

1. The qualifications and standards

<p>Assessment Team:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>In the main centres are maintaining sufficient qualified and occupationally competent staff for the qualifications. In the odd centre where this has not been the case and External Verifiers have dealt appropriately with the situation setting actions and recommending appropriate sanctions. In the financial climate centres are closing or merging and so assessment teams have been a lot more fluid in the last year. The evidence is that most centres involved have managed these situations well and maintained the quality of delivery.</p> <p>A couple of centres required reminders regarding the requirement to see the original certificates for the assessors or signed copies. CPD is checked by External Verifiers and there are some examples of good practice which has been highlighted by External Verifiers. In house development is a strong feature in many centres. External Verifiers have been particularly good at identifying areas for development such as in the use and recording of assessment methods and suggesting how these can be addressed in standardisation and development activity.</p> <p>Generally the qualifications are being well delivered in centres.</p>
<p>Resources:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>Centres are providing a safe environment in which the candidate can be assessed and are checking policies and procedures in relation to access to assessment, appeals policies and Health and Safety compliance. External Verifiers have commented in reports about the increased provision of technical equipment such as digital recorders as a mean of retaining discussion evidence and about the provision of documentation for both assessor and candidate to record evidence on.</p> <p>An increasing number of Centres are using on-line portfolios and e-assessment software for paperless portfolios.</p>

	<p>Where these are in place they work well and allow candidates to place evidence, and assessors to make assessment decisions, outside of the normal working day if necessary and remotely from the workplace. This ensures flexibility in the assessment process with candidates and assessors still using face to face meetings for assessment planning, review and assessment activity. External Verifiers report that generally they are well used but also that care needs to be taken that the quality of assessment recording, IQA activity and use of assessment methods is maintained.</p> <p>External Verifiers have generally reported that centres have adequate resources available. Assessment is in the workplaces of the learners as simulation is not permitted for these qualifications so the main resource is a human one.</p>
<p>Candidate Support:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>Candidates appear to be content with the support they receive from both their assessors and verifiers.</p> <p>External Verifiers report that interviews with learners confirm the other evidence of support provided such as inductions, learner handbooks and access to assessment. Learners frequently comment on the support provided and how they feel able to contact their assessors between formal activities if they have any questions. They also confirm that they are guided through the process and understand how the qualification works.</p> <p>Selecting the right units for the learner from their work is crucial and External Verifiers generally report that this is conducted well and it is an area they monitor to ensure centres do not automatically choose the units for the learners.</p> <p>Candidates that have been interviewed by External Verifiers have commented on the support provided through the induction process:</p> <p><i>‘They benefit from a thorough induction which provides detail about the qualification and the assessment process.’</i></p> <p>Candidates also indicated they were well supported by their assessor throughout the assessment process.</p> <p><i>‘Learners interviewed stated they received excellent support from the centre and their assessors’</i></p> <p>Where necessary candidates with particular assessment requirements are having these identified at an early stage and steps taken to put appropriate interventions in place. One External Verifier commented:</p>

	<p><i>'a learner's considerable needs were outlined today with very satisfactory provision to assist with assessment confirmed'</i></p>
<p>Assessment and Verification:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>Assessment planning has been found to be regular and effective at the majority of Centres:</p> <p><i>'It is clear from sampling portfolios that detailed assessment plans are prepared with candidates and reviews carried out every 2/3 weeks.'</i></p> <p><i>'Very detailed assessment planning noted in portfolio's which confirmed the involvement of the learner in the planning processes.'</i></p> <p>External Verifiers have seen assessors using a range of assessment methods, in the main including, observations of candidates in the workplace, examination of product evidence, witness testimony and professional discussion. Generally for centres that require guidance, External Verifiers would recommend that more detail could be recorded and in particular what activity the learner needs to undertake. The assessment methods were appropriate for both the candidate and also the particular unit under assessment. Candidates are providing evidence from a variety of sources:</p> <p><i>'Wide range of evidence used including some very detailed and clearly documented observations.'</i></p> <p><i>'A varied and valid range of appropriate means and methods of assessment are evident'</i></p> <p><i>'There was a range of evidence being used including holistic observations and recorded professional discussions.'</i></p> <p>There have been a minority of issues identified with some assessment practice which has required advice and guidance from External Verifiers and on occasions the application of sanctions. It has been seen that candidates have been registered for the QCF qualifications and then assessed against the older NVQ standards, necessitating a sanction being applied. Another group of candidates were assessed using only written questions and answers. No other methods were used to assess performance competence in the workplace. Advice with regards to appropriate assessment methods had to be provided, again with a relevant sanction.</p> <p>External Verifiers have found that internal quality assurance in the majority of Centres is effective and robust. Sampling is taking place on both a formative and a summative basis with feedback given to assessors and any actions are followed up and signed off by the IQA.</p>

	<p>Centres have sampling plans in place identifying which units, assessors and assessment methods it is intended to sample over a period of time. IQA reports are produced following sampling activities. Centres are also monitoring the work of assessors through observing them working with candidates and also interviewing candidates to establish what their experience of the assessment process was. EVs have also seen records of standardisation meetings that have taken place.</p> <p><i>‘The IV sampling records are detailed with helpful comments and checks made to ensure any actions are carried out.’</i></p> <p><i>‘The sampling plan includes interim and summative sampling of portfolios plus a schedule for observing assessors.’</i></p> <p><i>‘IQA/IV systems are well documented and systematically applied.’</i></p> <p><i>‘There is evidence to show that assessors are regularly observed by IQA staff.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Standardisation meetings are planned on a regular basis where the team discuss assessment practice.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Every portfolio is seen and IV reports are very detailed and provide excellent feedback to the assessment team.’</i></p> <p>There have been a minority of incidences where External Verifiers have had to comment on the IQA practice. Instances such as a Centre not having an IQA in place, a lack of IQA activity despite an IQA being in place and a Centre where the IQA had not signed any of the sampling reports all resulted in action from OCR.</p>
<p>Management Systems and Records:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>Centres generally have effective recording systems. They keep records of registrations, achievements, candidates and assessors and when candidates complete their qualification.</p> <p>IV records, with a few exceptions, have been maintained and kept up to date, similarly there have been no issues identified with assessor records.</p>
<p>Assessment Summary:</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>This has been a year that has seen an increase in the registration for, and assessment of, the QCF qualifications.</p> <p>Guidance from the EQA team has continued and Centres appear to have responded positively to the advice given and</p>

	<p>sanctions applied.</p> <p>The majority of centres have delivered the qualification in line with the guidelines and requirements and have met the evidence requirements and required assessment and verification practice. There have been a very small number of Centres where sanctions have had to be applied.</p>
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2. Sector Developments

It is clear that Centres are continuing to find funding to provide access to these qualifications for candidates who find them difficult to access. The various apprenticeships available in management and team leading are attracting the funding and as such Centres are increasingly choosing to deliver whole packages and obtain appropriate funding.

There has been an increase in apprenticeships in all sectors, including management. As such an increase in the 'technical certificates' at Level 3 Management and Level 2 Team Leading can be anticipated. OCR will also be launching in April 2013 a technical certificate in Level 5 Management for the higher apprenticeship which centres may be interested in.