



Internal Assessment Report: HN Business Graded Units (390)

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

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified

DE3V 35: HN Business Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

DE3W 35: HN Business Graded Unit 3 (SCQF level 8)

General comments

Verification activity during this academic session has been limited. This is due to the successful external verification of candidate evidence over the past few years, and because there are few new centres offering the Graded Units for the first time. Both the Graded Unit 2 project and Graded Unit 3 were verified this session, but no Graded Unit 1 candidate evidence was selected on this occasion.

Assessors appeared to be familiar with the Unit Specifications and used the relevant assessment exemplars.

It is very easy to become over-reliant on the assessment exemplars, and it is important that assessors and those involved in internal verification refer back to the Unit specifications. Through verification and discussions with staff at various centres, it was apparent that those involved in the delivery and verification of the Graded Units were referring to both the assessment exemplars and the Unit specifications.

For the Graded Unit 2 project, there was some evidence that there was difficulty in getting candidates to submit the three stages of the project on time. This is an issue that almost certainly extends beyond the centres verified this session, and is a concern that needs to be addressed. Careful management throughout the delivery of the Unit is required. This will in part be gained through experience, but those centres with an established track record in delivering Graded Unit 2 also need to exercise care.

Candidates need to be made aware of the need to carefully select a suitable subject for their project, and that to some extent this will determine their potential degree of success. The links between the project stages need to be explained, and the importance of the planning/brief stage made clear.

It is very easy to lose momentum with a project group of students, as other Units can easily become a distraction. It is vital that centres try to avoid candidates placing the project 'on hold' for any extended period of time.

Graded Unit 3 requires continued focus by all involved to ensure that the appropriate standard is applied.

Centres that underwent external verification applied the required standards. Continued care needs to be exercised in all Graded Units in ensuring that the process of awarding marks is transparent and considered, and that candidates receive the grades that their work deserves.

Areas of good practice

One centre devised a new set of questions for a Graded Unit 3 case study. The centre largely adapted existing questions from a number of published assessment exemplars, ensuring that the correct balance of marks was maintained for each subject, and for the integrative questions. This was a good approach to a difficult task, and the questions successfully passed through prior verification.

It is often difficult to distinguish between essential and good practice. There is certainly evidence that centres are providing good feedback to candidates, taking care in assessing the candidate evidence against the Evidence Requirements.

What might have been viewed as good practice in the past often becomes the norm over time, and arguably it becomes more difficult to introduce further innovation and creativity. One example from a previous year was where a centre recommended appropriate formatting for the project and gave candidates the opportunity to have their projects professionally bound. Professional binding is certainly not a requirement of the project, but candidates who did so gained a tangible example of their work that they could show potential employers and educational establishments.

Areas for improvement

The main concerns relate to the need for continuing care in the delivery and management of the Graded Unit 2 project as outlined previously.