



Work Based Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022

Information Technology

Computer Science

Verification group numbers: 288, 357

Introduction

This report covers competence based qualifications (diplomas) that span two verification groups: 357 and 288. The diplomas contain mandatory units in both groups therefore centres generally require that two verification visits take place. To accommodate centres these visits are allocated to a single external verifier and the verification done as one event. Centres receive two visit plans and two final verification reports. This approach has been adopted for some years now and appears to work well. All centres in this report were training providers.

Centres were well organised for visits and verifiers reported significant strengths in all criteria.

The following qualifications were reviewed this session:

Code	Group award	Level
GL2T 48	Diploma for Information Technology and Telecommunications Professionals	Level 8
GL2R 46	Diploma for Information Technology and Telecommunications Professionals	Level 6
GL2K 46	Diploma in Digital Application Support	Level 6
GJ74 48	Diploma for Information Security Professionals	Level 8
GJ75 46	Diploma for Information Security Professionals	Level 6
GR53 46	IT: Hardware/Systems Support	Level 6
GR54 46	IT: Software Development	Level 6

The following units within the awards were reviewed:

Code	Unit title
H3A3 04	Event Driven Programming 1
H3AA 04	Object Oriented programming 1
H3BH 04	Web Development 1
H3BJ 04	Web Development 2
H3AE 04	Procedural Computer Programming 2
H3BM 04	Software Design Fundamentals
H7CW 04	Carrying Out Information Security Risk Assessments 2
H7CT 04	Testing the Security of Information Systems 2
H3AP 04	IT & Telecoms Fault Diagnosis 2
H3AR 04	IT & Telecoms Fault Diagnosis 3
F9AP 04	Bespoke Software 2
H39M 04	Customer Care for IT and Telecoms Professionals 2
H39J 04	Interpersonal and Written Communications 2
H3C5 04	Health & Safety in IT & Telecoms
H3B6 04	Working with IT & Telecoms hardware and equipment 2
H3BN 04	Networking Principles 1
H3BP 04	Networking Principles 2
J4EW 04	Foundation Apprenticeship Work based Challenge

Code	Unit title
H39S 04	IT & Telecom System Operation 2
FR11 04	Developing Personal and Team Effectiveness Using IT 3
FR10 04	Understanding the Potential of IT 3
H39Y 04	IT & Telecom System Management 2
H3AH 04	Investigating and Defining Customer Requirements for IT and Telecoms Systems 2
H3AJ 04	Investigating and Defining Customer Requirements for IT and Telecoms Systems 3
H3C4 04	Personal Effectiveness 2
H39F 04	Personal Effectiveness 3
H7CN 04	Principles of Information Governance and Assurance 1
H7CP 04	Principles of Information Governance and Assurance 2
H3AX 04	User Profile Administration
H7CT 04	Testing the Security of Information Systems 2
H3B0 04	IT & Telecom System Security 2
HD56 04	Digital Communications

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 qualifications, both vocational and assessor/verifier were found to be appropriate to deliver and assess the awards and to be compliant with the assessment strategy. CPD logs for staff had been maintained throughout the session and CPD activities made available had been relevant.

The majority of staff hold appropriate L&D units for their role but there are a few with older qualifications. Where this is the case, these are supported by a detailed CPD activity log which is completed to L&D standards.

In almost all instances both subject-specific activity and assessor–verifier activity had been seen as recorded on individual CPD records.

Evidence was seen of the use of outsourcing of HR functions, including the recording of CPD activity.

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 review. Many programmes have rolling starts and centres are established in their activity so initial review is not as relevant. Minutes of standardisation meetings are normally made available for verifiers to review in advance. This provided evidence of review of assessment, assessment methods, learning materials and learning and assessment environments. In all cases candidate feedback is included in the review process.

Standardisation meetings are in, some cases, supported by decision logs which make it easy for assessors and verifiers to identify key points for making assessment decisions. When included in minutes these can be overwhelmed by other activity.

Almost all centres make use of MS Teams for discussion which can be captured for future reference.

All centres make use of e-portfolios for candidate evidence and for internal verification. Learning Assistant, Proof Positive, One File, Google Classroom are most commonly used.

A variety of different platforms are in use and centres mostly give access to verifiers in advance of a visit. Where required, centres are always willing to provide a member of staff to guide the verifier through.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

In work based diplomas, selection is carried out in conjunction with the employer. In a few cases this will be part of in-house training and development but more commonly it is part of a modern apprenticeship.

Suitable candidates are selected based on their initial qualification profile and their interest in a job role. In all instances the level of the diploma is agreed based on the initial selection process. Some instances have seen a candidate with a higher academic profile on a level 6 diploma as this is more suitable for the individual.

In most centres some recognition of prior learning is reviewed at the selection stage.

Extensive learner induction resources are available in most centres which provide a good level of detail about the award and quality assurance processes.

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

Candidates have regular contact with assessors and evidence has been seen in all visits. Progress reviews are generally carried out remotely. This can vary from 2–8 weeks depending on the candidate needs and the pace at which they are progressing.

As units are selected at induction these can change based on the candidate job role and the availability of evidence.

Verifiers always request a meeting with candidates, and in most cases this is provided. During the discussion candidates are asked about their experience of the award and in particular assessment. In all cases candidates have a good understanding of the awards and how they will be assessed. Work based assessment is seen by all as being a very positive method of assessment. They also report that they feel well supported and that assessment is fair.

Feedback from assessment is, in most cases, constructive and supportive for candidates.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Internal assessment and verification are well understood by all centres. All centres have a set of policies and procedures that meet the requirements of SQA quality assurance criteria. Electronic storage of these gives easy access to all involved with delivery and quality assurance.

Assessment requirements are clearly understood and applied in all cases. These are supported by documented marking decisions which usually form the basis of candidate feedback. In all cases sampling is done on a regular basis throughout the lifetime of the award. A candidate will have a single assessor throughout the award and in turn the assessor a single internal verifier. It is clear from standardisation minutes and discussion logs that this is discussed for consistency.

In almost all cases the level of internal verifier feedback is good.

In a few instances evidence was seen of a final verification check being carried on candidate evidence prior to certification to ensure that all evidence was complete.

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

Instruments of assessment are not generally in use. Almost all assessment is based on evidence generated in the workplace. E-portfolios allow this to be clearly mapped to the performance criteria of the unit and for candidates to make evidence claims.

A range of assessment methods are used such as observation, professional discussion, video etc and verifiers confirmed that methods used are valid.

Knowledge based elements are assessed by a range of methods such as written question-and-answer or embedded knowledge in the skills elements.

All assessment was found to be valid, equitable and fair.

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

All centres have an appropriate malpractice policy and this is shared with the candidate at induction. Many e-portfolios have a facility that requires the candidate to accept that work is their own for each submission.

Almost all evidence is generated in the workplace and is unique to the candidate job role and work based activity, thus making it easy to authenticate.

Most assessment is carried out in loosely controlled conditions, and this is consistent with unit specifications.

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

All verifiers report that e-portfolio marking decisions that were seen were accurate and consistent. In all cases candidates are judged against the requirements of the unit specifications and not each other.

Feedback for assessment demonstrates that marking decisions are appropriate.

In a few instances verifiers have seen requests for further information or evidence to be provided by the candidate to fully meet the evidence requirement.

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

In almost all instances the funding model requires that evidence is retained beyond the requirements of SQA. However, all centres are aware of the SQA requirements and are fully compliant in making evidence available to verifiers.

The use of e-portfolios ensures secure access to candidate evidence via user credential and permissions.

In most cases the archiving of completed portfolios is discussed and found to be effective.

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

All centres have provided evidence of external reports being discussed in standardisation meetings. In some cases, a very robust approach is taken and may form a separate meeting to discuss findings and share across multiple areas.

In the majority of instances, feedback is disseminated as it arrives and discussed at the next standardisation meeting.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ Comprehensive CPD activities undertaken
- ◆ Good reflective logs regularly maintained
- ◆ Use of third party to host staff records (Monday.com)
- ◆ Extensive use of electronic platforms for assessment and remote access to quality documents (internal verification activity on Teams, OneNote, Google Forms, MS Forms)
- ◆ Review documentation completed collaboratively
- ◆ Subject-specific standardisation scheduled throughout the year to upskill staff
- ◆ High level of candidate support
- ◆ Positive, constructive feedback to candidates
- ◆ Positive, constructive internal verifier feedback
- ◆ Effective recognition of prior learning and/or accreditation of prior learning

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Centres to ensure that candidates are available for discussion during verification activity
- ◆ Centres to work with verifiers to ensure that an appropriate sample is agreed in advance