

SAQA

KHA RI GUDE SITE VISITS 2012

Feedback on the capture of comparative data
22 March 2013

Background

The 200 coordinators acting as moderators had spent the morning and part of the afternoon capturing the data on the site visit records and on matching tasks in the linked portfolios.

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

- any thoughts after this morning's work
- recommendations that the SAQA team might make to KRG management as a result of what you have seen
- recommendations about the design and running of the site visit programme
- recommendations about the design and running of the data capture session

In the following record, points are combined in themes where this is possible.

The issues raised here will all be taken seriously in future development. *For clarification, however, some comments from the SAQA verifiers are included in italics.*

Recommendations to KRG

We are concerned about the appointment of unsatisfactory new coordinators in the past year. They are not properly trained and bring down the quality of the programme.

We would like valid certificates based on our experience here.

Discussions are in progress with the ETDP SETA and Unisa, among others.

Would a proper, full external assessment (national exam?) not be desirable in KRG?

Should we not have accredited assessors *inside* KRG to do the visiting and related work?

There should be more frequent site visits in KRG. We suggest that these are documented with photos.

We are grateful that the certification process was much improved last year.

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!

We want learner contact time increased - at least to 8 months.

Site visit programme

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.

But problems in organisation sometimes meant that learners could not be there 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.

Visitors are expected to make arrangements between one or two weeks before the visit. 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. Warning well in advance can create misleading findings.

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 2012/13, which especially affected reach into deep rural areas (which involve great costs in time and transport).

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. By the same token, some visitors had frustrating experiences after carefully negotiated appointments had been made. But the main problem has been the budget which limited time for training and supervision.

The visitors should provide feedback immediately to the learners and VEs during the visit.

This point misunderstands the intention of the summative assessment. 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.

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.

Wasn't the sample too small?

There was budget for 200 visits. This was stretched to 300. Visits are expensive. 300 are enough to give us all the statistical information we need. But it is clear that KRG would benefit by more monitoring visits from senior officials.

Our group were puzzled by how the visitors were appointed?

Community agencies were sub-contracted to run the site visits in their provinces.

Please could we have advance notice and time frames for the visits.

See above

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.

This is a difficult issue. The problem is related to the need for a reliable, independent assessment. In the nature of things, VE's 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.

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.

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.

Tokens should be given to the learners to allow them to cater for the visits.

Data capture session

We found this morning confusing. We thought we were going to do familiar work, and were excited about the new process that we would have to learn about. However, the interjection of new advice and guidance while we were working put us off our tracks. This was necessary because the “crowd control” during the training was poor - please get everybody to be quiet so that we can engage with the new process.

We thought we were here to moderate. Why did the visitors not mark the site visit records and we just record the marks?

The marking of the site visit records is an essential part of moderation. The point is precisely not to moderate the marking of the visitors.