



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2014  
Beauty Therapy**

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

Centres have delivered the current HNC/HND Beauty qualification over several years and have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards.

During 2013–14, SQA revised some HN Units due to feedback received from centre representatives at an HN Beauty Therapy Network meeting. Generally, centres seem to be aware of these amendments to the Units.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres are familiar with the Unit specifications and have developed instruments of assessment over time, which often have been sent to SQA for prior verification. The majority of centres use the SQA assessment exemplars for the mandatory Units within the HNC and HND framework.

Centres do not often use the HN online Candidate Support Packs for Body Massage; Facial Treatments; and Face and Body Electrotherapy. These are available from SQA's secure website and can be downloaded to a college intranet/VLE.

Generally, centres had the current Unit specification, and had checked it was current, prior to delivery of the Unit. However, where some assessment exemplars had been revised, some centre staff were not aware of the new exemplification material.

## Evidence Requirements

Centres, generally, have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the HN Units being delivered. The SQA assessment exemplars for the mandatory Units give clear guidance on what Evidence Requirements are required.

It was noted through external verification that one centre was not meeting the Evidence Requirements for Beauty Therapy: Depilation and for Beauty Therapy: Nail Extensions. In addition, in some centres formative assessment can cause additional workload and over-assessment for the candidates. Where this was noted the centre was advised to reduce formative assessments.

## Administration of assessments

Many centres are making the transition from storing their Unit assessment material on paper-based master files to electronic files. Some centres are using their VLE to allow candidates to access course material and to post their assessments and receive assessor feedback.

Centres with centre-devised instruments of assessment often have the instrument of assessment prior verified by SQA, as well as going through their own internal verification process.

Some centres have integrated Unit instruments of assessment where appropriate. These then can be cross-referenced and this streamlines the assessment process for assessors and candidates.

Internal verification will often start with pre-delivery internal verification to ensure currency of the Unit specification.

Generally, an internal verification schedule for the academic year will identify the final verification activity. Some centres are storing internal verification material on their centre intranet, which can be viewed by all staff and external verifiers.

Regular HN team meetings and course team meetings are recorded where standardisation has been discussed and this supports the internal verification process.

### **General feedback**

Feedback to candidates was generally constructive and this was evidenced by verbal feedback recorded from candidates who were interviewed during the external verification process. The written feedback evidenced on assessor feedback forms attached to candidate assessments was also very supportive.

Candidates who were interviewed were very positive with regards to their course and felt they had good access to their tutors who gave them very good support and guidance.

Generally, centres are well resourced and continue to refurbish their salon environments, purchasing contemporary equipment to try to provide a realistic work experience for the candidates.

However, one group of candidates did feedback that because of their large group size this had caused a lack of salon space and a reduction in equipment available for them all to use at the one time. This had caused difficulties in completing certain practical Units.

Many candidates participated in external work experience as part of their course. Centres also provided additional enrichment activities from industry/commercial stakeholders.

### **Areas of good practice**

One centre involves candidates in promotional work, raising their awareness of environmental issues and gaining assessment evidence from their project.

One centre had developed a Unit Summative Checklist for each practical Unit they were delivering, which the assessor used as an aid to ensure all ranges,

number of treatments, clients and observations were completed. It also allowed an easy check on the candidates' progress to-date.

Centres continue to provide additional opportunities for candidates to attend contemporary industry training sessions during their time at college.

Some centres ensure there is commercial salon time within the HNC/HND candidate's timetable to allow them to further develop their practical skills to enhance their opportunity of finding employment.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

When delivering the Unit DN6R 35: Product Knowledge, ensure the candidates are encouraged to research a wide variety of product brands with various price ranges.

Programme team meetings must be recorded to help provide evidence that standardisation is taking place within the team.

When remediation is carried out, ensure it is clearly indicated and that the assessor and candidate signs and dates the evidence for authentication.

Assessors and/or internal verifiers should always check Unit currency before a Unit is delivered.

Centres should continue to reduce over-assessment and integrate Unit assessment where possible.

# Higher National Graded Units

Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 1 F3SA34

Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2 DP6035

## General comments

Centres generally have a clear understanding of the requirements of the national Graded Unit standards. When new assessors are delivering a Graded Unit, usually they ensure an experienced assessor mentors the new assessor on the process and the expected assessment evidence from candidates. New, inexperienced assessors can be unsure of marking the Graded Unit and of the remediation and re-assessment procedure.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Experienced assessors are familiar with the Unit specifications and instruments of assessment. Centres are using the assessment exemplars and the marking guides contained within the exemplars. The assessment exemplar for Graded Unit 2 does not give a mentoring record pro forma for recording meetings with candidates. However, there is an example in the Graded Unit 1 assessment exemplar that some centres use.

SQA has developed TAPs for both Graded Unit 1 and Graded Unit 2, not all centres were fully utilising these materials.

## Evidence Requirements

The assessment exemplar marking guides give an indication of what the assessor can accept as the minimum evidence required for each stage of the project. Additional marks are not justified for those candidates who meet just the minimum evidence of a stage.

The assessor can justify giving additional marks if the candidate response has included the criteria in the marking guide for grades within the Unit specification. Assessors are advised to check against these criteria when potentially marking a candidate as A grade.

Though the Graded Unit 2 specification does not specify an exact number of treatments that the candidate has to complete in order for the investigation to be satisfactory, the candidate should be following the equipment manufacturer's recommended number of treatments to get the best results where possible. The diary sheet within the Graded Unit 1 assessment exemplar could be used by the candidate to provide more evidence of logging their planning activities rather than it just being used to record submission dates and dates of meetings.

## **Administration of assessments**

Centres generally are now giving the candidates an induction into the Graded Unit very early on in their academic session, to allow candidates more time to prepare and research for the planning stage.

For Graded Unit 1, centres are encouraging the candidates to be creative when preparing their own personal space for their performance for the development stage.

Some centres are continuing to purchase additional contemporary electrical equipment and this is allowing a greater flexibility for candidates when carrying out their investigation for Graded Unit 2.

To deliver the Graded Units, experienced assessors are normally drawn from a team. They work closely together and it is good practice where they double-mark each other's candidate evidence. The candidates' evidence may be anonymous to the second assessor to ensure the marking is fair.

Centres ensure that their centre internal verification procedures have been completed for the Graded Units in order to standardise the marking and grades awarded by the assessor. This includes a pre-delivery internal verification procedure and an initial meeting between internal verifier and assessors.

The assessor and internal verifier will generally work very closely during the Graded Unit process. The internal verifier is normally an experienced assessor of Graded Units so can also mentor any new assessors.

## **General feedback**

The assessment exemplar for Graded Unit 1 has a template to use for recording mentoring sessions with candidates and most centres have adopted this recording mechanism for feedback.

Generally, written recorded feedback from assessors to candidates can at times be limited, which then doesn't reflect the additional marks awarded to the candidate.

Candidates can feedback that the Graded Units are hard work and the timing of the Units can coincide with them trying to complete their other studies. Generally, most have enjoyed the experience and see the relevance to their studies.

Candidates for Graded Unit 1 can take great pride in preparing their treatment area and welcome the opportunity to impress their clients and assessor.

The length of time given to candidates to complete the development stage for Graded Unit 2 can be very limited. This can disadvantage a candidate's evaluation stage as it reduces the information and statistics they gather from the investigation in order to compare and contrast their pieces of equipment.

Centres, occasionally, agree to visit dates when they have only assessed evidence for the planning stage. This does not allow the external verification process to verify the potential grades to be awarded to the candidates. There should be assessed candidate evidence for both the planning and developing stages presented for external verification.

There is some difficulty with assessors giving high marks and A grades where the candidate evidence does not reflect this grade and the assessor's feedback does not justify the high grade.

This also often arises from centres using mechanistic marking rather than holistic marking of the project as a whole. Additional guidance on marking is often given by external verifiers during the course of their external verification visit, though some centres are advised to request a development visit to allow more in-depth guidance and support.

## **Areas of good practice**

Indicating the date when an assessment exemplar or Unit specification was downloaded confirms currency.

Having a formal centre procedural form, that requires the candidate to sign it, is useful when a candidate does not meet their submission date. This confirms that the candidate is aware of, and agrees to, the centre's re-assessment policy — and knows that the centre will follow its policy.

Candidates design their own client consultation record for Graded Unit 1, which encourages autonomy given to each candidate.

Centre-devised logbooks allow the candidate to record multiple entries of all their activities that contribute towards their planning stage. This provides the candidate with good evidence to 'show information gathered in response to the brief' for Graded Unit 1.

Candidates are asked to initially devise three treatment packages for their Graded Unit 1 clients and then reflect on the best package to suit their client. This is used to encourage the candidate to give more reasons for their choice of treatment package.

Additional workshops by student services provided advice on how to avoid plagiarism and how to reference correctly.

The use of permission slips when using photographs of clients within candidate evidence is to be commended.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Assessors should refer to the guide given within each Graded Unit specification and follow the requirements for an A grade and C grade.

Continue to encourage the candidates to improve their scholarly skills in critical thinking and evaluative writing.

Centres should standardise their approach to referencing and ensure consistency across assessors on the format of the presentation of project reports.

Centres should refer to SQA's *Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher Certificates and Diplomas* when delivering and marking Graded Units. This guidance also gives advice on remediation and re-assessment and how to manage 'reasonable assistance'.

Centres need to advise candidates to ensure any photographs used in their project are of a good standard and add value to their evidence.