Scottish Vocational Qualifications
Qualification Verification Summary Report 2021

Information Technology

Verification group number: 288

Introduction

There was a reduction in activity this session in both the number of visits and the number of candidate portfolios that were available. Most activity was slightly later than normal to allow for more evidence to be generated. Many centres reported that the overall impact of the pandemic had not caused any detriment to the candidate journey. In many centres the move to remote activity has been seamless, and all centres now operate e-portfolios.

Centres had faced a number of challenges in delivery and assessing this session. It was evident they had worked hard to provide a service throughout the pandemic and to support candidate activity to a high standard.

The new virtual visit model was adopted throughout and this worked well. Evidence was reviewed in advance, and the verification visit allowed further discussion. High confidence was reported in all visits.

Many centres had allocations for both Computing groups (288 – Information Technology, and 357 – Computer Science). Where possible, the two events were conducted as one. Two reports were generated with differences relating to the actual units looked at. Therefore, there will be similarities between this report and the report for Computer Science.

HC35 04	Health and Safety in IT & Telecoms
H3AH 04	Testing IT & Telecoms Systems 3
H3C4 04	Personal Effectiveness 2
H39F 04	Personal Effectiveness 3
H3AP04	IT & Telecoms Fault Diagnosis 2
H3B0 04	IT & Telecoms System Security 2
H3B6 04	Working with IT & Telecoms hardware and equipment 2
H7D8 04	Principles of Information Security Testing
H39M 04	Customer Care for IT and Telecoms Professionals 2
H7D1 04	Carrying Out Information Security Incident Management Activities 2
H3B1 04	IT & Telecoms System Security 3

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.

Staff at all centres undertook appropriate professional and vocational continuing professional development (CPD) activities. Training in cyber security was noted in a number of centres as being the main vocational activity. Activity in supporting candidates with additional needs has also been noted as being undertaken by staff at a few centres. There was evidence in a few centres of this being put into action by updating learning materials.

CPD records were completed effectively by staff at all centres. This is well documented and show a range of activity.

Most assessors and verifiers within centres hold L&D qualifications, but it was noted that there are a few who have older qualifications.

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

Most centres had evidence of additional review being carried out to support remote working. In some instances centres had adapted their quality manual to include procedures for remote working.

Additional standardisation meetings had been held in almost all centres to discuss any adaptations to assessment that may have been necessary. In most cases it was found that adaptations were not required. Most adaptation came from rearranging the assessment schedule.

A few centres had sourced equipment for candidates working from home and provided this on a loan basis to enable continuation and completion of their award.

All centres are now using e-portfolios. These range from commercially available systems to centre devised systems. This allows for a range of types of assessment to be stored, and it is evident from reports that the range of assessment types appears to be varied. Evidence of recorded discussion was available in many instances. This provided a good record of professional discussion and was stored within the e-portfolio. The use of e-portfolios has also enabled cross-assessment, where evidence can be indexed to a number of assessment elements.

Some centres have made use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) for storing learning materials and activity. Platforms include Google Classroom and Moodle. There was evidence in a few centres that materials are being adapted as a result of recent training such as dyslexia and the use of assistive technologies.

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 have established procedures for candidate selection. Many centres work with employers, with the employer having the final say on selection. Centres help to match suitability to job roles and qualifications and prepare candidates for interview.

In a few cases, there was evidence of recognition of prior learning and this was used to place the candidate on the appropriate level of the award.

Candidate induction procedures were available electronically and in some cases stored within a section of the e-portfolio.

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

In all cases, candidates had increased contact with their assessor. It appears that assessors took on a greater support role to support remote learning and working from home. In all cases, candidates have regular scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and assessment plans. However, in almost all cases, centres had increased this contact to reduce the timeframe. There was evidence to suggest that many changes had been made to unit and assessment scheduling.

In all cases, feedback for assessment evidence was available for candidates. In many cases this was very supportive and provided an effective means for candidates to evaluate their own performance.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres have robust, well established and clearly understood quality policies and procedures to support assessment and verification. In all cases, these were stored electronically and easily accessible to all. Sections aimed at assessors, verifiers and candidates provide sufficient detail for smooth implementation.

In all cases it was noticed that increased standardisation activity had taken place to review any changes required to assessment. In most cases it was reported that very few changes were needed.

All centres carry out a three stage verification process, and evidence was available for each stage and demonstrated this being carried out. In some cases additional comments during verification was extensive and provided good feedback for assessors, particularly new assessors.

In all cases, verification of assessment evidence had been carried out effectively and in line with centre procedure. In a few cases, due to smaller numbers involved, centres surpassed their sampling policy.

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

In all cases, assessment requirements are clearly understood and applied.

In work-based activity, all centres make use of SQA checklists and evidence requirements as a framework for evidence. Practical competences are demonstrated by evidence generated within a job role and matched to the assessment element. In most cases, the required evidence is discussed so that the candidate knows what is required and what would be deemed suitable.

Knowledge and understanding is assessed with a wide range of assessment methods, resulting in a range of types of assessment evidence from written research to recorded question and answer activity.

One centre delivering the Foundation Apprenticeship had devised a holistic instrument of assessment that covered all evidence requirements for the award. This was a well written and quality assured assessment and provided an excellent approach to assessment.

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

In almost all instances candidate work had been generated during work-based activity and was therefore original and clearly the candidate's own work. A candidate declaration of own

work is signed at induction, and all centres have appropriate plagiarism and malpractice documentation.

Assessment conditions were found to be adhered to in all cases.

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

All centres have a good understanding of the level of work required by candidates. In many cases, evidence is produced beyond the required standard. Candidates in the workplace are required to demonstrate a professionalism in their work. Assessors in all cases do not judge against other candidates.

All assessment decisions were found to be appropriate and accurate and consistent. In almost all cases, assessor feedback provided a thorough insight into the making decisions.

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

All centres are aware of SQA's retention policy. Most need to retain evidence beyond the period required by SQA so that they meet other bodies' requirements.

All centres have secure digital storage. In some instances, there is additional authentication for access to evidence.

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

All centres are aware of the requirement to disseminate external verification feedback to staff. There is evidence in standardisation meeting agendas that this is discussed regularly. There was no evidence of actions or recommendations being considered as there had been no prior points for consideration due to the reduction in activity.

Some centres discuss feedback form verifiers from other verification groups to provide a wider sharing of practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ Regular CPD activity in computing and cyber subjects.
♦ Participation in Autism and Dyslexia Training.
♦ The provision of new rules to support assessors working from home with the monitoring system in place to allow input from assessors.
♦ Learning materials updated as a result of recent CPD.
♦ Learning materials of a high quality.
♦ Cross-assessment of learning elements to reduce duplicated evidence.
♦ Using APL to assess candidates.
♦ IV documentation is completed to include a commentary of findings, which provides useful feedback for the assessor.
♦ Information in the assessment and internal verification policy about planning and methods of assessment. This is particularly useful for new assessors and verifiers.

- ♦ Use of e-portfolio provides a clear audit trail of uploaded evidence.
- ♦ Use of assistive technologies, specialist autism and dyslexia training to support the candidate.
- ♦ Centre-devised integrated and holistic assessment of all the units and their associated assessments in the award was excellent.

Specific areas for development

No areas for development were reported during session 2020–21.