



# **Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2013 Further Education**

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

# Higher National Units

Units verified during Session 2012–13:

G85C 18	PDA Teaching in Further Education: An Introduction	G85D 18	PDA Teaching in Further Education
DV5X 36	Teaching Further Education: Planning	DV5K 36	Facilitate Learning, Teaching and Assessment
DV5V 36	Teaching in Further Education: Delivery and Assessment	DV5P 36	Plan and Prepare the Learning Environment
Two Units (optional) from the PDA in E-Learning			
F2BC 35	E-Learning Materials: Specification and Selection		
F2BE 35	E-Learning Materials: Design and Build		

## General comments

The Units indicated in the table above were verified in session 2012–13.

Two external verification visits took place during the session. Both centres visited have many years' experience delivering the two PDAs — Teaching in Further Education.

The centres have an accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards (ie Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges) and take cognisance of the essence of these standards in their delivery and assessment of the PDAs. This is evidence in both centres by the use of a comprehensive assessment plan to guide and support the students.

This is the first time the two Units from the PDA in E-Learning have been delivered by a centre. These Units focus on the valuable skills of being able to source online learning materials to meet learning objectives and knowing why they are suitable and appropriate. The other skill developed is to produce new online learning materials and to be able to demonstrate the process to follow when designing and developing materials.

Both centres demonstrated that they are fulfilling the need within the national standards to embed the creative use of IT within the curriculum and encourage independent learning of the students.

The small number of centres available to provide evidence for external verification is mainly because of the amalgamation of the colleges and the reduction in recruitment of new staff at this time.

*Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges* was revised and then published in March 2012. Details of the new standards are available on the following site:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/6519/downloads>

The PDA Teaching in Further Education: an Introduction (G85C 18) will lapse on 31 July 2014 and centres will have until 31 July 2017 to get their candidates certificated.

The PDA Teaching in Further Education (G85D 18) will also lapse on 31 July 2014 and centres will have until 31 July 2017 to get their candidates certificated.

The following two refreshed PDAs have been developed and validated by SQA to encompass the revised professional standards. These PDAs are ready to be delivered now and college centres have devolved authority to do so.

PDA: Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges at SCQF level 9

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/33053.html>

PDA: Developing Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges at SCQF level 9

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/66392.html>

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

Both centres continue to use the most up-to-date Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and support materials for the PDAs in Teaching in FE.

The centre offering the PDA in E-Learning has also used the most up-to-date Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and support materials for the two Units. Although both these Units are optional Units within the PDA they are both based on the practical application of e-learning techniques. The centre is delivering the two Units together with the instruments of assessment dovetailing.

Within each centre the assessors continue to have informal discussions as well as formal meetings to ensure that their assessment judgements remain competent and consistent with each other and the standards.

## **Evidence Requirements**

Both centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for all the Units that were verified. They have ensured that the required number of events for assessment have been carefully monitored and maintained especially within the PDA in E-Learning Units. The PDA in E-Learning requires a very detailed reflective log to be maintained over the Unit and specific topics to be covered within that log.

There is still discussion over the permissible word count for some of the student narratives and the External Verifiers in this Verification Group feel that as little leeway as possible should be the norm.

### **Administration of assessments**

Evidence shows that there is now consistency within centres on what constitutes an SCQF level 9 piece of writing. This has always been a challenging area for centres delivering the PDAs Teaching in FE.

The PDA in E-Learning Units were appropriately levelled and the centre had produced some very good templates to assist the candidates.

### **General feedback**

#### **PDAs – Teaching in Further Education**

During the visits, candidates who were interviewed were extremely happy with the level of support and guidance they had received, including their induction to these awards. They had frequent one-to-one meetings with their mentor/assessor as well as online support via e-mail and VLE.

All candidates had fair access to assessment and had discussed an assessment plan with their assessor.

They found the organisation of online resources and assessment supportive and comprehensive.

After reflecting, the candidates agreed their practice had changed and improved, and they were more open to introducing new teaching methods and resources as a result.

They had also enjoyed the independent learning enquiry and research this award had afforded them, including the online resources and links to further reading.

They were happy with all assessment decisions. One candidate commented very favourably on the level of support received in particular when remediation was required.

#### **PDA – E-Learning**

The EV recorded that during discussion with one particular assessor, it was encouraging to hear how the assessor had developed the Award and designed an integrated assessment approach to the three Units in the PDA. The centre had also updated the SQA materials to include more current links. The assessor also confirmed that there had been appropriate IV support and feedback.

### **Areas of good practice**

The following features were highlighted as points of good practice:

#### **Units F2BC 35 and F2BE 35**

- ◆ Integrating the assessment to avoid duplication and to streamline the approach, with appropriate templates designed to ensure all aspects of the reflective log were met.
- ◆ Effective use of a VLE as a platform for the learning objects and to provide an appropriate means of recording the reflective log and tutor feedback.
- ◆ The centre introduced an effective peer review process with recorded feedback.
- ◆ Using external agencies (such as JISC) to provide workshops to support development

These were some of the comments from candidates interviewed:

‘The candidate had enjoyed working through the PDA and developing new ICT skills. He found the structured assessment plan useful and was pleased to see how his practice had developed over the course and how this progress was documented in the reflective log. He also gave positive comments about the level of assessor support and the peer-review process.’

‘The quality of assessment material (online learning materials) verified was very high.’

#### **Units DV5V 36 and DV5X 36**

- ◆ Tailoring support to meet the needs of the individual.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

#### **Units DV5V 36 and DV5X 36**

There are the two main areas for improvement, both of which when implemented would easily then demonstrate good practice.

- ◆ Ensure candidates adhere to the specified word count for reports.
- ◆ Supplement the oral feedback with written comments on the assessment checklists — this will allow candidates to refer back to them and will exemplify good feedback practice to candidates in the hope that they will do this with their own students.
- ◆ The use of the written feedback checklist would further support the development of good practice for candidates when giving written feedback to learners.

Both centres were also recommended to watch for the release of the new PDAs (updated in light of the refresh of the Professional Standards for Lecturers published in March 2012) and consider the benefits of attending any SQA support events.