



NEWS

GLASS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

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Glasgow Metropolitan College

The merger of Glasgow Colleges which brought about the change of name of the Glasgow College of Building and Printing to Glasgow Metropolitan College has coincided with radical changes in the way they offer Glazing SVQs.



William Dick (Glasgow Metropolitan Assessor), Darren Venesky (apprentice) and Tommy Wilkinson (MPC representative)

verification of adult experienced glaziers, installers and fabricators to achieve the appropriate SVQ.

2006 has been a good year for Glasgow Metropolitan College glazing apprentices with the first group on the Level 2 Glazing Installation and Maintenance SVQ (G6T7 22) having achieved their qualification. The successful apprentices were employed by five different companies, A1 Glass, Glass Age, Haran Glass, Maintenance and Property Care Ltd and Sola Glass. In addition over twenty experienced workers/adults have achieved Fabrication, Glazing and Installation SVQs.

The backbone of the approved Glasgow Metropolitan College centre is the assessment team of William Dick and David Smith. Their individual CPD progress has been enhanced by the close relationship with a wide range of glass sector employers.



David Smith (Glasgow Metropolitan College Assessor) and Francis Cox (A1 Glass apprentice)

Glasgow Metropolitan College via its Glazing Department are supporting a wide range of glaziers and glazing apprentices dispersed across twenty different organisations. Traditionally, glazing apprentices have supplemented their employment work experience with a comprehensive educational programme based at the college and undertook appropriate assignments and examinations that resulted in an SQA approved Glazing qualification.

This model has been the basis of the current programme for new generation SVQ apprentices but with a far greater involvement of the employers via the college based trainers and assessors. In addition the college has provided a resource for the upgrading, training, assessment and internal



William Dick (Glasgow Metropolitan College Assessor) and Peter O'Donnell (Glass Age)

TEST Candidate Achieves First Technical Certificate

The first GQA Level 3 Certificate in Glass Related Operations (awarded in the context of Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications) has been awarded to Liam Hunt of Paramount Window Systems Ltd.

Paramount have registered nominally fifty employees on GQA NVQs via The Essential Support Team (TEST) Ltd. The majority have successfully achieved their NVQs and others are still actively working towards them.

During the NVQ journey, TEST advised of the availability of the Level 3 Technical Certificate and its suitability for both established and new employees. Liam, a supervisor was registered and subsequently became the first Level 3 Technical Certificate achiever.

GQA Approved Centre CPD Seminar

This CPD event is aimed at Centre Co-ordinators, Internal Verifiers and Assessors and will include sessions on assessment and E-assessment. The seminar will be held on the 5th of October at Broomfield Hall, Derby.

Many thanks to those centres who have already booked on to this event. There is a cost of £75 per delegate, with all details to be communicated 7-10 days prior to the event.

Please contact the GQA office if you would like further information.

SPOTLIGHT ON NORTHERN IRELAND

QCA Northern Ireland TEN 1996-2006

QCA Northern Ireland is unique in several ways. It remains QCA's only regional facility thanks to the continued sponsorship and support of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) who saw the wisdom in having QCA fulfil its statutory remit for the regulation of NVQs through a locally staffed office.



GQA Chief Executive Allan Murry, FAB Chief Executive Paul Ellis, QCA NI Chief Executive Joan Gormley, GQA NI-based External Verifier Brian O'Gorman

Looking back over its ten years in operation it is apparent to everyone that it was the right thing to do for Northern Ireland. The intelligence derived from centre focused audits and investigation has contributed to improvements in regulation and to bettering individual NVQs. The annual conferences, seminars and project related events held by QCA Northern Ireland have been consistently well attended and highly regarded. The great range of NVQ case study material available in published and web based format, is more extensive than is held anywhere in the UK and the online and telephone information and advice services have assisted several hundreds of companies and thousands of individuals to access the right NVQ for their needs and to implement them effectively.

'TEN' was a celebration event to bring together the people who are designing, delivering and benefiting from NVQs in Northern Ireland. The special anniversary for QCA was an opportunity to acknowledge the scope and impact of NVQs in Northern Ireland and to show their appreciation to the many individuals and organisations that have helped ensure the NVQ system worked efficiently and effectively in Northern Ireland.

The head of QCA Northern Ireland has been Joan Gormley throughout the last ten years. The Glass Qualifications Authority (GQA) was invited to attend the 10th Anniversary QCA NI celebrations held on the 6th June 2006 at the Stormont Hotel, Belfast.

The invitation was taken up by Allan Murry (Chief Executive, GQA) and Brian O'Gorman (GQA External Verifier NI).

QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), also marked the decade of work in skills, qualifications and training with the launch of a special report entitled TEN. It features analyses of the past, present and future of NVQs, skills and training in Northern Ireland from the perspective of leading business and skills champions.

The anniversary event acknowledged the local contribution to shaping NVQ policy, improving standards and to providing input into a range of consultations and surveys.

For further information on QCA NI or copies of the TEN publication please contact Pauline Jenkins at QCA on 028 90330706 or email Jenkinsp@qca.org.uk



GQA Invite participants for Quality Audit Committee

GQA, a BS EN ISO 9001:2000 recognised organisation, hold regular Quality meetings to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and that GQA continues to ensure that they operate as a quality organisation. The Quality Audit Committee comprises of GQA staff and representatives from the industry and is chaired by an independent quality consultant.

GQA place great importance on continuous improvement and invite Approved Centre members interested in attending the Quality Audit Committee meetings as occasional guests to contact the GQA office for further details (info@gqaqualifications.com). GQA welcomes input from its Approved Centres and sees this move as key to the ongoing success of the business.

E-Portfolio trial in Northern Ireland

The Glass Qualifications Authority (GQA) is working closely with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to conduct a feasibility study on the use of new technology to support NVQ implementation in Northern Ireland.

GQA has already established an online Health and Safety test linked to the generic content of health and criteria within its qualification. A databank of over 150 questions has been established from which 40 questions are randomly selected. GQA NVQ candidates will be able to access the test free of charge via their GQA Approved Centre in either an e-learning or e-test mode. The online facility provides almost instant access to the test results which can contribute to the NVQ portfolio.

One of the reported problems related to NVQ qualification implementation is the need for candidates and assessors to produce a portfolio of evidence. Often due to misunderstanding (or the expectation that the bigger a portfolio is, the better it will be) the production of quality, portfolios

particularly for experienced workers has proved a barrier.

GQA has taken the initiative and is involving QCA NI, to conduct a feasibility study and the piloting of the collection of NVQ assessment and verification evidence via an e-portfolio. The system, developed by OpenVQ in conjunction with the GQA includes the use of electronic portable devices, PDA's (Personal Digital Assistant), which have been programmed to contain the in depth details of a GQA NVQ qualification. GQA recognised assessors at 3 Approved Centres, including 1 Northern Ireland Centre, will use the PDA's during the 3 month trial to record assessment details and auditable job references etc.

Briefings have been conducted with all those taking part in the trial, with the Northern Ireland session being carried out at the RAC Autowindcreens Ballymena branch, with Proskills' Paul Coffey attending alongside RACAW Assessors Dave McMath and Sean Hayes.



The trial is scheduled to run until the first week in October, when GQA will evaluate the effectiveness and practicalities of the system.

It is anticipated that one of the portfolios of the future will be totally e-based with the NVQ candidate's personal copy being retained on either a web server or a CD ROM.

Toughglass – A GQA NVQ Success in Northern Ireland

Toughglass, based in Killeel has in recent times invested in new plant and production procedures in Killeel, Northern Ireland.

They now have two production facilities in Killeel, one with the latest state of the art equipment and new working procedures etc related to their toughened glass products.

In parallel with the introduction of new technologies,

they introduced a comprehensive modern apprenticeship programme. Some of the youngsters who started as raw apprentices are now team leaders.

Toughglass has used national vocational qualifications (NVQs) as the basis of in-company training and assessment. They have achieved more glass related NVQs than any other company in Northern Ireland i.e. over 150 awarded by the Glass Qualifications Authority (GQA).

McMullen Architectural Systems, Moira

McMullen Architectural Systems was founded in 1971 and serves the UK and International construction markets specialising in design, fabrication and installation of aluminium curtain walling for large scale commercial projects. They provide a full range of aluminium facade systems, as well as louvres and structural glass assemblies and cladding.

McMullen is the market leader in Northern Ireland. It has also recently opened a manufacturing facility in the USA and have purchased a 40,000 ft² factory in North Carolina. The company is committed to developing its people to Investors in People standards and places great emphasis on training for

glass related NVQs. Within their workforce of over 180 direct employees, McMullen have 2 employees completing modern apprenticeships within its factory unit and 10 on site. All assessments, and verification are completed internally by technically competent assessors.

To date, McMullen have achieved 28 NVQs, and with an expanding workforce and 21 currently registered NVQ candidates, expects to remain as Northern Ireland's leading fenestration company.

McMullen are supported in the GQA implementation by GQA EV Brian O'Gorman.

They Said - Northern Ireland

"Over five million NVQ awards have been issued across the UK, more than 150 thousand in Northern Ireland and they've become, for many sectors, a true test of workplace competence" **Joan Gormley, Chief Executive, QCA NI**

"NVQs have been adopted by the Department as the 'qualifications of first choice' for almost all of its Government funded work based training programmes"

Aideen McGinley, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education and Learning (DEL), NI

"We all share a vision for Northern Ireland where a flexible, highly skilled and motivated workforce underpins the development of an economy achieving high levels of productivity, long term growth and sustainable employment. The high standards of academic provision in Northern Ireland working hand in hand with a first class vocational training environment will be essential to achieving this vision"

Mark Fisher, Chief Executive of the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

"We have to become a more knowledge based economy and NVQs can help with developing people in the workplace but there still needs to be a passport of skills developed where academic qualifications like GCSEs and vocational qualifications like NVQs are matched up. The education system has not equipped the workforce with the skills needed for work, skills such as problem solving, team working, communication skills or even work readiness skills, such as the way they dress"

Bill McGinnis, Chairman of the McAvoy Group, NI

"If I could influence the future it would be to reconcile the Government's and employer's objectives regarding training. Government has the right reasons for its objectives in terms of requiring more and more people to obtain formal qualifications and of requiring employers to make a reasonable contribution towards the cost of training, but this is not always appreciated by employers. We need to reconcile those points of view in relation to qualifications and training and encourage employers to understand more about their responsibility to supplement the funding of training"

Tom Place, Director of the East Down Institute of Further and Higher Education, NI

"There is still a snobbery in Northern Ireland regarding education. When I took over as Chief Executive we didn't take 16 year olds. The attitude was 'who wants people without education?' You had to have a degree. It's true, you need those academic qualifications but you also need people whom you can develop to your own industry standards. We've got people who started at 16 who are on a path to become chartered engineers and chartered accountants. We have young people who started on the post who now run fleet management services. If you can blend those people in via the NVQ route with people who've had the academic opportunities you get a much stronger company. And if you want to go on to academic qualifications later in life, as I did, that's possible too"

Peter Dixon, Group Chief Executive, Phoenix Gas, NI

"The Construction Employers Federation, in partnership with the unions under the guise of the Joint Council for the Building and Civil Engineering Industry (Northern Ireland) is developing a new framework for apprenticeships in discussions with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and training providers, and we hope to attract many more young people towards vocational training. We are committed to reinvigorating that route into the sector and making it more effective than it has been previously"

Michael Graham, Managing Director of John Graham (Dromore) Ltd, NI

"The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2002 as a means of encouraging lifelong learning within the workplace. Training has come a very long way for the group of people we are targeting but there is a long way to go. We have been successful in gaining the commitment from some employers who are prepared to open up access to training programmes if they can attract funding from government or unions but it's still a different story if they have to pay out of the core budget for training. My union has put serious resources and commitment into doing this for our members. People don't expect a union to provide a whole new world to open up for them and I am tremendously proud of that. We have been trailblazers"

Patricia McKeown, Regional Secretary of Unison, NI

GQA Related National Training Awards 2006

At their AGM, Glass Training Ltd made a number of award presentations to individuals and companies in the glass sector. GTL's Chairman, Malcolm Berresford-Dutton made the presentations. The companies who received awards included eleven individuals/organisations associated with the Glass Qualifications Authority (GQA) i.e.



Helen Chick, Holywell Glass

A 'First Award' in Stained Glass Conservation was made to Helen Chick of Holywell Glass. Helen achieved, via the GQA Approved Centre Salisbury College, a Level 3 NVQ in Glass Processing assessed in the context of Stained Glass Conservation.

A 'Scottish Training Provider of the Year' award was made to R T Resources, a GQA Approved Centre based in Ayr.

A 'First Award' to celebrate its 1000th GQA national vocational qualification in Automotive Glazing was made to Autoglass and received by Steve Sinclair-Day (their GQA approved Centre Co-ordinator).

An 'English Training Provider of the Year' award was made to The Vocational College based in Merseyside. The award was accepted by Roy Pusey, a GQA approved Internal Verifier and Assessor. The Vocational College has recently achieved a high grade (2) in an ALI inspection.

Denis Goodwin, a GQA External Verifier received a 'Services to Training in the Glass Industry' award. His original training/achievements were related to



Peter Heyes, Blackburn College

Engineering and Teaching. He has worked within the glass sector for the last twenty years.

John Taylor, the Centre Co-ordinator and Head of the GQA approved International Glass Centre, received a 'Services to the Glass Industry' award. John is also a City & Guilds examiner of the 'Raw Materials and Batch Mixing' certificate.

Peter Heyes, the Centre Co-ordinator of the GQA approved centre Blackburn College/Glass Creations received a 'Services for Education in the Glass Industry' award. Peter has an international as well as UK



Claire McCallum, RT Resources



John Taylor, The International Glass Centre



Roy Pusey, The Vocational College



Denis Goodwin, GQA EV

reputation having supported many educational provisions throughout the world.

Jim Kelly, a GQA Director and Company Secretary received an award for 'Services to the Glass Industry'

Askeri Kaplan, who achieved his GQA NVQ in Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications via The Vocational College, received an award in 'Fenestration Fabrications'. Askeri came to the UK from Turkey to continue a career in the glass sector with 1st Frame in Kendal. He was a runner-up in the Excellence in Cumbria Award (South West).

Birmingham City College received an award for their 'College and Employer Partnership' linked to the apprenticeship programme of Autoglass. The outcome of the partnership has led to a successful outcome of Automotive Glazing apprenticeship completions.

Gwyn Baker, a GQA Board Member, received an award for Services to the Glass Industry on Standards and Qualifications.



Steve Sinclair-Day, Autoglass

100% CSCS Cards for MCG

From January 2007, all Major Contractors Group (MCG) construction firms will require all onsite workers to have an appropriate CSCS card. Your initial reaction may be 'not again', as previously the MCG has set a deadline for CSCS cards.

However, this is the most forceable message from the MCG to ensure that the biggest players employ only a properly accredited workforce on their sites. The Chairman of the MCG is reported as having said 'there can be no excuse for anybody in the construction industry not to embrace the concept of a fully qualified workforce'.

The current lax, or loose, regime appears to be coming to an end e.g.

- Admittance on site with only a CITB registration number
- Cards being passed around
- A success in the online H&S test be acceptable to gain access to a site

The other major players in the construction sector have set their own targets linked to the need for CSCS card qualified workers on their sites.

It has been concluded that there will be a radically increased demand in 2006 for cards and the CSCS call centre capacity is being increased accordingly.

Glaziers, Installers and Fenestration Surveyors are able to register on an appropriate GQA national vocational qualification (NVQ or SVQ), sit the CSCS online H&S test and with employer support, apply for an Experienced Worker CSCS card. The new Experienced Worker card will have a life of one year (NB previously such cards had a life of three years).

The firms which make up the Major Contractors Group companies are:

Bovis Lend Lease, Costain, Galliford Try/ Morrison, HBG, Kier, Morgan Sindall, Shepherd, Sir Robert McApline, Skanska, Taylor Woodrow, Miller, Vinci and Yates

National Occupational Standards

GQA nationally approved qualifications, including N/SVQs, are based upon national occupational standards (NOS) derived by the nationally approved Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

The SSCs that GQA actively works with on standards development issues are Proskills and ConstructionSkills.

All SSCs are required to work with and communicate with their respective industry sector. GQA Recognised Centres utilising their experience of implementing qualifications are well placed to influence changes to, or the introduction of new NOS.

Already this year, GQA centres have provided information that has contributed to amendments to existing standards and qualifications. GQA centres and indeed other organisations are encouraged to advise of any proposed improvements to existing qualifications or of the need for new standards on a regular basis.

GQA regularly collates sector feedback and communicates with the appropriate SSC(s).

Important Changes to the Experienced Worker CSCS Card

Many thousands of individuals that need to work on construction sites including Glaziers and Installers have in the last few years registered on national vocational qualifications (NVQs/SVQs), sat the CSCS Health and Safety test and applied for and received an Experienced Worker CSCS Card.

The card issued has had a life of three years, so the pressure has been off to actually achieve the national vocational qualification. For a variety of reasons in many cases no progress whatsoever has been made on the achievement of the qualification e.g. the individual may have changed employer/address and the Experienced Worker card may have expired or be close to expiry.

An Experienced Worker card cannot be renewed once it has expired.

To avoid a repetition of the current situation, new rules are to be

introduced with effect from 1st September 2006, i.e. CITB ConstructionSkills have issued the following notice:

IMPORTANT CHANGE

Experienced Worker Cards

From 1 September 2006 Experienced Worker Cards for experienced workers and experienced technical, supervisor and managers will be valid for one year only. At the end of this period, applicants are expected to have achieved their N/SVQ qualification. These cards are not renewable.

Existing cards will not be affected and will be valid until the expiry date shown on the card.



DWL Home Improvements are using GQA NVQs to Improve Performance

DWL Home Improvements, a manufacturer of windows, doors and conservatories, based in Queenborough, Kent, decided to offer GQA NVQ level 2 related training and assessment to all appropriate employees both in the factory and carrying out installation activities. The initial take up has been over 70% and this is expected to rise as others see their peers succeed.

Jonathan Strefford, Production Director reports that whilst one of the initial purposes was to 'give something back' to employees, the desired effects were for the scheme to benefit the company, as well as the individuals themselves. Employees have taken more

interest in their work, morale has improved and a willingness to cross train on different jobs has emerged. This has meant a more flexible workforce and generated ideas for process improvements.

The timing of the implementation of the NVQ's has coincided with the introduction of a system of 'grades' for factory operatives and this has in turn enabled a financial reward for those achieving the national standard.

The scheme itself required very little management effort on the part of DWL as, after the initial contact with Business Link, virtually everything was done by the GQA

approved training provider, IPS International, with very little lost production time, as the majority of the assessment is carried out by observing the candidates undertaking their normal tasks.

A significant aspect was the fact that the entire process was supported by 'Profit From Learning' with zero costs to DWL other than operatives time.

NB Profit From Learning is a government training programme designed to increase the skills of staff. The scheme enables businesses to up-skill their workforces to level 2 through quality training, leading to recognised qualifications. Access to the programme is limited to employees aged 19+ who do not have a level 2 qualification or 5 GCSEs at grades A-C.

IPS International are supported by their GQA External Verifier, Ray Potter.

GQA Qualifications Update

A Number of existing GQA NVQ/SVQ qualifications have been updated/enhanced by the addition of new or imported units i.e. at Level 2 Glass Manufacturing, Glass Processing, Fenestration Installation and Automotive Glazing and at Level 3 Fenestration Installation and Surveying and Automotive Glazing.

The current Glazing Installation and Maintenance Level 2 and 3 qualifications have been extended until 31st December 2006. They will however be replaced by new qualifications based on the new Proskills/CITB National Occupational Standards.

Further information can be obtained by contacting rebecca@gqaqualifications.com

Heritage Lottery Funds and the Institute of Conservation

The Institute of Conservation (ICON) has a 2006 programme of placements in place related to conservation graduates, craftspeople, scientists and those with a general heritage background. The programme follows the award of £1m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to aid workforce training via bursaries.

First year placements include stained glass installations. ICON have also secured other funding for those involved in stained glass conservation.

More information available at: www.icon.org.uk

Proskills – The Glass Sector SSC and SSB

Proskills, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) and Standards Setting Body (SSB) that embraces the glass industry has:

- launched an information helpline for anyone needing information or guidance - call **01235 432032**
- provided on its website details of its team. To find out more visit www.proskills.co.uk

GQA Qualifications and IT

We are looking to increase our knowledge and awareness of the use of IT/computers in the occupational roles embraced by GQA qualifications and the related skills developed by NVQ/SVQ candidates.

Access to such information can enable GQA to influence the development of appropriate learning provisions for both potential new entrants to the sector and those new to the relevant occupational roles.

Any information you can provide should be forwarded to rebecca@gqaqualifications.com

Regulatory Authorities Centre Recognition Project

GQA centres will no doubt recall that the regulatory authorities in England (QCA), Northern Ireland (CEEA), Scotland (SQA) and Wales (DELLS) are taking forward the Centre Recognition Project (CRP).

The CRP aims to develop and implement a common process across awarding bodies for recognising centres that are capable of delivering accredited qualifications and units in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Scotland. The qualifications offered by the recognised centres can embrace a wide range of qualifications i.e. not just NVQs/SVQs.

The most recent stage of the consultation process was held across the UK from November 2005 to January 2006 to help stakeholders understand and discuss the consultation proposals and make an informed response.

Despite the fact that there are 114 nationally approved awarding bodies, 900 unapproved awarding bodies and hundreds of approved training providers and colleges, only 349 completed web based responses contributed to the last stage of the project. A second source of consultation information was extracted from a series of seven conferences which took place across the UK at which over 300 delegates attended.

It is claimed that overall the findings of the consultation were very positive but that there is work to do on the detail of the proposals before any implementation. The feedback and findings, the 'stakeholder consultation report May 2006' can be found in a 44 page A4 booklet reference QCA/06/2660 published by QCA on behalf of the four regulatory authorities.

For more information visit www.qca.org.uk/15567.html

They Said...

"Business needs a well educated workforce if the UK is to remain competitive and the demand for higher level skills will only increase in the face of global competition"
CBI

"QCA is working with a number of awarding bodies to reach agreement on a set of protocols to support centres in the use and acceptance of e-portfolios"
QCA NI

"Education: that which reveals to the wise and conceals from the stupid the vast limits of their knowledge"
Mark Twain

"Around 15 million adults would fail maths GCSE"
Education Secretary, Alan Johnson

"An NVQ/SVQ qualified workforce is likely to make you more profit than an unqualified workforce because you enter into a partnership with your employees to improve performance"
GTL

"In the last two years, over one third of a million people have arrived here from abroad, with the intention of joining the UK's workforce. For many, English is not their native language"
Source not known

"We should look at those sectors which consistently fail to address long term training needs and consider radical action to help them raise their game. This must include examining options such as imposing training levies or licences to practice, if necessary, in a particular sector"
Secretary of State for Employment and Skills, June 2006

"One in five of Briton's workers is now employed by the state. National figures show that more people rely on the taxpayer for their jobs than at any time since 1992"
Office for National Statistics

"21% is a pass mark in maths national curriculum tests. Maths tests are divided into four papers aimed at different ability ranges. Teachers decide which paper students should sit. The pass marks vary but those taking the second hardest paper could achieve a level five with 32 out of 151 or 21%. The easiest paper has a pass mark set at 66%, the second easiest was 37% and the hardest, 22%."
National Assessment Agency Statistics



For further information on any articles in this newsletter, future contributions, comments, queries or complaints please contact: Rebecca Brown, Glass Qualifications Authority Limited, Provincial House, Solly Street, Sheffield S1 4BA.
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