



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Personal 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
F870 34 Developing the Individual within a Team
DV0M 34 Work Experience
A6T1 34 Workplace Experience
DH21 34 Working within a Project Team
D7H J 34 Employment Experience 1
D77H 34 Employment Experience 2

General comments

Centres continue to have a very clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards in the delivery of HN Personal and Social Development Units. HN visiting verification activity confirmed that internal standards were being maintained and centres continue to build on the good practice which is highlighted in the internal assessment report on an annual basis.

Centres are very familiar with the assessment and internal verification requirements of HN Units in the Personal and Social Development verification group and have established ways of contextualising and integrating Units within a wide range of course frameworks, eg Health and Social Studies; Administration and Information Technology; Business Computing and Creative Industries; Medical Practice; Tourism; Fashion Design, Production and Retail; Social Care; Sports Development/Therapy; Animal Husbandry; Hair/Beauty and Hospitality.

HN external verification activity involved using two quality assurance approaches — the mainstream approach and the new approach — and external sampling was undertaken in further education colleges.

Verification activity revealed a wealth of good practice and highlighted some development issues, which will be detailed within this report. Some development issues continue to resurface year on year and centres should take advantage of addressing these areas by requesting an SQA development visit. This allows the centre and the staff to discuss development issues with a PSD External Verifier and to look at available options and solutions.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

HN external verification sampling continues to re-affirm that centres are familiar with exemplification materials and continue to make good use of SQA exemplars. There is no doubt that centres gain security in the knowledge that SQA exemplification materials conform to national standards.

There was very good evidence of well organised master teaching packs, which contained Unit specifications, exemplification materials, instruments of assessment, and learning and teaching schedules.

It is important that centres are aware that they can submit their own assessment instruments for prior verification if they wish to do so. This can help centres to move away from SQA exemplification materials, especially where there is a real opportunity to create more current assessment instruments to support in-house programme delivery.

Assessment approaches tend to be delivered on a Unit-by-Unit basis and there is a need to consider integrated assessment approaches across Units.

Evidence Requirements

External visiting verification activity was extremely positive with a number of areas of good practice highlighted.

External verification sampling revealed that centres do have a very clear understanding of HN Unit evidence requirements and this was exemplified and reported in the following way:

- ◆ Evidence requirements were available using SQA exemplification materials and it was clear that centres had provided further exemplification of the national standards using course materials and formative assessment tasks.
- ◆ External Verifiers were able to endorse the interpretation of HN Unit evidence requirements across many centres and this provided an opportunity for development issues to be discussed: Was the evidence sufficient? Were there any gaps and what steps could be taken to address this? Was the evidence at the right level? Was the judgement across various occurrences standardised? Does the marking guideline support consistent judgements of the evidence requirements?
- ◆ Centres are keen to address the need for improved standardisation approaches and methods in the assessment and internal verification processes, eg maintaining internal records of meetings and action points; internal sampling of candidate folios with records of feedback to support remediation opportunities; assessment decisions with clear and concise feedback to candidates showing how the assessment judgement had been reached; constructive written feedback throughout the assessment process.
- ◆ The SCQF level of HN Units determines the level of analysis and justification required at SCQF levels 6, 7 and 8. There is a tendency to treat these levels the same and they are clearly quite different.
- ◆ The verification team strongly recommends that two self-evaluation tools be identified at SCQF level 6 and above to allow analysis and justification of the findings, eg SWOT/Force Field/Johari.
- ◆ Assessors need to ensure that they provide an interim results matrix for the partial completion of HN Units and that this is available when external verification is carried out.

- ◆ Folio evidence should clearly map the evidence requirements for the chosen sample of HN Unit activity. Good practice is reflected in the use of highlighted summative assessment evidence, tutor feedback and clearly recorded assessment judgements.

Administration of assessments

Unit assessments tend to be delivered using a rolling assessment cycle and this is part of a well structured HN programme framework which operates across a yearly cycle.

Centres have well structured HN programmes and assessment schedules, which allow them to deliver Units very effectively.

HN frameworks determine the level of mandatory and optional Units that can be delivered. Centres are complying with the HN framework principles and guidelines.

Centre assessments were at the appropriate level, although the external sample was restricted this year to mainly SCQF level 7 Units.

Assessor judgements across the sample were consistent, fair, valid and reliable. It was evident throughout external sampling that assessor advice, guidance, support and direct feedback contributed greatly to the successful achievements/outcomes.

Internal verification systems are very advanced and are fully fit for purpose. Internal quality assurance systems and procedures ensure assessment instruments, sampling and internal verification are implemented effectively.

Assessment instruments consisted mainly of SQA exemplification. 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 held records of internal verification meetings, relevant action points, standardisation activities, and internal sampling.

General feedback

Candidate feedback was very positive and tended to reflect on the overall HN programme and how the PSD Unit supported personal development increased confidence in their studies and an understanding of likely progression routes. Some candidates appeared to indicate that there was a tendency to have some over duplication of assessment evidence in the creation of PDP (Personal Development Planning) folios.

Assessor feedback was consistent and supportive throughout the assessment process. Candidate evidence maintained high standards and made good use of

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.

Centres continue to rely on SQA exemplification materials where there is a sense of a safety net being provided in their use. There is good evidence of centre-produced learning schedules and in-house support materials. Centres are reminded that they can submit their internal assessment instruments for prior verification if they wish to do so.

Areas of good practice

DE3R 34 Personal Development Planning

Centres are familiar with the step-by-step approach and candidate folio evidence revealed a wealth of information and self-evaluation. Some centres are exploring the use of the college-based PDP portfolio, meeting the requirements of the PDP module undertaken at university.

F870 34 Developing the Individual within a Team

Candidate evidence revealed a good depth of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to effective team participation skills.

Candidates need to be able to apply the knowledge, skills and understanding of effective team participation in a practical task, eg project or case study approach. The key to this is to devise a practical investigative approach that students will be able to relate to. There is a need to ensure that in Outcome 1 candidates fully explore the consequences of a poor application of consultation, communication and interaction skills.

DV0M 34/A6T1 34 Work Experience

The delivery of Work Experience (DV0M 34) revealed a wide range of contextualised work experience placements, which related to the overall HN programme — eg health and social care; sports coaching; business administration; fashion design and retail; tourism and hospitality. There was good evidence to support a good level of candidate satisfaction and some measured success in obtaining and securing employment. Candidate evidence was exemplified in excellent candidate logs, placement arrangements and protocols, assessment activities, and candidate evaluations.

DH21 34 Working within a Project Team

Working within a Project Team continues to excel in the use of a wide range of project proposals and for the direct subject relevance to candidates, who clearly enjoy planning, implementing and evaluating the project tasks. The contextualisation of the reading task ensures the relevance of the tasks

associated with the embedded Core Skill of Communication within the Unit delivery.

D7H J 34 Employment Experience 1 and D77H 34 Employment Experience 2

Employment Experience delivery was exemplary. Hairdressing and Beauty curriculum teams continue to excel in the delivery of employment experience, providing an attractive delivery and portfolios with a wealth of information regarding the identified team task in a work setting. There was a real attempt to consider tasks that would prove useful to the candidate and the organisation when implemented, eg customer card record system, stock control and marketing initiatives.

Employment Experience 1 and 2 exemplify a range of good practice through the use of Moodle, commercial beauty salons, 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 the HN Unit specifications. There is a tendency to use the national exemplars without referring to the Unit specification.

The SQA exemplar for Personal Development Planning (DE3R 34) identifies a scoring system. The exemplar is one example of how PDP can be assessed and 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 an internal scoring system or simply mark as a pass or fail.

Whilst the delivery of Personal Development Planning (DE3R 34) continues to make good use of the seven-step cycle, assessment folio evidence can contain a fair amount of over-assessment. PDP aims to develop personal, educational and career goals as a structured and supported process which can be used in a lifelong learning context.

HN Unit assessment evidence must be differentiated across SCQF levels 6, 7 and 8. Candidates must provide detailed analysis and justification throughout the levels. It is simply not good enough to download skills questionnaires and provide no analysis and justification of the findings.

Careful consideration should be given to the use of a team project and/or case study approach to the delivery of the HN Unit: Developing the Individual within a Team (F870 34).

Centres must provide evidence of assessment judgements prior to external verification. This is just as relevant mid-cycle as it is at the end of the Unit delivery. An SQA External Verifier must be able to see a partially completed result matrix and/or completed matrix during the external sample.