



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

# **Dental Nursing**

**Verification group number: 97**

## Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, verification did not take place in 2020 and SQA moved to virtual verification in 2021. This was very much a learning curve for centres and verifiers.

Verification activity in 2021 resulted in all centres receiving a 'high confidence' rating.

Virtual verification required verifiers to be more specific in the selection of units for sampling to enable centres who did not use electronic student portfolios to scan and upload the requested evidence to the Hub.

Verification reports indicated that some centres had to 'front-load' knowledge evidence as dental practices were closed during lockdown, and once opened were not accepting trainees on placement.

The units verified compose the SVQ Dental Nursing GH0H 23 (SCQF level 7) qualification, and those sampled during 2021 were:

H4TR 04	Make Sure Your Own Actions Reduce Risks to Health and Safety
H4PT 04	Prepare and Maintain Environments, Instruments and Equipment for Clinical Dental Procedures
H4PV 04	Offer Information and Support to Individuals about Dental Services and the Protection of Oral Health
H4PW 04	Provide Chairside Support During the Assessment of Patients' Oral Health
H4PX 04	Contribute to the Production of Dental Images
H4PY 04	Provide Chairside Support During the Prevention and Control of Periodontal Disease and Caries and the Restoration of Cavities

## 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.**

In all centres the qualifications of assessors and internal verifiers comply with the requirements of the current assessment strategy. All staff employed by the centres are required to have GDC registration status, registration certificates, copies of assessor and verifier awards, and evidence of ongoing CPD available in staff folders. The centres verified had this evidence pre-uploaded to the Evidence Hub.

During lockdown it was evident that centre staff working from home had invested time in participating in CPD.

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

All centres participate in ongoing reviews following centre policies and procedures. Annual course reviews by teams are held in all centres, and include review of assessment environments, assessment procedures, equipment, learning resources, and assessment materials. This was well documented in the minutes of team meetings.

There was evidence of ongoing reflection and improvements. Centres had moved to online Zoom or Teams meetings, and were able to show evidence of regular meetings and decision logs.

### **Category 3: Candidate support**

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

The recruitment process and entry requirements vary from centre to centre. In some centres these are made clear in the candidate handbook, centre website, or are discussed at a pre-course candidate interview. The levels of course entry requirements vary.

The colleges tend to have a structured progression route, with candidates accepted on to the appropriate level of learning such as a foundation programme with a view to progression on to the awards leading to registration with the GDC. When a candidate is identified as having development needs, it is apparent that they get good support from the centre tutors/lecturers and from colleges that have specialist units.

Verification reports showed good evidence of development reviews and support. Where required, candidates were referred to an Educational Psychologist for comprehensive assessment.

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

All centres had strong evidence of candidate-assessor contact. The move from face-to-face teaching to webinars appeared to increase the contact. Candidates interviewed by telephone reported that they felt very well supported and were kept well informed during their course.

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

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

All centres were able to show evidence of verification procedures. Each centre had documented assessment and verification strategies/procedures and kept comprehensive records. The current unit specifications were being used, and assessors were aware of assessment criteria and conditions, particularly the COVID-19 interim arrangements for dental nursing.

One centre employed a Gantt chart format which demonstrated clear timelines for assessment and internal verification to ensure everyone was aware of their role and when it was to be completed.

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

The COVID-19 interim arrangements allowed for changes to assessment instruments. Some centres allowed for expert witness testimonies backed up by a professional discussion between the assessor and candidate. Live observation of candidate practice via a livestream

through a Teams channel was also carried out for the first time during this session, and this was seen to be a success.

Some centres also used SOLAR for the knowledge component of the SVQ for the first time this session, and this was seen to be a valuable resource during this uncertain time when access to sites was closed.

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

All centres had suitable malpractice and plagiarism policies. In all cases there was good evidence of candidates' declaration that portfolios were their own work.

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

All assessors were familiar with the unit specification requirements, and the COVID-19 interim arrangements. Verifiers reported a myriad of innovative evidence which included:

- ◆ Expert Witness testimonies
- ◆ livestream observations
- ◆ Skype recordings of simulated assessments
- ◆ case studies
- ◆ projects and written or electronic observation records

All reports indicated that candidates' work was accurately and consistently judged against SQA requirements.

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

There was evidence in all centres that centres were aware of SQA's retention guidelines and that they retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements. The majority of centres retain evidence beyond SQA guidelines.

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

The reports appeared to indicate that all staff attended the virtual feedback sessions. Evidence of centre policies uploaded included the process, requirements and timelines for reports to be disseminated to staff

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

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

- ◆ Members of one team have participated in the 'Certification of Learning Facilitation' programme. This enabled the team to improve their online teaching methods and to offer a more interactive learning experience for the candidates.
- ◆ The multiple adaptations described under criterion 2.4 ensured no student was disadvantaged by lockdown. This was welcomed by students who claimed these

approaches fully supported their personal mental health and wellbeing by allowing them to progress in a timeous way to achieve their qualification.

- ◆ During lockdown there was increased communication and contact with each student, providing academic support and pastoral care.
- ◆ One centre uses a 'buddy' system for new assessors and internal verifiers during their award and for a period afterwards. This support ensures consistency and allows new assessors and internal verifiers the opportunity to have someone to seek help from.
- ◆ Teams have worked well together in remote environments to ensure that the candidates are supported and can continue their learning. The learning that was required to adopt this new way of working has been successful due to the sharing of good practice and what has been learned from the unsuccessful areas. This type of collaboration has allowed teams to support each other and work together to maintain the integrity of the qualification and the standard of delivery.

### **Specific areas for development**

There were no specific areas for development reported during the 2020–21 session.