



**GNVQ Support
Programme**



The revised GNVQ

Recruitment, induction and progression

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Published by FEDA

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Registered with the Charity Commissioners

Editor: Jenny Rhys
Proofreader: Jeremy Pinel
Designer: Kevin Ashill

ISBN 1 85338 528 X

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Foreword

The revised GNVQ is being introduced into schools and colleges from September 2000. It will introduce changes that were recommended by the Capey review of GNVQ assessment and by Sir Ron Dearing's review of all post-16 qualifications. The changes are designed to achieve two major objectives. First, to ensure that all GNVQs are more manageable to implement in schools and colleges. Second, to ensure that the assessment of GNVQs is rigorous and consistent.

This pack is part of the support provided through FEDA's GNVQ Support Programme. It is one of five packs designed to help tutors and managers implement revised GNVQ courses:

- Managing the revised GNVQ
- Recruitment, induction and progression
- Teaching, learning and assignment writing
- Assessing the revised GNVQ
- Key skills within the revised GNVQ.

This pack is for:

- GNVQ coordinators and tutors responsible for recruiting students in all vocational areas
- tutors who plan induction programmes.

The first part of the pack will also be useful to:

- advice and guidance staff
- careers teachers in schools
- careers guidance service staff
- marketing staff and those who plan publicity.

It also provides information that can be used in communication with parents and local contacts, including local education authorities, employers and staff in higher education institutions.

The pack is in three sections:

- Recruitment and progression
- Induction
- Moving on: helping students to progress.



Introduction

The national qualifications framework

There are three families of qualifications within the framework of national awards: general, general vocational and vocational.

Within this framework GNVQs offer broad-based, vocational-related programmes at Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced levels.

Strengths of the framework and what GNVQs offer students

- An overall structure that shows clear links between different awards and levels
- The chance to mix vocational and academic programmes
- A vocational focus that keeps options open
- A course of study that encourages enterprise and independent learning
- A separately accredited key skills award which is integrated into GNVQ programmes.

Section 1 – Recruitment and progression

Recruitment and aspects of progression are intrinsically linked. Students will only enrol on and successfully complete a GNVQ programme when they are fully aware of the possibilities and challenges the programme offers.

Recruitment

Recruitment policies and practices vary. In schools and sixth-form colleges GNVQ staff may be closely involved in devising recruitment information and interviewing prospective students. In larger centres the responsibility for marketing and recruitment will probably lie with a central college team.

Whatever the setting, centres will want to ensure that students receive information about GNVQs in general and their vocational area in particular. They will want the publicity to reflect the user-friendly nature of the awards and to be presented in a lively and appropriate way.

Students and others need to know:

- how GNVQs relate to other programmes
- the unique features of GNVQ curriculum entitlement
- how GNVQs offer an increase in breadth, choice, flexibility and 'parity of esteem'
- about levels and entry qualifications
- how GNVQ courses are taught
- what skills students can expect to develop
- how GNVQs are assessed
- the place of the key skills award
- how a balance can be achieved with vocational and academic courses
- which programme is most suitable for students and where it might lead them.

Students might get this information from:

- leaflets, both generic and specific to vocational areas
- newspaper publicity, including articles and advertisements

- visits to the centre and faculty area
- taster days in vocational areas/school link courses
- joint recruitment days or events with higher education institutions
- past students giving presentations in schools
- careers fairs.

It may be useful to think of this recruitment process in stages, moving from a wide distribution of information to a focused one-to-one meeting with a prospective student, e.g.

Stage 1 – Provision of information through:

- prospectus
- posters
- leaflets
- other published information.

Stage 2 – Talks and presentations at:

- information evenings for students and parents
- assemblies
- informal events
- careers fairs.

There may also be opportunities to give presentations to local business groups. This not only raises general awareness and gives information, but can also encourage employers to offer work experience and, possibly, employment.

Stage 3 – Information specific to the course and vocational area can be provided through:

- taster days
- drop-in sessions
- displays of work
- presentations by current students.

Stage 4 – Individual interview of prospective student and parents with guidance staff.

How will students be recruited and by whom?

Most centres have an overall policy for recruitment, marketing and publicity. The GNVQ coordinator and vocational teams contribute to the overall policy and may be involved directly in recruiting students. In other centres recruitment of and contact with potential students will be by careers guidance, student support staff or by vocational admissions tutors.

Anyone advising students in this critical initial stage needs to be fully aware of the nature of the revised GNVQ and the implications for mix-and-match programmes.

Lively and attractive written materials with clear diagrams on progression routes and quotes from students on the nature of GNVQs will facilitate students' understanding. If you are a member of a GNVQ vocational team, collect some good case-study material that can be used in your publicity.

Progression

Although the GNVQ programme is valuable in its own right as a nationally recognised qualification, students and their parents will want to know where it can lead. This is just as important at Foundation level as it is at Advanced.

Checklist

Points you may want to highlight to parents and students considering a GNVQ:

- GNVQs are broad-based vocational programmes which, with the inclusion of key skills and other enrichments, enable students to reach a standard of education whilst developing valuable transferable skills.
 - GNVQs are and will continue to be accepted by most higher education institutions and evidence indicates that GNVQ students are well equipped to deal with the demands of study in higher education
 - Evidence based on the current GNVQ suggests that most, but not all, GNVQ Advanced-level students who move on to higher education go into areas of study closely related to their GNVQ
 - The structure of the revised GNVQ enables GNVQs to be combined with other qualifications to provide breadth to study.
- Students are helped to progress smoothly if:
- vocational and academic staff work co-operatively within the centre
 - tutors develop good contacts and working arrangements with local industry, business or services
 - the centre and/or the GNVQ coordinator are involved in local compacts or partnerships with higher education institutions
 - the centre and staff are willing to work in collaboration with other schools and colleges.
 - tutors plan their programmes of study and ensure that teaching and learning methods prepare students for GNVQ assessment
 - the centre looks closely at possible progression routes when designing publicity.
 - staff are aware of the standards achieved by students on 'feeder' programmes – for example, where students are progressing from one level of GNVQ to another
 - students are encouraged through ongoing guidance to plan their futures
 - the centre is proactive in informing higher education institution admissions departments of its curriculum.

Section 2 – Induction

Induction is a vital process for all students coming new into a school or college. They need to have accurate information and to take part in activities that will help them settle in quickly, make friends and feel comfortable in the new environment. Induction should give them a feel for the programme they have enrolled on and the challenges it offers. Students will want to know they have made a good choice and each day be encouraged to come back tomorrow. There is strong evidence that opinions and attitudes formed during the first few days of a course can affect attendance and retention.

It is equally important that students who are moving on to a new programme within the same institution are offered a suitable induction programme, as the course organisation and demands on them may be different.

The challenge for everyone involved in the planning and delivery of induction is to balance the needs of each individual student with those of the school or college, and at the same time to encourage group cohesiveness.

This section highlights the key features of successful induction and provides guidelines to help you plan.

The overall induction programme

Weaving the strands together

Students should experience the induction phase as a whole and feel that they belong to an organisation working together. Many may be taking a mix of subjects, and staff need to plan induction across departments and programmes to ensure that students do not experience duplication or receive contradictory information.

It is also important that students are kept busy for much of the induction period. You can tell them about the course programme and philosophy but they will absorb more from what happens to them. Although students need time and space to meet each other, a busy, lively and varied induction with clear rules will tell them everything they need to know about what is expected of them and what they can expect in return.

There are several 'stakeholders' in the induction process. These include:

- students
- the organisation
- key skills staff
- GNVQ coordinators/team leaders
- vocational teachers
- academic teachers
- support staff.

You could also add parents and employers.

In balancing the requirements of the organisation (to collect information, for example) and the demands of the course (to start the teaching schedule, for example), the needs of the students should not be overlooked.

The students, both as individuals and members of a group, need:

- a sense of security and of 'belonging'
- to build group identity
- basic information on what to do and where to go
- an understanding of the rules and regulations
- help with individual problems (financial, for example).

What students need to know

About the school or college

Students need to know:

- where to go
 - the sites, buildings and specialist resources
- who's who
 - managers
 - key skills and learning support staff
 - vocational and academic tutors
 - student counsellors
- what the policies and practice are for:
 - equal opportunities
 - disciplinary procedures
 - appeal procedures
 - curriculum entitlement.

About the whole curriculum

Students need to know about:

- the curriculum and how their choice of programme fits in
- the nature and accreditation of key skills
- the timetable
- enrichment activities
- tutorial support.

About GNVQs

In the new post-16 curriculum, students will probably be doing other qualifications alongside GNVQ, so induction for GNVQs needs to be coordinated with these. All the students doing GNVQs will need to know, and experience as far as possible, the unique nature of the GNVQ approach and programmes, including:

- the teaching and learning styles used
- the practical application of theory to practice
- individual responsibility for their own learning, planning and monitoring
- independent learning skills
- the content of the GNVQ ('What you need to learn')
- the use of evidence and building a portfolio
- overall assessment by portfolio and external assessment
- the nature of internal verification and standards moderation.

They will also want to be introduced to the vocational area they have chosen. They will already know some of the possibilities for the future and the nature of the course from the recruitment process. The most successful induction programmes include an introduction to, and experience of, the vocational area, perhaps through a visit. However, this has to be balanced with other demands when resources are limited.

The specific aims of GNVQ induction

Ensuring that there are clear aims for the GNVQ induction will enable planners to include all the important features. The programme will work best if you can plan it as a team, even if only a few staff deliver it.

The aims could include the need to:

- help students settle in and form a group
- confirm each student's choice of course
- motivate and enthuse the students about the course
- confirm their expectations of how the programme will operate
- reassure students about the different approaches used in GNVQ programmes in contrast to others
- introduce methods of GNVQ working
- demonstrate how key skills are integrated into GNVQ programmes
- identify students' needs for learning support
- assess levels of competence in key skills
- introduce students to the way the course is presented through unit specifications
- introduce methods of assessment (portfolio, assignments, tests)
- instil attitudes and behaviour that are conducive to success.

The timing of induction

How long does induction last and when does it take place? Normally it is thought of as a specific period at the beginning of the autumn term. In many colleges and schools the first week or fortnight is allocated for new students to familiarise themselves with the college, facilities and staff. Although this is helpful, you may wish to think of planning GNVQ induction over an extended period, perhaps the first term. This 'tapered' model enables priorities to be met over a longer period and avoids overwhelming students in the first weeks.

Where the students are moving onto another programme in the same centres, induction can start at the end of the previous course in July and may involve work over the summer break. There are a number of possibilities :

- set an individual summer task that can be used in the early weeks of the course – for example, read reports, documents, newspaper articles and give a resumé (Business and Health and social care), or experiment with colour and present the results (Art and design)
- invite students into the centre in July
- introduce students to the college first and let them familiarise themselves with the institution as a whole, then meet in vocational areas
- let students meet vocational staff as early as possible to get a sense of belonging and identify with other students in the group.

Although many of these decisions are made at a college management level, the GNVQ coordinator and GNVQ teams should contribute because they are closest to the students and have an idea of what is most appropriate for them.

In large centres it is worth giving new students a 'home base'. This may be with a course group or with a tutorial group.

Whatever the shape of the programme, ensure that the students feel at home in the first few days or, quite simply, they may leave. You will often need to introduce important aspects of the programme early and return to them later.

The contents of the GNVQ induction programme

Do not try to include everything. Whatever is included should be about induction as a whole, rather than a series of fragmented activities.

Some possibilities are to:

- choose an appropriate theme from one of the units and use that as the focus of the students' activities – for example, marking techniques in Art and design, types of business in Business
- devise an induction 'project' that introduces some of the key concepts and skills of GNVQ and the vocational area.
- devise an induction assignment – this might be linked to a 'project' or theme, or might focus on students' self-assessment and action planning

- compile a course handbook – integrate it with the centre handbook and general information or produce a separate GNVQ edition
- introduce key skills and the key skills award
- undertake initial assessment for key skills – the centre may have carried out some diagnostic assessment at the recruitment stage but you will need to be clear about who requires what kind of support and help in application of number, communication and information technology.

○ Also see – Key skills

Projects can be used to:

- demonstrate the integration of key skills
- get students to work in small teams
- give students a taste of the world of work through a visit or work-based task
- expose students to working independently and interpreting written and oral briefings.

Whatever approaches you choose, ask to what extent they:

- help students get to know each other
- introduce students to their vocational and key skills tutors
- introduce students to their personal tutor
- encourage cooperative or competitive behaviour
- give a flavour of the GNVQ students are embarking on
- challenge and stretch students without making unachievable demands
- introduce students to GNVQ specifications and help them interpret the unit requirements.

Initial assessment is a process whereby:

- a student's current level of attainment and skills can be identified
- staff can discern students' current needs
- students can identify and refine what they would like to achieve in the future.

An important feature of initial assessment is judging the level and type of learning support required by an individual student. You can:

- interview the student
- examine evidence of prior achievement
- use tests to screen basic skills
- get students to demonstrate current skills or knowledge
- use diagnostic testing.

Diagnostic testing is one component of initial assessment. It is:

- **forward-looking** – it does not rely on past achievements
- **analytical** – it identifies strengths and weaknesses
- **rigorous** – it uses formal carefully constructed and validated tests to identify a student's potential and capabilities.

Resourcing and delivering the induction programme

There are considerable pressures on staff and facilities in the early weeks of the autumn term. Planning across the centre will make the best use of resources, so coordination is best undertaken by a senior member of staff.

There are several resources you can draw on, both inside and outside the centre:

- people
 - staff – members of the vocational team; key skills, support and learning centre staff; managers
 - students – former students, especially those who have moved into related employment or higher education; the incoming student group
 - interested outsiders – local employers; local employer organisations; staff from higher education institutions; members of the centre's advisory groups; voluntary organisations
- the environment and facilities
 - the school or college, including libraries and learning support centres
 - specialist teaching areas, including IT facilities
 - recreational facilities, for example, sports and eating areas
 - the local community, including libraries, shops and community and leisure centres
 - equipment available in the centre, such as portable still and video cameras, printing and photocopying equipment and access to the Internet.

Unit specifications

Give each student a copy of the relevant unit specifications for his/her GNVQ and key skills. There is no need to edit or rewrite them, as they are written for the student in clear language.

They tell the student:

- about the unit
- what you need to learn
- assessment evidence.

GNVQ teams will want to devise their own resources. These can include:

- handbooks
- guides to GNVQ
- briefings for the induction activities.

You may want students to build up a folder of all the relevant materials over a period of time. In this way they can use and absorb the information and not feel overwhelmed.

Handbooks

The aims of the handbook require careful thought:

- Is it a document that will be used throughout the course?
- What information is ephemeral?
- What will students need to refer to throughout the course?
- Do you wish the students to add their own information to the handbook?

The handbook could include information about:

- the centre
 - layout and geography
 - facilities, e.g. sports, recreation, food, shop
 - advisory and support services
- the centre's policies and practices
 - equal opportunities
 - disciplinary procedures
 - appeals
 - complaints
 - the student charter
- the post-16 curriculum and its opportunities
- the role and nature of the key skills award
- GNVQ generic information
 - the award
 - unique aspects of the GNVQ approach
 - the assessment and grading system
 - the portfolio – collecting and recording evidence
- GNVQ vocational area
 - unit specifications
 - a calendar/diary
 - assignment and test dates and deadlines
 - hints and tips on organising time
 - the induction assignment.

In designing a course handbook, think of ways of ensuring the students refer to it, use it regularly

and keep it up to date. It needs to be attractive, portable (or storable in the centre), durable and easy to use. You may want to encourage the students to customise it for their own use.

Induction assignment

In devising an induction assignment, bear in mind the aims of the induction process as a whole but be very clear about the aims and outcomes of the assignment. Beware of creating situations where students are doing several induction assignments because teams have not planned the induction together.

You will also want to identify students' ability to handle key skills and show them how key skills are integrated into the programme. Make use of the 'Signposts' in the unit specifications to help you choose an appropriate induction task.

The induction assignment should:

- give students a sense of the vocational area
- be vocationally realistic, e.g. derived from one of the units
- include a range of group and individual tasks
- be varied and interesting to the students
- be capable of being achieved in the time
- demonstrate the integration of key skills
- refer to assessment criteria
- illustrate how assignments will be assessed
- contribute to unit assessment, if feasible.

You could ask students to:

- find information, analyse, synthesise and present it in an appropriate way
- go on a visit to a local firm or facility and report back, working to a tightly structured brief
- plan and undertake a search for information (either within or outside the centre), then report back on the findings and also on the process
- undertake experiments within the vocational area, using appropriate techniques, and present the findings in a number of ways: visual, oral presentation and/or written report
- present the result of activities to the peer group, local employers, and/or centre staff.

- work with a theme from a unit and produce a short piece of work that uses the unit assessment criteria.

You will want the students to get a feel for the demands of the programme and the challenge to plan and to work independently, either on their own or with others. They will also want to have a sense of satisfaction at completing a task successfully.

○ **Also see – Managing**

Monitoring and evaluating induction

Why monitor and evaluate induction?

- As part of quality procedures
- To determine how students are responding to each part of the programme
- To deal with any immediate difficulties
- To make improvements for the next students.

Who will be involved?

- Students
 - individuals and groups – make sure you get both
- Staff
 - GNVQ vocational teachers
 - GNVQ coordinator
 - key skills
 - personal tutors
 - academic teachers.

What feedback is needed from induction?

- Students' feelings
- Responses to tasks and activities
- Understanding of unit specifications
- Students' demonstration of their ability to undertake the tasks and work to a brief, and their comprehension of the GNVQ information
- Presentation of tasks
- Demonstration of skills
- Staff evaluation of students' response and performance.

When is feedback needed?

- During induction
- At the end of induction
- At the end of the course.

How is information collected?

- Formally – using a range of methods from group discussion to questionnaires
- Informally – answering questions, inviting informal discussion, feedback from tutorials and by observing students.

It is important that tutors are approachable and actively engaged with the students so that problems, whether individual or group, can be identified and dealt with promptly.

It makes sense to keep students informed about the response to induction and share any issues with them that may affect the progress of the course.

It is also helpful if staff from different areas of work, e.g. academic and vocational, can share perceptions of how students are settling down in each area.

What is the information used for?

- To adjust the programme as you go
- To measure whether the aims of the induction were met
- To note specific difficulties
- To inform the planning of future induction programmes
- To report on the effectiveness of induction to the centre-wide planning team
- To inform teams of what to build into the year's programme that needs further work or reinforcement
- To contribute to the centre's quality assurance report for inspection.

○ Also see – [Managing](#)

Summary

A checklist for induction planning

- Ensure coordination at senior level
- Create an induction planning team which includes those with the responsibility and the authority to ensure decisions are actioned
- Agree on the aims of induction and plan at the outset how induction will be evaluated.
- Agree who will do what and plan so that the following do not compete or overlap:
 - cross-college/school functions
 - departments/faculties
 - course teams
 - personal tutors
- Agree a timetable structure for the induction period which allocates time for each of the above.
- Ask for detailed plans that specify:
 - what the students will be doing
 - rooming requirements

- staffing requirements
- other resource requirements.

A checklist for course handbooks

- Coordinate management of both course and school/college handbooks at senior level
- Agree and provide clear guidance and quality indicators for teams on the preparation of course handbooks
- Ensure that the contents of all handbooks are validated by those who are responsible for delivery of each aspect
- Advise on a timescale for preparation which includes approval of all handbooks by managers.

School/college handbooks typically include:

- a welcome from the head/principal
- a yearly calendar with key dates
- rules and regulations
- the school/college ethos
- charter commitments
- a description of the main facilities
- the support available
- entitlements
- Health and Safety information
- what to do if things go wrong.

Course handbooks typically include:

- the course calendar
- the assessment schedule and dates
- equipment and materials provided
- equipment and materials required
- specific rules relating to the course
- a who's who
- a study guide
- unit specifications
- specialist resources
- parent evening dates.

Section 3 – Moving on: helping students to progress

The possibilities offered by the revised GNVQ

The revised GNVQ opens up great choice for students, with the opportunity to mix and match vocational and academic courses. Progression arises from the first contact with the student and continues until they leave the school or college to go into work or higher education. The school or college therefore needs to ensure that it is able to provide quality guidance and support throughout the student's stay.

GNVQs themselves are established as valuable qualifications, and students achieving them have been successful in employment and higher education. However, it is likely to be achievement in greater breadth that will present challenges to employers and admissions tutors. There is currently a great deal of publicity and other information to ensure that employers and admissions tutors are fully informed of the curriculum changes, and this is set to increase, but there is much that schools and colleges can do themselves.

How staff can help students

Build and maintain strong links and lines of communication with:

- colleagues within your own institution
- colleagues in other GNVQ centres
- admissions tutors in higher education institutions
- local employers
- local employer organisations
- regional organisations.

Take any opportunity to inform your local, regional or even national communities. Publicise the innovations that are part of the programmes, as well as the achievements of GNVQ students.

In particular there is a need for GNVQ staff to:

- provide high-quality careers guidance
- be aware of university entrance requirements
- liaise with staff in their own and other institutions, especially when students wish to progress from one level of GNVQ to another
- prepare students on GNVQ Advanced courses for the teaching and learning they can expect in higher education.

Enthusiastic and well-informed staff with a clear approach to organisation and delivery of the programme are key to the success of the revised GNVQ and the mix-and-match curriculum. In times of transition, students need to feel secure. If they do they are more likely to achieve the qualifications and to move successfully and confidently to further study or employment.

○ **Also see – Teaching, learning and assignment writing**



ISBN 1 85338 528 X