



**National Units**

**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022**

# **Personal and Social Development**

Verification group number: 159

## Introduction

The following qualifications were verified in 2021–22:

Personal Development Awards: GF2J 43; GF2K 44; GF2L 45; GF2M 46

Employability: G9D2 43; G9CY 44

Wellbeing: GF2N 44

Certificate of Work Readiness: GF0F 04

Steps to Work: G9PO 43

Self and Work: H18P43; H18P 44; H18P 45; H18P 46

Self Awareness: H18X 44; H18X 45; H18X 46

Self in Community: H18N 43; H18N 44; H18N 45; H18N 46

Practical Abilities: H18W 43; H18W 44; H18W 45; H18W 46

Preparing for Employment: First Steps F786 09; F786 10

Building own Employability Skills: F787 09; F787 10

Responsibilities of Employment: F788 09; F788 10

Dealing with Work Situations: F789 09; F789 10

Exploring Wellbeing: H18L 43; H18L 44

Improving Wellbeing: H18M 43; H18M 44

Certificate of Work Readiness: Workplace Skills H188 04

Steps to Work: Self in Community H18N 43; Work Placement HF88 43

Almost all centres achieved qualification verification (QV) compliance with ‘high confidence’ outcome ratings during session 2021–22, with some achieving ‘broad confidence’ where there were required actions. Most centres have robust internal quality assurance systems and procedures in place.

Most centres utilise SQA assessment exemplar materials for the delivery of a wide range of SQA Personal Development Units and Awards; for example, Personal Development Awards, Wellbeing, Employability, Leadership, Workplace Skills, Steps to Work, Enterprise Skills and Local Investigations.

Most centres were able to make minor adaptations to the ‘open book’ delivery of National Qualifications during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they supported candidates with a blend of online and face-to-face programme delivery throughout the lockdown. This has had a significant impact on the current delivery of PSD where centres continue to adapt and modify learning, teaching and assessment delivery for the benefit of candidates, for example: the use of Microsoft Teams and other platforms to provide ongoing tutorial support and guidance; integration of unit assessments; improved use of technology to enable candidates to use iPads, other tablets and assistive technologies.

Almost all centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the various personal development qualifications. Certification of wider achievement awards across all centres is on the increase as programme frameworks across the curriculum begin to address, and recognise the importance of, issues related to developing candidate self-confidence, resilience and personal health and wellbeing.

There is increased recognition of the value of employability training and work placement experience. The Employability Awards at SCQF Levels 3 and 4 continue to have good uptake and the recent introduction of virtual work placement qualifications provides a range of qualification and programme delivery options to suit the needs of candidates undertaking National Qualifications and work placement provision.

Almost all centres continue to provide robust information in relation to QV reporting criteria:

- ◆ 2.4 Pre-delivery and ongoing quality checks of the assessment materials; equipment and the assessment environment.
- ◆ 3.2 Candidate development needs and prior achievements identified through the application and induction process and ongoing delivery of the qualification.
- ◆ 3.3 Providing records of scheduled contact with candidates including face-to-face learning and teaching and assessment delivery as well as tutorial online methods.
- ◆ 4.2 Evidence of internal verification sampling; standardisation and quality assurance procedures.
- ◆ 4.3 Assessment Instruments — SQA exemplar materials and centre devised.
- ◆ 4.4 Assessment conditions — supervised and/or open book.
- ◆ 4.6 Assessment frameworks/assessment evidence, marking guidelines and results matrices.
- ◆ 4.7 Retention policy and procedures.
- ◆ 4.9 QV reporting highlighted the need to have more informed QV feedback to staff within centres to inform assessment practice going forward.

## **Category 2: Resources**

### **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 have rigorous systems and procedures in place to ensure pre-delivery and ongoing quality assurance checks have taken place. A few centres did not carry out the required pre-delivery or ongoing checks of assessment materials.

Assessors and internal verifiers must ensure that pre-delivery checks of the assessment materials take place before the start of the delivery of the qualification and any assessment. Some centres failed to provide evidence that pre-delivery checks had been carried out (especially of SQA assessment exemplars).

Risk assessment policies and procedures were fairly robust, and assessors and internal verifiers understood their roles in the process.

Almost all centres were well resourced with ICT technology and equipment suitable for the delivery of SQA National Qualifications, for example: Microsoft Teams; Zoom; electronic portfolios; computers, iPads, or other tablets; digital and paper-based evidence.

## **Category 3: Candidate support**

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

Internal systems and procedures within almost all centres support candidate development needs from the pre-entry stage through the application and interview process to qualification delivery. SQA Connect is utilised by most centres. Where there are little or no prior candidate achievements, centres sought information from partner providers, such as guidance staff; candidate references and previously identified support records.

QV reports indicated that many centres were supporting a wide range of individual needs of candidates (for example: autistic spectrum disorder (ASD); attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD); child sexual exploitation (CSE)) via a range of personal development programmes and qualifications.

Some centres sought advice where candidates struggled to provide sufficient written responses. Qualification verifiers confirmed that the use of verbal responses is appropriate as evidence across all SCQF levels; they also provided advice and support to assessors to sign and date additional verbal responses as part of the ongoing assessment process. A few centres were encouraged to support candidates through the use of electronic assessment materials instead of paper-based evidence, especially for candidates with dyslexia or dyspraxia.

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

Centres identified scheduled contact through timetabling arrangements and face-to-face contact with assessors throughout the delivery of qualifications. Many progress reviews were both informative and insightful, reflecting the individual development needs of the candidate and the learner's journey. Centres placed a good deal of emphasis on working towards personal development goals and positive work-based destinations.

Many centres provided additional training to complete job applications, mock interviews and work placement experiences. A few centres failed to identify and certificate candidates for additional activities undertaken where there was a clear crossover to other NQ Units; for example, candidates undertaking employability training could have been entered for an NQ Work Placement unit and could have been certificated for the Steps to Work Award if they had completed the Employability units (including the two optional units) and the Work Placement unit.

A few centres provided exemplary progress reviews and action plans tailored to specific short, medium and long term timebound goals and SMART objectives.

## **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 systems and procedures are in place in almost all centres to ensure the standardisation of assessment. Almost all assessment decisions were consistent with National Qualifications standards.

Where the standard was not met, it was very often due to inconsistencies of assessor judgements across candidate cohorts. Assessors need to make valid and reliable assessment judgements across all candidate submissions. Where candidate evidence is borderline, the assessor and the internal verifier must decide if the minimum standard has been met or not. If the candidate has not met the required standard, then the assessor must clearly specify the requirements for remediation and/or re-assessment to take place.

Centres routinely made centre assessment, internal verification procedures and policy documents available, and qualification verifiers were able to see the cycle of verification activity within each centre.

There was some evidence of standardisation meetings and discussions taking place between assessors and internal verifiers to standardise assessment judgements and marking schemes. There was good evidence of centres providing support to assessors and internal verifiers with clear sampling strategies.

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

Qualification verifiers routinely sampled assessment instruments that were developed by SQA as centres were confident in their selection and use. SQA assessment support packs were contextualised to suit the requirements of subject-specific design frameworks.

Most centres stick to the delivery of specified personal development qualifications without taking into consideration how the assessment activities could generate certification of other PSD units. Centres should consider undertaking a mapping exercise to ensure candidates are being certificated for the work they undertake.

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

All centres provided internal quality assurance policy documents, including internal processes and procedures for malpractice and plagiarism. Most provided information relating to the induction process and the requirement for candidates to sign authenticity declarations.

Centres should note that SQA qualification verifiers will ensure that this criterion is discussed in more detail during QV activities in session 2022–23. This pertains to SQA's external audit requirements to ensure that centre assessment arrangements comply with SQA qualification requirements and assessment conditions.

Centres may wish to refer to SQA published guidance — *Qualification Verification Criteria: Guidance for Centres* (March 2019): Appendix A Criteria 4.4 (pages 19–22) — which explains clearly how a centre can comply when implementing a range of different assessment conditions.

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

Almost all QV reports during session 2021–22 indicated that candidate evidence met the national standard. However, most non-compliance was due to incorrect assessment judgements of unit standards, or incorrect centre devised assessment workbooks which did not cover all unit outcomes and performance criteria.

Good practice was identified where centres, parents and families worked in partnership to support candidates during the delivery of the qualification. Further good practice was identified in one centre, which supported candidates to reflect on the whole learning experience in a formal celebration of learning.

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

All centres continue to retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements and longer if necessary. Some centres may retain candidate evidence for longer periods due to other awarding bodies and/or funding requirements. This can vary from the minimum requirement of three weeks to one year and beyond.

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

QV reports indicate that most centres routinely disseminate reports to staff using internal shared systems and procedures. Centres continue to retain QV reports electronically, which enables access to all assessors, verifiers and relevant staff.

Some centres ensure assessors and verifiers have an opportunity to discuss the QV report at the next scheduled standardisation meeting. More than a few centres need to ensure that qualification verification feedback is used to inform assessment practice and that this is clearly shown in standardisation meeting records.

## **Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers**

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

- ◆ Centres, parents and extended family worked in partnership to support candidate development needs and achievement of qualifications.
- ◆ A centre held 'Celebrations of Learning', where candidates reflected on their learning journey.

## Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Assessor and internal verifier assessment judgements must be valid and reliable across the entire candidate cohort. Where the assessment evidence does not meet the national standard, centres must provide details of remediation and/or re-assessment.
- ◆ A few centres failed to provide evidence of authenticity of candidate evidence. SQA has a template which centres can access, customise and utilise for National Qualifications: [https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/Candidate\\_disclaimer\\_for\\_SVQ\\_Portfolio.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Candidate_disclaimer_for_SVQ_Portfolio.pdf). Candidates must sign and date the declaration and centres should retain this document with candidate assessment evidence.
- ◆ A few centres did not provide evidence of pre-delivery assessment checks being carried out prior to assessment taking place. This is important with the use of both SQA assessment exemplars and centre devised assessment materials to check on currency and validity.
- ◆ A few centres need to consider the use of electronic assessment materials and assistive technology equipment to support inclusiveness and specific candidate development needs, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. Many centres are moving towards electronic assessment evidence and decreasing paper-based evidence.
- ◆ Assessors should use verbal responses as evidence if candidates struggle to produce written responses.
- ◆ Some centres should consider how to map the qualification delivery to other National Qualifications Units to ensure candidates are certificated for all the work they undertake.