



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Community**

Higher National Units

General comments

From the External Verifiers' (EV) reports it was clear that the centres visited were fully conversant with the requirements for the HNC Working with Communities.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases the current Unit specifications were being used and the assessors were all familiar with the instruments of assessment.

Evidence Requirements

From the reports it was clear that the evidence available was authentic, sufficient and valid. It reflected the existence of good teaching and learning approaches underpinned by reliable guidance and support systems and opportunities for re-assessment when required.

Administration of assessments

EV reports indicate that assessors administered assessments fairly and took into consideration the needs of their candidates.

General feedback

The following point was included in one of the reports:

'The college's decision to appoint a formally qualified and well experienced community worker to lead this course has resulted in the creation of a well-structured course with sound teaching/ learning and support and guidance practices that manifest themselves in both the course work and post-course aspirations of candidates.'

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Motivated and committed teaching team that work closely together
- ◆ Learner-centred approach from the teaching team, particularly in relation to placements. Extensive candidate support available from both teaching team and college wide
- ◆ The centre has current and comprehensive procedures for assessment and verification
- ◆ The centre was making every effort to create a learning/assessment environment similar to that which candidates would encounter at the next stage of the learning continuum: university study
- ◆ Candidates appear to be well motivated and determined to succeed. This is largely due to the fact that the centre is actively promoting the achievement of this award as a gateway to higher level learning and employment opportunities
- ◆ Moodle was being used as a bank for documents relating to the above
- ◆ Good clear guidelines to candidates where remediation was required

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Consider integration of assessments
- ◆ Ensure all Evidence Requirements met are recorded on marking frames, including recording of first and second attempts
- ◆ Consider consistency of recording more constructive assessment feedback on marking frames
- ◆ Consider including candidate declaration of own work on submission of assessments

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DK16 34 Working with Communities Graded Unit 1

General comments

The centre visited was using the most up-to-date and current assessment specifications. All parts of the assessment specification were being followed correctly and the Evidence Requirements defined in the Unit were correctly specified.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All of the assessors interviewed were familiar with the Graded Unit specification and the Evidence Requirements. This was fully reflected in the assessment materials available for inspection.

Evidence Requirements

The Graded Unit requirements were fully understood by all the assessors and internal verifiers.

Administration of assessments

In the centre visited, a professional approach was taken to the administration of assessments. This was verified during discussions with candidates, assessors and internal verifiers and by the assessment documentation.

General feedback

There has been a phenomenal change since the previous visit which has shown the centre to be radical in its thinking to improve the performance of the team delivery of the distance learning award and its approach to quality improvement. There are some great good-practice examples and it was obvious that the team is passionate about the delivery of the award.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ The quality audit checklist is a good way of highlighting the need to treat candidates fairly and without bias
- ◆ Comments and guidance were noted on the candidates' work. This helps the candidates to relate comments and guidance to the actual section of the submission being referred to
- ◆ There is a range of Graded Unit activities and placement setting. These clearly link to the needs of the community

- ◆ Marks allocated were justified well by providing detailed explanation and comments
- ◆ The centre's self-evaluation system is used as a tool for continuous evaluation
- ◆ Use of the marking system and self-evaluation system to record discussions and decisions
- ◆ The team is exploring the use of Turnitin as a tool to check for plagiarism

Specific areas for improvement

A formal document, similar to the one used for internal verification, should be introduced to record feedback to candidates. The assessor(s) could also include support and guidance on the candidates' work.

SVQ awards

General comments

All of the centres visited demonstrated a clear and accurate understanding of what is required to successfully support candidates through this award.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It was clear from the reports that assessors are fully aware of the requirements of the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials.

Evidence Requirements

It was evident from the reports compiled by the team that the Evidence Requirements were fully understood. The comments below fully support this view.

'The centre was advised that, in general, all evidence in portfolios sampled for verification indicated that candidates were progressing well and were being well supported.'

'Good paperwork which is appropriately used, signed and dated.'

Administration of assessments

Marking systems were being applied appropriately with Unit checklists, for example, linking to knowledge and understanding evidence.

Evidence sampled across a range of mandatory and optional Units reflected the Assessment Strategy and performance criteria demands of the qualification.

There is excellent material from the main subjects of study which shows that the Units are being integrated into the candidates' daily activities.

One assessor was commended for adopting a holistic approach to assessment in line with the recommendations within the qualification Assessment Strategy. Equally admirable was the fact that she is 'trailblazing' in relation to the delivery of this qualification, which is a new award for the centre. She is singlehandedly delivering the award to a high standard to one candidate who works for a different organisation and whose work patterns require the assessor to adopt a high degree of flexibility and tenacity in terms of the gathering of evidence and communication in general.

General feedback

One centre was advised that the evidence seen met SQA requirements and that this, and the discussions which took place, reflected that the delivery staff had clearly taken into account observations, suggestions and guidance provided from the previous year's visit. An ethos of continuous improvement was prevalent. Evidence sampled across a range of Units

and candidates showed a consistent high standard in both the quality of evidence produced by candidates and the assessment decisions and support.

There was an equally high standard of administration processes, which included induction packs for candidates undertaking both the SVQ and the L&D9Di format of portfolios and documentation of standardisation.

The following points were made during feedback:

- ◆ The delivery of the award was well organised
- ◆ The candidate paperwork was clear and easy to follow
- ◆ Meetings relating to this award should be evidenced, ie minutes, notes of meeting

One centre was advised that it was clear from discussions with staff and candidates, and from the evidence sampled, that steady progress was being made without comprising the integrity of the award. All staff involved were dedicated and committed Community Learning and Development workers who were having a positive influence on the candidates who were beginning to appreciate the merits of achieving the award.

One centre has identified good one-to-one candidate support as a key component for the successful delivery/achievement of the award.

There was good customisation of assessment tools to meet individual candidate needs and workplace/learning environment requirements.

One centre was sensitive and responsive to candidates who present with specific learning difficulties.

One centre was commended for adopting a partnership approach to the delivery of this award. This relationship with the local council community learning team guaranteed a current professional competence dimension for candidates and college staff alike. Similarly, the centre's plans to develop the award to include the local Prince's Trust demonstrated its commitment to expanding its partnership links and longer term sustainability of the award.

One centre was advised that, from the evidence seen and discussion with candidates, it was clear that the learning/assessment environment was supportive and inclusive. Candidates were engaging well in real youth work situations. Assessors were cautious in their approach but had made sound judgements. Overall, the ethos was one of continuous improvement.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Use of personal development reviews which enable staff to highlight learning actions
- ◆ The format of the file that showed staff qualifications and experience was simple but effective
- ◆ The induction pack for the SVQ Level 3 in Youth Work and the support pack for candidates undertaking the L&D9Di are to a high quality with clear and concise information

- ◆ There is an induction check list to ensure all candidates receive the same current information
- ◆ Format of the assessment plan and the centre's assessment strategy
- ◆ Format of standardisation meetings ensure that all assessors have the same level of understanding and knowledge required to ensure consistency throughout all candidates' work
- ◆ The staff and volunteers participate in relevant in-house courses to support the community development work being undertaken
- ◆ The assessor demonstrated a good understanding of the practices and principles of youth work and a strong interest in keeping abreast of current developments in the field through her volunteer work and her regular meetings with local community education delivery partners
- ◆ A staff 'away day' had been scheduled to allow newly qualified assessors to focus on the above with specific emphasis on assessment procedures
- ◆ A well-structured weekly training and guidance programme was in place for candidates. Candidates who were interviewed felt well supported
- ◆ The format of the CPD file document clearly highlights for staff the learning gained, action points and recent training history
- ◆ One centre has an excellent lone-worker policy for staff
- ◆ Excellent professional support from internal verifiers and assessors to candidates to ensure progression in learning
- ◆ Excellent internal verification policy which clearly illustrated the expectations for verification
- ◆ There was a robust and meaningful documented assessment system for the centre
- ◆ Minutes of the standardisation meetings are thorough and the format of the document reflects the nature and content of the meeting, ie be it discussion of performance criteria or updating areas of work or resources
- ◆ Well documented and transparent assessment and internal verification process
- ◆ Comprehensive SQA accredited centre handbook

Specific areas for improvement

Meetings relating to this award should be evidenced, ie minutes, notes of meeting.

One centre confirmed verbally that all staff delivering the award are experienced community education workers and either possess or are in the process of achieving the required qualifications for regulated awards. However, there was no documented evidence available for two of the workers to match this assertion.

All centres are encouraged to:

- ◆ ensure each candidate signs a separate document confirming that evidence within their portfolio is their own work and places the signed document within their portfolio
- ◆ include the above as a quality criterion when reviewing their policy procedures document
- ◆ record assessor monthly meetings with the placement practitioner in the CPD file and ensure that the internal verifier keeps the CPD file updated

- ◆ provide candidates with a list of websites and resources signposting access points for self-directed learning
- ◆ try to ensure that judgement decisions are accompanied by written observations that are specific to each piece of evidence and that they are inspirational in nature
- ◆ devise a customised instrument of assessment for observation visits, which also identifies the specific youth work context in which the observation visit takes place
- ◆ ensure each candidate portfolio contains details of approved witnesses and the status of each in terms of competences to assess evidence
- ◆ produce a summary sheet relating to all aspects of induction and ask each candidate to sign a copy then store it in their portfolio as evidence
- ◆ consider formalising the process of evidencing a candidate's own work

Prior to future EV visits, delivery staff are advised to engage the support of the centre's SQA Co-ordinator to ensure that the Visit Plan document is available to the relevant staff at least two weeks before the actual visit and to ensure that all documented evidence cited within it is available for the visit.