



Internal Assessment Report 2010: Travel and Tourism (192)

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

Higher National Units

General comments

Five centres were visited (three in Scotland and two overseas) to verify HN Units in Travel and Tourism. Four out of five visits were successful, with the centres involved having delivered the Units in accordance with national standards.

However, a hold was placed on one centre where staff were not applying national standards in terms of evidence requirements, judgement of candidate performance and internal verification. In another centre there were well defined internal verification policies and procedures, but these had yet to be implemented.

In all cases, centres were using the correct Unit specifications and assessment exemplification packs. However, it was evident in the held centre that staff members were not familiar with the content.

With successful verification in four out of the five centres, it can be concluded that generally centres understand the evidence requirements for the Units. However, where the hold was placed it was clearly evident that the centre did not understand the evidence requirements in both Tour Operations and the Graded Unit.

In all centres it was noted that SQA assessment exemplar packs were being utilised together with associated marking checklists.

One centre had developed alternative assessments where necessary, and these had been sent to the SQA for prior verification before they were put to use. This is good practice. In the successful centres:

- ◆ Assessments were planned well in advance and there were sufficient opportunities for undertaking remediation, second attempts, and the sitting of missed assessments.
- ◆ Assessment decisions were appropriate and in keeping with national standards.
- ◆ Some Units had not been completed but the available evidence was in keeping with the Unit delivery schedules.
- ◆ A clear system for assessing students' work is in place, and there was significant evidence of the college undertaking internal verification. Delivery teams demonstrated close working relationships and a clear understanding of the centre's verification system.

In some cases it was not clear how the Assessor reached a decision, and obviously clearer annotation is required where this occurred. Generally, though, Verifiers reported that feedback to candidates was clear and constructive.

In three centres, candidates were interviewed. Candidates were found to be positive about the administration of the assessment process. They confirmed that Assessors had given adequate prior notice of assessment, its requirements and how they should prepare for it. Assessment conditions and the remediation process were well understood by the candidates

in these centres, and they confirmed that feedback took place within an acceptable time scale.

In one centre, candidates highlighted the mechanisms in place to ensure accessible and equitable access to assessment. They highlighted, in particular, the excellent mechanisms put in place to ensure candidates who had been ill were not disadvantaged when it came to accessing assessments.

There seemed to be little overloading of assessments, and candidates confirmed that feedback was helpful and supportive.

In another centre, candidates felt that study guides were out of date and did not always match the requirements of assessments. It was explained that the guides give only a basic understanding and are not meant for classroom teaching, as they are written in open learning format. Personal research and class activities should provide information on current industry practice and trends.

Areas of good practice

Examples of good practice identified in 2009–10 included:

- ◆ A centre had developed a link with a local travel agent, who had agreed to take all candidates on workplace experience on an ongoing basis. This had been particularly useful in preparing candidates for internal assessment in Retail Travel Practice. Candidates also had access to a PC lab and interactive whiteboard, which has aided them considerably when preparing for the mapping assessment in International Tourist Destinations.
- ◆ In another centre there was evidence of a college internal audit team which verified Assessor and internal verification decisions. This centre also included delivery team standardisation meetings as part of the internal verification system, which helped ensure consistency in the administration of the assessment process. The same centre also conducted a series of viva voce interviews to ensure authentication of candidate work where assessment was unsupervised.

Areas for improvement

Centres are encouraged to desist from becoming too reliant on SQA/COLEG student guides as the main method of delivery. These are mainly written in open learning format and are not suited for classroom delivery. They very quickly become outdated, particularly those covering air travel and retail travel practice. Candidates must learn about current industry practice and trends through engagement in classroom teaching activities which encourage personal research.

Where required, eg closed book tests and practical exercises where only minor errors are allowed, centres must develop alternative assessment instruments for reassessment purposes.

There is evidence of appropriate use of remediation. However, where this occurs, clearer recording of Assessors' decisions is required to identify where additional knowledge and understanding has been generated.

With regard to the Unit structure of Travel and Tourism, assessors will have to update marking instructions to reflect current trends and developments. One verifier also questioned whether candidates were being given sufficient guidance on the depth and breadth of information required to generate acceptable evidence.

In Tour Operations assessment task 1, students must use reliable sources to identify trends. Any external factors identified must be linked to the markets and destinations, factors affecting demand must be linked to the target market, and market research (primary and secondary) must be appropriate for the proposed tour.

The following feedback is aimed primarily at overseas centres but is also relevant to Scottish centres. Centres must ensure that Assessors and Internal Verifiers:

- ◆ are familiar with and fully understand the requirements of the Unit specifications.
- ◆ ensure the candidates are producing their own work and are aware that plagiarism and copying work from the internet is not acceptable.
- ◆ identify errors in documentation (tickets, vouchers, business letters, itineraries, etc) as incorrect and allow minor errors to be remediated without any guidance from the Assessor.
- ◆ are marking to the standards required and according to the Unit specification.
- ◆ implement internal verification policies and procedures.
- ◆ do not have access to the model answers for assessments.
- ◆ consider ways of providing additional English language support to enable non-native students to develop their language skills and produce work to current industry standards.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified

DKOC 34: HNC Travel Graded Unit 1

DK09 35: Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 2

F6J1 34: Activity Tourism Graded Unit 1

F6J2 35: Activity Tourism Graded Unit 2

DI14 34: Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 2 (overseas centres only)

General comments

Most presenting centres have experienced successful verification of their Graded Units in previous years, and will be verified again within the three-year cycle model.

Verifiers were generally satisfied that the three Scottish centres visited have developed a good understanding of the requirements of the Graded Units. In all cases certification was recommended. However, Verifiers found that they are still fielding lots of questions about Graded Unit delivery, and it is clear that centres are not yet fully confident in their ability to deliver Graded Units.

One of the overseas centres had not applied the marking scheme correctly.

All centres were using the correct, most up-to-date Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials.

In two Scottish centres, the allocation of marks and assessment decisions made appeared to be lenient and, as stated above, one of the overseas centres had not applied marking schemes correctly. This would suggest lack of familiarity with the requirements of the instruments of assessment.

The instances outlined above show that there is not yet a full understanding of the evidence requirements in Graded Units. However, this is now being addressed through the internal verification/standardisation processes in the centres involved.

In all cases centres tried to deliver at the appropriate level. Centres used the most up-to-date SQA assessment exemplar packs where appropriate. The centre delivering Activity Tourism had used centre-devised materials.

In good centres:

- ◆ candidates had completed the planning and development stages; the most advanced candidates had completed the evaluation stage, with others underway.
- ◆ judgement of candidate performance was generally appropriate.
- ◆ candidates had fair access to assessment and remediation arrangements.
- ◆ standardisation of assessment decisions was confirmed through the internal verification process.
- ◆ staff were experienced in the internal verification processes and applied them in accordance with the centre's procedures.

Feedback to candidates from Assessors varied in quality. Where feedback was seen to be lacking, Verifiers noted this as a development point.

There is no candidate feedback on Graded Units, as none were interviewed in the Scottish centres. The candidates who were interviewed in one of the overseas centres did not comment on the Graded Unit.

No problems of access to assessment have been reported.

Areas of good practice

Good centres have developed master folders for Graded Units, and these contained all necessary information for the delivery of the Units. Internal verification documentation was also contained within these folders.

In one centre, two Internal Verifiers were deployed. One IV considered the technical content of the instrument of assessment, while the other considered the appropriateness of the assessment method used. This centre also used a second marker to mark a sample of the marked scripts, completely independent of the original marker.

One centre had devised its own assessment materials and had taken the opportunity to involve candidates in exciting, real development proposals. This gave the candidates opportunities to develop their own ideas based on a site which they could easily access. In the same centre, a requirement to develop a website as part of the assessment in the second Graded Unit was particularly innovative and will help develop digital marketing skills which should enhance the candidates' employability.

Areas for improvement

Centres are encouraged to apply the grade criteria as stated in the Unit specification when determining grades, rather than finely detailed marking schemes. Marking schemes should only be used for general guidance and as an aid when determining final grades.

The following is aimed specifically at the overseas centres but is also relevant to Scottish centres:

- ◆ Assessors and Internal Verifiers must ensure that they are familiar and fully understand the requirements of the Graded Unit.
- ◆ Assessors must ensure that they mark errors in documentation (tickets, vouchers, business letters, itineraries, etc) as incorrect, and deduct marks accordingly.
- ◆ Centres must write a new assessment to allow candidates who have failed to be reassessed; this should be sent to SQA for prior verification.