



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2016
Chemistry**

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

Two external verification visits were carried out by the team this academic session, and the standard of assessing observed on the visits was good. Both of the centres visited had a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards and had correct and appropriate assessment specifications.

Centres offering specific HN qualifications are fully aware of the changes to the HN Applied Chemical Sciences framework and are fully prepared for the transition to the revised group award. There was felt to be an improvement in the standard of exemplar assessments available for the new units in comparison to the old. The Understanding Standards materials for the Laboratory Skills for Science Industries unit (H91V 34) will also set the standard for laboratory work and reporting across the science units, and this was welcomed by centres.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In both centres visited, the assessors showed a high degree of familiarity with the unit specifications and the instruments of assessment, and were familiar with the exemplification material. This ensured the reliability of assessment in these centres and resulted in excellent standards of assessment.

In both centres visited, centres were using valid and reliable instruments of assessment which satisfied the unit specifications.

In both centres visited there was good judgement of learner performance with clear marking schemes in use. In both cases there was clear evidence of fair and consistent marking.

The assessment judgments by assessors and internal verifiers were confirmed by external verification to be accurate.

Both of the centres visited were using the 'old' HN units, and were intending to progress to the new HN Applied Chemical Sciences framework in session 2016–17. As stated above, the Understanding Standards materials for the Laboratory Skills for Science Industries unit (H91V 34) will set the standard for laboratory work and reporting across the science units. These documents can be accessed from SQA's Understanding Standards website ([SQA Understanding Standards](#)). Centres are strongly advised to follow the standards as specified in these documents.

Evidence requirements

There was good evidence from both centres of a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the units verified. This ensured that in these centres

the assessment instruments were appropriate, fair and reliable, and the assessment specifications were correct.

Administration of assessments

Excellent judgement of learner performance and robust standardisation was observed in both centres through comprehensive sampling for verification. In both centres, the internal verifiers carried out their work appropriately and fairly.

Both centres had clear, effective and routinely applied policies regarding the administration of assessments. All assessment conditions complied with the requirements of the relevant unit specification.

Both centres complied with SQA policies and procedures regarding retention of evidence, security of storage and dissemination of external quality control reports.

General feedback

Overall, this was a successful year for both centres involved in the external verification exercise.

Delivery of units at the centres visited was appropriate. Assessment materials and assessment decisions were equitable, valid, reliable and fair.

External verifiers were in agreement with all of the assessment and internal verification decisions made.

Assessors and verifiers were well qualified and had a good grasp of the standards required. The new assessment support packs and Understanding Standards materials will provide further support to centres in the next session.

Areas of good practice

External verifiers' comments in relation to good practice are included below:

- ◆ If learners missed a lesson/tutorial, they could catch up on the lesson/tutorial using the in-house VLE platform.
- ◆ There was excellent use and accessibility of VLE portals.
- ◆ Use was made of an online 'grade centre', which allowed learners to track progress, read feedback and submit a remediated version of a report.
- ◆ Minuted evidence of internal verification and standardisation was kept.
- ◆ One centre had produced several documents such as checklists for assessors and checklists for learners to track achievements.

Specific areas for improvement

No specific areas for improvement were identified during the external verification visits undertaken this session.

However, as mentioned above, centres should follow the standards set out in the Understanding Standards materials for the Laboratory Skills for Science Industries unit (H91V 34) as they move to the new group award. These materials give extensive guidance on standards for laboratory practicals and reporting for units across the HN science suite. Adhering to the standards as specified in these materials will help to ensure that centres meet a consistent national standard in laboratory reporting.