



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2016  
Drama and Theatre Arts**

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

# Higher National units

## General comments

Within verification group Drama and Theatre Arts (16) there continues to be, in by far the majority of centres, a clear and accurate understanding of the national standards for HNC/D Acting and Performance and HNC/D Musical Theatre. Standards across centres appeared to be appropriate and consistent with HN level. However, there was some concern regarding Technical Theatre where there were a few issues with standardisation and delivery, resulting in assessment and provision not being at HN level. This tended to occur where centres were offering HNC/D Technical Theatre for the first time.

The following units were verified across centres:

|         |                                                       |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| DP8V 35 | Performance 2: Applying Skills for Musical Theatre    |
| H1KW 34 | Voice 1: Developing Skills                            |
| H1KX 35 | Voice 2: Applying Skills in Performance               |
| H1L1 34 | Singing Skills 1 for Musical Theatre                  |
| H4SJ 34 | Acting 1: Developing Skills                           |
| H4TP 34 | Professional Development for Actors                   |
| DP8W 34 | Score Interpretation for Musical Theatre              |
| F389 34 | Stage Management                                      |
| FA64 35 | Stage Management Advanced                             |
| F38D 34 | Technical Theatre: Set Construction and Painting      |
| FA01 35 | Scenic Art and Construction                           |
| FA07 35 | Technical Theatre and Production Arts: Work Placement |

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, centres used the SQA assessment exemplar materials if they were available for the unit. The majority of centres adopted their own house style for delivering the material. The availability and use of SQA assessment exemplars for HNC/D Musical Theatre mandatory units proved to be a distinct aid to standardisation across centres.

Most centres had delivered the units for some time and demonstrated a high level of familiarity with the unit specifications, instruments of assessments and exemplification materials and this aided the standardisation of marking and recording of assessment across the centres. There was a continued high standard of presentation of material in all centres.

## Evidence requirements

Centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the evidence requirements. In most instances written and practical evidence was accessible and easy to track. There was continued significant use of a VLE in teaching and learning and written evidence requirements were being submitted and stored electronically.

The use of a VLE was an aid to addressing issues relating to plagiarism and logbook submission deadlines. Turnitin was also being used to address issues of plagiarism. Within Technical Theatre, there was some variance from HN level requirements. It is recommended that centres are clear on the level of evidence required for this area before commencing delivery and assessment.

### **Administration of assessments**

There was significant evidence of administration of assessments being consistent and appropriate. Standardisation was achieved through centres employing robust and well documented internal verification procedures. Internal verification of assessments was generally active and robust. It is important that internal verifiers have subject knowledge of the area in order to substantiate decisions made by assessors.

### **General feedback**

Feedback to candidates was considerable and supportive across the majority of centres. There was a significant amount of evidence where the use of comments and ticks in written work and checklists supported the derived result. This is extremely important as it removes elements of ambiguity in marking and allows the verification process to be smoothly progressed. Candidates across centres were very enthusiastic about their programmes of study. There was substantial evidence of positive feedback from candidates to their studies in terms of both course content and lecturers. VLEs, such as Moodle, are being used for delivery of some teaching and assessment material.

### **Areas of good practice**

- ◆ All centres offered very well laid out unit folders and candidate assessment material.
- ◆ There were many good examples of detailed feedback to candidates
- ◆ Recorded video evidence was generally very good throughout and easily accessible for verification.
- ◆ Use of a VLE for learning and teaching enables the candidate to learn and apply new IT skills. It also aids with issues such as plagiarism and submission deadlines of assessments.
- ◆ Turnitin is being used in some centres to assist with issues of plagiarism.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

- ◆ Where a centre-devised assessment is to be used it is strongly recommended to use SQA's prior verification process.
- ◆ Pre-delivery verification of instruments of assessment should be documented for all units intended for delivery and assessment. This also applies where an SQA assessment exemplar is being used.
- ◆ Centres should keep in mind that the Technical Theatre units should be delivered to industry standard with the appropriate level of challenges built into project briefs.

# Higher National graded units

Titles/levels of HN graded units verified:

|         |                                                      |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------|
| DG4T 34 | Acting and Performance: Graded Unit 1                |
| DG4V 35 | Acting and Performance: Graded Unit 2                |
| DP9P 34 | Musical Theatre: Graded Unit 1                       |
| DP9R 35 | Musical Theatre: Graded Unit 2                       |
| F3NN 34 | Technical Theatre: Graded Unit 1                     |
| FA09 35 | Technical Theatre and Production Arts: Graded Unit 2 |

## General comments

In all centres there appears to be a clear and accurate understanding of the national standards for Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Acting and Performance and Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Musical Theatre. Centres are strongly advised to keep backup copies of performance recordings. The standards across the centres appeared to be appropriate and consistent with HN level. One centre, externally verified for Technical Theatre, Graded Unit 1, had used a centre-devised variation of the SQA assessment exemplar and this resulted in issues of standardisation. Centres are reminded that it is strongly advisable to use the SQA assessment exemplars. If a centre wishes to use their own assessment this should be sent to SQA for prior verification. Furthermore, a development visit may be available from SQA. This can be particularly helpful where a centre is delivering a graded unit in a particular subject area for the first time or assessors/internal verifiers are new to the process.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases (except one), centres used the SQA assessment exemplar material for Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Acting and Performance, Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Musical Theatre, Graded Unit 1 in Technical Theatre (one centre used their own version) and Graded Unit 2 in Technical Theatre and Production Arts. It is advisable to become familiar with the SQA assessment exemplar materials for graded units in Technical Theatre prior to delivery. The centres generally adopted their own house style for delivering the material.

The high level of familiarity with the unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials in Acting and Performance and Musical Theatre continues to aid the standardisation of marking and recording of assessment across the centres.

## Evidence requirements

Overall, centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the evidence requirements. Candidates' evidence was easily accessible and, in most instances, easy to track. Occasionally, some issues arose over the difficulty in

locating and identifying candidates on video files. It is recommended that each centre has a clear approach to identifying candidates on video for external verification purposes. This is particularly the case where practical group work takes place. Centres are reminded to use the marking techniques given within the SQA graded unit exemplars. This assists in the verification process by clearly highlighting where marks have been awarded.

Within Acting and Performance and Musical Theatre it is recommended that candidate logbooks are submitted electronically. This makes for easy assessment and verification of word counts. Also within the graded units in Technical Theatre, it is recommended that an indexing system is used by the candidate when compiling their portfolios.

### **Administration of assessments**

Standardisation was achieved through robust and well documented internal verification procedures. This remains a dominant feature across the majority of centres. There were examples of very detailed feedback from verifier to assessor within the internal verification (IV) process. Consistent and appropriate marking was achieved sometimes through a dual-marking system. Assessments were marked by two assessors, each with an individual score sheet, and an average mark taken from the two results. This was particularly beneficial in the marking of the practical assessment and logbooks in Acting and Performance and Musical Theatre graded units. There was evidence in some centres of internal verification taking place throughout the delivery of the graded units — once after Stage 1, once after Stage 2, and after the final stage. This system enables issues to be picked up early on and corrected if necessary, rather than wait till the end of the delivery and discover a problem in Stage 1. It is important that internal verifiers have subject knowledge of the area in order to substantiate decisions made by assessors.

### **General feedback**

Feedback to candidates continues to be generally significant and detailed throughout all graded units with a significant amount of positive feedback given to candidates in relation to written work. There was a substantial amount of evidence that the use of comments in logbooks and checklists supported the derived mark. All centres offered fair access to assessment and learning support if required. Candidates who were interviewed, displayed enthusiasm for their course and lecturers.

### **Areas of good practice**

- ◆ All centres offered very well laid out unit folders and candidate assessment material.
- ◆ Some centres used more than two assessors for the performances thereby creating a realistic scenario for the mock audition.
- ◆ Double marking was employed to assist with appropriate level and standardisation of marking.

- ◆ Internal verification was carried out throughout the delivery of the graded unit thus reducing potential problems that otherwise might not be picked up soon enough. This also helped to maintain standardisation.
- ◆ There was evidence that some candidates had chosen challenging performance material and the end performances were of a high standard.
- ◆ There were examples of candidates being offered opportunities to work, with and engage with, theatre companies.
- ◆ One centre offered candidates the opportunity of a trip abroad in relation to theatre practice.
- ◆ One centre had a system of easy access to generic information required in the verification criteria. The verification criteria were available in a digital format and a hyperlink directed the external verifier to the appropriate evidence.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

- ◆ Use of SQA assessment exemplars in order to eliminate issues related to standardisation.
- ◆ Where a centre-devised assessment is to be used it is strongly recommended to use SQA's prior verification process.
- ◆ Pre-delivery verification of instruments of assessment should be documented for all units intended for delivery and assessment. This also applies where a SQA assessment exemplar is being used.
- ◆ Centres should keep in mind that the Technical Theatre graded units should be delivered to industry standard with the appropriate level of challenges built into project briefs.