



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2013  
Construction Technician**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

# Higher National Units

## General comments

It is apparent in the External Verifiers' reports that all centres have a very clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards.

Observation and promotion of the national standards are visible in all aspects of the delivery and assessment of the Units.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The majority of assessors are thoroughly familiar with the full suite of Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplar materials. This is confirmed in the quality of alternative instruments of assessment and associated marking schedules that have been designed by centre staff.

There have been some minor issues of misinterpretation of the Unit specifications resulting in some over-assessment of a few elements. However, these occurred predominantly where the programme and Unit(s) were being delivered for the first time. Guidance and direction from the associated External Verifiers (EVs) resulted in prompt corrective action.

## Evidence Requirements

Apart from the few instances identified above, all assessors have a complete understanding of the Evidence Requirements contained in the Unit specifications. In the situations identified above, the External Verifiers gave specific and appropriate guidance to the assessors and Internal Verifiers (IVs) in the interpretation and application of Evidence Requirements.

## Administration of assessments

The centres actively contribute to the Qualifications Support Team for this and associated verification groups. In this forum, there is considerable expression and sharing of good practice among the centres that benefits and enhances the understanding, application and administration of the assessment and verification processes. This also contributes greatly to the consistent, coherent and transparent application of national standards across the construction discipline.

As 'regionalisation' of the sector is embedded, many of the centres are rationalising and refining their administrative systems. It is significant that External Verifiers are already reporting that sophisticated and effective electronic systems are in place to manage, store and record all elements of documentation to support delivery, learning, tutorial, assessment and IV and EV activities.

## General feedback

Generally, feedback to candidates was found to be very good. In nearly all cases it was relevant, valid and informative. In most cases it was clearly documented in

the candidates' scripts or portfolios. In a very few cases the recording of feedback to candidates was inadequate.

Once again, praise for the commitment and dedication of the staff was considerable from the candidates interviewed. Many spoke of the excellent guidance and support given throughout the delivery of the academic programme. In addition, there was encouragement and advice as they explored destination options prior to completion of their programmes.

It is evident that there are no barriers to assessment in any of the centres. Learners regularly spoke of the flexibility of assessment events and the obvious planning that had taken place to try to avoid conflict or bunching of assessment processes.

## **Areas of good practice**

Many elements of good practice were identified across many of the centres that were audited this session. Inevitably, some elements that were exemplary in some centres were identified as areas for development in others.

Special mention was made of the following quality elements:

- ◆ Feedback to candidates — constructive, relevant and informative and fully documented
- ◆ Support and guidance of candidates — extremely thorough throughout the programme delivery and beyond
- ◆ Master folders — good design, structure and content
- ◆ Electronic/IT-based quality assurance systems — ongoing development as a result of regionalisation
- ◆ Graded Unit documentation for candidates
- ◆ Team approach to Graded Unit delivery and assessment
- ◆ Integration of Graded Unit content with that of constituent Units
- ◆ Double-marking of all Graded Unit portfolios

## **Specific areas for improvement**

A few issues were identified in a very small minority of centres as follows:

- ◆ Recording of feedback to candidates was inadequate
- ◆ Indiscriminate web downloads 'bulking-out' assessment submissions without due consideration, application or interpretation of content
- ◆ Misinterpretation of Evidence Requirements resulting in over-assessment
- ◆ Internal verification processes not consistent over all campuses.
- ◆ Standardisation processes and events inadequately documented and recorded

# Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DX20 34	HNC Construction Graded Unit 1
DX23 35	HND Quantity Surveying Graded Unit 2
F559 35	HND Architectural Conservation Graded Unit 2
DX25 35	HND Architectural Technology Graded Unit 2
DX21 34	HNC Construction Management Graded Unit 1

## General comments

It was clear from all External Verifiers' and the documentation reviewed that all staff in all centres have a clear, thorough and comprehensive understanding of the requirements of national standards demanded by the Graded Units in all Built Environment awards.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It is apparent that all assessors and Internal Verifiers, with very few exceptions, are extremely familiar with all aspects of the various Graded Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplar materials. This is epitomised by the high quality of the centre-devised alternate instruments of assessment which have been widely adopted. All of those alternate assessment materials have now been subjected either to prior verification scrutiny or external verification processes.

Two centres presented Graded Unit evidence for the first time. In both centres, the assessors were not fully conversant with the instruments of assessment and exemplar materials. During external verification, some minor development points were identified. However, these did not affect the outcome or grades for the individual candidates as the content and the processes were consistent and robust.

## Evidence Requirements

Throughout the external verification process this session there has been no significant instance of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of any of the elements of the Graded Unit programme.

As stated above, the misinterpretation of requirements, in two cases only, was very minor. Those elements were identified during external verification and remedial action was discussed, agreed and put in hand by the assessors and Internal Verifiers prior to completion of the audit. There was no significant impact on the performance of any candidates.

## **Administration of assessments**

The centres actively contribute to the Qualifications Support Team for this and associated verification groups. In this forum, there is considerable expression and sharing of good practice among the centres that benefits and enhances the understanding, application and administration of the assessment and verification processes. This also contributes greatly to the consistent, coherent and transparent application of national standards across the construction discipline.

As 'regionalisation' of the sector is embedded, many of the centres are rationalising and refining their administrative systems. It is significant that External Verifiers are already reporting that sophisticated and effective electronic systems are in place, to manage, store and record all elements of documentation to support delivery, learning, tutorial, assessment and IV and EV activities.

Several centres have adopted coherent and co-ordinated 'team' approaches to the delivery and assessment of the Graded Unit programmes. In addition, many centres are now cross-marking all submissions for the Graded Units to ensure and enhance the credibility of the grades awarded.

It is significant that **all** centres have now developed 'sanctions' policies to be applied to candidates who fail to meet the agreed submission dates for elements of work contributing to the Graded Units. The policies reflect and reinforce the conditions which are experienced in the wider built environment industry and have met with support from higher education institutes.

The content and application of the sanctions policies are coherent and consistent across the majority of the centres. They are robust, but fair and have the full support of all staff involved in delivery and assessment of the Graded Units.

All centres are critical of the grade boundary for the 'A' Grade pass in all Graded Units. The spread of 30% across the 'A' Grade is considered to be too broad and does not adequately differentiate or reward those candidates achieving greater than 85% of the marks.

## **General feedback**

Generally, feedback to candidates was found to be very good. In nearly all cases it was relevant, valid and informative. In most cases it was clearly documented in the candidates' scripts or portfolios. In a very few cases the recording of feedback to candidates was inadequate.

Once again, praise for the commitment and dedication of the staff was considerable from the candidates interviewed. Many spoke of the excellent guidance and support given throughout the delivery of the academic programme. In addition, there was encouragement and advice as they explored destination options prior to completion of their programmes.

It is evident that there are no barriers to assessment in any of the centres. Learners regularly spoke of the flexibility of assessment events and the obvious

planning that had taken place to try to avoid conflict or bunching of assessment processes.

## **Areas of good practice**

Many elements of good practice were identified across many of the centres that were audited this session. Inevitably, some elements that were exemplary in some centres were identified as areas for development in others.

Special mention was made of the following quality elements:

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- ◆ Team approach to Graded Unit delivery and assessment
- ◆ Integration of Graded Unit content with that of constituent Units
- ◆ Double-marking of all Graded Unit portfolios

## **Specific areas for improvement**

A few issues were identified in a very small minority of centres as follows:

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# SVQ awards

## General comments

All centres have demonstrated a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards this session.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Once again, it is apparent that all assessors and Internal Verifiers are thoroughly familiar with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplar materials across the broad array of SVQ awards audited this session.

## Evidence Requirements

Many of the centres reviewed this session have been delivering the SVQ awards for some time. It is evident that the staff in those centres have a broad and clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements in each Unit within the SVQ programmes. This was also evident in the centres that were presenting candidates for the first time.

## Administration of assessments

Without exception, all centres demonstrated a well-structured approach to assessment. There was clear evidence of planning, assessing, review and feedback processes embedded in all centres. These were further confirmed in the content of the candidates' portfolios.

It is significant that many of the assessment events are specific to individual candidates and are located in the candidate's site/office environment. There is no evidence of loss of content or rigour in those circumstances.

A small number of centres use self-employed consultants to effect their internal verification processes. This does offer more opportunity for 'national' standardisation of assessor judgements and reinforces the same 'national' identity of the SVQ awards.

## General feedback

Generally, feedback to candidates is very good with appropriate documentation recording feedback and indicating forward planning as preparation for the next assessment event.

Feedback from candidates, without exception, commends the support and guidance given by the appointed assessors throughout the duration of the programme. Special mention was made of the accessibility and flexibility of the assessors in their approaches to assessment.

## **Areas of good practice**

As mentioned earlier, the quality of feedback to the candidates is extremely high and very well documented.

Candidate portfolio documentation generally has been developed to a very high standard.

One centre has devised and developed an excellent IT portal system which is extremely effective throughout the assessment and verification processes. The system is extremely efficient when locating candidate evidence, assessment and internal verification documentation. Pictorial, video and audio evidence of assessor/ candidate interaction during delivery and assessment is also retained within the portal.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

In a few centres, External Verifiers asked that evidence and cross-referencing matrices be refined/ developed to assist candidates, assessors, Internal Verifiers and External Verifiers in linking evidence to standards.