



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2013
Personal and Social Development**

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

Higher National Units

DE3R 34 Personal Development Planning
DV0M 34 Work Experience
F86Y 35 Developing the Individual within a Team
DH21 34 Working within a Project Team
DF4E 34 Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness
DF4F 35 Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness
D7H J 34 Employment Experience 1
D77H 34 Employment Experience 2

General comments

External visiting verification activity continues to confirm that centres do have a very clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards in the delivery of HN Personal and Social Development Units. However, there is a need within centres, especially colleges, to share good practice and to facilitate standardisation activities in subject areas where there is a high level of occurrences.

HN external verification activity in Personal and Social Development last session covered PSD activity in further education colleges and SQA's New Approach to Quality Assurance.

The new approach to quality assurance was used in all external verification activity carried out for HN PSD. The new approach involves quality assurance criteria which examine internal systems and subject verification.

Verification activity revealed a wealth of resource materials and good practice. Arrangements for the visits were put into place with ease as centres responded promptly to visit requests and put arrangements into place for the agreed sample. There was a willingness to discuss assessment instruments, delivery approaches, folio evidence and areas of development.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Assessors are very familiar with SQA exemplars which give them security in the knowledge that they reflect the national standard.

HN Unit specifications are contained within master teaching packs but tend to be ignored in favour of SQA exemplification materials. External Verifiers continue to emphasise that the national standard is determined by the Unit specification and the Evidence Requirements, not the exemplar.

There is a lack of awareness that SQA supports the prior verification of centre-devised assessment instruments. This means that centres can submit their own assessment instruments, which will be verified by an External Verifier.

Evidence Requirements

Assessors do have a clear understanding of HN Unit Evidence Requirements. The following feedback was given during visiting verification:

- ◆ External verification activity underlined the importance of the SCQF level of HN Units in determining the level of analysis and justification required.
- ◆ Folio evidence should be organised and have a contents and index system of referencing. Formative evidence should be indexed to the appendices section and External Verifiers should be able to identify summative assessment activities.
- ◆ At SCQF levels 6, 7 and 8 two self-evaluation tools must be identified to allow analysis and justification of the findings, eg SWOT/Force Field/Johari.
- ◆ Assessors need to provide a results matrix even if this indicates partial achievement. A number of instances emerged during external verification whereby some groups had not indicated the achievement of the candidates.
- ◆ Centres were keen to interpret HN Unit Evidence Requirements with External Verifiers, especially where there was ambiguity and to have reassurance that they were meeting the required standard. Often there was a standardisation issue within centres where the same Unit was being delivered across curriculum areas in quite separate delivery modes and with different interpretations of the standard.

Administration of assessments

Centre assessments were at the appropriate level and reflected the HN course design frameworks mandatory and optional Units. HN Units were sampled at SCQF level 6 (33), level 7 (34) and level 8 (35).

Assessor judgements across SCQF levels 6, 7 and 8 need to reflect differentiation in the complexity of the tasks, analysis and justification.

Internal verification systems are robust and fit for purpose. Internal quality assurance systems and procedures ensure assessment instruments, sampling and internal verification checks are in place.

Assessment instruments consisted mainly of SQA exemplification materials. Centres are familiar with the standards and continue to make good use of assessment checklists.

Master teaching packs provided a wealth of learning and teaching resource materials and records of internal verification sampling.

Internal verification approaches need to include regular sampling of HN candidate evidence. Assessors need to get together to standardise assessment judgements within class groups and across all live occurrences within a centre.

General feedback

The presentation of candidate evidence at HN level was simply outstanding. Folio evidence included advanced research skills, PowerPoint presentations, reflective accounts and self-evaluations.

There was good evidence of knowledge and understanding of self-evaluation tools, learning styles and learning theories, SMART targets, reflective accounts, self-review and evaluations.

Feedback from candidates indicated that they enjoy PSD HN Units. They understand the 'process' and the importance of the knowledge, skills and understanding gained as part of lifelong learning. Many describe how the experience has given them more confidence and how they can put what they have learned to good use as they progress with their higher education goals.

The Work Experience Unit provides 'real' opportunities to gain employment experience and can lead to a permanent job. There were real prospects of freelance self-employment opportunities in photography where established industry links provided work experience at various events.

Centres rely heavily on SQA exemplification materials and appear daunted by the prospect of devising their own assessment instruments. The SQA prior verification process ensures centres can submit centre-devised assessment instruments for external approval.

Areas of good practice

External Verifiers witnessed evidence of good practice in several centres:

College 1

The delivery of Work Experience (DV0M 34) in Sports Coaching was simply outstanding. The sports coaching curriculum team had developed a range of assessment materials to deliver a work experience programme working with Active Schools Co-ordinators and with partner schools. Programme materials were colourful, vibrant and engaging, eg candidate logs, placement arrangements and protocols, assessment activities and evaluations.

Developing the Individual within a Team (F86Y 35) presented candidates with a real team task to open a fair trade shop in the college. Candidates were split into teams to develop the business plan, find a suitable location, marketing and products.

College 2

A revised internal verification checklist allowed assessment work to be graded in order to identify remediation opportunities and/or future progression routes. Assessors find the grading system supports the assessment process and provides a real focus for formative and summative assessment activities.

College 3

Working within a Project Team was commended for the wide range of project proposals attempted and for the subject relevance to the candidates, who clearly enjoyed undertaking team activities. The contextualisation of the reading task with the communication team ensured the relevance of the tasks associated with the embedded Core Skill of Communication within the Unit delivery. The enthusiasm of the assessor and the positive learning experience was clearly reflected in exemplary folio work.

Employment Experience 1 was exemplary. The hairdressing and beauty curriculum teams provided an attractive delivery and style of developing candidate portfolios for the team task in a work-based placement. There was a real attempt to consider tasks which would prove useful to the candidate and the organisation when implemented, eg customer card record system, stock control and marketing initiatives.

College 4

HND Photography exemplifies good practice and is a shining example of a School of Excellence. Assessment evidence was very progressive, exemplifying integrated assessment evidence in Personal Development Planning (DE3R 34), Work Experience (DV0M 34) and the Graded Unit. Folio evidence was fully integrated across the three Units, easily tracked and directly relevant to the candidate and the achievement of personal and vocational goals. Candidates spoke enthusiastically about their learning journey and the freelance work experience opportunities they had been privileged to take part in. This had inspired them to continue with their studies, seek employment and/or had given them the confidence and belief to set up in self-employment.

Employment Experience 1 and 2 in HND Beauty and Make-up programmes involved a range of good practice through the delivery of Moodle, utilising the commercial beauty salon, work placement opportunities and themed fundraising events.

Specific areas for improvement

Assessors need to ensure that they refer to the national standards as detailed in HN Unit specifications.

Assessors need to provide more detailed feedback to candidates to support the remediation and re-assessment process to maximise potential and opportunities for success.

The delivery of Personal Development Planning (DE3R 34) must clearly show summative assessment evidence and be easily tracked in internal and external verification sampling. PDP is process based but the Unit specification clearly states the assessment evidence standards and the folio must reflect this. Centres should develop a marking guideline checklist which reflects the Unit standards and requirements.

The SQA exemplar for Personal Development Planning (DE3R 34) identifies a scoring system. The exemplar is one example of how PDP can be assessed. Some centres like the scoring system whilst others do not. This is not a mandatory requirement and centres can choose to mark the folio using a scoring system or simply as a pass or fail.

HN Unit assessment evidence must be differentiated across SCQF levels 6, 7 and 8. External verification sampling revealed a number of centres where project activities did not meet the SCQF level of the Unit. Candidates must provide analysis and justification of their findings.