



Skills for Work

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2023–24

Engineering Skills

Verification group number: 412

Skills for Work Courses

Engineering Skills (National 4 and National 5)

All visits this academic session were site visits. The units externally verified this session were:

National 4

J16F 74 Engineering Skills: Mechanical

J16G 74 Engineering Skills: Electrical/Electronic

J145 74 Engineering Skills: Fabrication

J144 74 Engineering Skills: Manufacture and Assembly

National 5

J12P 75 Engineering Skills: Mechanical and Fabrication

J12S 75 Engineering Skills: Electrical and Electronic

J12T 75 Engineering Skills: Maintenance

J12V 75 Engineering Skills: Design and Manufacture

General comments

All centres verified this session were delivering the National 5 qualification.

Two centres also delivered units from the National 4 qualification.

Two centres were registering candidates for the first time following approval early in the session or last session.

The other centres have previous experience in delivering the qualification and have a sound understanding of national standards as they have been offering the courses and units for a number of years.

The candidates sampled were a mix of S4–S6.

A number of centres, especially schools, asked about developing unit assessment instruments that are relevant and practical as an alternative to the NABs. These discussions were mainly in relation to the Mechanical and Fabrication unit. Centres were advised to submit any newly developed assessment instruments for prior verification.

We would emphasise the importance of the visit plan, which is sent to centres before the visit date. This document explains that the external verifier will wish to meet with a centre representative before the visit commences and that they will need to access evidence relating to:

- ◆ equal and fair access to assessment
- ◆ assessor standardisation arrangements
- ◆ internal verification strategy/procedures and sampling

Centres are encouraged to ensure they are familiar with the visit plan documentation (in some cases this had not been completed prior to the external verification visit).

Course arrangements, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres were using SQA-approved assessment instruments (NABs). External verifiers often noted the use of master folders to ensure the use of approved assessment tools. Of the centres visited, most have been offering these qualifications for many years, they are demonstrably familiar with the course arrangements and record the requirements from the unit specifications in their internal verification procedures.

There were no issues raised with any of the centres with regards to course arrangements or assessment instruments.

Evidence requirements

Most centres have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the units.

No issues were identified by any of the external verifiers in their reports.

There is variation in the level and sufficiency of evidence submitted by candidates in relation to employability skills. Some centres have excellent partnerships with colleges or industry, and some of these excellent partnerships were identified as points of good practice (but it was also identified as an area for development in others). This is the most inconsistent area in relation to assessment evidence that external verifiers commented on.

All schools should be encouraged to build these relationships with local colleges and employers at the outset of delivery to allow candidates to interact with local employers. Satisfactory completion of the skills sections of the units should enable candidates to monitor their own progress and allow them to record development.

Assessor written feedback on employability skills to candidates should always form part of an individual unit feedback session with targets mutually set.

Administration of assessments

Centres are reminded that the sample should follow the centre policy (where the procedure should be stated).

Centres can make use of the SQA-produced internal verification toolkit as a means of checking their existing internal verification processes to ensure that they are appropriate. For example, centres could keep a record justifying their rationale for an assessment decision.

Learning and teaching

No issues were identified in relation to learning and teaching.

Some centres are continuing to invest in modern technology resources and encouraging candidates to make use of this in their completion of practical tasks.

Candidates stated that they found the units challenging but very enjoyable. Candidates at one centre commented on how much they had learned and that the units were, in their words, “real”. One candidate stated he had learned so much in one year and that this course was the reason why he had applied for an apprenticeship with a local employer.

Overall assessment

All centres made use of the SQA-produced NABs, so all assessment approaches were appropriate. Some centres have identified that they wish to develop new assessment instruments which will be submitted for prior verification approval.

There was some inconsistency in assessments being signed off by the assessor in a timely manner. Some centres had clear assessment plans and feedback to candidates was timely and highlighted strengths and clearly explained areas requiring development. Non-timely feedback to candidates could have an adverse effect on the learning and confidence of the candidate and lead to the candidate being disillusioned.

Verification

Centres can make use of the SQA-produced internal verification toolkit as a means of checking their existing internal verification processes to ensure that they are appropriate.

Internal verification was identified as a strength this session. Numerous external verifiers commented on the effectiveness of the process in the centres they visited. Comments related to this included:

- ◆ ‘detailed and highly effective’
- ◆ ‘documented professional dialogue between the assessor and internal verifier promoted consistency of standards’
- ◆ ‘the centre provided their internal verification policy, which detailed sample size, frequency and recorded timings of the internal verification process. The centre’s internal verification process was effective’

Areas of good practice reported on during session 2023–24:

The centre’s internal verification practices were identified by external verifiers as being robust.

Centres, particularly newly approved centres, should familiarise themselves with the internal verification toolkit to ensure they are complying with the latest requirements.

The use of storyboards and electronic recording of assessments was identified as good practice in helping to support candidates to work at their own pace, and to provide support for candidates who have missed lessons. This is also a good way for them to consolidate tools and process knowledge.

Specific areas for improvement reported during session 2023–24:

Centres should understand that the visit plan requests that internal verification procedures be presented and explained to the external verifier at the start of the external verification visit, and centres must make arrangements for this to take place.

Centres should develop assessment plans and resource plans and share these with assessors. Assessment and resource plans should be reviewed regularly.

Assessors should provide feedback in a timely manner to candidates. Assessments should be signed and dated by the assessor.

Centres are encouraged to develop strong links with local industry and FE colleges. This will help with candidates identifying and recording evidence in relation to employability skills.

It is good practice for internal verifiers to record which candidate materials have been reviewed during the internal verification process.