



Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022
Customer Service

Verification group number: 297

Introduction

There were 25 visits to centres during the academic year of 2021–22 for the verification of all levels of the Customer Service Award:

GL0F 22 SVQ1 Customer Service (SCQF Level 5)

GLOD 23 SVQ1 Customer Service (SCQF Level 6)

GG2A 45 Principles and Practices Award (customised unit)

Of the 25 centres visited in 2021–22, 19 were very experienced, established and competent. These centres had well-qualified and knowledgeable staff and delivered a sound, well-documented and organised qualification. Their candidates enjoyed the training and were usually successful. Centre policies were well-set-up and extensive, and centres continually monitored and modified them. The other six were new centres which had their first qualification visit since approval. They were well-organised with either paper-based or online assessment material for the candidates. There were more approval visits during 2021–22; hopefully, there will be further increase in verification visits in 2022–23.

Despite challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown for the whole of 2020 and most of 2021, centres are slowly getting back to normal in arrangements such as assessors meeting candidates and going over their qualification. A lot of centres are now combining face-to-face visits with virtual Microsoft Teams/Zoom visits, which is encouraging; this also means the candidates are receiving more support and guidance from centres.

With the COVID-19 pandemic in mind, a lot of centres have been looking at new technology for delivering qualifications safely using broadband access for online assessment programmes, which allows assessors and candidates more flexibility without compromising required standards.

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 internal verifiers in all of the sampled centres were occupationally competent; they either held or were working towards appropriate assessor and internal verifier awards. Staff were experienced in the delivery of work-based qualifications and had a full understanding of the requirements of the awards, and the occupational competence is in line with assessment strategy requirements. Comprehensive continuous professional development (CPD) records were maintained for all members of the assessment and verification team.

The qualification verifiers reminded centres of the importance of a comprehensive continuous professional development (CPD) and this was the only area for 2021–22.

As mentioned in last year's report, here are some examples which centres could consider:

- ◆ What did you do that contributed to your CPD?

- ◆ What did you learn from this activity?
- ◆ How have/will you use this?

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

The use of video conference calls has extended beyond the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period – centres now use them to keep assessors up to date, and the virtual format allows more centre staff involved in the customer service qualifications to attend these meetings.

Centres are still using a workplace checklist, that is, a site selection checklist, to ensure that the workplaces of all candidates have the appropriate equipment to meet the requirements for the customer service qualifications. This process also checked that candidates had proper access to appropriate reference and learning material, and that the health and safety aspects of the policy were regularly reviewed to ensure best practice.

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 qualification verifiers reported that all 25 centres had conducted a comprehensive initial assessment of each candidate during the induction process. Centres reviewed previous certificates and profiles showing core skills along with candidate job roles, and signed them with the requirements of the awards, making sure that the candidate took the appropriate units and level of the award. Centres took a lot of time at this crucial stage to identify the correct level of award and units.

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

In all of the 25 centre visits, there was clear evidence of assessment planning to support all candidates, and candidates received sufficient support and guidance. Most of the assessments were well planned and carried out with good feedback to candidates. In all the virtual visits, centres provided good documentation to support the assessment planning process.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All 25 centres fully documented assessment and internal verification procedures. The candidates' portfolios, internal verification reports, and sampling plan confirmed implementation. Centres held standardisation meetings using video conference systems, that is, Microsoft Teams/Zoom, and retained minutes which detailed the discussions.

Almost all the centres showed evidence of a good system of internal verification, providing good feedback to both the assessors and candidates.

All the centres held both formal and informal meetings to support standardisation between assessors. Minutes were available for formal meetings.

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

A lot of the centres' candidate portfolios were well presented and well assessed. All candidates had access to the assessment process. Some good examples of candidate and witness statements were in line with unit assessment guidance and evidence requirements, and fully met performance and knowledge requirements.

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

In all of the 25 centres, assessors knew their candidates well, which resulted in good candidate support. This, in turn, helped to ensure the authenticity of the evidence submitted by each candidate.

A lot of the centres are now moving from paper-based portfolios to password-protected e-portfolios, which also helped to ensure authenticity.

The candidates of all 25 centres undertook an induction programme when they started their qualification, and the induction content included the implications of plagiarism. Candidates had to sign a statement confirming that they were aware of the centre policy and would comply with it in the duration of their award. They also had to sign a declaration to confirm that all work produced for their portfolio was their own work. There was no evidence of malpractice in any of the centres during the 2021–22 session.

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

The qualification verifiers reported that centres carried out many informal standardisation discussions and recorded them.

In almost all centres visited, assessors made assessment decisions consistently and accurately against the standards and did so in a fair manner. They assessed evidence against the current and valid standards.

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

All 25 centres were well aware of the evidence retention rules. SQA extended the retention requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, but has now reverted them. Centres were aware of SQA's current evidence retention requirements.

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

All 25 centres used different methods and procedures to disseminate the findings of the qualification verifier report to relevant staff as part of the assessment and internal verification procedures. All centres shared the feedback electronically and normally held a staff meeting to discuss the qualification verifier report in more detail, especially if SQA required any actions within a set timescale.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ moving away from traditional paper-based portfolios to an e-portfolio system
- ◆ good balance of performance evidence and supporting evidence

Specific areas for development

The following area for development was reported during session 2021–22:

- ◆ ensuring assessors and internal verifiers have updated their knowledge to units L&D9D, L&D9DI and L&D11
- ◆ ensuring that CPD is comprehensive and in line with SQA requirements
- ◆ raising occupational competence related to customer service award standard to meet assessment strategy requirements
- ◆ ensuring all centre staff have read SQA's latest guidance on the SQA website to make sure all quality assurance requirements are met