



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2014 Further Education

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

Higher National Units

Units verified during Session 2013–14

G85C 18	PDA Teaching in Further Education: An Introduction
DV5X 36	Teaching Further Education: Planning
DV5V 36	Teaching in Further Education: Delivery and Assessment
G8GC 49	PDA in Inclusiveness: Facilitating Strategies to Support Learners with Additional Needs
FW57 36	Promoting Inclusiveness for Learners with Additional Support Needs
FW58 36	Facilitate Inclusive Learning Strategies

General comments

Only two external verification visits took place during Session 2013–14 — one visit verified the PDA Teaching in Further Education and the other visit verified the PDA in Inclusiveness. Both visits had an overall outcome rating of Significant Strengths, meaning that verification was Successful. Five areas of good practice were identified, and two recommendations were made to the centres.

PDA Teaching in FE

The centre staff delivering this PDA have many years' experience in this subject area. They have an accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards (ie Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges) and continue to take cognisance of the essence of these standards in their delivery and assessment of the PDAs.

This PDA Teaching in Further Education is now in its lapsing period, and centres are only just beginning to deliver the new PDAs:

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>

It will not be until session 2014–15 that we may be able to verify Units from these PDAs.

PDA in Inclusiveness

Similarly with the centre delivering this PDA, the staff also have a number of years delivering these Units, and inclusiveness plays a prominent part in their core curriculum. This award is non-devolvable, so all prospective centres need to submit an approval application to SQA to offer the Units/Group Award. A copy of the IAR is sent annually to the Professional Learning and Development Forum

(PLDF) in lieu of the previous arrangement whereby the PLDF endorsed a prospective centre as suitable to offer it.

The Units in this PDA are delivered on Moodle to distance-learners. Adobe Connect is used to deliver sessions and tutorials to candidates and also used for staff meetings. The Verifier found that the resources they have produced and their use of a virtual environment for online communication and information sharing demonstrates good practice. The centre has fully 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 by their candidates.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Both centres are using the most up-to-date Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and support materials for the Units they are delivering in their respective awards. The assessors are very familiar with these as was demonstrated through discussions with them and recorded in the Verifiers' reports.

Within each centre, the assessors continue to have informal discussions as well as formal standardisation meetings. Minutes confirm that their assessment judgements remain competent and consistent with each other, and with the standards. Detailed assessment checklists and guidelines used consistently by all assessors in both centres.

There was also evidence of prior verification of instruments of assessment.

The centre delivering the PDA Teaching in Further Education uses the SQA assessment exemplar documentation and marking guidelines. This ensures the assessments are valid and reliable. The assessment feedback given demonstrates both equity and fairness.

Roles and responsibilities for assessors and verifiers are clearly stated and communicated to staff. HN Unit specification assessment arrangements are adhered to. Evidence of internal verification sampling plan, IV reports and standardisation meetings with actions were available.

Evidence requirements

Through the use of appropriate assessment instruments and assessment opportunities, the centre staff demonstrated that they understood how to apply the evidence requirements for the units. Their marking guidelines were also standardised against the evidence requirements.

Administration of assessments

Both centres are using a VLE to store support and assessment materials and encourage candidates to be independent learners. The PDA in Inclusiveness is

delivered solely by online/virtual delivery, and the candidates all stressed how supportive their tutors had been.

The candidates in both centres were greatly encouraged by the very good feedback they received from their tutors.

General feedback

Candidates at one centre were interviewed by the Qualification Verifier in two sessions using Adobe Connect. Candidates were very happy with their course — they could contact their tutors and mentors at any time, and were given prompt communication and individual feedback. They particularly liked the supportive online resources, which were easily available for downloading, and the fact that the learning was contextualised to workplace settings.

Detailed feedback was given on all assessments with strengths and development points were clearly identified.

Candidates felt well prepared for the award because of fair, easy access to assessments, and effective scheduling of assessments enabled candidates to plan their time. Feedback was fair and consistent — oral and written. Candidates enjoyed the virtual delivery experience — one candidate initially felt daunted but was now confident with online learning experience, and has moved to another online course.

Candidates had found the Course very useful in supporting their performance as FE lecturers. It had also clarified their understanding of systems and processes within the college. Candidates were also very complimentary about the support they had received and of the benefits of the regular workshops in helping them to remain motivated and up to date, and about how they had benefitted from the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other curricular areas.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ The well-structured and effective use of Moodle/visual materials/online forums and meetings providing a fully supported learning environment greatly appreciated by candidates of one centre. The effective use of Adobe Connect for delivery of learning to candidates, allowing tasks to be shared and encouraging peer learning. Using Adobe Connect for effective delivery of online standardisation and Course review meetings with all staff.
- ◆ Good practice was evidenced through the recording of professional dialogues with candidates and also the recording of workplace observations.
- ◆ The internal verification policy and procedures of one centre was considered by the Verifier to be '*...the most clearly documented I have seen. They are very easy to follow and promote good practice.*'
- ◆ The other centre demonstrated a robust internal verification process too, which was good and gave ownership to all staff. They also had evidence of very detailed IV reports.

- ◆ The initial induction of candidates in one of the centres, using a specifically-targeted self-evaluation/initial assessment form with a follow up review, demonstrated good practice. Encouragement in the use of reflective logs gave candidates the opportunity to track their own progress towards their learning goals.
- ◆ One centre gave candidates access to the structure/resource materials prior to the start of their course — this encouraged effective orientation and helped to overcome any confidence issues and barriers to learning.

Specific areas for improvement

The use, maintenance and dissemination of a decision log to record all assessment decisions mentioned within narrative/actions of standardisation meeting minutes. This would allow staff quick, easy reference to assessment decisions and also support audit trails.