# Higher National Qualifications
# Internal Assessment Report 2016
# Sociology

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

Units verified:

Sociology A (FK8R 34 and DP3R 34)
Sociology B (FK8T 34 and DP3T 34)
Sociology C (FK8V 35) and
Sociology D (FK8P 35)

From visiting verification there is evidence that centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards.

Internal verification is supported by appropriate documentation covering three stages of the verification process (pre-delivery, ongoing and post-delivery). Documentation across centres showed variable depth of comment and justifications for decisions reached and agreed.

Generally, there is good evidence of standardisation within centres, which provided good support to new assessors.

Centres make good use of assessment exemplar packs, and there is evidence of centre-devised alternative assessments that had been developed and submitted for SQA prior verification.

All centres visited had master teaching packs in place (paper or electronic) and these were kept up to date by pack holders and internal verifiers.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

There was evidence from centres that assessors were using correct unit specifications and instruments of assessment were appropriate. It is recommended that unit specifications be downloaded, dated and signed to demonstrate the latest version is being used.

### Evidence requirements

The centres visited had a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the units sampled. Candidates were appropriately prepared for progression to university.

### Administration of assessments

Where assessments were at the appropriate level there was evidence of good quality assurance procedures. For instance, there were instruments of assessment that had been prior verified by SQA and an overall internal verification process that was well managed and administered with available records of meetings for verification and standardisation between assessors.

Open-book and closed-book assessments, remediation and re-assessment were managed effectively, fairly and in line with the standards of the awarding body.

It is important that there is appropriate levels of detail recorded in minutes on judgements and decisions reached and agreed through the internal verification and standardisation process.

**General feedback**

Overall, centres provided feedback to all candidates.

Where feedback to candidates was good, comments were included on a section of a student checklist that identified where evidence requirements were met.

Comments were found to be generally positive, supportive and clear where advice on improving candidate performance was specified.

Candidate feedback is generally very good and students appear to be getting a positive experience from studying these Sociology units. Candidates felt supported by staff and were happy with the pre-entry and induction process.

In some centres where assessment is more 'traditional' candidates where asked how they felt about the opportunity for more diverse assessment methods and the response was receptive and positive. A diverse assessment strategy across the overall award can provide candidates with the opportunity to develop new skills, eg in digital literacy and ICT.

There appeared to be no barriers to assessment and centres made adjustments and additional requirements for assessment where they were needed.

## Areas of good practice

♦ Good, organised administration and record keeping of the whole assessment process (prior-, during and post-verification)
♦ The use of Turnitin software providing candidates with supportive feedback and/or checking the authenticity of candidates' work and the development of appropriate referencing conventions
♦ Documented feedback post internal verification to allow action points to be identified for future assessments
♦ Close contact with learning support, ongoing consideration, monitoring and reviewing of additional learning and support needs

**Specific areas for improvement**

Considering the diverse range of assessments available, Centres generally seem hesitant to adopt more diverse assessment instruments that offer a more engaging and diverse approach to assessment under the HN framework.

Planning of diverse assessment could be managed if assessment was planned at the programme level and not in isolation of assessment across subjects and the programme — and have these diverse assessments submitted for SQA prior verification in good time for delivery.

Minutes of internal verification and standardisation meetings should be detailed to show the justification and rationale behind judgements and decisions reached and agreed through the process of quality assurance and internal verification.

Centres could be more pro-active in providing opportunities for staff to acquire suitable CPD or qualifications that support the internal verification process.