



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Travel and Tourism**

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

Higher National Units

General comments

The following Units were verified during visits to presenting centres in 2014–15. In total, 12 deliveries were reported on.

DK0E 34	Applying Marketing Principles in Travel and Tourism
DK0H 34	Visitor Attraction Operations
DK04 35	Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism
DK08 35	Influences on the Travel and Tourism Industry
DJ9W 34	Structure of the Travel and Tourism Industry (two centres)
DJ9T 34	Tour Guiding and Resort Representation (two centres)
DJ9P 35	Tour Operations
F5DK 35	Food, Tourism and Culture
F6VY 34	Air Travel
F6VX 35	Air Travel Advanced

Significant strengths were reported in all centres, which would indicate that there is a clear and accurate understanding in centres of the national standards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The evidence presented in the centres that were visited indicated that centre staff are familiar with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials. In all centres, nationally devised assessment exemplar packs were being used and the marking guidelines had been adhered to and applied in accordance with SQA requirements.

Evidence Requirements

In all centres the evidence sampled was accepted as it met the standards and evidence requirements for the Units. In general, centre staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the Units.

Administration of assessments

All centres had robust quality assurance systems in operation. Assessments were planned well in advance and there were sufficient opportunities for undertaking remediation, second attempts, and the sitting of missed assessments. Assessment decisions were, in the main, appropriate and in keeping with national standards. Where Units had not been completed, the available evidence was in keeping with the Unit delivery schedules. There was also significant evidence to demonstrate that centres were undertaking internal verification and that there were close working relationships between staff and a clear understanding of verification systems in centres.

General feedback

Robust and supportive internal verification systems were in place in all centres, including standardisation meetings where delivery issues and assessment use are decided prior to and during delivery. Internal verification records were all maintained securely and included internal verification reports, the internal verification cycle and course minutes.

Feedback to candidates was generally clear and constructive.

Candidates from HND Travel and Tourism first year and second year groups were interviewed in all centres. Candidates were positive about the programme, Units studied and teaching and learning. They felt they were well prepared for future careers and/or further studies. Assessment conditions and the remediation process were well understood by candidates. They felt the course gave them the grounding to select their career choice and prepare them for work or further study. In two centres, candidates expressed a desire for more optional Unit choices but understood the resource constraints within centres.

Areas of good practice

There were several examples of good practice this year. The following were noted:

- ◆ The use of digital drop boxes for candidate assessment submissions and online marking by assessors. The software also records when candidates submit on time and gives candidates access to their results outwith timetabled classes.
- ◆ Signed declarations and the use of Turnitin to ensure candidates are aware of plagiarism. However, it was noted that this software does not permit learners to use a variety of file types or Apple Macs.
- ◆ The use of an e-assessment centre for DJ9W 34 tests was particularly impressive in one centre.
- ◆ Course action and development meetings which included feedback from learners in the review process.

Specific areas for improvement

Where Units are being delivered to several groups, centres should ensure that there is consistency in the quality of feedback given to candidates.

Candidates should be encouraged to use recognised referencing systems. This will greatly assist candidates progressing to degree programmes.

With reference to specific Units:

DJ9P 35 Tour Operations

Centres delivering this Unit must ensure candidates apply the correct formula when calculating the agent's commission element within a tour costing.

F6VY 34 Air Travel and F6VX 35 Air Travel Advanced

Centres are encouraged to regularly redevelop their own teaching and support materials for these Units to ensure they reflect up-to-date industry practice.

Higher National Graded Units

The following Graded Units were verified during visits to presenting centres in 2014–15.

- H1J6 34 Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 1
- H1J7 35 Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 2 (five centres)
- F6J2 35 Activity Tourism Graded Unit 2
- F6J3 35 Activity Tourism Graded Unit 3 (central verification)

Significant strengths were reported in all centres visited.

General comments

All the presenting centres visited experienced successful verification of their Graded Units.

A good understanding of the requirements of the Graded Units was evident. HND year 2 candidates found the Graded Unit 2 projects challenging but recognised that the Units studied gave them the knowledge and understanding to complete the investigation successfully. Selecting their own topic made the investigation more interesting and some candidates commented that they felt it had helped determine their future career choice.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Master packs, usually stored electronically, were comprehensive and included internally devised forms. These packs detailed procedures for assessment and re-assessment, teaching and learning methods, learning resources, assessment conditions, assessment instruments, marking, assessment solutions, and learning and teaching schedules.

Evidence Requirements

Staff in centres had a clear understanding of Evidence Requirements.

Administration of assessments

Centre information included reviews of resources, equipment and assessment environments. Candidates and staff attend these meetings. Meeting records are stored in master folders or on the centres' intranets. Internal verification procedures include pre-, mid- and post-reviews and any identified actions are recorded and reviewed. In all cases, the most up-to-date SQA assessment exemplar packs had been used. Candidates had completed the planning and development stages and tutor judgement of candidate performance was generally appropriate. In some centres the evaluation stage had also been completed and marked.

Standardisation of assessment decisions was confirmed through the internal verification process. Internal verification processes were applied consistently in accordance with centres' procedures. The assessment decisions for the Graded Units that were sampled were satisfactory for the stages that had been completed.

Candidate interviews confirmed that they had fair access to assessment and remediation arrangements.

General feedback

External Verifiers confirmed that the grades proposed in all centres were accepted.

EVs highlighted good practice in most reports and continue to note robust and supportive internal verification systems in place.

Assessors were found to have provided candidates with good feedback and made constructive comments where appropriate. They are complimented for the detailed constructive feedback given to candidates, identifying strengths and weaknesses in their projects. Records were up to date. In all cases, marking was confirmed as fair and met national standards.

Candidates were again found to be producing an interesting range of original topics, which clearly demonstrated their ability to apply the knowledge and skills learned during their programme in a practical task.

Candidates reported that they generally found the project to be a good experience which gave them a sense of personal achievement. They also felt that the Graded Unit project linked well to the subjects in the HND programme and prepared them for progression to employment and/or university. The exam-based Graded Unit 3 for the HND in Activity tourism was operating effectively.

Areas of good practice

Although the following examples of good practice were highlighted in previous years, they were once again mentioned in verifier reports in 2015:

- ◆ Preparation for verification visits by centre quality assurance staff was commendable
- ◆ Assessors and internal verifiers meeting frequently thus demonstrating that review and improvement of delivery is constant
- ◆ Second marking of projects and standardisation meetings are both very good practice
- ◆ In several centres good use of VLEs was evident to support and guide candidates outside class time. Submission of the various stages via the VLE ensured candidates were aware of deadlines and the use of Turnitin software helped to ensure the authenticity of candidates' work

Additionally, in 2015 the following good practice was noted:

- ◆ The use of 'My Portfolio' in one centre allowed assessors to give online feedback. One candidate produced a 'client pack' online accessed by a web link*. The requirement for a web page design in Activity Tourism Graded Unit 2, represented a stimulating challenge for candidates. Some interesting designs were produced.
- ◆ The centre which developed the Activity Tourism examination mentioned in the section above is commended for developing and delivering a high quality instrument of assessment.
- ◆ Several centres released staff to attend SQA Network events, QDT and QST meetings.

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Wherever possible, centres are advised to timetable mandatory Units in the first teaching block to give candidates knowledge and understanding required for the Graded Unit.
- ◆ Centres are encouraged to use a VLE/Turnitin software as part of delivery, if not currently doing so.
- ◆ Tutors should ensure any Graded Unit guidelines reflect the centre's policy on quality assurance and are clearly explicit with regard to rules on late submission and grading following remediation.
- ◆ Candidates should complete declarations to confirm the work was their own at each stage of the project, not just at the evaluation stage.
- ◆ The planning stage should include detailed timescale plans to give the candidates the opportunity to fully evaluate their plan.

With reference to **H1J7 35 Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 2:**

- ◆ Tutors should provide careful guidelines when considering candidates' choices of topic for study to ensure that they have sound support from their industry contact and that it will be possible to obtain primary statistical information related to the business organisation.
- ◆ Some scripts failed to cite sources. In such instances centres should consider how referencing could be improved.
- ◆ To ensure projects are presented to industry standards, tutors should discourage candidates from including too many screenshots and appendices in projects.
- ◆ Monitoring the choice of topics for Graded Unit 2 enables tutors to intervene and block certain topics which, experience has demonstrated, would be poorly tackled by candidates.

*With reference to the development of websites, centres should warn candidates against placing their projects on websites which are accessible to the general public.