



Chief Verifier Report

QCF Level 3 Award in Supporting clients to overcome barriers to learning and work

QCF Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice

QCF Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development

2011/2012

England and Wales

September 2012

REPORT FOR PUBLICATION

1. The qualifications and standards

- **Structure and content**

Assessment Team:	Findings: All Assessors are fully qualified and occupationally competent. Most of the Internal Verifiers are fully qualified and occupationally competent with the exception of a small number who are working towards their qualification. External Verifiers have met a range of candidates during their visits, all of whom have been very positive about the support and feedback received from their assessor.
Resources:	Findings: All centres continue to have sufficient Assessors and Internal Verifiers for the number of candidates. The CPD undertaken by Assessors and Internal Verifiers has been recorded and is relevant for the qualifications concerned. Some Assessors have used the mapping documents, animated presentation and the document on Career Guidance Theories produced by OCR which are available on the OCR website.

	A number of Assessors and Internal Verifiers attended the Get started – getting to grips with delivery and assessment events were held during Autumn 2011 in London and Sheffield. The majority of Centres offering the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development have developed their own resources to support the delivery of the unit on Career Guidance Theories and some have bought in support or have enabled candidates to attend training provided by organisations such as the Institute of Career Guidance. A few Centres have developed on-line training resources including the use of Moodle. All centres have developed more teaching/training resources for all units and a number of staff have attended ICG events and made use of websites such as the National Guidance Research Forum. All centres have provided details of how their equipment and accommodation comply with relevant legislation.
Candidate Support:	Findings: Conversations with candidates and examination of centre records have confirmed that all centres are providing information, advice and guidance about the qualifications to candidates, including information on the appeals procedure. All candidates interviewed by the External Verifiers have received clear and positive feedback from their assessors and good use has been made of assessment planning. A wide range of assessment methods are being used by all centres which are appropriate to the needs of the candidates. All centres are checking to ensure that candidates are undertaking the correct level of qualification.
Assessment and Verification:	Findings: All centres are now providing both formative and summative assessment and internal verification and where necessary have set up new systems to record this more clearly and to keep the records up to date. Overall the level of assessment has been good with assessors paying attention to the verbs in the assessment criteria and employing a range of assessment methods as well as making good use of workplace evidence. Standardisation meetings are now being held in all centres. These include feedback on External Verifier Reports and any actions to be taken.

	More use is being made of e-portfolios and audio recordings across the Centres. Some centres are up-skilling staff to the new Standards for Assessment and Internal Verification. There are good examples of detailed assessment planning and good use is also being made of workplace evidence. A few centres have required guidance about the types of evidence which are acceptable, especially concerning use of assignment and case studies for the career guidance theories units and suitable evidence for the units on Labour Market Information/Intelligence. A few centres have been reminded of the need for relevant signatures on candidate documentation and more accurate recording on the Evidence Record Sheets. All centres are now more aware of the distinction between the levels of the verbs used in the QCF qualifications and are paying more attention to words such as <i>Critically evaluate</i> etc. Initial queries about occupational competence have been resolved by a statement in the Centre Handbooks which clarifies the position. Where sanctions have been applied they related to issues such as not counter-signing unqualified assessor records, slow transference of records to a central recording system, not keeping IQA records up to date.
Management Systems and Records:	Findings: Most of the reports showed good management support, systems and records including proof of access to fair assessment and the monitoring of achievements in relation to diversity and equality. External Verifiers have met the Assessors and Internal Verifiers for the qualifications and have discussed their roles and responsibilities and communication methods used both within the team and with OCR. A small number of centres have been slow to update their records or to keep IQA records up to date and sanctions have been applied as a result of this. There have been no problems reported in the use of Interchange. Any queries about the qualification have either been answered by the External Verifier during the visit or have been referred to the Chief Verifier who has then responded to the External Verifier.

	Centres have systems in place to solicit feedback from candidates and employers about the quality and effectiveness of the qualification provision.
Assessment Summary:	Findings: Centres continue to offer thorough assessment and internal verification of these qualifications and in many cases have been praised by their candidates on the quality of the candidate support on offer. The portfolios requested by the External Verifiers were all made available at all visits and have included candidates who are new to the qualification, mid qualification and who have completed. All portfolios sampled covered a range of assessment methods.

2. Sector Developments

The National Careers Service in England was launched in April 2012 and provides face-to-face services for adults, but not for young people. Instead, its service for young people is confined to telephone and web-based services. Furthermore, there has been a reduction in funding for those who used to provide career guidance to pupils in schools through Connexions. Responsibility for providing the face-to-face services for young people has been transferred to schools. Schools are now responsible for providing face to face career information, advice, guidance and development to pupils and some have chosen to use their own staff to do this and some are using former Connexions staff on a freelance basis.

The Government has recommended that practitioners providing career guidance and development should be qualified to at least Level 6. As a result of this, the work carried out by the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) from November 2011 to April 2012 in developing a Register for Career Development Professionals has set the entry level for the Register at Level 6. The Register was launched on 1st May 2012. Those people who already hold a NVQ 4 in Advice and Guidance or Learning Development Support Services (undertaken in a career guidance context) will be allowed conditional entry to the Register provided that they attain the Level 6 units in Career Guidance Theories, Reflective Practice and Labour Market Information (or the equivalent HE Modules) within two years of registering. This has already resulted in a number of candidates registering with centres for these three units.

The Career Progression Framework and website which accompany the Register allows staff to record their Continuous Professional Development which is a requirement of their registration. Completion of units from the CIAGD qualifications is one of the sources of CPD suggested on the site and may lead to further take up of the qualifications. Case Studies on the site also show how people can progress from one level of the qualifications to another and also from other qualifications such as the new ones in Employment Related Services.

The Careers Profession Alliance is made up the Institute of Careers Guidance; Association for Careers Education and Guidance; National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults and the Association of Career Professionals International. In January 2013 it will be renamed as the Career Development Institute. The remit of the organisation is to bring together the professional bodies engaged in career development in the UK to create a careers profession comparable to other Chartered professions, both in public standing and in the rigour of its supervision of members. The vision for the CPA is to achieve: A profession that inspires confidence in the public, dedicated to delivering high quality career development activities and services that help individuals achieve their full potential and support economic productivity while ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

The definition of the career development sector is now much broader than in the past. The *Blueprint for Register of Career Development Professionals and Career Progression Framework* published in April 2012 provides the following definition,

Career development professionals provide activities and services which assist individuals or organisations seeking support to affect a wide range of career transitions. These may be associated with life and career stages, including the development of the career ideas of young people. Contexts include educational choices, work experience and internships, labour market entry, skills and vocational training, job search, sector/management level change, promotion or transfer, redundancy, entrepreneurial business development, working identity change, disability and stress related career development issues, adjustments to life-work balance, returners to the labour market, portfolio working and pre-retirement choices.

Such activities and services may be delivered in schools, universities, colleges, training organisations, public employment services, the workplace, community or voluntary sector and the private sector. They may be provided on an individual or group basis and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help-lines and web-based services). They include the provision of information, ideas, tools and resources (verbal, printed, web-based or other forms), administration of assessment and self-assessment tools, career guidance interviews, career education programmes, career coaching, taster programmes, work search programmes, outplacement, redundancy and transition services, retention and talent management reviews, career progression or promotion, training, or other forms of career development-related consultancy, research and professional development.

In conclusion, the above changes and developments in the sector can be seen as an opportunity to further develop the qualifications in order for them to appeal to a wider range of people working in the career development sector. OCR, via its links with the Institute of Career Guidance/Careers Profession Alliance is well positioned to keep abreast of these developments and to further support product development accordingly.