



Internal Assessment Report: Politics

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

Units verified this session were:

DP55 34	Politics A
DP56 34	Politics B
DP57 35	Politics C
DP58 35	Politics D

Overall across the sector, those centres sampled this session displayed a good and consistent level of presentation of candidates and assessment decisions.

Most centres provided a good quantity of marked student work, which made for a successful verification process as assessors were able to reach comprehensive decisions.

Overall, the presentation of student work displayed a general high standard of response across the centres verified. There was also evidence of strong tutor input and support for candidates, and of satisfactory systems in place for remediation where required.

Again across centres there was evidence of good quality support systems in place, with appropriate internal verification. Due to the problems with some of the Unit descriptors, particularly Politics A (DP55 34), internal verification became a good vehicle for addressing issues identified before and during delivery. This was particularly relevant in the assessment of this Unit.

All centres verified were using the current specifications and, as was said earlier, there was a good supply of candidate evidence. Overall, there was a satisfactory level of fair and accurate assessment decisions.

Where there was more than one tutor delivering and assessing, assessment decisions were accurate and comparable.

Where available for interview, students were positive about their experience and found the HN Social Science both challenging and rewarding.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

Good written and oral feedback to candidates continues to be an area of essential good practice. It gives candidates an explanation of concepts, theories and techniques in a personal manner, and encourages effective self-evaluation.

Cross marking also helps the integrity of assessment and assessment decisions.

Internal verification meetings that address problematic or marginal student performance are also good practice. They ensure consistency of decision making over assessment and reassessment.

One verifier reported positively on the practice of delivering lectures in large groups before holding a longer seminar/tutorial at a later date to promote learning.

One centre produced a learners' appeal policy that is recommended as good practice.

One centre failed to provide the verifier with an instrument of assessment for a Unit. This Unit had not been assessed at this point. The centre was informed that this was not acceptable as assessment material should be established, internally verified and available for external verification prior to beginning the Course.

In addition, student feedback is essential and should be shown in evidence. Good student performance should be highlighted as well as poor. This applies to spelling and grammar as well as theoretical or structural problems of understanding.

Further development revolves around the points already highlighted. There is a need for consistency, where required, in marking, assessing and candidate feedback. In areas where there are uncertainties with Unit descriptors or assessment, centres should make greater use of verifiers through SQA. Verifiers are particularly keen to give assistance wherever required.

The HNC/D Social Sciences is currently being reviewed and as part of this process the Politics Units are being revised. The revised Units will be introduced in August 2011.