualification to ensure currency and to support sharing best practice, industry knowledge and experience with candidates.

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

Almost all external verification reports confirmed that assessment plans in sampled portfolios showed evidence of effective reviews of the assessment environment. These plans confirmed that learning resources and assessment materials were available for almost all planned observation events.

However, at two centres areas for development were reported, recommending that the centres should ensure that standardisation meeting agendas cover the key evidence within this criterion 2.4.

At one centre, a recommendation was noted for more effective planning of site observations to ensure that observed evidence covered as many units of the SVQ as possible.

## Category 3: Candidate Support

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

For SVQ level 5 and 6, candidates continued to receive support from centre staff while generating evidence from the workplace. Effective assessor feedback to candidates at all centres confirmed assessment decisions and identified areas where evidence was still required. At almost all centres, effective assessment planning maintained a focus on candidate progress.

One centre had continued the support of candidates during COVID-19 restrictions by the innovative use of twilight after-work virtual drop-in sessions to support 3rd and 4th year apprentices. Discussions with candidates confirmed that these sessions were invaluable for candidates no longer attending college.

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

Sampled assessment plans at most centres provided good evidence of planned contacts between assessors and candidates. While face-to-face contacts were planned these were difficult to fulfil due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, almost all centres managed to schedule and maintain contacts with candidates virtually, by email or mobile phone. An array of good practice was reported by EVs for this criterion at more than a few centres, which reflects the commitment of centre staff to maintain support for candidates despite lockdown restrictions.

At one centre the EV reported that effective and supportive virtual and email contacts between the college assessors and candidates during restrictions was welcomed by candidates and was decisive in maintaining a focus on SVQ evidence requirements.

At another centre the report noted 'assessors and candidates used a range of social media platforms effectively to communicate a wide range of assessment materials. Additionally, candidates also shared industry related learning and site knowledge with centre staff and their peer group which enhances motivation, confidence building, sharing of best practice and learning progress'.

However, areas for development were identified at two centres. At one centre the EV noted that assessor feedback and observation report narrative for future observations should be directed to the candidate and not a third party.

At another centre the external verification report identified that assessors should ensure all submitted candidate portfolio documentation is signed off and must include the candidate name, submission date and assessor feedback.

As in previous years, contacts for SVQ 3 candidates were augmented by Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) apprenticeship officer reviews, which helped to maintain a focus on overall progress with the qualification.

## **Category 4: Internal assessment and verification**

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

All centres had implemented well-established assessment and verification policies and procedures to support the effective delivery of the SVQs in Bricklaying level 5 and 6. External verifiers reported that assessors and IVs at almost all centres implemented these processes consistently and effectively to ensure a standardised approach to assessment and internal verification practice.

At one centre, two areas of good practice were identified. The first was the extremely high standards of clerical housekeeping, including meticulous signing and dating of all documents and records.

The second area of good practice was detailed observation reports which were noted as commendable by the EV and supported by robust internal verification quality assurance checks.

There were three areas for development noted at three separate centres. IV feedback to the assessor was too generic at one centre. The EV noted that it would be helpful if the IV stated which units and PCs required further evidence or resubmission.

At another centre a heavy reliance on witness testimony and personal statements was reported. The EV required all sampled candidate portfolios to be reviewed, and reassessed using direct observation clearly linked to the criteria being claimed.

One other EV report noted that the IV should highlight candidate evidence from the workplace which could be mapped and assessed against other units within the SVQ.

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

Staff delivering SVQs in Bricklaying level 5 and 6 at all centres have made good progress in the development of candidate portfolios and assessment documentation for collating and assessing evidence from the workplace. In almost all cases portfolio assessment instruments and records were being used effectively to assess candidate evidence from the workplace.

However, areas for development were reported at two centres. At one centre it was identified as a required action to ensure that observation reports for workplace evidence are completed for all sampled candidates covering all competences for resulted units.

At another centre, it was noted that referencing evidence to units and PCs could be more robust.

Areas of good practice were reported at two external verification events. One centre-devised portfolio was identified as an excellent resource for candidates to use. It facilitated the continuous gathering and assessment of evidence from the workplace despite the issues and barriers presented by COVID-19 restrictions.

At another centre the centre-devised Evidence Reference Summary sheet, which mapped all assessed evidence to units, outcomes and performance criteria, was reported to be comprehensive, detailed and very easy to track. This document conveyed visually to the candidate what has been achieved and what still had to be assessed.

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

Evidence for SVQs in Brickwork from the workplace, and candidate records were clearly attributable to candidates at all centres. At almost all centres assessment records were signed and dated by the candidate, the assessor and where appropriate the IV. Virtual and video evidence presented by candidates was easily confirmed by the assessor as the candidate's own work.

One area of development related to complying with SQA requirements through the effective use of narrated video rather than photographic evidence.

Skills tests were conducted in line with SQA requirements at a few centres which had managed to deliver skills testing. Evidence was available to confirm that the expert witness had been in attendance.

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

Qualification verifiers reported that assessor judgements were accurate and consistent at almost all centres delivering SVQs in Bricklaying level 5 and 6, and the assessment process was supported by effective IV quality assurance checks.

Good practice was reported at one external verification event, where the use of virtual observation of live assessments on site was well planned and executed, with good probing questions by the assessor to confirm knowledge and understanding. This approach obviated any issues presented by COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing.

At one centre it was a required action to provide evidence of completed observation reports from the workplace for the candidate sample. The observation reports were required to provide evidence of competence for the units recorded as being achieved in the candidate portfolios.

An area for development reported at another centre was IV reviews confirming that sufficient candidate evidence has been provided and assessed in line with SQA requirements to enable unit achievements to be claimed.

Another area for development noted at one external verification event was that the assessor should be encouraged to assess presented evidence for more than one unit and should include practical and generic competencies.

Additionally, a recommendation was noted that observation report writing needed to be developed to be specific about what units, PCs and range had been observed.

A recommendation noted that the assessor at one location should review the paper-based portfolios completed by SVQ 3 candidates in first and second year, with a view to

establishing and giving credit for previously assessed evidence in the centre's new electronic portfolio.

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

All evidence identified on external verification visit plans was readily available during qualification verification activity at almost all centres. Centres had a clear understanding of the awarding body's policy requirements on retention of candidate evidence and assessment records.

All external verification reports confirmed that centres continue to retain candidate evidence and assessment records in line with SQA requirements. Retention of evidence policies at most centres exceed SQA requirements.

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

All centres had clear policies and procedures in place for the dissemination of information from qualification verifiers to assessors and IVs. Staff at all centres implemented centre procedures effectively and there was good evidence of improvements and enhancements being made to develop assessment practice.



## **Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers**

The following good practice was reported during session 2020–21:

- 2.1 Assessors and IVs renewing safety qualifications
- 3.2 Twilight after-work virtual drop-in sessions for candidates
- 3.3 Virtual and email contacts between assessor and candidates during restrictions
- 3.3 Assessors and candidates using social media platforms to support assessment
- 4.2 Meticulous clerical housekeeping, signing and dating all documents and records
- 4.2 Evaluative observation reports writing
- 4.3 Centre-devised portfolio, facilitating continuous gathering and assessment of evidence despite COVID-19 restrictions
- 4.3 Comprehensive and visual 'evidence referencing' records
- 4.6 Virtual observation of live assessment on site

## **Specific areas for development**

The following areas for development were reported during session 2020–21:

- 2.1 Recording of CPD and sharing practice at standardisation meetings
- 2.1 IV technical qualification
- 2.4 Standardisation meeting agendas covering reviews of the assessment environments
- 2.4 More effective planning of site observations
- 3.3 Observations reporting directed to the candidate
- 3.3 Signing and dating candidate portfolio documentation (clerical housekeeping)
- 4.2 Internal verification feedback to the assessor not being specific
- 4.2 Reliance on witness testimony and personal statements, with limited direct observation for resulted units
- 4.2 Mapping candidate evidence to more than one unit (holistic approach)
- 4.2 Centre's internal verification report not facilitating SVQ assessment and internal verification methodology
- 4.3 Observation reports being available for all resulted units
- 4.3 Referencing evidence to all potential units and PCs
- 4.6 Use of narrated video rather than photographic evidence
- 4.6 Observation reports being available for sampled candidates
- 4.6 IVs confirming sufficiency of candidate evidence for resulted units
- 4.6 Assess presented evidence for more than one specialist unit (specialist and generic units)
- 4.6 Report writing should record the units, outcomes, PCs and range being observed
- 4.6 Assess portfolios evidence presented by SVQ 3 candidates when in first and second year