



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

Management

Verification group number: 247

Introduction

This last year saw many challenges for centres, candidates and SQA, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of the furlough scheme. For this reason, this year has seen many verification visits to centres carried out by virtual means. This itself has set many challenges for the learners, centres and SQA. Although it has been a difficult time, this factual report demonstrates the quality of delivery and the continuing meeting of standards required by SQA under difficult circumstances.

External verification activity in session 2020–21 indicated High Confidence across all the qualifications sampled:

GM26 23 SVQ Management at SCQF level 7
GM27 24 SVQ Management at SCQF level 9
GM25 25 SVQ Management at SCQF level 11

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.

Almost all of the staff are qualified, and new assessors with appropriate occupational experience are all working towards the relevant assessors or internal verifiers qualification. Centres have faced a challenging year due to the impact of COVID-19, but almost all have managed to undertake CPD activities and been able to link this to assessment practice and specific awards in line with the assessment strategy.

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

Some centres revisited their processes and procedures during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic. Some centres are now using an e-portfolio system and changing the way they work, incorporating the virtual experience.

A few centres amended their own learning resources; induction material and handbooks to suit the virtual learning environment.

All qualification verifiers reported that all centres provided documented evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of the assessment environments; equipment; reference, learning and assessment materials.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Almost all of the centres have a process and procedure in place to ensure that candidate needs, and achievements, are matched against the requirements of the award. Most centres have an interview and selection procedure followed up with an induction to the centre and the qualification. Almost all qualification verifiers reported that centres are identifying

candidates' development needs and prior achievements as well as providing support and guidance.

Most centres use a questionnaire, or an initial assessment developed by the centre, to assist the selection process to ensure that the candidate is matched to the correct level of award. These documents help to ensure a good match to the award, but also ensures the authenticity of any evidence provided.

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

Almost all candidate feedback continues to confirm that candidates are very positive about the contact — especially the efforts of the centre staff to support and give guidance during COVID-19. Almost all centres have scheduled more frequent contact with their candidates using the virtual environment. Some centres have moved to virtual online learning, providing the opportunity for centres to be able to communicate with candidates on a day-to-day basis and as and when there is an identified need.

Some centres are delivering a face-to-face service, but this has proved more difficult as lockdown measures affect the continuity of delivery. Most centres demonstrate robust systems and procedures, ensuring candidates are appropriately supported. Example of these include: clear assessment scheduling; planning arrangements; regular meetings; blended learning opportunities combining with face to face and/or virtual learning, email and telephone.

However, there are still times where contact records are not as robust as they could be, and centres are reminded of the need to demonstrate ongoing support to their candidates.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Qualification verifiers report that almost all centres have a robust internal verification system in place. This is demonstrated by documentation such as: sampling plans; minutes of standardisation meetings and records of feedback to the assessor and the candidates.

Most centres are well organised, using sampling plans and attendance records for standardisation meetings. Whilst internal verification was robust and fit for purpose in almost all centres, some centres need to be more robust where standardisation content could be encouraged to be more focused linking units and performance. It is important that all assessors/internal verifiers are involved in the standardisation process, and most centres do ensure that this is the case.

This year, there was an increase in the use of e-portfolio systems, where many centres provided excellent tracking of assessment plans; assessor decisions; assessor and internal verifier feedback; performance monitoring and sampling; which continue to demonstrate a high level of compliance with this criterion.

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

Assessment instruments were valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair in all centres. All centres are aware of the assessment strategy as feedback from the qualification verifiers reports revealed that compliance is high. The centres have told qualification verifiers how challenging the environment has been over this last year due to COVID-19 and the impact it has had on the candidates and centres. Almost all centres have changed their delivery of the qualification to a blended approach with virtual meetings, including observation during these meetings.

Qualification verifiers continue to comment on the incorrect use of reflective accounts as performance evidence. Reflective accounts are not performance evidence, but can provide strong support for performance evidence and may refer to performance evidence in the portfolio. They can be used as evidence of knowledge and understanding and can provide a useful narrative that enables the assessor's or verifier's understanding of the performance evidence provided, but they are not evidence in their own right.

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

No evidence of malpractice was identified during virtual verification activities. Staff and candidates, in almost all centres, continue to maintain standards and adhere to the requirements of the qualifications. All centres have in place appropriate malpractice procedures which help to ensure that the work is indeed that of the candidate.

The qualification verifiers indicated that all centres have authenticated documentation, such as signed and dated induction checklists; disclaimers/statements; and direct observation of the candidates. All centres authenticated candidate evidence in line with SQA's requirements. The one-to-one relationship between the candidate and the assessor also helps to ensure the authenticity of any evidence provided.

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

High Confidence was recorded against all qualification verification activity in session 2020–21. All centres accurately and consistently judged candidates' work against SQA requirements. All centres have held standardisation meetings, and almost all of these have been held on a virtual platform, due to the current circumstances and restrictions with COVID-19. SQA external verification reports indicate that assessment decisions are consistent and accurately judged against the standard and in a fair and equal way.

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

Candidate evidence was retained by all centres in line with SQA's revised requirements during session 2020–21. External verification activities confirmed all centres were effective, retaining candidate assessment evidence in accordance with SQA's current amended requirements and in response to qualification verification activities.

All centres were aware of the changes to the retention of evidence by SQA.

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

All centres have managed to disseminate feedback using a variety of methods. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all centres have changed their working methods for disseminating information. Centres have engaged ICT and embraced the use of Zoom, MS Teams, and SharePoint to share external verifier reports and general information from SQA.

All centres intended to hold team meetings, or standardisation meetings directly after receiving the EV report from SQA. All centres recorded the outcome of QV activities and noted recommendations and actions, where needed, to address these directly.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ Almost all centres reviewed the requirements for change during this difficult situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, by supporting staff and candidates to work differently.
- ◆ Some internal verifier reports were detailed and informative and demonstrated a robust system.
- ◆ Some centres utilise a forum for standardisation and general queries. Staff use the forum to discuss units and to support each other. The forum supports assessors and verifiers to identify problem areas and to discuss candidate progress on an ongoing basis.
- ◆ The development of the Induction Unit hosted on Learning Assistant in a few centres combined a diagnostic tool with feedback and discussion.
- ◆ A few centres have a system of LINKS within statements, which open to provide immediate access to the specific product evidence which is mapped to the qualification standards.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ CPD development activities were confirmed by staff, but not recorded or noted in minutes.
- ◆ A few centres need to enhance their accreditation of prior learning (APL) and induction processes.
- ◆ It is recommended that centres omit the practice of claiming reflective accounts against performance criteria.
- ◆ Some centres need to expand CPD to show specific links to the assessment strategy and subject specific assessed and verified qualifications.
- ◆ Records for assessment planning could be backed up in a written format or recordings.
- ◆ Some centres need to focus on standardisation activities to discuss unit standards in accordance with the assessment strategy.
- ◆ Professional discussion — it is important to ensure that this is referenced to show where relevant criteria are met.

- ◆ Company policies must not be used to cover knowledge criteria. Professional discussion or statements should be used to cover these criteria.
- ◆ Where there is insufficient candidate evidence for units, centres should review the portfolio and collect additional evidence — for example holding a standardisation meeting with all staff — confirming the requirements for all units.