

SAQA Kha Ri Gude Site Visit and LAP comparison

Background

The coordinators acting as moderators had spent the morning of 22nd March and part of the afternoon capturing the data on the site visit records and on matching tasks in the linked Learning Assessment Portfolios (LAPs).

The thirty verifiers were asked to lead and report on discussion in response to the following themes:

1. Any thoughts after this morning's work
2. Recommendations that the SAQA team might make to Kha Ri Gude management as a result of what they had seen
3. Recommendations about the design and running of the site visit programme IN 2013
4. Recommendations about the design and running of the this session.

The issues raised here would be taken seriously in future developments.

Notes on the discussion after the comparison session

The issues and comments raised by SAQA are collected below together, where appropriate, with a comment from the SAQA team and an indication of who should take the matter forward.

Issue with comments and recommendations	SAQA response	Agency for action
Concern about the appointment of a number of unsatisfactory new coordinators in the past year. They are not properly trained and bring down the quality of the programme.	Not a SAQA matter.	KRG management and co-ordinators in meeting on Monday and Tuesday

Need for proper valid certificates that recognise the assessment and moderation experience gained by the moderators at these verification workshops	Progress has been slow on this matter but there are ongoing discussions in progress with ETDP SETA and UNISA.	SAQA team and KRG management
Would a proper KRG national examination with full external marking and moderation be desirable in KRG?	Logistics and costs would be a major factor to consider. Impact on learner attitudes would also have to be considered.	KRG management
Should we not have accredited KRG assessors to do the visiting and related work?	One must distinguish between assessment in KRG (which is currently done by voluntary educators) and moderation or verification (which good practice tends to argue should be done by an external agency or a separate component of the system (such as a monitoring unit)	KRG management
The site visits were great and a new experience. They help us to get insight into what is going on at the centres around the country. It's good to get proof that all the sites we hear about really exist. The approach is very sound, though it probably creates some fear in the VEs.	Noted.	
More frequent site visits, documented by photos , should happen	More frequent visits has budgetary implications. It is obviously a good idea. Some photos were taken in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape in 2012.	KRG management re budget. SAQA team's instructions to site visitors re photos.
We are grateful that the certification process improved in 2012.	Noted.	

After five years it is surprising that VEs are still writing in marks based on the number of ticks, instead of using the criteria. This leads to completely misleading results when the marks are added up on the summary page!	Coordinators and supervisors have a responsibility to train on this and to check and reject LAPs that have not been marked properly.	KRG training
A longer KRG programme of eight months is needed.	Clearly desirable but with budgetary implications and problems associated with the DBE financial year.	KRG management
The Site Visit/LAP comparison session on 22nd March was confusing. Some thought they were going to do the usual moderation. Others were excited to learn about the new process they were about to learn about. However, the interjection of new advice and guidance while we were working put us off our tracks. “Crowd control” during the training was poor. Everybody needed to be quiet so that the moderators could engage with the new process.	Our apologies for this. Part of the problem was logistical. The blue folder packs were meant to have been distributed at registration.	SAQA team
We thought we were here to moderate. Why did the visitors not mark the site visit records and we just record the marks?	The site visitors were never meant to mark the site visit tests (although they had to assess the reading ability). Except for that they had no training in marking. The marking of the site visit records by the participants at this workshop is an essential part of the verification process.	SAQA team to revise Moderators guide for 2014

Wasn't the site visit sample too small? .	Statistically it was reasonable, though obviously the larger the sample the better. The sample of 300 is enough to give us useful statistical information that we need. We only had a budget for 200 visits but by cutting costs we managed 300. KRG would benefit by more monitoring visits from senior officials.	KRG management for budget
We felt that the site visitors were not properly trained. They were not always clear about what was expected, and we don't think we can compare the performance in both sets of tasks (visit record and LAP). The visitors should record information - like the unique numbers - accurately.	Problem noted: We regret that there were some unsatisfactory encounters. But the main problem has been the budget which limited time for training and supervision.	SAQA team.
We are a bit concerned that the same coordinators seemed to be targeted for the second year, and that many sites of one coordinator were visited rather than the visits being spread among coordinators. Also, the visits seem to miss the deep rural areas.	For the sake of continuity we visited one previously-visited area and one not visited before when designing the sample. The sample for visiting was affected by a very limited budget in 2012 which especially affected reach into deep rural areas (which involve great costs in time and transport).	SAQA team

Some problems in organisation sometimes meant that learners could not be there on the day of the visit and this gives the wrong impression. Sometimes the visitor was late or communication was poor. Appointments need to be made well in advance so that the learners can be prepared to come. Please could we have advance notice and time frames for the visits.	Visitors are expected to make arrangements between one or two weeks before the visit. They are expected to arrive on time as arranged. It is not desirable to give too early a warning for various reasons. All sites around the country should feel that they might be visited. By the same token, some visitors had frustrating experiences after carefully negotiated appointments had been made. Warning too far in advance can create misleading findings.	SAQA team KRG management
The duration of the site visits is puzzling. We see that some visits were two hours and others only 20 minutes. These seem to us too much and too little.	The site visitors are asked to give the learners as much time as they need. They should perhaps be given clearer guidelines about the time limits.	SAQA team

The visitors should provide feedback immediately to the learners and VEs during the visit.	This not their job nor are they trained to do it. This point misunderstands the intention of the verification by SAQA of the summative assessment in the LAPs. It is important to recognise that we were very clear that we were NOT conducting an evaluation, or a formative assessment (which would be aimed at directly helping sites to improve). The visitors were not expected, and were neither qualified nor trained for doing this. However, the point shows that some visitors may need to give more careful attention to how they brief and debrief the learners, VEs and Supervisors.	SAQA team KRG training
How the site visitors appointed?	Community agencies were sub-contracted to run the site visits in their provinces.	
The visitors should know the languages of the sites visited.	This is a primary requirement for the appointment of visitors. Sometimes sites have mixed languages, and the visitor might not be competent in one or the other. It would be helpful to have information about visits where the visitor did not know the language of the site.	

The VE should be present during the visit and not excluded. The VE's insights into the learners and their learning should be attended to.	It is not that the VE is excluded from the visit. Their attendance is necessary. They are excluded from the assessment test. This has to be independent. In the nature of things, VEs should be eager to help their learners - but this makes their presence unsatisfactory when the site visit tasks are being done.	
Would it be possible to get some insight into best-performing sites?	A valuable suggestion which can be explored	SAQA team KRG management
There was an unnecessary number of typos in the site visit questionnaires (this seemed to apply particularly to seTswana and isiXhosa).	The text was precisely the same as the text in the LAP. Some errors may have been made in re-typing these. The problem will be attended to.	SAQA team
The instrument (task sheet) needs to be improved . It needs to be edited and moderated before distribution. The instrument should be communicated to the coordinators in advance.	The scope for improvement is limited because the site visit tasks must be the same as LAP tasks. It would also compromise the independence of the site visit records if the learner task sheet instrument were communicated to the coordinators in advance.	
Tokens should be given to the learners to allow them to cater for the visits .	Requires a budget.	KRG management