QCF NVQ Languages qualifications
September 2011

The qualifications and standards

Assessment Team:	Findings:
	Many centres are now experienced in assessing and verifying NVQ Language Units. The majority of Assessors and Verifiers are now qualified. Where unqualified assessors and verifiers are conducting assessments, these are normally countersigned by qualified members of the team or qualified assessors are employed specifically for these tasks.
	The provision and cost of A1/V1 training still can challenge some schools, particularly where language-focused training is concerned. The development of e-portfolios for AI/V1 assessment could provide a more feasible process, but the costs of such systems deter centres from using e-portfolio. It is of course possible for centres to buy in assessment and verification services. Increasingly, local consortia of centres are being developed where qualified assessors and IVs assess and verify on a 'quid pro quo' basis. These consortia also meet to undertake standardisation processes.
Resources:	Findings:
	All centres have the necessary variety of resources to support the introduction of new languages and undertake the assessments using a number of different methods. Increasingly, centres are moving from taped evidence to CD format. Some centres are planning to move to e-portfolio for evidence collection. The use of video is also beginning to be used more. Video can make assessments more realistically challenging. Assessment material for QCF NVQ Languages, with suggested assessment tasks is commercially available. Increasingly, centres are devising their own assessment tasks or adapting published tasks to add a "localised" focus and make them more relevant to candidates.

Candidate Support:	**Findings:** Candidate support is usually very sound. All centres offer a good induction process to introduce candidates to the NVQ structure. Input is appropriate and feedback to candidates is common after all assessments. Where timetabling does not allow for sufficient input and assessment, then tutor/assessors are willing to offer additional support during lunchtimes and after school/college time. All assessors accept that, on balance, sufficient time is made available.
Assessment and Verification:	**Findings:** Assessments have largely been conducted correctly and verified appropriately. There are still some centres which do not adequately space internal verification throughout the session. Admittedly, assessments cannot start until a reasonable amount of input has been completed, but internal verification should still be phased over the six months or so before final external verification. Assessment assignments have become more appropriate and are reviewed annually. Some new centres have required assistance in formulating assignments. External Verifiers (EVs) and the Chief Verifier (CV) have designed model assignments for dissemination to centres, which are currently used in OCR centre training events; there are plans to publish these on the OCR website. The conduct of the Speaking assessments sometimes shows some weaknesses of procedure; for example they are not always conducted by the assessor in a suitable environment. The CV has issued a revised set of guidelines for circulation to EVs and centres. This also is located in the OCR Centre Handbook and distributed at OCR training events.
Management Systems and Records:	**Findings:** Recording processes are improving as model approaches are disseminated. Centre management Teams are very supportive although in some centres, re-structuring and course funding have led to the closure of NVQ languages in spite of the fact that sound structures have been established and candidates find them attractive and relevant for their future careers. Some centres have been disappointed that a level 1 sanction has been applied, but soon come to realise that this an automatic result from any identified action point.

Assessment Summary:	As the number of new and experienced qualified assessors and Internal Verifiers increases, the quality of assessment and verification processes in centres continues to maintain the required quality. Where unqualified assessors are conducting assessments, these are countersigned by qualified assessors, normally by qualified assessors and IVs contracted into centres to conduct the process. The costs of training of assessors and IVs can still be a financial challenge to centres, but most understand the importance of such expenditure. Most centres are buying in the commercially produced NVQ resources as this assists them when initiating NVQ courses. However, more experienced centres are now devising their own assessment tasks or adapting tasks to give them a 'localised' flavour and, in consequence, making them more relevant to candidates. All centres have a good induction progress and a sound candidate support structure. There remain some centres where internal verification is not suitably spaced out during the year. EVs continue to advise on this. Centre Management teams continue to support NVQs, but some are re-directing language learners to GCSE in order to conform to the E-bacc requirements.

Sector Developments

With the Assessor and IV Training programmes organised by VLC, IBC, CILT:England and CILT:Cymru, the number of qualified Languages Assessors and IVs has increased dramatically during the last few years and in consequence the number of centres seeking approval has likewise increased.

The threat of the E-Bacc, which requires GCSE Language qualifications *only,* has not yet had a serious effect on numbers of candidates working towards QCF/NVQs.