



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2016
Beauty Care**

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

General comments

The HNC (G7WX 15) and HND (G7WY 16) Beauty Therapy awards have been delivered by SQA-approved centres since August 2005. SQA annually holds network meetings where centre representatives have the opportunity to discuss and give feedback on the units within each qualification. This has resulted in some minor amends being made, reflecting centre requirements, to keep pace with the changes in the beauty therapy industry.

Due to this ongoing review process, the timespan of the qualification and successful verification activity carried out this academic session, it is evident that centre staff have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards for these awards.

Ten external verification visits took place this session; all visits were successful.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The evidence viewed in centres where external verification activity took place this session confirmed that assessors and internal verifiers have a clear understanding of the unit specifications and evidence requirements.

SQA assessment exemplars are used where these are available. This material clearly indicates the expected standard of learner response, facilitating standardised, reliable assessment decisions being made. One centre visited was using an outdated exemplar, however due to the timing of the visit this did not impact on candidate evidence. It was recommended that exemplars are checked for currency as part of the pre-delivery internal verification.

Where SQA assessment exemplars are not available, centre-devised instruments of assessment were developed. These had not in all instances been submitted to SQA for prior verification. It was recommended that although this is not mandatory, centre-devised instruments of assessment be sent to SQA, following internal verification, prior to use.

In most centres core packs are now stored in a central share drive which facilitates cross-campus access and standardisation. Examples of material contained in core packs are unit specifications, instruments of assessment, internal verification records, meeting minutes, and learning and teaching material.

Evidence requirements

The evidence sampled during the external verification activity would suggest that centre staff have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for units contained within the HNC and HND Beauty Therapy awards.

There was evidence of pre-delivery internal verification and standardisation activity.

In one centre visited a quality and development week is set aside in each semester for a variety of quality enhancement and assurance activities which enables the team to catch up with each other and other subject areas to discuss and share practice and ensure standardisation.

Administration of assessments

The external verification activity undertaken confirmed that assessment is carried out at the appropriate level.

SQA assessment exemplar material is used where available which gives a clear indication of the required level of response. Centre-devised instruments of assessment sampled were appropriate in type and gave coverage of all outcomes of learning defined in the unit specification for which they were intended. Some of these could, however, have been streamlined to avoid repetition and over-assessment. It was recommended in these instances that the centre review and revise their assessments and submit to SQA for prior verification.

Assessment decisions were consistent and accurate. Remediation was clear; oral questioning when used was recorded appropriately. The evidence requirements of the units sampled were fully met.

In one centre a high proportion of assessment was submitted and marked electronically via 'Google drive'. Assessors add comments on work submitted. Learners can then update their submissions as required. In another there is a weekly 'open salon' giving learners the opportunity to be assessed on all practical areas.

In the majority of centres a holistic approach to delivery and assessment was adopted where practicable, avoiding unnecessary repetition and over-assessment.

During the external verification activity undertaken, evidence of internal verification planning, pre-delivery checks, ongoing and post-delivery sampling was noted. In one instance the instrument of assessment were stamped signed and dated by the internal verifier to show that they had been checked for validity prior to use.

General feedback

Overall the standard of candidate evidence sampled was good.

It was noted that case studies were completed well in units DN6Y 34 Beauty Therapy: Management and Practices of Facial Therapies and DN6X 34 Beauty Therapy: Management and Practices of Body Therapies. The linking of treatment aims and treatment plans/choices were logical and met the overall treatment

objective. The majority of reports in units DN80 33 Beauty Therapy: Face and Body Electrotherapy and DN6R 35 Beauty Therapy: Product Knowledge were well written and clearly reflected the SCQF level of each unit.

Reports in a view instances did not contain referencing. The importance of the inclusion of referencing in reports, reflecting the SCQF level of unit(s), was discussed and agreed with centre staff where necessary.

Learners who were interviewed were motivated and positive about their learning environment and their experience overall.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Core packs stored in a central share drive which facilitates cross-campus access and standardisation
- ◆ A quality and development week in each semester for a variety of quality enhancement and assurance activities which enables the team to catch up with each other and other subject areas to discuss and share practice and ensure standardisation
- ◆ A holistic approach to delivery and assessment adopted where practicable avoiding unnecessary repetition and over-assessment
- ◆ Assessments submitted and marked electronically
- ◆ A weekly 'open salon' giving learners the opportunity to be assessed on all practical areas

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Check currency of unit specifications and SQA assessment exemplars during pre-delivery internal verification
- ◆ Submit all centre-devised instruments of assessment to SQA for prior verification
- ◆ Encourage candidates to develop and use a recognised referencing system to reflect the academic level of the unit(s)
- ◆ Review and revise instruments of assessment to check that they are neither repetitive nor lead to over-assessment

Higher National graded units

Titles/levels of HN graded units verified:

F3SA 34 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF 7)

DP60 35 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF 8)

General comments

SQA held a Beauty Therapy Graded Unit standardisation event in mid-January 2016. At this event draft marking guides for Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 1 and 2 were discussed and agreed. These were then applied to sample learner submissions, culminating in agreement and standardisation.

General discussions with centre staff during external verification visits confirmed that this exercise has facilitated a better understanding of the national standards, the minimum evidence requirements, and where additional marks could be applied.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres were using the current unit specifications and SQA assessment exemplar material. Centre staff in almost all instances had attended the SQA Beauty Therapy Graded Unit standardisation event in mid-January 2016. The marking guidelines contained within the SQA exemplar were in almost all instances being applied correctly.

Standardisation identified discrepancies between assessors and allowed adjustments to be made to remedy this. Limited standardisation was noted in one centre.

Evidence requirements

The SQA assessment exemplar provides marking guidelines which clearly demonstrate the minimum evidence requirements for each stage of the graded unit — planning, developing and evaluation. The exemplar also provides guidelines on where there is the potential for additional marks. Learners must meet all minimum requirements to achieve a grade C.

Learner submissions sampled included feedback which gave a clear justification of the mark allocation, demonstrating that both assessors and internal verifiers have a good understanding of unit evidence requirements.

Administration of assessments

The external verification sample indicated that assessment was at the appropriate level and that the marks applied were in the main a true reflection for learner submissions. Where this was not the case the SQA marking guidelines

and reference to the grade A/C table in the unit specification were used to support discussion with centre staff.

Centres begin the graded unit(s) by giving learners an overview of the unit requirements. Almost all centres use and/or issue the SQA Training and Assessment Programme (TAP) packs as part of this process and find them useful.

Mentor meetings had taken place between the learner and assessor after the submission of each stage of the graded unit as identified in each unit specification. This process provides the candidate with a review of their progress within the context of a graded unit. In one centre these had not been recorded and the importance of keeping a record of these was highlighted and discussed.

In a few instances, the DP60 35 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2 evaluation stage presentation was observed by more than one assessor to ensure fairness and consistency and in one centre presentations are recorded enabling learners to review their performance and the internal verifier to confirm consistency and accuracy of mark allocation.

Internal verification activity in the majority of centres was robust and of a high standard. There was evidence of double-marking to ensure accurate, reliable and consistent decision making.

Learner submissions were supported by the completion of a plagiarism statement in almost all centres.

General feedback

Graded unit submissions sampled were on the whole good.

There are clear mechanisms in place to support learners in the majority of centres. Learners in one centre indicated that they felt supported by their lecturers but not by the college's wider learner support services.

F3SA 34 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 1

There was some general discussion on the importance of ensuring the chosen treatment package is reflective of current industry practice.

DP60 35 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2

In one centre, for the development stage learners had been encouraged to include alternative methods of gathering information from manufacturers and industry sources which included surveys. This data was then analysed and described in chart form by learners in their reports.

The delivery mode in centres does not always enable learners to use the selected equipment in the timeframe recommended by manufacturer guidelines to give optimum results.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Double-marking to ensure accurate, reliable and consistent decisions made by the assessor
- ◆ DP60 35 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2:
 - Developing stage – learners encouraged to include alternative methods of gathering information from manufacturers and industry sources
 - Evaluating stage – presentations recorded

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Record mentor meetings between learner and assessor
- ◆ DP60 35 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2 should be delivered in a manner which enables learners to use the selected equipment over the timeframe recommended by manufacturer guidelines, giving optimum results

SVQ awards

General comments

SQA-approved centres where external activity took place have delivered the SVQ Beauty qualifications for many years. They receive an annual external verification visit and attend annual SQA update events. Centre staff have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. They are familiar with, and demonstrate compliance with, the existing Assessment Strategies for Beauty Therapy, Nail Services and Spa.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

External verification activity undertaken confirmed that assessors and internal verifiers are familiar with the requirements of the National Occupational Standards.

Centres use SQA candidate portfolios which detail course frameworks, unit outcomes, range related to performance criteria, and essential knowledge and understanding.

Evidence requirements

The evidence sampled indicates that centre staff have a clear understanding of the unit evidence requirements. Accurate, reliable, assessment decision-making was evident with appropriate assessment evidence recorded and easily tracked in candidate portfolios.

There was evidence of team meetings to standardise assessments and ensure a consistent approach to assessment. In some instances team teaching takes place in practical classes. There were some opportunities for new assessors to shadow more experienced assessors through informal mentoring.

Administration of assessments

The mandatory essential knowledge and understanding (EKU) element of units is assessed using SOLAR e-assessment, accessed through personal log-in. Open-book assessment is the main mode of centre-devised instruments of assessment for non-mandatory EKU. In most centres a mapping grid was used to track EKU assessment, avoiding repetition and over-assessment where knowledge and understanding is the same both across units and award levels.

Direct observation is used for practical performance. Practical performance is supported with completed consultation records. The integration of practical assessment is encouraged. There were examples where extra-curricular activities make good use of opportunities to assess learners in a realistic situation.

Evidence was easily tracked in candidate portfolios; evidence type and location were clearly marked. Constructive feedback was evident for both practical and written assessment. Remediation where required was clearly indicated. Oral questioning when used was recorded appropriately.

Centres were applying their internal verification procedures appropriately. Evidence of pre-delivery and sampling were viewed with relevant centre documentation being completed.

General feedback

Learners interviewed felt able to approach centre staff to gain feedback and discuss their progress.

In one centre, learner motivation and learning had improved due to the use of virtual learning through social media. Learners commented that they 'feel more likely to study what their lecturers post to the site'.

Learners are given the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities, which develops additional skills and enhances the learner experience.

The impact of changes relating to how the new National Occupational Standards are implemented were discussed with centre staff during external verification visits, eg instruments of assessment, assessment strategy.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Team meetings to standardise assessments and to ensure a consistent approach to assessment
- ◆ Team teaching in practical classes
- ◆ Opportunities for new assessors to shadow more experienced assessors through informal mentoring
- ◆ The cross-referencing of essential knowledge and understanding across units and award levels where these were the same
- ◆ The use of virtual learning through social media
- ◆ Learner participating in enrichment activities

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Encourage integration of assessment where practicable