



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Social Sciences**

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

Higher National Units

FM66 34, Social Science: Research and Methodology
F1BS 34 Research and Methodology

General comments

All paperwork required for the verification process was produced by centres appropriately.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All materials were appropriate and up-to-date.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence requirements were met, in the main. A number of minor details in relation to checklists, remediation word limit (100 word/outcome rule), etc were evident, but nothing so serious as to detract from confirming that national standards are being applied.

There was a slight over-assessment of evidence requirements in the Unit F1BS Research and Methodology.

Administration of assessments

One centre expressed minor concern over the 100 word remediation allowed in this award, as they felt that was difficult to stick to.

General feedback

Materials presented for verification met the national standard.

A suggestion made in relation to Outcome 3 (numeracy) of F1BS 34 Research and Methodology was to cut the size of the data set to between 8 and 12 and to combine the assessment of the mean calculation with the standard deviation. This should reduce the number of tasks required to meet the standard.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Centres provide good feedback to students along with a grade indication. This is very useful for students in preparation for their Graded Unit exam.
- ◆ Good checklists were used which showed clearly the progress made as a result of remediation.
- ◆ On all papers, clear advice was provided as to where students could make improvements.

- ◆ Centres have a record of oral questioning for students requiring remediation/oral clarification.

Specific areas for improvement

When F1BS 34 Research and Methodology is being used it should be contextualised to ensure the students see the relevance of it to their vocational area.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

FM67 34 Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1
FM68 35 Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3
FM6A 35 Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3
FM66 34, Social Science: Research and Methodology

General comments

Marks and appropriate comments were recorded in the recommended style. Excellent support was given to candidates throughout the duration of the course. All paperwork required for the verification process was produced by centres appropriately.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres were using the correct version of the Graded Unit specifications and assessment instruments met the evidence criteria. All centres were using exemplar materials as a model for the Graded Unit exams.

Evidence Requirements

The Graded Unit exams were often prior verified. The questions posed were appropriate to meet the evidence requirements.

The Graded Unit project topics were changed from the previous year, as is appropriate. The materials produced in centres met the requirements.

Administration of assessments

Most assessments had been prior verified by SQA after going through the centres' internal verification process. The timing of the closed-book assessments were appropriate and matched requirements.

General feedback

The marking of the assessments, supported by internal verification, was clearly in line with the standards laid down by SQA.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ The use of prior verification is helpful.
- ◆ Evidence of cross-marking and internal verification represents good practice.
- ◆ Good written, constructive feedback was given on candidates' work.
- ◆ In a number of centres there was evidence of cross-marking, including points where more marks should have been allocated. This is fair for candidates.

Specific areas for improvement

Some mark allocations on scripts could be clearer in terms of where Knowledge & Understanding and Evaluation & Conclusion marks are being allocated.

Better care is needed to ensure that allocated marks tally with the overall mark — there was evidence of addition errors. Arithmetical errors here did not impact on grades but marks awarded on scripts should be double-checked in future.

In centres, care should be taken to ensure that the marking of all subjects follows a specific pattern so there is parity across subjects. Individual differences in application of marking schemes can make one subject easier to achieve marks in than another. It is essential that centre teams look at this as part of their internal verification processes.

Credit for any other suitable point must **not** have marks allocated at the expense of information which is required. This is a point that was part of last year's report, which is repeated here:

Marks for 'Additional marks/credit any other suitable point' must not be fixed. For example, 2 marks have been allocated to this out of the 40 possible. This means that some candidates may be disadvantaged if they do not provide this 'extra' information and 2 marks have been removed from the information they need to provide. In other words, 'other suitable point' becomes a requirement rather than credit for additional information.

Conclusion marks are not optional and there must be marks allocated to this.