



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
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

Centres have delivered the current HNC/HND Beauty qualification over several years and have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. However, there have been challenges with collaboration of campuses and adopting standardisation practices for HN standards across campuses.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres are generally familiar with the Unit specifications and have developed instruments of assessment over time, which often have been sent for prior verification. The majority of centres use the SQA assessment exemplars for the mandatory Units within the HNC and HND framework. Some centres have been using the Training and Assessment Programme (TAP) materials that were recently developed.

Centres do not often use the HN online candidate support packs for Body Massage, Facial Treatments, and Face and Body Electrotherapy, which are available from SQA's secure website and can be downloaded to a college intranet/VLE.

Generally, centres used the current Unit specification and checked this information prior to delivery of the Unit. However, some centre staff were not aware that some assessment exemplars had been revised.

Evidence Requirements

Centres generally have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the HN Units being delivered. The SQA assessment exemplars for the mandatory Units give clear guidance on what Evidence Requirements are required.

It was noted through external verification that a small number of centres were not meeting the Evidence Requirements for certain Beauty Therapy HN Units. Also, in some centres there was evidence of over-assessment, which can cause unnecessary additional workload for the candidates. Where this was noted the centre was advised to revise their assessments.

Administration of assessments

Many centres are making the transition from paper-based master files to electronic files for storage of their Unit assessment material. Some centres are using their VLE to allow candidates to access course material. Candidates can then use the VLE to post their assessments and receive assessor feedback.

Centres with centre-devised instruments of assessment often have the instrument of assessment prior verified by SQA, as well as using their own internal verification process.

Many centres are now using a 'centre share drive' to store instruments of assessment to allow easier access for assessors and ensure a standardised approach.

Some centres have integrated Unit instruments of assessment where appropriate. These then can be cross-referenced and this streamlines the assessment process for the assessors and candidates.

Internal verification will often start with pre-delivery internal verification to ensure a Unit specification is current.

Generally, an internal verification schedule for the academic year will identify the final verification activity. Some centres are storing internal verification material on their centre intranet which can be viewed by all staff and External Verifiers.

Regular HN team meetings and course team meetings are recorded where standardisation has been discussed and this supports internal verification. This is now a very important process to ensure consistency of administration of assessments where there are multiple campuses.

General feedback

Written feedback to candidates was found to be very constructive and supportive to candidates, and at times was recorded as good practice. This was also evidenced by verbal feedback from candidates interviewed during the external verification process. Candidates who were interviewed were very positive about their course and felt they had good access to their tutors who gave them very good support and guidance.

Generally, centres are well resourced and continue to refurbish their salon environments and to purchase contemporary equipment to try to provide a realistic work experience for the candidates.

Many candidates participate in external work experience as part of their course and in extra-curricular activities provided through industry/commercial stakeholders in order to enhance their experience.

HN students are making use of their college VLE to access their course material and assessments.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Centres continue to provide additional opportunities for candidates to attend contemporary industry training sessions to help develop vocational and generic skills and build confidence

- ◆ Using SQA TAPs to aid delivery of HN Unit and assessments
- ◆ Storing master packs for individual Units on centre share drives to allow easier access for all centre staff and to assist consistency across assessors
- ◆ An internal verification process that includes observation of the practical assessment procedures with candidates and assessors
- ◆ Providing detailed constructive and supportive written feedback to candidates for written assignment drafts and remediation of written question papers
- ◆ Encouraging candidates to provide feedback on individual instruments of assessment that is then recorded on the assessor Unit assessment feedback form

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ When delivering the Unit DN6R35 Product Knowledge, ensure candidates are encouraged to research a wide variety of products and that they reference their research. Encourage integration of the practical aspect with Management & Practices of Facial Therapies Unit
- ◆ Ensure any centre-devised Body Massage Unit DN6C33 written question paper is in line with the new SQA assessment exemplar
- ◆ Alternative instruments of assessments must ensure equal rigour and demand as the original instrument of assessment
- ◆ The Contemporary Aesthetic Unit treatments can be revised to meet current industry trends and centres are not required to deliver the same treatments each year. The instruments of assessment will need to be updated to meet any changes to treatments offered
- ◆ Continue to reduce over-assessment where possible and try to integrate Unit assessments as good practice
- ◆ Assessors and internal verifiers should always check the currency of a Unit before it is delivered

Higher National Graded Units

F3SA 34 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 1

DP6035 Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 2

General comments

Centres generally have a clear understanding of the requirements of the national Graded Unit standards. When there are new assessors delivering a Graded Unit, centres usually ensure an experienced assessor mentors the new assessor on the process and the expected assessment evidence from candidates.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Experienced assessors are familiar with the Unit specifications and instruments of assessment. Centres are using the assessment exemplars and the marking guides contained within the exemplars. SQA has developed TAPs for both Graded Unit 1 and Graded Unit 2 and most centres are now fully utilising these.

Evidence Requirements

The assessment exemplar marking guides give an indication of what the assessor can accept as the minimum evidence required for each stage of the project. Candidates meeting this minimum evidence are not entitled to additional marks for just completing the stage.

Centres are not always aware that the sections on the exemplar marking checklist are the minimum evidence required from the candidates for each stage. The assessor can justify giving additional marks if the candidate response has included the criteria in the marking guide for grades within the Unit specification. It would be advisable for assessors to check against these criteria when potentially marking a candidate for an A grade.

Though the Graded Unit 2 specification does not specify an exact number of treatments the candidate has to complete in order for the investigation to be satisfactory, the candidate should be following the equipment manufacturer's recommended number of treatments to get the best results where possible.

Some assessors encourage candidates to provide detailed descriptions of the treatment procedures for Graded Unit 1, particularly in the Planning and Development stages. Assessors need to remember that the candidate is deemed competent in their practical beauty treatments and they are not being assessed on the practical aspect, rather their management and organisational skills.

Administration of assessments

Centres generally are now giving candidates an induction into the Graded Unit very early on in their academic session, to allow the candidates more time to prepare and research for their planning stage.

For Graded Unit 1, centres are encouraging candidates to be creative when preparing their own personal treatment area for their performance for the development stage.

Centres are continuing to purchase additional contemporary electrical equipment and this is allowing a greater flexibility for candidates when carrying out their investigation for Graded Unit 2.

For the Graded Units, experienced assessors are normally drawn from a team. They work closely together and it is good practice where they double-mark each other's candidate evidence. The candidate's evidence may be anonymous to the second assessor to ensure the marking is fair.

Centres must ensure their centre internal verification procedures have been completed for Graded Units in order to standardise the marking and grades awarded by the assessor. This will include a pre-delivery internal verification procedure and an initial meeting between internal verifier and assessors.

The assessor and internal verifier will generally work very closely during the Graded Unit process. The internal verifier is normally an experienced assessor of Graded Units so can also mentor any new assessors

General feedback

The assessment exemplar for Graded Unit 1 has a template to use for recording mentoring sessions with candidates. Most centres have adopted this recording mechanism for feedback.

At times, written recorded feedback from assessors to candidates can be limited which then doesn't reflect the additional marks awarded to the candidate — or the comments might suggest marks should be reduced and this does not appear to happen.

Some candidates provided feedback that the Graded Units were hard work and that the timing of the Unit can coincide with them trying to complete their other studies. Generally, most enjoyed the experience and saw the relevance to their studies. This year some students felt they had not received all the relevant information and that this had hindered their progress.

Candidates for Graded Unit 1 can take great pride in preparing their treatment area and the opportunity to impress their clients and assessor.

The length of time given to candidates to complete the development stage for Graded Unit 2 can be very limited. This can disadvantage the candidates. There is some difficulty with assessors giving high marks and A grades where the

candidate evidence does not reflect this grade and the assessor's feedback does not justify the high grade.

This often arises also from centres using mechanistic marking rather than holistic marking of the project as stated in the SQA guide for marking project-based Graded Units. The guide suggests an A grade candidate will be working at this standard throughout all three stages.

Additional guidance on marking is often given by External Verifiers during the course of their external verification visit, though some centres are advised to request a development visit to allow more in-depth guidance and support.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Providing detailed assessor feedback and comments to justify a grade aids the internal/external verifier
- ◆ Storing internal verification reports of Graded Units electronically allows assessor and internal verifiers to review any actions and ensure these are completed timeously
- ◆ Candidates are being encouraged to use the TAP and complete SMART objectives as part of their planning stage

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Assessors should refer to the guidance within each Graded Unit specification and follow the requirements for an A grade and C grade
- ◆ Centres need to provide formal guidelines which would justify the grades they have given their candidates
- ◆ Continue to encourage your candidates to improve their scholarly skills in critical thinking and evaluative writing
- ◆ Centres should refer to the SQA guide 'Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher Certificates and Diplomas' when delivering and marking Graded Units. This guide gives advice on remediation and re-assessment, holistic marking and how to manage 'reasonable assistance'
- ◆ Encourage candidates to refrain from using detailed descriptions of their treatment step-by-step procedures within the planning and developing stages of their Beauty Therapy Graded Unit 1

SVQ awards

General comments

Centres delivering the SVQ awards have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. All the centres have delivered SVQ Beauty qualifications for several years and receive an annual external verification visit; therefore they are very familiar with the assessment strategy and awarding body requirements.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The centres were very familiar with the Unit specifications and instruments of assessment, as they have been delivering these current National Occupational Standards for several years.

Assessors continued to take time to look at the Units they had delivered last year and to streamline and integrate their instruments of assessment to enhance the delivery of the Units and assessments.

Some centres had provided feedback regarding a small number of questions and issues relating to the SOLAR online assessments. Centres were advised to contact SOLAR directly to resolve their technical issues.

Evidence Requirements

Centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements and their candidates were providing sufficient evidence to meet the requirements. The use of the SQA portfolios guides them clearly to the necessary Evidence Requirements and suggested types of evidence.

Some centres provide additional guidance to candidates to allow them the opportunity to monitor their own Evidence Requirements. Candidates will complete logbook entries of their practical work in their commercial salons. Centres continue to be creative and to integrate evidence across numerous Units.

Administration of assessments

Centres generally have administration rights within the Beauty departments in order for the teams to generate the SOLAR assessments when they require them. This can be a speedier process rather than always having to go through the college administration system/team. This provides a very user-friendly but secure system for centre staff and candidates. Remediation is being carried out by assessors using various methods to ensure the candidates achieve 100% as required by the assessment strategy.

Many centres have adopted the procedure where a new assessor to a Unit would go through a Unit induction with an experienced assessor for this Unit to ensure a

clear understanding of Evidence Requirements. Often a mentor is assigned to a less experienced assessor to provide support regarding assessment process and recording methods.

Assessors continue to be innovative by cross-referencing the candidate evidence where they can, which helps reduce over-assessment for the candidate.

Assessors mapped all the Units to discover the similar EKU (essential knowledge and understanding) within each Unit and then developed either an integrated written workbook/assignment or a bank of oral questions along with suggested responses to cover these EKU. If this type of oral question was asked the assessor was not required to record the candidate response.

Also noted this year, cross-referencing of evidence from Level 2 to Level 3 was appropriate.

Centre internal verification procedures and documentation were being used appropriately. This included pre-delivery internal verification of instruments of assessment and samples of candidate evidence internally verified throughout the year. In some centres the element of practical assessment was sampled by an internal verifier to ensure standardisation and consistency across all assessors. Some centres' internal verification activity can be end-loaded late in the academic year, whereas best practice is that there should be continuous internal verification throughout the year.

One centre is using the SQA e-portfolio and the candidate portfolio and photographic evidence is stored on a memory pen.

General feedback

Generally there was evidence during external verification of assessor feedback to candidates for practical observations and written assignment/workbook activities. This could vary from assessor to assessor and centre to centre. Some assessors provided feedback orally to candidates rather than providing a written record. There was evidence of candidates being encouraged to self-reflect on the practical treatments they had performed.

Candidates who were interviewed seemed to really enjoy the practical aspects of these awards and, in particular, the additional opportunities for training in contemporary treatments/products provided for them throughout their time at the centre. Providing these additional industry/commercial enrichment activities seems to be a growing trend within centres. This also allows assessors to access CPD opportunities.

Centres recognise the importance of giving the candidates the opportunity to further develop their employability skills.

One centre has a local salon delivering the SVQ Level 2 Beauty and the salon is working closely with the centre assessors and internal verifier.

Many centres are continuing to provide teaching/learning materials on their centre VLE and/or memory pen drive. This allows an alternative resource and easier access for candidates. The centre staff can also concentrate on the practical skills when candidates are in class, if the candidates can access the underpinning knowledge from their VLE.

Centres are aware of the present work on the new Beauty NOS and there have been consultation and information events held in Scotland. Some centre staff have been able to attend these events.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ There was very good evidence of assessor CPD that was relevant to the delivery of Beauty SVQs
- ◆ An employer engagement event was held to promote a centre's Beauty students. Trade testing was part of the event and enabled employers to see the standard of the candidates. This allowed the candidates to experience this type of selection which can often happen in the beauty industry
- ◆ Centre additional enrichment activities allow candidates to experience up to-date industry workshops
- ◆ Ongoing internal academic guidance given by centre tutors to candidates and additional learning support can aid candidates
- ◆ Interdisciplinary work with other curriculum areas on joint live briefs, eg annual college show, competition work with make-up artists
- ◆ Assessors are encouraging self-reflection by candidates on their practical performances
- ◆ Some centres allow better access to PCs and laptops to enable candidates to do research or complete e-portfolio's, eg breakout areas with PCs, 'classroom in a box' taken into the salons

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Assessors need to ensure they indicate the number of hours their CPD (or planned CPD) activity is worth on their annual CPD record
- ◆ Continue to cross-reference evidence across Units and awards where appropriate to avoid repetition and over-assessing of candidates and continue to reference to summative practical assessment where possible.