



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2015 Childcare

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

The centres visited this year have mainly provided evidence of a good understanding of the national standards for HN Units. Work sampled across most centres indicated that candidates were working to a suitable standard and being assessed appropriately.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all centres visited this year, assessors were very familiar with Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials. Most centres had made good attempts to integrate Units where appropriate. When integrating Units, assessors and internal verifiers should always make sure a robust tracking system is in place in order to ensure all performance criteria are met. This will be particularly important as the sector moves forward with the revised HNC Childhood Practice award that takes a more holistic approach to delivery and assessment.

Evidence Requirements

Centre teams were clear on the Evidence Requirements for the Units sampled and some had very good checklist tracking to ensure coverage of all Evidence Requirements, particularly where Units had been integrated. This was evident across SCQF levels 7 and 8.

In all centres visited, assessors and internal verifiers worked hard to make sure that SCQF requirements for levels 7 and 8 were met. Candidates were encouraged to use appropriate referencing systems and all centres recognised that candidates benefited from being encouraged to reference their work from the beginning of the course. Assessor feedback indicated that candidates were being reminded of these requirements regularly throughout their course of study.

Administration of assessments

All centres appear to be working well with the HNC EE&CC and the PDA Childhood Practice qualifications. All centres visited have some form of integration of Units. In some instances centres had to be reminded to ensure that Unit numbers are more clearly visible for candidates in order that candidates understand what they are undertaking when integration is happening.

Remediation of candidate work is usually clearly marked and appropriate recording of candidates' results appears to remain robust across the sector.

There is good use of VLEs and Turnitin to support candidates with assessment administration, provision of feedback, accessing of materials, and as a group support mechanism.

All centres visited had good robust internal verification systems in place that allowed for a satisfactory degree of self-regulation across the qualifications verified.

General feedback

Centres have again demonstrated that they have some very good feedback mechanisms for candidates, particularly where a VLE is used. Candidates are able to go back at any time and re-read feedback on the VLE sites. One-to-one feedback is still a feature particularly where students need support to move forward.

Feedback from candidates indicated that they were very satisfied with their experience and almost all felt they had learned a great deal from their course of study. Most candidates who had progressed from one level to the next mentioned the differences in level of study and spoke positively about the support offered as they made the transition from one level to the next. All candidates interviewed were keen to mention that they felt supported in the classroom and in their placement. The placement experience remains as invaluable as ever to all candidates interviewed.

Centres were keen to discuss the new HNC Childhood Practice qualification and were advised to work with providers as early as possible in order to support their understanding of the requirements of the qualification. Centres were reminded that assessing staff will require appropriate qualifications to assess the SVQ part of the revised HNC. Again this year, EVs reported that the new revised quality assurance system was welcomed and centres were keen to raise issues and discuss new ways of working in an open and purposeful manner.

Areas of good practice

Across all centres visited, assessors appeared to be paying particular attention to the integration of assessment. This will stand them in good stead when they move forward with the revised HNC Childhood Practice award where they will be required to take an even more holistic approach to assessment.

This year again saw a greater increased use of VLEs across centres visited; this was considered an enhancement to the student experience. Online assessment, administration, provision of feedback, access to materials and the provision of online group support mechanisms were some of the benefits students reported when engaged with VLE systems.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres should ensure that paperwork and documentation carries up to date (correct) Unit numbers.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

HNC Early Education and Child Care Graded Unit 1

PDA Childhood Practice Graded Unit 2

General comments

All centres visited this year appeared to have a good understanding of the national standards for HN Graded Units 1 and 2. Candidates across the centres visited were working to an appropriate standard and were assessed appropriately. External Verifiers are required to examine at least two parts of the Graded Unit and all candidate work requested should be made available.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, assessors appeared to be familiar with the Unit specifications and all centres produced appropriate instruments of assessment. Most centres provided candidates with support materials in the form of a guide booklet to help candidates develop their evidence-gathering skills.

Evidence Requirements

External Verifiers reported that the centres visited were comfortable with the Evidence Requirements for Graded Units 1 and 2. Clear distinctions were made between the Graded Units at levels 7 and 8. External Verifiers noted that centres offered candidates appropriate guidelines for each level and appropriate topic selection was more robust this year.

Administration of assessments

Most centres appeared to have a good understanding of where and when to best place the Graded Unit in the programme of study, ie after mandatory Units had been completed and candidates had undertaken placements. External Verifiers found that assessments were generally marked promptly and feedback given to candidates in order that students could progress to the next stage.

Almost all centres had robust internal verification procedures in place and standardisation of candidate work across assessors was clearly evidenced. Centres appear keen to ensure appropriate standardisation of the Graded Unit and often the internal verification of the Unit is in excess of the requirements for SQA quality assurance; however, this is done to support assessors and is not considered an issue by the External Verifiers.

General feedback

External Verifiers reported that centres provided good levels of feedback for candidates, often with one-to-one meetings to ensure candidates were clear on how to move to the next stage. Overall, centres have again provided positive learning environments that allow candidates to select suitable topics for investigation.

Areas of good practice

Very good use of detailed feedback is being used by some centres to support candidates through all stages of the Graded Units. Candidates can reflect on their learning and identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

Specific areas for improvement

For Graded Units 1 and 2, all centres should ensure to only offer high marks where there is sufficient analysis and interpretation of findings.