



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2015  
Art and Design**

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

Those centres that were externally verified all demonstrated clear understanding of the delivery and assessment requirements of HN Units. The national standard was adhered to and this was demonstrated in the accuracy of both the assessment and internal verification of candidate folios.

Work seen was varied, individually creative and reflected the quality of tuition received. By emphasising the need for candidates to adopt an individually artistic and professional approach to their work, centres have generally increased the quality and quantity of work produced.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Evidence has shown that in all centres staff have good understanding of the requirements stated in the Unit specifications and have produced clear documentation and guidance both for staff and students as to the implementation of these. All were aware of, and used, exemplification material published by SQA.

## Evidence Requirements

The majority of candidate evidence seen indicated a clear knowledge and understanding of the Unit specifications and what evidence was required to meet the stated criteria. Internal verification was a strong factor in this and an increasing emphasis on minuted meetings with clearly defined action plans and responsibilities greatly helped in clarifying any issues regarding these requirements.

## Administration of assessments

The majority of centres now have clear and informative documentation covering all aspects of internal verification and assessment. Quality managers ensure course materials are relevant, valid and are countersigned.

Good examples were where assessments are detailed, indicating the number of interim assessments, results and remediation requirements, where applicable. Good practice was where staff, team marked, and informative discussion took place around the assessment of candidate work. The presence of the internal verifier also benefited assessors as when they were present at, and participated in, the marking process; this enabled informed discussion and accuracy of assessments.

Where integrated assessment is used over a number of Units there should be a clear matrix or structured assessment sheet which shows where Outcomes are integrated and how the completed Outcome criteria match those of the other Units/Outcomes.

## **General feedback**

Diagnostic and formative feedback was part of all successful departments' quality assurance and ensured full awareness of progress and attainment.

In general this was ongoing feedback and was of a good standard, clearly stated, supportive in nature and welcomed by the students for its positive benefit. For staff and students the use of personal feedback, monitoring and access to course materials and mentoring notes through IT-based applications such as Moodle, iLearn and blogs proved to be very successful in keeping all parties up to date and informed.

The inclusion of course timetables, progress records, Unit specifications and support materials was extremely beneficial.

Mentoring feedback was clear, informative and encouraging.

Staff using Moodle etc had noted positive improvements. Feedback from the students indicated that they too had benefited in that they had all the course information, support material, tutor feedback, assessment and monitoring evidence available online.

Feedback from candidates showed them to be articulate and enthusiastic which reflected the high quality tutoring and commitment of the Art and Design staff in each centre.

Candidates interviewed all felt that Art and Design staff were very committed and personally encouraging in their development throughout the session.

All centres presented assessment documentation as requested and met the requirements for an external quality assurance visit.

The evidence indicates that where minuted regular staff meetings take place to monitor and discuss all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, the courses run more smoothly with fewer issues or problems.

The use of predictive grading and stage reports seems to have positive benefits for the students in creating more awareness of progress, attainment, or need for remediation.

Harmonisation of course structures, documentation, assessment, and internal verification across campuses will be an important factor in ensuring quality assurance in the future.

## **Areas of good practice**

Those centres which had created time and opportunity for staff to look into employing an integrated approach to Unit delivery had been able to create a more effective, flexible course delivery and assessment structure. The

importance of a clear matrix indicating where commonality occurs must be stressed.

Where emphasising the use of transferrable skills in Unit progression, including utilising existing research and investigation across Units, there had been a marked improvement in the work produced, the understanding of the Art and Design process and also the additional time gained for developing specific skills.

Encouraging CPD and arranging in this for staff to visit other centres had enabled them to feel more confident in the assessment process, created an awareness of current developments, and brought fresh initiatives in approaches to the construction and delivery of their courses.

Taking part in group assessment rather than individually assessing had allowed staff to discuss candidate work, enabling more effective and consistent assessment.

Centres which encouraged students to be more confident in their personal creativity, emphasising the need for structured development of ideas coupled with relevant annotations in their sketch books, had produced exciting high standard work overall.

Use of blogs or VLEs such as Moodle and iLearn had positive benefits for understanding and feedback as it allowed all course materials to be readily accessed and staff to monitor effectively progress and support students where required. It also enabled monitoring of candidate work, attendance and the identification of guidance or support issues.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Where Art and Design Units are integrated in a course or award delivered by another subject discipline, the centre must ensure that the Unit specifications are delivered with the specialist emphasis intended. This means liaising with a subject specialist to ensure content, artistic emphasis, specific technical emphasis and assessable materials meet the subject specialism requirements.

# Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

F1X2 34 Art and Design 1  
F1X3 35 Art and Design 2  
FA6G 34 Contemporary Art Practice 1  
FA6H 35 Contemporary Art Practice 2  
FA6E 34 Visual Communication 1  
F0H9 35 Visual Communication 2  
DX9X 34 Visual Communication  
F7FD 34 3D Computer Animation 1  
F7FE 35 3D Computer Animation  
F4PG 35 Filmcraft and Animation 2  
DX44 34 3D Design 1  
F13R 35 3D Design 2  
DX44 34 Interior Design

## General comments

The Graded Unit delivery and assessment in particular, seems to be well understood by all centres.

The majority of departments had managed to complete the Units prior to external quality assurance and showed clear and accurate understanding of Unit specifications, national standards and SQA requirements.

There is less inhibition in awarding marks at the high end as staff get more confident and accustomed to matching achievement in terms of the grade criteria for each Outcome in the Unit at that level.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The Unit specifications are by now well understood and being assessed correctly. Exemplification materials are still being used, enhanced and improved on, without affecting the requirements of the Units. The breaking down of marks for each element into specific criteria for attainment has helped staff to more effectively and confidently decide the level of attainment.

## Evidence Requirements

Generally the evidence submitted was of a good, to very good standard, which was evidenced in the variety, quality and breadth of artistic creativity displayed. The evidence requirements were presented particularly well in sketch books, portfolios or electronic media.

Much of the research, investigation, and development were well annotated and showed good understanding of the Unit specifications.

Evaluation continues to show in many instances sound understanding of the processes the candidates have gone through in completing the Unit. However, there still are instances where, in the evaluations as well as sketch books, far too much writing has taken place which is just padding.

### **Administration of assessments**

Centre documentation was generally of a very high standard, covering all aspects of centre and SQA requirements. Assessment material was well written clearly indicating all requirements for internal and external assessment and verification. Specific times were set aside for all aspects of course management with appropriate documentation covering, mentoring, feedback, assessment and internal verification.

Staff meetings were minuted and covered specific issues related to course development, implementation and quality assurance. Detailed timescales and responsibilities were stated which was to be commended.

Group marking was often used to ensure clear understanding of each candidate's work before recording grade and mark, this proved to be most effective and marks were concordant with the national standard.

Internal verification was at its most effective when both assessors and internal verifiers discussed the candidate work, course support and assessment material and clarified any issues or concerns.

### **General feedback**

All candidates spoken to appeared knowledgeable about their work and the courses they were undertaking. All praised the quality, enthusiasm and commitment of the Art and Design staff. Most intended to continue with their course either at college or in higher education. They spoke highly of the support they had received and how the feedback from staff had been positive, supportive and relevant.

This was well documented in the mentoring feedback sheets and course or Unit evaluations.

The use of IT to allow access, at all times, to course materials and feedback was seen as very positive.

All felt they had sufficient access to assessments and staff felt that by having individual contact through IT — Moodle etc — had positive results in keeping students and staff aware of progress, attainment, absence and concerns where guidance and support could be offered.

## **Areas of good practice**

Centres which encouraged students to be confident in showing their personal creativity, structured development of ideas coupled with relevant annotations in their sketch books, had produced exciting, high standard work overall.

Where design briefs are supported with clear explanations of what they mean, as well as clearly stated criteria to be achieved, enabled students to feel more confident in interpreting and tackling them.

Bibliographies of common art terms and professional terminology were a great help in ensuring understanding for all levels of ability and experience.

Mentoring sessions were most successful where candidates came to them with clear knowledge of what they were for and what could be discussed.

Feedback to candidates was at its best when clearly stating where work met the stated criteria and where it was not meeting it and what they should do, without leading or directly influencing.

Where candidates had access to online course notes, support material, feedback and mentoring notes the benefit was obvious in their understanding and confidence in tackling the Units.

Integration of Outcomes enabled students to better understand transferrable skills and allowed more time to develop course work.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Departments should try to ensure that the Graded Units are delivered with sufficient time to complete and remediate, if necessary, before the end of session. Relevant annotation, particularly on the development sheets should be encouraged as an additional means of explaining the creative process.

Evaluations need more thought, emphasising the relevance of the processes that had been gone through, the evolution of ideas, time management successes or otherwise, what had been achieved, and where other approaches or emphasis might have improved the final outcome; rather than a blow-by-blow progression of everything that had happened throughout the Unit.

However, it has to be said there is a general improvement in the quality of evaluations and more understanding generally of what an evaluation should contain.