

**30 September 2013**

**REPORT FOR PUBLICATION**

**1. The qualifications and standards**

- **Structure and content**

Feedback has been identified consistently as a strength across many centres. Specific examples include annotated feedback being provided throughout learners' work and summary feedback clearly stating strengths and areas for improvement, with development points to be considered for future submissions. The use of technology in feedback has been referenced as a particular strength in a couple of centres, where the use of electronic and recorded feedback has been trialled with positive findings. One centre was commended for the use of self-assessment in learners' marking against their own work; which assessment criteria they thought they had hit, from the standards within their own work. Many centres, embracing OCR's flexible approach, are increasingly using a varied range of assessment methods to assess these qualifications. The use of technology and VLEs in the delivery, assessment and support offered to learners is becoming more widely used and allows for centres to offer a blended or distance learning approach for their learners which often more readily links in with their needs and personal circumstances.

<p><b>Assessment Team:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Many centres have small assessment teams. All assessors and IQAs have the appropriate experience and qualifications to meet the assessment strategy, or are working towards gaining the relevant qualifications and experience. Centres have incorporated the necessary arrangements for countersigning when required and have good induction systems for new staff; to support them in their new role (including the standards if they are new to them). Overall, OCR has been notified of new members to assessment teams. Original certificates of new staff or staff gaining the relevant qualifications have been reviewed by EQAs as part of their quality monitoring. Some centres have undergone significant changes with some restructure and redundancy situations. Centres have in the main managed this well, ensuring that the</p>
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	<p>team remained sufficient to support the number of candidates on programme and that they (the students) experienced no disruption to the progress of their qualification.</p>
<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Centres have appropriately qualified teams with relevant knowledge and competence to deliver and assess this suite of qualifications. Where centres are opting to offer the Learning and Development units, qualifications of the team have been checked and confirmed in line with the assessment strategy. Assessment teams maintain their CPD, engaging in a range of activities; in some centres this is formalised as part of a process, in others it is more assessor driven. A range of accredited qualifications have been achieved by assessment team members at various levels. Overall centres were actively carrying out standardisation activities as part of the assessment team's CPD; with an occasional centre needing to improve in this area. In the main senior management are supportive of CPD. Centres have the relevant physical resources to deliver these qualifications. Some centres provide learners with a copy of specific books, such as Reece and Walker and Anne Gravells, for them to use throughout their programme. Some centres are using technology such as video conferencing, skype and webinar effectively to support learners. Centres are increasingly using VLEs in the delivery of this suite of qualifications as part of a blended learning or distant learning approach to offering the qualification. Others use their VLE as an additional resource for learners to enhance the taught programmes. One centre was noted for using ipads in recording the microteach sessions. Some centres are using plagiarism software as part of the quality monitoring of learners work. Where EQAs have checked centres' insurance policies, no problems have been identified. The relevant Health and Safety checks have been carried out where external venues have been used for the delivery of the programmes. Some centres have detailed handbooks, which are issued to learners as part of their induction, which detail the structure of the programme.</p>
<p><b>Candidate Support:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>External Quality Assurance monitoring has reported that, overall, centres have a robust induction process. Centres have informative handbooks which are issued to the learners, detailing all aspects of the programme. Learners receive relevant advice and guidance and undergo an initial assessment; which ensures that the programme is right for them. One centre has an appropriate enrolment process that is suitable for their deaf learners; which ensures their particular requirements</p>

	<p>can be met, when commencing on programme. Overall support and assessment methods on programme are varied and reflective of the differing needs of learners. Some centres relied heavily on the use of assignments as the main assessment method and EQAs have encouraged that alternatives be considered (including the use of technology) within the assessment process. EQAs confirmed that centres overall were assessing both formatively and summatively as part of reviewing learners' progress and implementing any relevant support. Learners' progress is reviewed regularly and the use of action planning was used effectively as part of this process in some centres. Assessor feedback had been repeatedly reported on as "good"; identifying clear strengths and areas for improvement; offering development points for the learner to consider. Some centres' assessments and feedback encourage learners to apply their submissions to their working context and expand their knowledge beyond the field in which they presently work. Feedback has often been provided in an annotated format throughout the learners' work in addition to a summary of feedback at the end of the submitted work. Some centres effectively linked the feedback from work to the assessment criteria achieved; so learners can visualise their progress and identify how their work relates to the meeting of the standards. One centre was commended for using a system by which learners marked what assessment criteria they thought they had hit within the standards (in a margin against the relevant parts of their work); thus helping the learners to take responsibility and enhancing the standard of submitted work. Tutorials are often an integral part of centres' programmes, providing dedicated time to support learners and review their progress face to face and individually. The assessment team are also contactable by other means and this has provided additional access to support when required (and has been commented on positively by learners interviewed). Some centres are effectively using subject specific staff or guest speakers for the delivery of specialist aspects of the qualification. Examples of relevant special arrangements that have been made (for learners who had specific additional needs) had been identified and good practice highlighted.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and Verification:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>All staff within centres are either appropriately qualified or are working towards the relevant qualification. Where members of the assessment team are working towards qualifications, appropriate arrangements have been put in place for countersigning. EQAs have reported that feedback from assessors to candidates overall is constructive and supportive. A small number of centres have used electronic feedback which has proved positive with learners. One centre has provided some feedback</p>

	<p>from their IQA to the assessor via a recorded method which was well received; as it allowed for more detail to be given and the content of the feedback was more specific and focussed. Centres gain feedback from learners through various means and generally centres act upon this in making any relevant changes to their programmes. Internal Verification in most centres has been identified as robust; where all assessed units and assessment methods are sampled across the timeframe of the qualification. However, some centres are still heavily reliant on conducting IQA sampling at the end of the programme. In the main, centres were good at tracking actions set for the assessors by the IQA and these were appropriately monitored and signed off when completed. Some centres included observing the microteach session and the feedback from the assessor as part of the IQA process. Other centres were encouraged to do this. Paperwork used to record IQA activities, feedback and the setting of actions has been identified as good in a number of centres. In a small number of centres suggestions have been made by the EQA on how improvements could be made to the centre's paperwork to ensure a more robust system is implemented and a clearer audit trail is provided. In the majority of centres, assessors are observed and candidates are interviewed as part of the IQA process. The majority of centres hold meetings with minutes as evidence to support this. Standardisation activities have been identified as good in the majority of centres. One centre was encouraged to consider undertaking standardisation more regularly and to include the use of APL/RPL as part of this. Some communication in centres is more informal but still supports the quality assurance process. Centres feed back findings from EQA visits by various means to the assessment team and actions and recommendations are addressed. No issues were raised with centres' policies or procedures (other than one centre being advised to review them). Actions set for centres have been against a "disagree" for IV0, IV3, IV4, IV5, IV6, IV7 and IV 9.</p>
<p><b>Management Systems and Records:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>A number of points covered within the assessment and verification section were also reinforced within the management review of centres' performance. EQAs confirmed that centres have relevant policies and procedures in place that are reviewed and supported by senior management. In some centres senior management are part of the assessment team. Centres have mechanisms in place to obtain feedback from learners which is used to inform changes to the courses. Some centres monitor learner retention and feedback as part of the evaluation process. One centre gets the learners to create the evaluation form as part of the</p>

	<p>course; which is then used to obtain feedback. Another centre uses an external agency to obtain learner feedback. The use of technology is used by some centres as part of the evaluation process; the use of blogs is an example. One centre conducts exit interviews at the end of their programme and provides advice to learners on possible routes for progression. Communication between OCR, the EQA and centres has been reported on as good with positive working relationships being established. Centres regularly call upon their EQAs for advice and guidance in-between visits. Overall centres have met all requirements for information as requested by the EQA; both prior to and during the visit and have kept OCR and the EQA informed of any relevant changes. No issues have been identified where assessors or IQAs have stated they have insufficient time to carry out their role effectively. One centre, however, had allocated insufficient time for the delivery of the programme, resulting in quality issues. Some centres have robust, sophisticated MIS systems which support the effective monitoring of learners in relation to equality. Some centres were required to tighten up on their registration process and the maintenance of their systems in recording learner registrations and certifications.</p>
<p><b>Assessment Summary:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>EQAs sampled across all the schemes for which centres had live registrations. Sampling took place across the range of assessment methods and for learners at various stages on programme. The meeting of the assessment team and other staff within the centre formed a part of the sampling as did the interviewing of candidates. Some observation of teaching and assessment took place by some EQAs within some centres.</p>

## 2. Sector Developments

Revised teaching qualifications are being phased in from September this year but OCR have opted not to offer the new qualifications. The 2011 version of the Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualifications will remain live for registration until 31 December 2015.