



Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Career Information and Advice

Level 3 Award Supporting Clients to Overcome Barriers to Learning and Work **10214**

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

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

OCR Report to Centres 2014-2015

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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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1. Overview

During 2014-15 fifty three centres across England and Wales offered the careers guidance qualifications and had large numbers of active learners. As with previous years, the main focus has been with the Level 6 Diploma.

The centres have been supported by eight EV's, with an additional EV being added to the team for the year 2015-16.

The work completed within the centre teams continues to be of a good standard and meets the requirements and standards set by the awarding body. Learners are being effectively supported, and skills and theory training is being provided by most centres.

The careers guidance sector, as outlined below, is going through further change and uncertainty. At the same time, demand for the Level 4 and 6 Diplomas remains strong, as learners strive to achieve professional status, as set by the CDI (Career Development Institute).

2. General Comments

No specific issues have been raised for either the diplomas at Levels 3, 4 or 6.

At level 6 most centres have adapted effectively to helping learners produce sufficient evidence and to analyse and evaluate to the required depth.

Centres are continuing to maintain high levels of IQA sampling throughout the various stages of the qualification. The levels of IQA sampling range from 100% to 30% dependent on the competence and experience within the teams. IQA processes are clearly recorded, with good examples of detailed developmental support, where required.

The assessment practice has depth, and justified and valid decisions are being made. Most teams are familiar with the qualifications and processes completed with learners, though there does seem to be less concern with the correct application of verbs at Level 6. In addition, the use of observation or witness testimony is being correctly applied across units in all qualifications. Centres, as highlighted in other sections, are completing sufficient standardisation and reviewing assignments, materials and workbooks on an annual basis.

Some centres have sought guidance about:

- 1) The use of verbal as opposed to typed witness testimony in order to reduce pressure of the time required for completion. A signposting record would support the process and provide a clear audit trail.
- 2) Entry requirements to the CDI Register of Career Development Professionals in the light of revised entry dates to the register.
- 3) Assessment approaches for the Career Leadership units on the Level 6 Diploma. (Units 21-23)
- 4) The benefits and types of e-portfolio systems.
- 5) The future direction of the required standards and the continuation of the current standards.

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- 6) The use of RPL for the Advice and Guidance Level 4 Diploma to cover units within both the Level 4 and 6 Diplomas.
- 7) The use of Unit 1 as an initial assessment tool at both Level 4 and 6 to determine learner capability and support needs.

These queries have been responded to by the Chief Verifier and appointed EV's within the centres.

During 2014-15 fewer than 5% of centres received sanctions or action points. Sanctions applied were at Level 1 and 2. (DCS removal)

Where sanctions were applied, they related to the following:

- 1) Plagiarism and copying of other learners' work.
- 2) Insufficient assessment planning and reviews with learners.
- 3) Insufficient IQA of completed portfolios across a cohort.
- 4) Requested IQA personnel not being present at an EV visit.
- 5) Insufficient support of a new assessor and administrative errors within some portfolios.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Generally across all three qualifications there have been no major issues over the last year. Centres are familiar with the levels and initial issues, e.g. they are comfortable with the use of verbs and the depth of work at Levels 4 and 6.. Most centres have provided additional training on skills and theory across a range of units, which has assisted with learner research and coverage of evidence. The centres are using review workbooks and the full range of assessment methods on an annual basis.

During this year two themes have emerged:

The first relates to reflective practice being used holistically to cover a range of units and ensuring currency of product evidence. This covers Unit 2 for both Levels 4 and 6.

For both units a reflective log and use of products, e.g. appraisal, are a major source of evidence. However, at times the appraisal paperwork lacks currency, depth and is not related sufficiently to the qualification being undertaken. Therefore reference to learner development lacks detail or relevant examples.

In addition, other opportunities for reflection through naturally occurring evidence are not being fully utilised, e.g., the learner reflecting after interview or group observations. This could provide valuable evidence for the Group-work unit at both levels as well as the Career Theory unit at Level 6.

At Level 4 it covers Unit 2 LO 3 AC 3.3.2 and LO 4 AC 4.4.2-4 and Unit 6 LO 5 AC 5.5.2

At Level 6 it covers Unit 2 LO 4 AC 4.4.2 and LO 5 AC 5.5.1-4, Unit 3 LO 6 AC 6.6.1 and Unit 18 LO 5 AC 5.5.2

The second theme relates to Units 21-23. These are the 'newer' units within the Level 6 Diploma and are often referred to as the 'Career Leadership' units. The commonest evidence-types being used by centres are assignment, personal statements, questions and products. The only unit that refers to observation and witness testimony as a possible method is Unit 23. The evidence being produced by learners is of a high standard. At the same time, centres are reminded that observation, and especially witness testimony, could be used more effectively to cover the 'be able to' Learning Outcomes across all three units.

4. Sector Update

Over the last twelve months there have been developments within the sector. The National Career Service contracts were awarded, with a change of focus regarding qualifications required for the roles within the service. As a result, a minimum of Level 3 in Advice and Guidance was set, despite the fact that many organisations take as the benchmark for professional qualifications the Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice and the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development.

In March the government provided revised statutory guidance for schools: 'Career Guidance and Inspiration in Schools'. This highlighted the need for independent careers guidance within schools, working towards quality assurance frameworks and ensuring that careers advisers have professional qualifications

Within the CDI there have been some further developments. The Career Development Progression Pathway has been completed and the Certificate in Career Leadership is available.

The final development has been to further extend the deadline for access to the CDI UK Register of Career Development Professionals until March 31st 2017. This applies to those completing specified units within the Level 6 Diploma, having previously completed the Advice and Guidance and/or LDSS 4 old standards.

The Level 3 Award has been discontinued, with most learners in centres nearing achievement of the qualification.

In conclusion, the sector continues to face a level of uncertainty and is moving through an ongoing transition.

A decision on the future of the Level 4 and 6 Diplomas is awaited in the coming months. Over the last year there has been a fall in the numbers completing these qualifications. This could be linked to ongoing changes within the sector but also to the fact that most learners who are able to complete the three-unit option to access the CDI register have done so.

At the same time, there has been an increase in numbers completing the Level 4 Diploma, the full Level 6 Diploma and the Career Leadership units across most centres.

Therefore 2015-16 once again offers the sector as a whole, the opportunity to develop and market a wider range of products, in order to meet the training and qualification needs of its practitioners and managers.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Skills and Employment
Telephone: 02476 851509
Fax: 02476 421944
Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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