



Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Qualification Verification Summary Report 2021
Health and Safety in a Construction
Environment

Verification group number: 667

Introduction

There was extensive qualification verification activity throughout 2020–21 within this verification group, despite COVID-19 restrictions and industry lockdown. This single unit qualification is in high demand within the construction sector, as it is a requirement for candidates seeking to gain a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Green Card and access employment in construction.

There continues to be a steady demand from new centres, with approval applications continuing at the same levels as in previous years. Consequently, this increases the need for external verification quality assurance visits for this 'high risk' qualification.

The recent transition to mandatory assessment of this qualification through SQA's SOLAR platform has meant that the focus of EV evaluations for some criteria has had to be revised. Almost all centres have now made the transition to SOLAR assessment.

EV report findings were positive in the main and there was clear evidence that the assessment process is being delivered consistently and efficiently at almost all centres. In the main, areas for development were related to centres' implementation and management of SOLAR assessment and invigilation.

Qualification code

GN2A 44 Health and Safety in a Construction Environment at SCQF level 4

Unit code and title

HX12 04 Health and Safety in a Construction Environment

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.

External verifier (EV) reports for almost all centres confirmed that staff delivering this qualification were well qualified vocationally, had good industry experience and almost all staff maintained their occupational currency through effective continuing professional development (CPD) activity. Assessors and internal verifiers at almost all centres held appropriate assessor and verifier qualifications.

EV reports highlighted recommendations at many centres highlighting the need for assessors, trainers and internal verifiers to continue to undertake appropriate construction-related Health and Safety CPD activities, to ensure that they maintain their currency in relation to health and safety legislation.

At one centre, the EV identified a required action for access to the assessor's A1 certificate.

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

Almost all centres verified in 2020–21 had further developed and implemented policies, procedures and guidelines for the delivery and administration of SOLAR assessment. These

procedures and guidelines included invigilation and invigilator guidelines, candidate identity checks, appropriate space within assessment rooms, candidate access to IT, IT support and connectivity and the quality of the assessment environment. Most centres continued to update and review assessment procedures, equipment and learning resources.

Good practice was reported at more than a few centres. At one centre, standardisation meetings confirmed that course materials were current and fit for purpose.

A well-presented health and safety candidate workbook has been developed by the assessor at another centre, covering all unit learning outcomes. The success of the workbook was reflected in the success rates of candidates undertaking the SOLAR assessment. These workbooks are updated regularly in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) updates and bulletins.

A very good online app has been developed by staff at a centre which is easy to follow and contained good up-to-date learning resources.

Centre staff had provided the EV with access to a good range of learning and formative assessment materials covering all learning outcomes for the Construction Health and Safety in a Construction Environment unit.

Areas for development for this criterion were identified at some centres.

An EV recommended including an agenda item at standardisation meetings to record ongoing reviews of the assessment environments and learning materials. Another EV report recommended that assessors and internal verifiers should ensure specific vocational CPD is recorded and shared with the delivery team at standardisation meetings with a view to sharing best practice, industry knowledge and experience.

A required action was reported at one centre, requiring centre policy and procedures for conducting on-screen testing to be reviewed to include invigilator checks on accommodation and facilities, as well as invigilator reports to reflect current best practice as outlined in the Joint Council for Qualification Instructions for Conducting On-Screen testing.

At another centre, a required action was identified requesting that invigilator assessment environment checklists be provided for the SOLAR assessment sessions for sampled candidates.

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 had systems and procedures in place to enable candidate development needs to be identified and support to be provided where necessary. These procedures were being implemented effectively at almost all centres.

At almost all centres, evidence of candidate development and support needs being identified at induction or registration was readily available. Candidate prior achievements, experience and knowledge was being matched to the qualification requirements through the effective use of SQA-devised Knowledge Analysis Profiles (KAPs) at almost all centres.

At a few centres, EVs recorded recommendations encouraging centres to continue to use SQA KAPs to ascertain candidates' prior achievements or knowledge, to enable bespoke training to be devised.

However, the very effective use of candidate KAP, ensuring that individual candidate development and training needs are identified early and addressed during the formal training period, was noted as good practice at one centre.

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

Assessors at all centres had planned contacts with candidates well, despite lockdown restrictions. Candidate initial contact with the assessor at induction or when completing KAPs or formal training periods ensured a focus on progress towards SOLAR assessment.

Effective feedback to candidates based on the outcome of KAPs and formal training prepared candidates well for SOLAR assessment.

Good practice was reported at one centre for the development of specific health and safety learning and formative assessment materials for candidate use via the centre's VLE. Candidates linked to digital learning facilitated by the assessor who provided ongoing guidance and support.

Feedback to candidates was supportive and meets the needs of the candidates' particular learning and developmental needs at one centre.

No areas for development were reported for this criterion.

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 verified in 2020–21 had well established assessment and verification processes and procedures in place for the assessment, internal verification and invigilation of this qualification.

EV reports for almost all centres noted that assessors and internal verifiers at most centres implemented centre assessment, verification, and on-screen testing procedures efficiently and effectively.

However, at more than a few centres, EVs identified that the internal verifier should consider supporting the assessor more effectively through a review of candidate achievement data for specific SOLAR questions. This would provide centre-wide intelligence on success with specific unit outcomes and would identify where candidates required additional support or where trainers or assessors may need to revise learning approaches.

The EV report at one centre recommended that a centre SOLAR file be set up with all candidates' results and all SOLAR validation reports logged.

At one centre with multiple delivery locations, the EV recommended that the centre consider establishing a college-wide standardisation team and meetings for all centre assessors and IVs for this qualification.

At another centre, the EV report identified actions relating to the delivery of SOLAR testing. The EV noted that the centre should revise the guidance on invigilation of SOLAR assessments contained within the policy and procedures for SOLAR testing. The revision should clearly define the need for an independent invigilator to be used for all SOLAR test sessions.

Evidence of the centre's on-screen testing policy and procedures being implemented for the identified candidate sample was reported as a required action at one centre. The EV specifically requested evidence of invigilator environment checks, candidate identity checks and the process of identifying a valid invigilator to be provided.

Good practice was reported for a centre having a really good system for keeping internal records whereby the record system and all recorded evidence was easy to follow and track.

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

Assessment instruments being used at all centres verified in session 2020–21 were SQA's SOLAR assessments. The use of assured SOLAR assessments obviated the need for centres to monitor the validity and practicability of assessments in relation to the qualification unit requirements. Assessment materials were being used effectively by almost all centres.

There were no good practices or areas for development reported for this criterion by EVs.

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

At almost all centres verified, checks on candidates' identity prior to undertaking SOLAR assessment was checked and recorded by the invigilator or the member of staff nominated to manage the SOLAR assessment. At almost all centres, SOLAR assessments were being managed and conducted in line with SQA requirements.

Good practice was reported at one centre in relation to the centre-devised on-screen testing policy and procedure which provided clear guidance on awarding body compliance requirements. Implementation of the policy and procedure ensured that all staff and invigilators complied fully with all quality assurance procedures and candidate assessment requirements.

No areas for development were reported for this criterion by EVs. However, all areas for development for criterion 4.2 will be valid in respect of this criterion.

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

The use of SQA's SOLAR assessments for this qualification negated the need for assessors to make any assessment decisions. Sampled assessment records at all centres in session 2020–21 confirmed that the assessment process was being conducted effectively at almost all centres.

A required action was recorded at one centre seeking evidence of completed KAPs and SOLAR achievement printouts to be provided for sampled candidates.

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

EV reports for 2020–21 confirmed that almost all centres continue to retain candidate evidence and assessment records in line with SQA requirements for this qualification and COVID-19 amendments. In almost all circumstances, retention policies used within centres exceeded SQA requirements.

Qualification verifiers reported that almost all centres complied fully with EV visit plans, with requested evidence and assessment records being provided to facilitate effective sampling.

No good practices or areas for development were identified by EVs for this criterion.

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

All centres had clear policies, procedures and systems in place to ensure the effective dissemination of information from qualification verifiers to assessors and internal verifiers across the centre and delivery locations. Staff at all centres implemented procedures effectively and there was good evidence of improvements to assessment practice being implemented from this dissemination.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- 2.4 Currency of learning materials
- 2.4 Candidate health and safety workbooks
- 2.4 Online app with up-to-date resources
- 2.4 Range of learning materials
- 3.2 Effective use of KAPs
- 3.3 VLE for learning and formative assessment materials
- 3.3 Supportive candidate feedback
- 4.2 Internal record keeping system
- 4.4 Centre-devised an on-screen testing policy and procedure

Specific areas for development

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

- 2.1 CPD to maintain health and safety legislation currency
- 2.1 Maintain currency of health and safety qualifications
- 2.1 EV access to assessor certificates
- 2.4 Standardisation meeting agenda item for assessment environment review
- 2.4 Reviewing policy and procedures for conducting on-screen testing
- 2.4 Invigilator assessment environment checklists
- 3.2 Use of KAPs
- 3.2 Availability of KAPs for candidate sample
- 4.2 IV review of candidate SOLAR achievement data
- 4.2 Provision of centre SOLAR file
- 4.2 Guidance on invigilation of SOLAR assessments
- 4.6 Evidence of completed KAPs and SOLAR achievement printouts for candidate sample