



## **Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)**

### **Career Information and Advice**

Level 4 Diploma Career Information and Advice **04512**

Level 6 Diploma Career Guidance and Development **10215**

### **OCR Report to Centres – September 2017**

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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### **OCR REPORT TO CENTRES**

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## **Level 4 Diploma Career Information and Advice 04512**

## **Level 6 Diploma Career in Guidance and Development 10215**

### **1. Overview:**

During 2016-17 forty six centres were active across England and Wales and offered a combination of the Level 4 and 6 Diplomas. The work completed within the centres continues to be of a good standard and IQAs and assessors are maintaining high levels of CPD.

The careers guidance sector is still awaiting the government 'Strategy' regarding the future direction of the profession and service provision. Both the Level 4 and 6 Diplomas are being extended until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 and learner numbers have remained consistent over the last year.

### **2. General Comments**

During 2016-17 there have been no specific issues raised with the application and interpretation of the Level 4 Diploma.

There have been two issues for the Level 6 Diploma that had to be addressed in a minority of centres.

The first is on-going in ensuring that new team members meet the requirements for IQA and assessment of Unit 3 as outlined on page 11 of the Centre Handbook. It is being monitored by EQAs, as some centres have changed staff in the last year and the pool of experienced career related staff in the sector that can assess has decreased.

The second issue is related to assessment planning and reviews. It has been noted that reviews can lack sufficient, recorded detail and are not telling the learners 'journey' through the qualification. Again this is being communicated to teams within the centres and emphasis placed on ensuring the format used is SMART.

Generally the IQA practice is to a good standard, with sufficient levels of sampling and standardisation taking place. The assessment practice has good depth and range of process. The support of learners remains strong, especially around the application of the command verbs.

Some centres have sought guidance on the following topics:

- 1 The use of 'walk and talk' to record observations and ways to signpost the process.
- 2 The number and range of examples to be used for knowledge based units.
- 3 Updates on the future of the Level 4 and 6 Diplomas with OCR.
- 4 The type of topics or project to be used for Unit 20: Undertake research on behalf of the service.

These queries were responded to by the Chief Verifier and appointed EQAs within the centres.

During 2016-17, a small number of centres received sanctions and action points for the Level 6 Diploma. Where sanctions were applied they related to the following issues:

- 1 The need for more detail within review plans.
- 2 The need to record CPD activity fully and demonstrate evaluation of activities undertaken.
- 3 The use of an IQA and assessor not meeting the specific requirements for Unit 3 and with insufficient experience of working in the sector or qualifications for the role.
- 4 Insufficient levels of standardisation activity across the year.
- 5 Insufficient support by management of new assessors and IQAs to a centre.
- 6 The evidence produced for a range of units not meeting the required standard.

### **3. Comments on Individual Units**

Generally there are no specific issues relating to units within either diploma. The above sanctions were more to do with centre management, IQA/assessor practice and application of processes in a small number of centres. On the whole, centres have relevant experience of running both diplomas and applied guidance effectively during the years that both schemes have been running.

### **4. Sector Update**

As stated briefly within the Overview section, the sector is awaiting the government 'Strategy' which has been promised for eighteen months. There is clear evidence, through practice and research, of the importance of effective careers guidance, particularly as we move towards a post-Brexit era. Relevant bodies, e.g. the Career Development Institute (CDI), have recently sent a letter to the relevant government department requesting the publication of the 'Strategy'. There appears to be a strong consensus that the Level 6 Diploma should be the minimum requirement for careers practitioners. If this is agreed, then it could lead to increased levels of work across all centres.

The CDI is also looking at developing a Higher Apprenticeship for career professionals and has received authorisation to progress with this. Therefore the sector continues to have a level of uncertainty but there is a lot of background work being undertaken to raise its profile and maintain the professional integrity of all processes and those that work within it. OCR remains the market leader for both Diplomas and it is encouraging to see a number of new centres being approved in the last few months. The demand for the Career Leadership Units is increasing nationally and the general feedback on the quality and usefulness of the qualifications for the sector remains at a high level.

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