



**Scottish Vocational Qualifications**  
**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2021**  
**Carpentry and Joinery (including Wood**  
**Machining and Floorcovering)**

Verification group numbers: 165, 170, 371

## Introduction

GM7T 23	SVQ in Carpentry and Joinery (Construction) at SCQF level 6
GM85 22	SVQ in Carpentry and Joinery (Construction) at SCQF level 5
GM82 23	SVQ in Wood Machining (Construction-Sawmilling Extrusion) at SCQF level 6
GM7V 23	SVQ in Floorcovering (Construction) at SCQF level 6

It should be noted, to keep all comments in perspective, that the sample requested of centres this session was only six portfolios and one piece of evidence per candidate from their fourth-year cohort of candidates.

These fourth-year candidates were the first to be completing an SVQ in Construction Crafts using only work-based evidence. SQA carried out six development visits per delivering centre in 2017 and 2018 to ensure centres were prepared for this radical change in assessment approach including the use of a candidate work-based evidence portfolio.

### Session 2020–21

General observations were that almost all the portfolios sampled were acceptable and that most centres were doing their best to continually improve both the format of the portfolios and the assessors' skills in assessing work-based evidence.

As would be expected, some centres were further ahead than others and both paper-based and electronic portfolios were being used. It was found that centres using external training providers (ETPs) were in a better position due to experienced assessors being used. Where new assessors had been employed by ETPs they were well supported by their fellow assessors and internal verifiers.

As a result of COVID-19 some centres had only recently employed work-based assessors and had not carried out live observations but had assessed video evidence in line with Appendix C of the CITB SSC Consolidated Assessment Strategy and SQA's Appendix 1 of Requirements for Assessment of SVQs in Construction. It was found that many internal verifiers in the centres were supporting the assessors but external verifiers still had to emphasise the importance of this role and the type of support required for new assessors.

External verification activity took place at 28 centres delivering the SVQ level 5 and level 6 in Carpentry and Joinery. This included two ETPs and 26 colleges. External verification activity also took place in one college for Wood Machining SVQ level 6 and one college for Floorcovering SVQ level 6. The focus of external verification sampling at colleges was on fourth-year or two-year candidates due to complete their SVQ in summer 2021.

External verifiers 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.

From the candidate portfolios sampled it was evident that there was still quite a lot of work to do in the majority of centres. Some candidates were nowhere near completion and the assessors still required a lot of guidance and support from external verifiers in understanding the assessment process and writing evaluative observation reports. One centre had two

development visits (one for Carpentry and Joinery and the other for Wood Machining) prior to the external verification visit taking place to ensure they were suitably prepared.

## 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.**

It was found that all centres were complying with the CITB Consolidated Assessment Strategy and SQA's Requirements for Assessment of SVQs in Construction in terms of staff qualifications and expertise for assessors and internal verifiers. However, it was found that a small number of centres were using internal verifiers who were unable to provide subject-specific feedback and support for the assessors.

This was evident when a small number of centres were required to re-submit evidence which had been signed off as being acceptable but had to be re-assessed and internally verified.

Subject-specific CPD had been seriously curtailed by the COVID-19 situation. However, it was encouraging to note that most staff had managed to maintain a level of professional CPD including SQA Quality Networks.

Recommendations were made at three centres, asking one centre to retain staff CVs, one centre to increase the amount of CPD (especially technical), and one centre to have a standardised approach to recording CPD across the team.

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

All centres were continuing to effectively review their centre-based assessment environments using their own systems.

It was very encouraging to see many centres had devised distance learning materials to support learners during the pandemic and ensure candidates remained engaged.

Most centres were striving to improve their candidate portfolios, whether by moving to fully electronic versions or fine-tuning their paper-based versions. Almost all centres using proprietary electronic portfolios were doing so to great effect, with candidates uploading evidence directly into the portfolio which is monitored by assessors.

Many centres were not aware of the requirement to carry out initial and ongoing reviews of the on-site assessment environment. The ability to undertake this activity had been seriously curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but centres are now aware of this requirement and will carry out the reviews when access to sites is allowed.

Three centres were recommended to create a standard agenda for their standardisation meetings including an agenda item for site selection checklists.

## 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 were using their own methods of determining candidates' development needs, usually through an enrolment form or registration document. Where any development needs were highlighted, all centres were putting in place the appropriate type and amount of support.

Prior achievements were only really relevant for candidates undertaking the two-year apprenticeship. All the centres involved in the delivery of this two-year award were applying the associated conditions and were very conscious of ensuring that currency of previous achievements was taken into consideration.

Because assessment of candidates was disrupted by COVID-19, verifiers were checking to see what recovery plans were being put in place by centres to enable candidates to get back on track.

It was very encouraging to see that almost all centres had held discussions with managing agents, employers and candidates to put in place a recovery plan for candidates to ensure they made up for lost time and completed their award.

Many centres had developed distance learning materials for their candidates to ensure they remained engaged and were progressing with their learning despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Eight centres received mention for examples of good practice, most of which were to do with exceptional measures put in place to support candidates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **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 had put in place systems to keep in touch with candidates over and above the normal methods employed. It was encouraging to see that almost all centres managed to schedule and maintain contacts with candidates virtually, by email or mobile phone.

At more than one centre the external verifier reported that candidates welcomed the effective and supportive virtual and email contacts with the college assessors during restrictions and this was decisive in maintaining a focus on SVQ evidence requirements.

Almost all candidates interviewed during external verification visits confirmed that they had been in regular contact with their assessor during the pandemic. While very little progress was being made with assessments, they had been encouraged to work through the learning materials provided.

As previously mentioned in this report, almost all centres had put in place recovery plans for candidates and revised their assessment plans accordingly.

As in previous years, contacts with candidates were augmented by managing agent 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 Carpentry and Joinery SVQ at level 5 and 6, and Wood Machining and Floorcovering SVQs at level 6. External verifiers reported that assessors and internal verifiers at almost all centres implemented these processes consistently and effectively to ensure a standardised approach to assessment and internal verification practice.

At one centre an area of good practice was identified regarding the planning of the internal verification activity of the work-based evidence units.

However, with work-based evidence being a new concept for centres, coupled with the majority of assessors being new to the role, assessing was proving to be quite a challenge in most centres.

Assessors were unable to carry out on-site observations due to the pandemic, so they had to apply the sector skills council's guidance and the special arrangements put in place to enable assessment to continue. This again was proving to be challenging for most centres/assessors with varying levels of success.

It was found in some centres that the internal verification procedures were designed for full-time courses and did not fully meet the requirements of an SVQ. Internal verifiers in some centres were not fully supporting their assessors in terms of providing relevant feedback or confirming assessment decisions.

Areas for development were noted at five centres:

Centre one: Include a rationale with the internal verification sampling schedule.

Centre two: Improve the completion of internal verification paperwork clearly showing support for the assessor.

Centre three: Use a risk management approach to compiling the internal verification schedule.

Centre four: Develop a pro forma for use by the internal verifier when observing the assessor carrying out live assessment.

Centre five: Ensure sampling is carried out over a wider range of the candidate evidence.

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

All centres delivering the SVQ in Carpentry and Joinery level 5 and 6, and the SVQs in Wood Machining and in Floorcovering level 6 had candidate work-based evidence portfolios and assessment documentation for collating and assessing evidence from the workplace in place. Most were still paper-based but were being used effectively to assess candidate evidence from the workplace.

All centres were using the knowledge and understanding evidence from the PDA level 6, and some centres had developed further sets of questions for use on site.

There was a range of different electronic portfolios in use which enabled candidates to upload evidence directly. This in turn enabled assessors to assess work remotely and ensure the process continued.

Two centres had areas of good practice noted:

Centre one: The development of knowledge questions for the assessor to use on-site confirming the knowledge was being applied in on-site conditions.

Centre two: The use of learning assistant e-portfolio which was well structured and supported the candidates very well.

However, areas for development were noted at three centres:

Centre one: Carry out more on-site observations to ensure they play a more significant contribution in the completion of the award.

Centre two: Assessor(s) to make clearer assessment decisions in observation reports.

Centre three: Assessor/candidate to cross-reference evidence to PCs and units.

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

Almost all centres delivering the SVQ level 5 and 6 in Carpentry and Joinery, Wood Machining and Floorcovering SVQ level 6 had a declaration document included in their candidate work-based evidence portfolio which was signed by candidates declaring all work submitted as evidence was their own.

Also, almost all centres had assessment observation documentation which is signed by both the assessor and candidate at the end of the process.

Almost all assessors know their candidates personally and are able to confirm their participation in assessment activities.

Most centres have adopted the Sector Skills Council temporary special arrangements for during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these special arrangements is the requirement for candidates to identify themselves and provide their date of birth in any video evidence submitted.

Skills tests were conducted in line with SQA requirements at a few centres who had managed to deliver skills testing, and where evidence to confirm attendance of the expert witness was available.

An area for development was noted at one centre to include a photograph of the candidate in the portfolio as well as a plagiarism declaration.

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

Qualification verifiers reported that in almost all cases assessor judgements were accurate and consistent for centres delivering the SVQ in Carpentry and Joinery level 5 and 6, and SVQs in Wood Machining and in Floorcovering level 6. However, in most cases there was insufficient evidence for candidates to fully complete their portfolio/award. This was partly due to the COVID-19 restrictions but also because of inexperienced assessors.



It was found that candidates who were being assessed by ETPs were making much better progress with their award. This was due to their assessors being much more experienced in assessing work-based evidence and subsequently cross-referencing to the PCs/units.

Areas for development for three centres noted:

Centre one: Develop and implement a standard observation report pro forma.

Centre two: Support assessors in developing report writing skills.

Centre three: Assessors to write observation reports directly to the candidate.

Required actions for two centres identified:

Centre one: Provide observation reports/professional discussions containing assessment decisions for selected candidates.

Centre two: Submit assessed and internally-verified skills test documentation for selected candidates.

**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 policy requirements on awarding bodies for 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 policies and procedures in place for the dissemination of information from qualification verifiers to assessors and internal verifiers. However, it was found that some centres were not implementing these procedures fully.

The same area for development was noted for two centres:

Include external verification reports as a standard agenda item at standardisation meetings.

There was good evidence of improvements and enhancements being made to develop assessment practice in almost all centres.

## Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

### Criterion 3.2:

- ◆ An excellent induction presentation
- ◆ Rolling programme to support candidates to get back on track
- ◆ Specific support for a candidate with hearing difficulties by use of clear visors for staff to enable candidate to lip read
- ◆ Production of distance learning materials to keep candidates engaged
- ◆ Candidate support using IT to maintain contact with assessor
- ◆ SVQ induction programme disseminated to employers and managing agents
- ◆ Traffic light system for work-based evidence to assist candidates to identify progress

### Criterion 4.2:

- ◆ Internal verification planning schedule encompassing work-based evidence units

### Criterion 4.3:

- ◆ Development of standardised questions for use on site
- ◆ Learning assistant e-portfolio which fully supports candidates and allows evidence to be uploaded at any time

### Criterion 4.4:

- ◆ Video declaration by candidate meeting requirements of assessment strategy

## Specific areas for development

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

### Criterion 2.1:

- ◆ Retention of staff CVs
- ◆ Increase the amount of CPD, especially industry related
- ◆ Create a standardised approach to recording CPD

### Criterion 2.4:

- ◆ Standard agenda for standardisation meetings to include site selection checklists

### Criterion 4.2:

- ◆ Include a rationale with all sampling schedules
- ◆ Improve the completion of internal verifier paperwork to support assessors
- ◆ Apply a risk management approach when compiling internal verification schedules
- ◆ Develop an observation form for the internal verifier to use when observing the assessor in the workplace
- ◆ Ensure internal verifier sampling is carried out over as broad a range of candidate evidence as possible

**Criterion 4.3:**

- ◆ Compile standardised questions for use by assessors on site
- ◆ Candidates to reference evidence to PCs and units when uploading evidence
- ◆ More on-site assessment/live observations to be carried out to ensure this has a significant contribution to achievement
- ◆ Assessors to make clear assessment decisions in reports
- ◆ Cross-referencing of evidence to PCs and units by assessor/candidate

**Criterion 4.4:**

- ◆ Include a photo of the candidate in the portfolio as well as a plagiarism declaration

**Criterion 4.6:**

- ◆ Develop and implement a standard observation report pro forma
- ◆ Internal verifiers to support assessors in developing report writing skills
- ◆ Assessor to write observation reports directly to the candidate

**Criterion 4.9:**

- ◆ Standardisation meetings to include an agenda item for discussing external verification report