



Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Supporting Teaching and Learning for Schools

Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 2 Certificate - **04465**

Supporting the Wider Curriculum in Schools Level 2 Certificate - **04466**

Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 3 Certificate - **04468**

Cover Supervision of Pupils in Schools Level 3 Certificate - **04469**

Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 3 Diploma - **04470**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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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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Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools

1. The qualifications and standards

- Structure and content

Assessment Team:

Centres are generally well resourced both in terms of qualified and occupationally competent assessors IQA's. There are a total of 136 assessors, 135 who are qualified and 1 working towards. There are also a total of 98 IQA's, all of whom are qualified.

Resources:

Feedback from assessors to candidates is clearly recorded. All candidates are employed or volunteers in the schools in which they are assessed. Resources are freely available as required to ensure progression. Candidates are using a combination of text books and the Internet to research information (clearly referenced) and also for learning activities. This has been clearly referenced to demonstrate that plagiarism has not taken place.

Candidates, on average, receive one to two hours per week training, either centre or school based (during the day or evening) over the course of the qualification, run either by occupationally competent tutors, qualified assessors or internal verifiers.

Risk assessments and health and safety inspections are carried out regularly. Ongoing monitoring of health and safety is carried out. Annual Health and Safety checks are carried out, especially with regards to electrical equipment and candidates are encouraged to conduct their own risk analysis of their workplace. Self assessments/reviews are being carried out regularly and the feedback is extremely positive. Where centres are Local Authorities or Colleges, the policies and procedures relating to Health and Safety are those which cover the whole establishment and not just the NVQ section.

Candidate Support:

The majority of candidate inductions are detailed programmes which last for at least one to two days.

Candidates are provided with extensive handbooks, usually during induction which detail the course structure, assessment procedures, appeals procedure, etc. They are introduced to their assessor and given full contact details, ie telephone number and email address. They are also shown how to access information using the Internet and how to reference this. Completion targets are agreed during induction and assessment planning is rigorous. The use of expert witness statements has proved advantageous, especially for those candidates who work in Special Schools. Unit certification has been available to all candidates, and a number of centres certificate candidates as they complete units as a method of motivation.

Candidates interviewed, from comments received, are fully aware of their rights both in terms of understanding the programme and also their right to appeal against decisions they do not agree with. Candidates have confirmed the full support they receive from their assessor and have also stated that their confidence has been raised and their level of responsibility within the school has been increased. Initial assessments are used either at the induction stage or very soon after to determine the most appropriate optional units. A small number of candidates have expressed a desire to continue with their studies in the form of a Foundation Degree.

Assessment and Verification:

Assessment and IQA is generally working well, with the majority of centres having well developed assessment and internal verification policies and procedures in place for both formative and summative IQA activities. The use of colour for IQA sampling plans aid the tracking of candidates from start to finish and many IQA's have separate tracking forms for each of their allocated assessors. Reviews are carried out either termly or twice a year to look at the overall assessment and verification practice. However, in some portfolios there is 'overkill' of evidence in terms of writing to each individual Assessment Criterion, without relating this to their role within the school.

The majority of IQA's plan their assessment strategy once the candidates have been registered; some before they have chosen the optional units, others as soon as this has been done.

There is wide coverage of assessment methods and assessment locations although more use and timing of observations should be made with regards to the optional units, especially in the Level 3 Specialist Diploma. The monitoring of trainee assessors works well with designated counter-signatories from the outset. The agreed timescales for achievement of the assessor qualification is realistic and give the candidates sufficient time to gather the required evidence. Interviews with the trainees confirm that they are receiving sufficient support. Observation of assessors and interviews with candidates continues to be a regular activity with some centres observing their assessors twice per year (assessing a candidate by a variety of methods, eg observation and product evidence). Standardisation meetings are being used not only to standardise individual units, but also to standardise the completion of assessor documentation. Continuing professional development can be tracked, with assessors and verifiers keeping records of courses attended and training undertaken.

Management Systems and Records:

In general, the assessment and IQA team are very clear on the centre's aim and policies. An increasing number of centres are introducing a Lead IQA to co-ordinate the whole assessment/verification process and this is working well. Head Teachers continue to be supportive to their candidates in terms of time allowances to gather the evidence. Centre personnel roles are documented and clearly defined in the Centre's policies which in the main, are adhered to, along with the assessment guidelines.

Emphasis continues to be placed on basic skills, with many candidates being given the opportunity to update their literacy and numeracy skills. Interviews with IQA's suggest that they are aware of their role, particularly in their monitoring of assessor practice. Reports suggest that all team members are given access to external verification reports and are also given the opportunity to discuss the findings of the visit at the next team meeting. Documentation forwarded to external verifiers prior to their visits contain sufficient information to allow the EV's to devise a sampling strategy and agree this with the centre in advance. Once in the centre, EV's are able to follow an audit trail.

Assessment Summary:

From monitoring the reports, it appears that assessment within centres is thorough and varied. Observation is used as primary evidence, especially for the optional units. Candidates are visited on a regular basis by their assessors. Assessment reports are clear with SMART targets and clear feedback. A large number of centres have devised workbooks for the mandatory units which guide candidates through the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. The use of Professional Discussion works well either to clarify an aspect of the candidates' role or to 'plug gaps' in the evidence presented.

Where recommendations have been written on EQA reports, these have been designed to aid the centre to improve on already satisfactory practice. Actions (a total of 3 in 2013/14) have been necessary and relevant. They deal with issues relating to the assessment and IQA team, in terms of limited range of assessment methods, numbers of qualified and occupationally competent personnel, and lack of training for both the assessment and IQA team.

2. Sector Developments

The current standards have continued to be extremely popular, with more centres applying for approval. No training events have been held this year. Newly approved centres have made successful starts to the QCF qualifications. Centre approvals are continuing at the rate of approximately six per year.

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