



GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETION OF CHIEF VERIFIER'S ANNUAL REPORT



Chief Verifier Report

Policing

2012 - 2013

England and Wales

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REPORT FOR PUBLICATION

This report has been designed around the structure of the new External Verifier Report Form. Please identify under each section a summary of the key issues which have arisen during the year within each of these categories.

1. The qualifications and standards

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| Assessment Team: | Findings: Centres continue to find themselves with reductions in assessment teams due to the budget restrictions in place. Many have had to review how they use and deploy assessors and, for many, a dedicated assessor is a luxury and a rarity. Many assessors are now carrying out operational police duties and the assessment role is a task, over and above, those policing duties. This has had an effect upon the assessment process with observations being used but less frequently than previously. Many Centres are reliant upon witness testimony from peers and supervisors and also candidate making statements. Despite these issues external verifiers heard from candidates interviewed that the support provided for them is regular and effective: <i>'My assessor has been great, always on the end of the phone if I need them' (Candidate comment)</i> |
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| | <p>and</p> <p><i>'He has provided me with good support throughout this time'. (Candidate comment)</i></p> <p>Centres are using appropriate assessment methods to assess candidate evidence. Use is made of work products which are mostly left in the workplace rather than being copied and placed in a portfolio. There have been examples of portfolios where there has been no work product evidence whatsoever and all of it has been appropriately sign posted. This is a noteworthy approach to assessment.</p> <p>Many centres have taken the decision to train assessors and internal verifiers rather than accredit them with a relevant qualification as is permitted by the assessment strategy. It is fair to say that there is a range of training taking place for assessors albeit covering the College of Policing guidelines.</p> <p>Interviews with candidates and reviewing processes at Centres have shown that candidates are being inducted into the requirements of the qualification. There is a range of approaches to this, the two main ones being, during the taught phase of their training programme or when they meet their assessor for the first time. Comments have been made by candidates that sometimes the induction during the training phase is too early and that what candidates have been told gets lost in amongst all the other information they have to assimilate during that phase of training. This has been addressed by Centres who ensure that the induction is revisited by assessors at the start of the assessment process or an induction input later in the training phase. At induction candidates are being advised about relevant policies and procedures including the Centre Appeals Policy. Interviews with candidates have shown that they are aware of the appeals process and how to access it if necessary. EVs have not reported any appeals during the year.</p> |
| <p>Resources:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <p>Many Centres are making effective use of e-assessment tools. Some are using commercial products whilst others have developed their own on line storage facility for the assessment process and storage of evidence and assessment and verification activity.</p> <p>Use of such systems has enabled the assessment processes to become streamlined and less time consuming for all involved. Centres have taken the opportunity to use the systems for documents that contain all the assessment activities in a rolling document. This</p> |

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| | <p>includes, assessment planning, review, decision making and feedback and IV activity. There is a real advantage in this approach in that the evidence for the whole assessment process is contiguous and in one place. Candidate evidence is also signposted within these documents, often with hyperlinks to the evidence within organisational systems. EVs are provided with remote access to systems at some Centres to facilitate their sampling if they so wish.</p> <p>There are still a few Centres using paper based portfolios and assessors and IVs are provided with appropriate documentation to enable them to carry out their roles. The use of technology is still evident with many Centres digitally recording all parts of the assessment not just professional discussions.</p> |
| <p>Candidate Support:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <p>Candidates interviewed by external verifiers during visits indicate they are generally satisfied with the assessment process and support they receive from both assessors and internal verifiers. Candidates seem to recognise that assessors have other demands on their time and skills due to redeployment and comments that despite this they are still receiving adequate support and guidance.</p> <p>Assessment planning continues to be a regular activity with some candidates indicating that they and their assessors meet regularly sometimes at 5 / 6 weekly intervals. External Verifiers have seen support for candidates by internal verifiers including interviewing them about their assessment experience.</p> |
| <p>Assessment and Verification:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <p>EVs have reported that assessment models differ between Centres. There are still a few Centres who maintain dedicated assessors whilst others use assessors who are in the workplace and assessment is an additional role they perform. Assessors interviewed indicate that time to carry out the assessment process is sometimes limited due to the operational demands they face and staffing levels. That said; there is evidently a commitment from assessors to try and support and assess candidates as much as possible within the constraints of their roles.</p> <p>Some Centres have numerous assessors whilst others manage the process with few. The ones with large numbers of assessors do not always make regular use of them and there is a danger of them becoming deskilled in terms of their assessment practice and also knowledge and understanding of the qualification requirements.</p> |

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| | <p>Assessors are generally using appropriate assessment methods. EVs have reported seeing effective use being made of observations by assessors and also witness testimony from colleagues. There is evidence of noteworthy practice when assessors contact witnesses to confirm the evidence they have presented and look to obtaining evidence from them that is holistic in nature, i.e. across a number of units. Assessors in the main are signposting work generated evidence and storing it where it naturally lives. Where work products are retained in portfolios there are occasionally issues with the work not being sanitised and given the nature of the work, this should happen in all cases. Professional discussions are digitally recorded in many Centres and candidate statements are used as evidence infrequently.</p> <p>EVs have found that internal quality assurance in the majority of Centres is robust and effective. Centres tend to have IQA staff that are qualified rather than trained to the required standard. IQAs are maintaining sampling plans and carrying out sampling of assessment process and candidate work both on an interim and summative basis. Sample sizes are appropriate and relative to the size of the Centre in terms of candidate numbers. There have been some issues identified in relation to assessors being observed working with candidates although this is tends to be in some of the larger Centres where assessors are spread over a wide area and on shifts and access can be problematic. This could also affect standardisation however some Centres are using e standardisation as an effect approach. The feedback from sampling is usually to assessors and not candidates and relates to the assessment process that has taken place.</p> |
| <p>Management Systems and Records:</p> | <p>Findings: Centres are maintaining effective management systems and records. These are often located within the HR department and are part of employee records whist the Centre Coordinator ensures that progress and achievements are tracked. The software used by some centres allows for percentage achievements for each candidate. This gives a clear indication to both candidate and assessor on their progress and where the gaps in evidence are appearing. It permits targeted assessment planning.</p> <p>EVs have not indicated any deficiencies in the relevant policies in place to support the assessment process. Centres have policies in place including access to assessment and appeals procedures. There have been no reported appeals against assessor decisions or practice that have been reported to the External Verifier teams. External Verifiers have not been required to become involved in any appeals during the last year.</p> |

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| <p>Assessment Summary:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <p>There have been no major issues with the assessment and IQA processes at Centres during the last year. This is reflected in the fact that the majority of Centres have DCS status and where there have been issues they have been addressed with a level 1 sanction and an action plan. Centres have quickly addressed issues identified by EVs.</p> <p>Despite the additional strain placed on assessors due to their increased workloads with operational policing, at most Centres there is a commitment by them to assess candidates regularly and effectively to ensure they achieve the qualification. IQA staff are carrying out their role effectively, ensuring the assessment process is effective and supporting both assessors and candidates as required.</p> <p>The knowledge certificate is now being taught, assessed and accredited and this will form the basis for police recruitment on the near future. This is a moderated qualification and early indications are that those Centres that are delivering it are doing so in line with OCR requirements.</p> <p>There have not been any major concerns raised about the qualifications with feedback that the Diploma meets the needs of new Constables and the PCSO Certificate relevant to their roles. Centres are appropriately using APL for PCSOs who have achieved the certificate and then become police officers.</p> |
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2. Sector Developments

As Chief Verifier you are the technical expert for your sector and we rely on you to pass that expertise on to OCR. Describe any developments that you are aware of within your sector, which may impact on current and future qualifications and related activities.

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| <p>Police forces are starting to recruit police officers following a lengthy period of inactivity. This has coincided with changes in the way centres deploy their assessors and as such may have an impact on the ratio of assessors to candidates. Centres will need to ensure that candidates are supported and regularly assessed in the light of this.</p> <p>There are suggestions that the Knowledge of Policing Certificate will be the basis upon which Police forces will recruit new officers as it is for the London Metropolitan Police Force. It is expected that applicants will be required to have achieved this qualification prior to commencing the recruitment process and so will be a vital qualification for those wishing to have a Police Career.</p> |
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The Police promotion process is changing from a stage 1 examination and stage 2 assessment centres to work based assessment. Currently the pilot forces have to accredit the units that Sergeants and Inspectors are assessed against and it is likely that this model will be the preferred option. It is envisaged that this will be a staged roll out allowing Centres who are not involved in assessment currently to put infrastructure in place to support this process.

It is also clear that more forces are working in collaboration and merging their assessment Centres. This will provide challenges for OCR to meet the needs of a merged assessment Centre with a larger number of candidates and assessment personnel and for Centres to manage those resources. Forces will be looking to achieve economies of scale by merging.