



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2016 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

All centres visited this year provided evidence that staff have a sound understanding of the national standards for HN units in Childcare. Work sampled across all centres indicated that candidates were working to a suitable standard and are being assessed appropriately.

Staff at the centres visited were knowledgeable about their subject area and about the teaching, learning and assessment processes. Across the sector there was a strong sense of team working and staff teams contributed to the visits undertaken in a positive and productive manner.

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.

External verifiers reported that they had viewed some excellent case study material for the Contemporary Issues unit to facilitate indirect research. It is hoped that centres will continue with this practice of writing their own high-quality assessment material to support the new qualification. When integrating assessments, assessors and internal verifiers should always make sure a robust tracking system is in place in order to ensure all performance criteria are met.

Evidence requirements

Centre teams were clear on the evidence requirements for the units sampled. Across all centres assessment material had been accurately and consistently judged by all assessors.

In all centres visited assessors and internal verifiers worked hard to make sure that requirements for SCQF 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.

Administration of assessments

All centres appear to be working well with the HNC Early Education and Childcare and the PDA Childhood Practice qualifications. All centres visited had evidence of robust integrated assessment practice. Feedback for candidates was also extensive and supportive in nature. In some cases the assessment front covers showed what stage the candidate was at and where additional work was required with dates for completion. Often there was a great deal of detailed feedback for the candidates, both positive pointers for improvement.

Across all centres effective systems were in place to ensure authenticity of candidates' work. For most centres induction information is given regarding the importance of not copying work and candidates include a signed no-plagiarism statement with their work.

There is a general increase in the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and Turnitin. VLEs support candidates with assessment administration, provision of feedback, access to materials, and a group support mechanism.

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

General feedback

All centres visited this year have shown that they are fully committed to providing their candidates with a positive and productive experience while studying for their SQA qualification. Centres have demonstrated that they have some very good feedback mechanisms for candidates, particularly where electronic assessment 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.

It was clear from discussion with candidates and assessors that placement experience is a high priority. The experience gained in their vocational area appears to support candidates well when linking theory and practice. Centres need to ensure that placement remains a major focus when undertaking the new revised HN qualification. When embedding a new qualification that has large practical base, candidates will require support in placement and placement will require support from staff to maintain a positive relationship going forward.

Centres 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, external verifiers reported that the 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

All centres have excellent placement-provider relationships. This will need continuous support going forward. The success of the revised award, HNC Childhood Practice, will depend on the quality and effectiveness of the relationships between placement and HN provider.

Specific areas for improvement

To ensure fairness for all candidates and centres, assessors should provide an assessment word count for theory-based units and that this is clearly indicated to candidates.

Higher National graded units

Titles/levels of HN graded units verified:

HNC Early Education and Childcare Graded Unit 1

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 candidates' 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. However, it is important when working across a multi-campus facility that assessors ensure standardisation is a priority.

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 SCQF levels 7 and 8.

External verifiers noted that centres steered candidates towards appropriate topic selection with a clear emphasis on current up-to-date thinking.

Administration of assessments

Again this year 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 placement experience.

External verifiers found that assessments were generally marked promptly and feedback given to candidates in order that students could progress to the next stage. Feedback from internal verifiers at each stage was also found to be very effective across all centres.

All centres have a malpractice and plagiarism procedure that is explained during the induction process, and student handbooks are effective in promoting student understanding of this issue. All centres indicated that students sign a declaration

to say that their work is original.

General feedback

External verifiers reported that centres provided good levels of feedback for candidates, with one-to-one meetings as required 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 centres to support candidates through all stages of the graded units.

Specific areas for improvement

Once again, centres need to be vigilant when allocating high marks and should only offer these where there is sufficient analysis and interpretation of findings.