

**September 2013**

## **REPORT FOR PUBLICATION**

### **1 The qualifications and standards**

- **Structure and content**

**Good practice has been demonstrated by the majority of centres in the following ways:**

- a) In-depth training/induction programmes being provided for candidates with a full range of materials;
- b) Well-designed handbooks to cover the induction process;
- c) Carefully designed assignments/workbooks for the mandatory units which have been required to demonstrate competence through a variety of methods, eg the design of leaflets/posters for use in specific parts of the school and powerpoint presentations;
- d) Course completion target dates together with assessment planning during the induction process;
- e) Early use of observation and individualised education plans;
- f) Professional discussions for candidates who find writing written statements difficult, or to plug gaps when candidates have almost completed. A mixture of handwritten and taped accounts;
- g) Mentor support for both the candidates and the assessors;
- h) Changes in the style of assessment, ie increased use of well-designed assignments;
- i) Support to trainee assessors by their qualified mentors who are responsible for their development while working towards their assessor qualification.

The main questions from centres were based around how much evidence is actually needed. Feedback to the centres was predominantly the same, ie evidence which is sufficient to meet the Learning Outcomes and the Assessment Criteria. Where the candidate is required to Explain/Describe, this is only required to be evidenced once (unless covered by an holistic observation or professional discussion) and where candidates are required to 'Demonstrate' then this has been covered by observation;

the number of times being dependent on the experience of the candidate and the situation at the time.

<p><b>Assessment Team:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b> Centres are generally well resourced both in terms of assessors and internal verifiers. Most are qualified, with a small number still working towards either the assessor or IQA qualification.</p>
<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b> Feedback from assessors to candidates is clearly recorded. All candidates are employed or volunteers in the schools in which they are assessed. Resources are freely available as required to ensure progression. There is increased evidence of candidates using a combination of text books and the Internet to research information and also for learning activities. This has been clearly referenced to demonstrate that plagiarism has not taken place.</p> <p>Candidates receive, on average, one to two hours per week training, either centre or school based (during the day or evening) over the course of the qualification. These training sessions are run either by occupationally competent tutors, qualified assessors or internal verifiers.</p> <p>Risk assessments and health and safety inspections are carried out regularly, especially with regards to electrical equipment and candidates are encouraged to conduct their own risk analysis of their workplace. An increased number of self assessments/reviews are being carried out and the feedback is extremely positive. Where centres are Local Authorities or Colleges, the policies and procedures relating to Health and Safety are those which cover the whole establishment and not just particular training departments.</p>
<p><b>Candidate Support:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b> The majority of candidate inductions are detailed programmes which last for at least one to two days. Candidates are provided with extensive handbooks, usually during induction, which detail the course structure, assessment procedures, appeals procedure etc. They are also shown how to access information using the Internet and how to reference this. Completion targets are agreed during induction and assessment planning is rigorous. The use of expert witness statements has proved advantageous, especially to those candidates who work in Special Schools. Unit certification has been available to all candidates, and a number of centres certificate candidates as they complete units as a method of motivation.</p> <p>Candidates interviewed appear to be fully aware of their rights both in terms of understanding the programme and</p>

	<p>also their right to appeal against decisions they do not agree with. The majority of candidates have stated that their confidence has been raised and their level of responsibility within the school has been increased. Initial assessments are used either at the induction stage or very soon after to determine the most appropriate optional units to take. A small number of candidates have expressed a desire to continue with their studies in the form of a Foundation Degree.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and Verification:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>Assessment and IQA is generally working well with the majority of centres having well developed assessment and internal quality assurance policies and procedures in place for both formative and summative IQA activities. There is an increasing use of colour for IQA sampling plans to aid the tracking of candidates from start to finish. Reviews are carried out either termly or twice a year to look at the overall assessment and verification practice. However, some portfolios contain too much in terms of writing to each individual Assessment Criterion with little relationship to their role in school.</p> <p>The majority of IQAs plan their assessment strategy once the candidates have been registered; some before they have chosen the optional units, others as soon as.</p> <p>There is wide coverage of assessment methods and assessment locations although more attention could be paid to the timing of observations with regards to the optional units, especially in the Level 3 Specialist Diploma. The monitoring of trainee assessors and IQAs works well with designated counter-signatories being put in place from the outset. The agreed timescales for achievement of the assessor and IQA qualifications are realistic and give the candidate sufficient time to gather the required evidence. Interviews with the trainees confirm that they are receiving sufficient support. Observation of assessors and interviews with candidates continues to be a regular activity with some centres observing their assessors twice per year (assessing a candidate by a variety of methods, eg observation and product evidence). Standardisation meetings are being used not only to standardise individual units, but also to standardise the completion of assessor documentation. Continuing professional development can be tracked, with assessors and verifiers keeping records of courses attended and training undertaken.</p>
<p><b>Management Systems and Records:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>In general, the assessment and IQA teams are very clear on the centres' aims and policies. An increasing number of centres are introducing a Lead IQA to co-ordinate the whole assessment/verification process and this is working well. Head Teachers continue to be supportive to their</p>

	<p>candidates in terms of time allowances to gather the evidence. Centre personnel roles are documented and clearly defined in the Centres' policies which, in the main, are adhered to along with the assessment guidelines.</p> <p>Emphasis continues to be placed on basic skills, with many candidates being given the opportunity to update their literacy and numeracy skills. Interviews with IQAs suggest that they are aware of their role, particularly in their monitoring of assessor practice. Reports suggest that all team members are given access to external verification reports and are also given the opportunity to discuss the findings of the visit at the next team meeting.</p> <p>Documentation forwarded to external verifiers prior to their visits contain sufficient information to allow the EVs to devise a sampling strategy and agree this with the centre in advance and, once in the centre, EVs are able to follow an audit trail.</p>
<p><b>Assessment Summary:</b></p>	<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>From monitoring the reports, it appears that assessment within centres is thorough and varied. Observation is used as primary evidence, especially for the optional units. Candidates are visited on a regular basis by their assessors. Assessment reports are clear with SMART targets and clear feedback. A large number of centres have devised workbooks for the mandatory units which guide candidates through the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. The use of Professional Discussion works well, either to clarify an aspect of the candidates' role or to 'plug gaps' in the evidence presented.</p>