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Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Qualification Verification Summary Report 2021

Care

Verification group number: 82

Introduction

SVQ 2 Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 6
SVQ 3 Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7
SVQ 4 Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 9
SVQ 4 Care Services Leadership and Management at SCQF level 10

This session, all visits were carried out using a virtual approach due to the current pandemic. SQA provided external verifiers (EVs) and centres with a platform called 'evidence hub' where all centres' evidence was uploaded to prior to the virtual visit. Some centres also used e-portfolios and gave EVs access to these in advance of the visits taking place.

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.

Assessors and verifiers in almost all centres complied with this criterion relating to qualifications for occupational competence, as per assessment strategy requirements, and all assessors and verifiers have a relevant occupational qualification to be able to assess and verify the awards being assessed. All assessors and verifiers have or are undertaking assessor/verifiers qualifications.

CPD for assessors and verifiers at almost all centres are robust and they have managed to continue with CPD activities during the pandemic, with some good examples of entries mentioned in EV reports.

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

Assessment environments were severely affected by COVID-19. Some assessment environments had to close, and some were able to continue on a reduced service, particularly in residential care and home care for older adults. This had an impact on assessors being able to gain access to these environments for observing candidates. Adaptations had to be made to allow assessments to continue. Observation by digital technology was used more and face to face meetings were delivered via other digital platforms such as Zoom, Teams, etc. Expert Witness was also encouraged to be used more and this has led to a discussion regarding the different roles of assessors (peripatetic and work-based).

Reviews of policies and procedures in almost all centres are carried out regularly and are version controlled using footer systems in almost all centres. Teaching and referencing material and equipment was relevant and up to date in almost all centres.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

With COVID-19 affecting delivery in almost all centres, candidates' development needs were highlighted more as well as changes from diagnosed conditions to more social issues such as poverty. Candidates, assessors and verifiers were directed to move to a digital platform. Many centres were able to provide the candidates with laptops and other specific support. There were also issues of isolation for all those involved in delivery and cognisance of this had to be understood. Almost all centres use RPL where it is relevant to the awards being delivered if the evidence is suitable.

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

Almost all centres have systems in place which are implemented to show scheduled contact between assessors and candidates. E-Mail, text messaging, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and WebEx were used and these interactions on digital platforms kept candidates in contact with their assessor, often on a more regular basis than it had been pre-COVID-19. Centres who assess using e-portfolio systems have detailed diaries of contact contained within these systems, which includes assessment planning, reviewing assessment plans, feedback and planning for observation.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Almost all centres have internal assessment and verification policies and procedures, and these are implemented as evidenced by EVs sampling aspects of these documents and through written records from assessors and verifiers within centres. Almost all centres are using the SQA preferred 3-stage model of verification (Pre-Delivery, During Delivery and Post-Delivery). This session, these documents were made available in the SQA evidence hub, where centres uploaded them to this site and EVs could access this portal prior to the virtual visit taking place.

All centres have standardisation meetings and decisions are being made relating to how centres are agreeing what candidates must do to show competence and how COVID-19 affected this.

Centres that managed to continue despite the challenges caused due to COVID-19 was very impressive in terms of commitment and support to candidates. It was noted in EV reports how much the centre co-ordinators and lead verifiers supported the assessors and candidates undertaking the qualifications.

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

All centres demonstrated that they were working to the VARCS principles of assessment and this was identified in verification records of the assessor's implementation of assessment methods. Centres also worked hard to ensure the assessment strategy was adhered to, allowing new guidance from SSSC/SQA to be implemented as a result of the pandemic.

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

All centres visited ensured they met SQA requirements, including authentication of candidates' work by having the necessary procedures in place for things such as malpractice and plagiarism.

Candidates at almost all centres signed declaration statements stating that the evidence within portfolios was their own. This was carried out for both paper and e-portfolio systems. Assessors are also using direct methods of assessment (observation/expert witness) which confirms that the work is that of the candidate.

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

EV reports sampled this session show that almost all centre assessors and verifiers are making accurate and consistent judgements and decisions against the standards being assessed. Internal verification records at almost all centres confirms this by using VARCS as part of the verification sampling process and decisions made at standardisation meetings.

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

Due to COVID-19, SQA sent out a directive to all centres detailing that all evidence was to be retained for longer than the usual timescales. On sampling reports from EVs, it is clear that all centres that were verified this session complied with SQA's directive.

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

Evidence from EV reports reviewed showed that centres disseminate these reports to assessors and verifiers for the teams to discuss. A few centres send reports to directors or chief executives to inform them of candidates' achievements. One centre used the EV report as an evaluation for funding from the Scottish Government.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ The ability to adapt to a pandemic was incredible.
♦ Collaboration between other organisations increased and it gave each of us a better insight into each other's roles and responsibilities.

Specific areas for development

The following area for development was reported during session 2020–21:

♦ Observation had to change due to the pandemic and this has given us the opportunity to explore this assessment method in more detail.
♦ The language in some SVQ units is out of date and no longer suitable. We have started a thorough scrutiny of these units to check what units are affected.