



Skills for Work

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2023–24

Hairdressing

Verification group number: 404

Skills for Work Courses

C238 74 Skills for Work Hairdressing: National 4

- J16S 74 Hairdressing: Salon Awareness (National 4) — 6 SCQF credit points
- J16T 74 Hairdressing: Working in the Salon (National 4) — 6 SCQF credit points
- J16R 74 Hairdressing: Employability Skills (National 4) — 6 SCQF credit points
- J16V 74 Hairdressing: Creativity (National 4) — 6 SCQF credit points

C252 75 Skills for Work Hairdressing: National 5

- J138 75 Hairdressing: Working in a Salon Environment (National 5) — 6 SCQF credit points
 - J139 75 Hairdressing: Salon Skills (National 5) — 6 SCQF credit points
 - J13B 75 Hairdressing: Creative Trends (National 5) — 6 SCQF credit points
 - J13A 75 Hairdressing: An Introduction to Colour (National 5) — 6 SCQF credit points
- and/or**
- J13M 75 Hairdressing: Introduction to Colouring Processes (National 5) — 6 SCQF credit points

General comments

Skills for Work: Hairdressing (National 4 and 5) Courses provide an introductory hairdressing qualification, with practical experience of general salon duties, reception skills, communication, and customer care. The courses are designed to help learners to acquire subject-specific knowledge and experience, an understanding of the workplace, positive attitudes to learning, and skills which are transferable to other employment areas, enhancing learners' employability profiles. A key feature is the emphasis on learning through practical experience and by reflecting on experience with a focus on process, not product. The units are written in a hierarchical format, to facilitate multi-level delivery, enabling candidates to achieve at their full potential.

In February 2012, an EU directive relating to health and safety requirements was issued relating to chemicals used to colour hair for people under the age of 16. To ensure compliance with this directive, SQA developed an additional unit — Hairdressing: Introduction to Colouring Processes (J13M 75) — as an alternative to Hairdressing: Introduction to Colour (J13A 75). The responsibility is with the centre to fully comply with the EU directive and be aware of the pre-16 year old restrictions (European Directive Pre-16 Restrictions) set out by the sector skills body, HABIA.

Skills for Work Courses were re-coded as part of the Curriculum for Excellence development programme in August 2013; however, there was no change to course and unit content.

All SQA-approved centres selected for external verification activity in academic session 2023–24 had an 'accepted' outcome following external verification review.

All units at National 4 and 5 were sampled by external verifiers during visits conducted this session.

The results of the external verification activity indicated that most centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards and apply them appropriately.

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

All centres externally verified are using SQA National Assessment Bank (NAB) material. Evidence sampled and discussions with assessors and internal verifiers during external verification visits confirmed that centre staff in most centres are familiar with, and have a clear and accurate understanding of, the unit specifications, evidence requirements and instruments of assessment. Learning and teaching is supported by a range of resources, including workbooks developed by CDN (previously known as Colleges Scotland) or appropriate centre-devised learning materials.

Evidence requirements

Evidence requirements for each unit are detailed in the unit specification. SQA NAB material is provided for all units. Marking guides provided within the NAB indicate the expected standard of learner response, facilitating standardised, reliable assessment decisions.

In almost all centres visited, the evidence viewed indicated that SQA NAB material had been used appropriately and that fair, consistent, reliable assessment decisions had been made in most centres. Therefore, the verification sample suggests that there is a clear understanding of unit evidence requirements.

Administration of assessments

Almost all centres visited continued to demonstrate excellent links with employers. The employers offered work experience to learners and carried out presentations to groups, discussing job roles and responsibilities, outlining realistic working practices and skills required to work within the hairdressing industry. This relates to task requirements for unit J16S 74 Hairdressing: Salon Awareness and supports the holistic implementation and expectations of group award delivery.

However, external verification still identified instances where assessors should encourage learners to use their own words to record their responses to demonstrate their understanding, instead of using the exemplar response provided in the marking guide.

One centre delivering unit J13B 75 Hairdressing: Creative Trends lacked a range of styles, textures, and colours. The assessing team needs to ensure candidates identify current fashion trends from a variety of sources to produce a style board which effectively combines style, texture, and colours to meet the minimum requirements.

Learning and teaching

Learning and teaching continues to be varied and appropriate to learners' needs. Activities were highly practical and reflected the skills and knowledge required to evidence each unit. Learners in all centres visited were given the opportunity to display practical skills at a range of events, such as competitions, charity activities, or open days, or with cross-centre groups such as full-time hairdressing classes and/or school performance activities.

As in previous years, learners interviewed during external verification visits were enthusiastic and positive about their learning experiences. They spoke freely and enthusiastically about their course and were all fully aware of their progress and next steps. They spoke highly of their assessor and the environment that they were working in, expressing that they felt very supported throughout their course and about the benefits of having the salon environment within the school facility.

Overall assessment

Overall, from the verification activity undertaken this session, centre assessment judgements were in line with national standards, reliable and accepted with a few development points identified. Assessments verified met the needs of each unit and showed consistent marking by assessors throughout. Good relevant feedback was given throughout portfolios verified. In almost all instances, the evidence viewed was extensive and demonstrated a high standard of work by candidates across all centres visited.

Verification

Each centre visited provided the internal verification policies, completed verification documentation, internal verification sample plans and activity, minutes of meetings and verification feedback to candidates. Assessor judgements were accurate, valid and consistent across centres.

Areas of good practice reported in 2023–24

A range of good practice was identified across the centres visited, which included:

- The centre held in-salon session for family members to showcase candidate skills gained.

- Feedback questionnaire from the school for assessors to complete, highlighting individual candidate progress and skills gained to celebrate and showcase success with teachers and parents.
- Recruitment sessions to support candidates making informed choices.
- The use of a WhatsApp group as a tool for communication, sharing learning resources and showcasing skills gained.
- Providing additional learning resources to support progression within hairdressing.
- Providing comprehensive induction information (salon etiquette).
- Hosting an end-of-course slide show of candidates' work and graduation certificates to celebrate success.
- Providing a purpose-built commercial salon in the school with the required tools, equipment and professional products available to enable candidates to complete their qualification in a realistic working environment.
- Candidates given the opportunity to create hair looks for a school production.
- Centre staff and candidates attended a Hair and Beauty world event with an award-winning creative colourist in November 2023, where centre staff and candidates observed creative colour techniques and attended a question and answer session on creative colour formulations.
- Centre staff arranged a visit to the Hair and Beauty Show held in February 2024.
- Working in partnership with Business Gateway to establish the salon as a commercial enterprise.
- Work placement in a salon, assisting stylists in the salon, greeting clients, preparing them for hair services while building confidence and improving practical skills in industry.
- Developing excellent links with local industry and candidates. Visiting local businesses and speaking directly with practitioners. The candidates visited the local salon for a presentation on employability skills within the hairdressing industry conducted by the salon owners.
- Having an online platform, like Brightspace, and using it consistently, showing all aspects of the candidates' learning journey.
- The centre worked closely with catchment schools, to ensure that the correct candidates are enrolled on the correct courses.
- Participating in career events outside the centre to promote their facilities to potential candidates before they are enrolled, ensuring a full understanding of course content.
- The centre having a very in-depth induction process that incorporates taster evenings prior to enrolment, allowing potential candidates to visit the salons, speak to staff, and have a realistic expectation of their future learning experience.

- The centre having a pre-induction process which includes an applicant's day with a pre-induction timetable to guide the candidates through all induction processes and support them through the first stage of their college experience.

Specific areas for improvement reported in 2023–24

- Candidates should answer assessment questions using their own words to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. The exemplar response is only for guidance and not a definitive answer.
- Internal verifiers should have a hairdressing background to enable subject-specific understanding of assessment requirements to support alternative answers provided by the candidates which meet the requirements of SQA.
- Unit J13B 75 Hairdressing: Creative Trends (Outcome 1) — The style board evidence presented did not always fully meet evidence requirements. To ensure the evidence criteria is fully met, the style board must reflect current creative fashion trends, combining style, texture and colour.