



National Progression Awards

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022

Criminology at SCQF levels 5 and 6

Verification group number: 682

Introduction

The following units in VG 366 were externally verified during the course of session 2021–22.

Group Award Code: GR4E 45

- J48F 45 Criminology: Crime in the Community
- J2A5 75 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
- J48G 45 The History and Development of Criminology
- J45V 45 Forensic Science: Applications
- J48E 45 Criminology: Crime Scenes

Group Award Code: GR4E 46

- J46Y 46 Criminology: Nature and Extent of Crime
- J2A6 76 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
- J46W 46 Criminology: Forensic Psychology
- F824 12 Forensic Science: Practical Techniques
- J46X 46 Criminology: Crime Control Strategies
- FN51 12 Crime in Society

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.

Many centres delivering the qualifications had as a minimum one assessor and one internal verifier who had the necessary qualifications. In addition, many centres had staff who were also further developing their qualification portfolio through a range of accredited CPD to further develop their knowledge and skills in Criminology.

However, some centres did not have staff who met the qualification requirements. As a result, they were required to look to enter a partnership agreement with another experienced presenting centre.

Centres are reminded that they should review group award specifications and unit specifications to ensure that they have staff with appropriate qualifications to deliver awards before seeking approval.

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

Most centres demonstrated that they had completed pre-delivery checks of their course learning and teaching, and assessment materials. Where there were numerous assessors and internal verifiers, there was evidence of pre-delivery standardisation meetings.

For many of these centres the materials were of a high quality and often went beyond the basic requirements of the units, offering learners the opportunity to enhance their knowledge

and understanding of the topics, as well as develop their skills. Guest speakers from the police and courts were found to be very beneficial as well as visits to a range of places, such as court, police stations, prisons, all of which helped enhance the learner experience.

Materials developed by many centres were informative and engaging, with a range of diverse activities aimed at addressing a range of learning styles and needs. Some centres were also looking at devising diverse methods and instruments of assessment for their cohorts next year.

However, it was found that many centres had shared very similar learning and teaching materials which did not demonstrate engaging activities to develop learner knowledge and skills.

J48G 45 The History and Development of Criminology

J46W 46 Criminology: Forensic Psychology

In a number of centres, the learning and teaching materials for these units were quite poor and did not demonstrate a clear understanding of many of the concepts required as part of the learning.

It was also discovered that an unacceptable number of centres had begun to deliver the awards without applying to SQA to do so. As a result, some centres were not fully prepared to deliver the qualifications and did not meet the necessary staffing requirements. They were also found to be developing the learning and teaching materials for some of the units as they were delivering the qualifications. The rectification of such a situation is not a quick fix. Learners may not receive the learning experience that they deserve, and this can be damaging, especially where rectification of work on behalf of the learner is required. It is the centre's responsibility to comply with the SQA regulations and to have all qualified staff, learning, teaching and assessment materials in place **prior** to the approval visit. Centres should not apply undue pressure on appointees and SQA staff in an attempt to bypass the approval requirements or to find solutions to issues. The group award specifications clearly set out the requirements to deliver the NPA awards and provides guidance on CPD.

With regard to delivery, it has also been noted that some centres are not allocating enough teaching time. Each single credit unit requires 40 hours of direct input from teachers / lecturers. In addition, the learner is expected to contribute another 40 hours of self-study. It is important that the full amount of time is allocated to the delivery of each unit. The awards and their component units should not be viewed as being of less importance or value than National Courses.

Centres are reminded that they must complete the SQA approval process before they deliver a qualification.

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 thorough selection processes which normally ensured that appropriate learners were attempting the qualification and the units chosen. Most centres had a diverse range of learners, from high performing learners looking to expand their subject area, to learners who may struggle to complete a full suite of National 5 courses and Highers.

Almost all centres had very detailed support processes in place to help all learners. There was clear recognition of previous support for learners. This support for learners was part of an ongoing review processes where learners or staff could complete referrals throughout the year.

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

In almost all centres there was ample opportunity for the learners to maintain contact with their assessor, not only during Criminology class time but also in other classes as they delivered numerous social subjects within the centre. Learners were very well supported, and every effort was made to advance their progress on the course.

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 demonstrated that they had clear systems of standardisation / moderation and an internal verification cycle. Centres had detailed procedures that in general were implemented and the whole process was entirely satisfactory. Centres used a range of diverse internal verification methods, such as second marking, blind marking, joint marking, all of which are acceptable methods.

In some centres there were issues where centres which were in the process of seeking approval did not have a suitably qualified internal verifier. Centres are reminded that they should refer to qualification group award specifications and unit specifications to ensure they have the necessary requirements in place and have completed the approval process before they begin delivery of the qualification.

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

Most centres were using SQA exemplar assessments from the SQA secure site, which ensured that the learners were being assessed in line with SQA requirements.

J2A6 75 and J2A6 76 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom

Some centres had allocated marks as part of the marking process, in particular, where a unit was also contributing to formative assessment in preparation for an NQ exam. While this may help the learner for exam preparation as part of the NQ, it may lead to confusion as unit achievement is based upon successfully meeting **all** assessment standards. Centres should avoid allocating marks to assessments as the criterion for success is achieving each evidence requirement.

J48F 45 Criminology: Crime in the Community

Some centres were informally sharing a prior-approved assessment. However, this assessment was no longer valid and did not meet the SQA assessment criteria after the group award specification updates. Centres are reminded that they must either use SQA exemplar assessments or seek prior verification for any assessment they wish to use. It would also be beneficial to review assessments and check the SQA secure site for any changes to assessment as part of the pre-delivery standardisation process.

A small number of centres had used an invalid assessment from the previous unit H1WL 11 as an alternative assessment. This did not meet the current unit specification. Centres are reminded that they should ensure they review their materials in the standardisation process, and as part of this process check SQA sites for updates to group award specifications, unit specifications, and SQA exemplar assessments or prior-verified assessments.

Outcome 2, performance criteria (b) and (c) — Centres should be aware that when discussing the effects of media reporting on the perception of crime, they should focus on the impact it may have on the community and not the individual. For example, there should be less focus on aspects such as an increase in readership and more on criminological topics, such as moral panics and deviance amplification spirals, agenda setting, cherry picking facts to create a narrative, othering, scapegoating, fear mongering, exaggeration, perception of high crime rates that are not factually supported, rumour cascades, etc.

Centres should also note that assessments should be kept in a secure environment. Assessments should not be shared via emails or social media. Where the security of an assessment has been compromised it will not be accepted as a valid instrument of assessment. If an SQA assessment has been compromised, this will be removed from the SQA website.

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

In almost all centres, learners undertook their assessments within the classroom, which helped assessors ensure that the work generated was indeed the learner's own. Where assessments could be completed out of class time, assessors held feedback / discussion sessions to ensure authenticity of work.

The learner's work must be authenticated.

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

Reviewing assessment processes, the external verifiers were satisfied that in most centres the learners' work had been properly assessed, that the comments of assessor(s) and internal verifier(s) were appropriate, and SQA's requirements were being met. Learner work was assessed consistently against SQA standards, and it was possible to track this within the learner evidence and in accompanying IV records.

In some centres, assessor and internal verifier feedback was minimal, often not more than 'tick' marks on learner evidence. While in some instances these may have been supported by oral feedback this was not evident in several cases. Centres are advised that evidence of detailed feedback is beneficial for learner development and should be retained for internal verifier and external verification purposes.

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

In all centres retention policies either met or exceeded those required by SQA.

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

In all centres, reports were sent to the Quality Department who sent them to the staff concerned, either directly or via the head of faculty or equivalent. These reports can then be included as an item for discussion at staff and course meetings.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ innovative and diverse methods of summative assessment
- ◆ good use of external partners as guest speakers to enhance the learner experience
- ◆ visits to a range of places relevant to the criminal justice system

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2021–22:

- ◆ Seeking approval to deliver the awards prior to delivery. This involves having appropriately qualified staff and prepared learning, teaching and assessment materials available prior to the approval visit. Before making a decision on whether to offer the awards, centres must read the group award specifications and units to ascertain what the SQA requirements are to deliver them.

- ◆ Ensure that all assessment materials are kept in a secure environment and are not shared via email or social media.
- ◆ Centres should review all relevant SQA documentation to ensure they are current and valid (group award specification, unit specification, assessments exemplars, SQA prior-verified assessments).
- ◆ Each single credit unit requires 40 hours of direct input from teachers / lecturers. In addition, the learner is expected to contribute another 40 hours of self-study. It is important that the full amount of time is allocated to each unit. The awards and their component units should not be viewed as being of less importance or value than National Courses.