



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2016  
Business: Graded Unit**

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

# Higher National graded units

F8LD 34 Business: Graded Unit 1 SCQF level 7

F8LE 35 Business: Graded Unit 2 SCQF level 8

## General comments

Centres have now had a period of time to adjust to the changes in recent years that have arisen as a result of regionalisation. Staffing continues to change and new staff in some centres are delivering graded units for the first time. Centres have to accommodate the challenges posed by delivery of graded units across different sites and often with using other staff at those different sites. There was evidence that most centres have moved forward in a positive manner in implementing greater co-ordination and standardisation in assessing and internally verifying candidate evidence across the different sites. In the past year there have been some changes in the approach to quality assurance used by SQA, and centres have adapted to these changes.

Qualification verification activity this year focused on F8LD 34 Business: Graded Unit 1 due to the implementation of new approaches to selecting centres for qualification verification visits. It is anticipated that next academic session there will be a return to selecting F8LE 35 Business: Graded Unit 2 for qualification verification visits in the second half of the academic year. At central verification there was evidence that centres have a strong appreciation of the standards expected in the examination (Business: Graded Unit 1).

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Different centres used different assessment support packs (ASPs) and it appears that centres are rotating the use of different ASPs each year, which is to be encouraged. There was a high degree of success at the external verification event and this demonstrated that the staff involved with the graded unit have become familiar with the requirements of the unit and developed strategies that are appropriate for the delivery and assessment of the unit. There was excellent feedback provided from a centre about the newest ASP. It is a valuable and helpful approach to both SQA and the centre in question when careful scrutiny of assessments is carried out and feedback to SQA is given, when appropriate.

Changes can be made to the ASP and graded unit specification at any point in time and it remains essential that centres maintain checks to ensure they are using the most up-to-date versions. Similar checks must be made between the different sites within a centre to ensure everyone is using the correct version.

## Evidence requirements

Centres selected for central verification again demonstrated that they have a good understanding of the evidence requirements in the graded unit. Some

centres demonstrated an effective use of standardisation with detailed records showing decisions made and providing a rationale for those decisions. This is now crucial because of the increased size of institutions and the expanded number of sites from which many centres now operate. Centres often hold a markers' meeting prior to marking taking place to try to ensure that the approach to marking is uniform and justified. Regular contact and discussion between staff is essential to help avoid differences in interpretation and meetings should be recorded to provide evidence that this is taking place, which can then be sent to SQA along with the candidate evidence for central verification.

### **Administration of assessments**

All centres are reported as organising and assessing candidates in accordance with the requirements set out in the graded unit specification. Where computers are used by a candidate in completing the examination there needs to be appropriate measures in place to disable any aids such as spellcheck that would provide an unfair disadvantage. Appropriate security also must be in place to prevent additional copies of responses being made and taken out of the examination by candidates.

The continuing security of assessments is crucial in safeguarding the integrity of the awards and measures to ensure photographs or other means of recording question papers are put in place. All question papers should be taken in by the centre at the end of the examination and fully accounted for.

### **General feedback**

Feedback for the examination is often limited and most centres will provide a grade to each candidate rather than their mark. Where candidates do not achieve a pass on their first attempt more specific detail should be provided to help the candidates understand areas of weaknesses and where they can improve.

### **Areas of good practice**

Good practice continues to be identified but, in the main, a lot of good practice identified in the past has now become the norm.

One essential requirement for central verification is evidence that internal verification is taking place and is effective. There were examples this year where there were excellent records of meetings submitted, which provided valuable feedback on the assessments used and also gave a valuable insight into how decisions were arrived at. The best records clearly showed how differences in marks were resolved and how grades were checked.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Whilst there were excellent records of meetings relating to standardisation provided, this is also an area where some centres need to focus their attention. There are still cases where the records are little more than a cursory checklist. The checks were rudimentary and there was little evidence of the discussion

behind the marking decisions. This is an area that needs to be improved in some centres and there will be a stronger approach regarding this at both visits and in central verification events in the coming year.

The security of all assessments, but in particular the examination graded units continue to be of prime importance and ongoing vigilance and effort is essential from all centres and staff.