

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Business and Administration (NVQ)

- Level 1 Award Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04702**
- Level 1 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04703**
- Level 2 Award Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04704**
- Level 2 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04705**
- Level 2 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04706**
- Level 3 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04707**
- Level 3 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04708**
- Level 4 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04709**
- Level 4 Diploma Business Administration (NVQ) – **10362**

OCR Report to Centres 2017 – Legacy Qualifications

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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Business and Administration (NVQ) – 04702-10362 – Legacy Qualifications

1. Overview:

As these qualifications run out this year, very few candidates remain on these. However, where there are candidates, the EQAs report that these last remaining learners continue to be well supported by qualified and experienced assessors and IQA staff.

Once again, very few actions and no sanctions have been identified by EQAs as necessary in the reporting year which indicates that overall, the assessment teams are continuing to operate effectively with the legacy qualifications.

All Centres are reported as being fully compliant with all aspects of health and safety; ensuring candidates are safeguarded whilst in their respective workplaces.

In a number of Centres, the majority of the assessors and the IQAs continue to work across both the Business Administration and the Management qualifications to ensure consistency remains.

Centre staff CPD

CPD activity which covers both legacy and newer qualification teams is good and well documented in most Centres. Where an electronic portfolio system is used, EQAs report that comprehensive training has been given to the assessors and IQA teams as well as candidates.

EQAs reported that Centres arrange a variety of CPD activities including compulsory aspects as well as the choice of subject areas.

Most Centres present the Staff development records for review at EV visits and in some Centres this also highlights the cross-college updating and curriculum based updating.

In all cases of reporting, the centres have competent, qualified and experienced staff for all levels of the qualification. Staff development is available and staff complete detailed PDPs in order to identify areas for development or updating. Some EQAs specifically report separately on legacy variations for example:

All learners are in the work place, except for those working towards the 04705 and 04706 qualifications and assessors ensure that the necessary range of learning opportunities are available to meet the requirements of the particular scheme, The assessors also check that the work place complies with all regulatory and statutory obligations. Those learners working towards 04705 and 04706 work within an office environment within the department where they have to abide by normal business practices and behaviours and carry out administrative tasks for college staff and external organisations.

Candidate induction

For the majority of centres no new candidates have been inducted into the legacy qualification as the candidates are now well on their way to completion. Where there are limited new registrations the candidates have been inducted appropriately. Physical resources to support learners often include an induction pack.

EQAs report that many assessors have company iPads and mobile phones, as well as facilities for scanning and photographing evidence and the recording of electronic signatures.

Initial assessment

This process has continued to be thorough and many Centres continue to use skills scans and in some companies, the final selection of units is not concluded with their candidate/s until the second or third meeting, where both parties have a clear understanding of the candidate's job role and the employer has been involved in the unit selection decision.

IAG

EQAs report that Information, advice and guidance are provided to all learners prior to and during their period of study. Additionally, they received a detailed appeals procedure. Learner development needs are identified through discussions with the learner and their line manager to ensure that the scheme meets their requirements. In the majority of cases, detailed assessment plans are created and reviewed at each visit, which normally occurs approximately every four weeks.

Feedback from candidates

Feedback from candidates undertaking the legacy qualifications interviewed during EQA visits is reported as being extremely positive in terms of assessor and work place support. They recall being provided with a copy of the Appeals Procedure and understand the process and have had relevant support throughout their programme of study.

In reports, candidates confirmed that they can call upon support at any time by telephone or email. Access to assessment is encouraged through the use of a range of valid assessment methods and the specific requirements of the learner where these are identified. Unit certification is available

EQAs have reported that candidates in Centres are very well supported. In many Centres additional support is provided to those candidates who have been identified as needing this.

Due to time pressures during the visit – EQAs undertake this aspect increasingly now by telephone rather than face to face unless learners are actually in the centre undertaking a formal session for example.

Learners confirm they have received induction, information about the programme, qualification, assessment and appeals.

Standard of portfolios

The portfolios sampled at visits by the various EQAs, demonstrate that planning, reviews and feedback are as detailed as possible and candidates confirm that they are fully supported throughout. There is a wide variety of assessment methods used within the portfolios, with observation being primary evidence. Many teams now digitally record all aspects of the visit to the workplace, including witness testimony and observation. Reports confirm that all candidates on the legacy qualifications are in the specific role that they are undertaking the qualification in. EQAs often comment that centre teams are forward thinking, flexible and unrestricted in the forms of assessment they use; consideration is always given to the needs of the candidates.

IQA Records and standardisation activities

IQA records are reported as including sampling all methods of assessment as well as pre-determined included portfolio sampling and assessor observations. Many of these records are reported as containing sufficient detail and constructive feedback.

Standardisation Meetings are held in Centres – generally on a monthly basis - to ensure standardisation of assessment. EQAs report that standardisation practice would appear to be sound.

EQAs report that internal quality assurance procedures and processes clearly align with OCR requirements and are rigorously followed by the Centre internal quality assurers. Internal moderation plans are prepared ensuring that all assessors, portfolios and assessment methods are sampled with appropriate feedback being provided to the assessors. Many remaining Centres using the legacy quals conduct annual reviews of assessment and internal quality assurance processes and procedures to ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements of the awarding bodies. All outcomes from external verification are discussed within the team and any adjustments made as required.

E-portfolios

In a small number of cases candidates are using an e-portfolio for the legacy qualifications. EQAs have reported that many of the observation reports are written in detail, stating when and where this took place and many Centres use digital recording of these together with photographs to support their findings which are used across a number of units, confirming holistic observational assessment. A wide range of evidence is encouraged and the personal reports or case studies in some Centres are reported as being of a high quality.

Review dates are also included for each candidate and also a record of attendance. Comments and feedback are clearly written with any action points recorded. Most Centres require that each candidate is seen, face to face, by their assessor every 3 or at most, every 4 weeks. Additional support is offered via email by the assessor or further support via e-portfolio communication.

In those Centres where all candidates use an electronic portfolio, the major benefit is that all of their records are available prior to the visit and are simple to follow, therefore dispensing with the need to select candidates prior to the visit.

Policies and Procedures

EQAs continue to report that within their allocated Centres all policies and procedures are maintained within a central file which details the roles and responsibilities of the team. In many cases these policies and procedures are uploaded onto the e-portfolio system and are reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Organisation of visits

EQAs report that in all cases their visits are well organised and that all requested information and personnel were available during the day as well as access to e-portfolio systems.

Records

Information relating to the learner's achievements is maintained electronically using the same e-portfolio system as used by the candidates and all the information is accurately maintained.

Support from Senior Management

EQAs report that there is full support from Senior Management with some playing an active role as a member of the Assessment and IQA team and that they fully support the policies and procedures required for the successful assessment and internal quality assurance of OCR qualifications and experienced delivery teams are fully conversant with the content and their roles and responsibilities. The Centres generally have a range of policies on fair access and assessment and these are adhered to by the assessors. Reports confirm there is very effective communication between the Centre team and OCR and the Centre folders usually contains copies of all correspondence for reference purposes.

Communication

Good communication between the centre staff and also between OCR is consistently reported in EQA reports with no specific issues being reported.

EQAs are very supportive of centres and often discuss issues and concerns either at the visit or via email as required.

Training

There have been no queries on standards or on assessment by email or telephone this year from the EQA team on the legacy qualifications as reported herein nor have there have been any significant issues with Centres this year.

2. General Comments

Candidate profile

Many of the candidates for the legacy qualifications are reported as being in very responsible and important roles within their respective workplaces and many have high levels of authority for areas of finance or within HR departments for example. In some Centres, EQAs report that the candidates are employees of the organisation and the qualifications are offered as personal development on a voluntary basis. In others, the Centre's purpose is to provide training and qualifications for the employees of the organisation and it is therefore fully supported in its objectives.

Unit certification

Whilst Unit certification is available as required it is not often used by Centres, confirming the holistic assessment by assessment teams. The only instance of where this is still offered is in the Secure Estates, where candidates are generally only able to complete on a unit by unit basis whilst they await transfer to other establishments. Very few other instances of unit certification are reported.

Assessment methods

A wide range of assessment methods was reported as being evident in portfolios sampled - observation, work products, personal statements and written and oral questions and EQAs report some very good and consistent Centre practice with high standards of portfolio presentation.

EQAs report wide use of professional discussions undertaken with all levels of candidates and they continue to report pride in presentation with portfolios, particularly where this applies to hard copy folders. This has been the case for many years where administrators are clearly filing and presenting work competently.

EQAs for these schemes have worked hard over the years to ensure good quality witness testimony. Many Centres provide detailed information to witnesses which help in the production of quality testimony and ensure that these are on headed paper with necessary contact details which can be followed up by IQAs or EQAs accordingly. Some of these are particularly complimentary about how much of an asset the candidate is within the workplace.

The legacy qualification standards are coming to an end and as would be expected all Centres are very familiar with the requirements and the associated assessment strategies including those of the imported units from other schemes such as ITQ or Customer Service.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Offer of units

As few centres have registered active candidates with the legacy qualifications they continue to offer as wide a range of units as possible and where applicable offer the opportunity to choose specialist units.

Standard of work

In general, EQAs continue to find that assessment of the legacy qualifications is of a good standard and meets the requirements of the qualifications and regulations. No sanctions to my knowledge have been applied to centres offering the schemes.

Records

Records in Centres are generally good and there are no reports of any issues with Centre records in the last year.

Once again. It is still the case that some Centres do not always promptly notify OCR of staff changes but this did not affect performance at all during this year and there were no issues reported where DCS was compromised as a result.

Centre visits

EQAs report that Centres are well prepared for the visit and provide access to all information, portfolios, staff and learners that were requested. EQAs confirm their sample reflects as many optional units as possible as well as examination of the mandatory units.

4. Sector Update

In this last year of the legacy qualifications, all would agree that they have served the sector well in terms of a qualified work force in administrative skills.

Centres and candidates are growing in confidence with digital skills be more digitally competent but there is still more to be done. The legacy qualifications certainly did not answer this requirement nor do the current standards either. The increasing use of social media, blogs and on line meeting and webinar technology continues to challenge learners and assessment teams. Investing in the appropriate technology and staff training will ensure success in the future.

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