



Internal Assessment Report 2010: Administration and IT (363/389)

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

It is worth noting, from the outset, that external verification activity in this area was limited, in line with the centre selection plan covered in SQA's verification strategy.

Most centres were represented at the HN Network event held in Stirling Management Centre in November 2009. Attendance at this event provided delegates with feedback on external verification activity for the academic year 2009–10, an opportunity to provide input to the limited review of the HNC/D Administration and Information Technology Group Award, and to network with the SQA Qualifications Team, Qualification Review Team, external verification team and colleagues. Feedback from the event was very positive. The requirements of the national standards were reinforced at this event.

Two development visits were made to centres during the year, to provide guidance and support where HN Units were delivered and assessed for the first time. Feedback from the development visits was very positive.

The majority of centres continue to use SQA assessment exemplar packs to assess candidates.

At most visits, assessors and internal verifiers were interviewed and it was clear that current Unit specifications were being used. It is also encouraging to see many centres making use of the Understanding Standards website to ensure that the appropriate SCQF level is applied to the marking of student work.

All centres have developed master or control files (paper-based or electronic) to ensure that all documentation relating to individual Units is readily available. At the start of each academic year, these packs are checked to ensure that all assessment materials are fit for purpose and up-to-date.

Assessors in this area are generally very experienced, and there is good evidence of support given to new staff. Centre staff make use of SQA's Qualifications Team to seek advice and support, where necessary.

Most centres have used the assessment exemplar packs to assess students. A small number of centres have produced their own assessments and have made use of the SQA prior verification service.

Most centres have well established internal verification procedures, with appropriate sampling plans in place.

Centres are continuing to develop assessments which integrate Units, reducing the assessment burden for candidates. Centres are aware of the greater opportunities that will be offered following the launch of the reviewed HNC/D Administration and Information Technology Group Awards.

Feedback to candidates

Feedback to candidates continues to improve, but this still varies in quality and quantity. Centres are using virtual learning environments more often to record candidate feedback.

Feedback from candidates interviewed

Candidates were interviewed during most external verification visits. All candidates interviewed were very positive about their experience at college and were able to see how the Group Awards would help them to progress to higher education or employment. A high percentage of candidates interviewed planned to progress to higher education, using articulation agreements negotiated between centres and universities.

Access to assessment

Many modes of delivery were offered by centres: full-time, infill, part-time day, part-time evening, blended learning, open and online learning. There was also evidence of Courses and individual Units being delivered and assessed at community outreach locations. In a small number of cases, it would appear that candidates were not always ready for assessment. In these cases remediation, followed by re-assessment, had taken place.

Other issues

The presentation of candidate work was generally very good and well marked. Internal verification was also well documented.

Areas of good practice

It is worth noting again that external verification activity in this area was limited, in line with the centre selection plan covered in SQA's verification strategy.

Centres have devised well structured feedback sheets which provide prompts to the assessor to give comprehensive and supportive feedback to candidates. This approach can improve candidate feedback and performance.

Centres are signposting the Graded Unit content, from the start of delivery, in individual subjects, and providing candidates with sample examination questions and support in examination technique. This approach could enhance candidates' examination performance.

Centres are using electronic master/control folders to ensure that all staff teaching a Unit have access to the latest assessment materials.

Centres work hard to ensure the authenticity of candidate work, with more making use of anti-plagiarism software. Some centres use examination log-ins to carry out closed-book assessments. These strategies ensure that successful candidates are producing their own work, to an acceptable standard.

Areas for improvement

Candidate feedback must be improved to ensure that it is consistent between centres and candidates.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified

DE1T 34: HN Administration and IT: Graded Unit 1 (Examination)

DE22 35: HN Administration and IT: Graded Unit 2 (Examination)

DE23 35: HN Administration and IT: Graded Unit 3 (Project)

General comments

It is worth noting again that external verification activity in this area was limited, in line with the centre selection plan covered in SQA's verification strategy. Central verification took place in June 2009.

All centres selected for external verification of the Graded Units were successful. The majority of centres have used SQA assessment exemplar packs. A small number of centres have created their own instrument of assessment and have made use of the SQA prior verification service.

Centres have used the exemplified materials on the Understanding Standards website as a source of reference.

Most centres were represented at the HN Network event held in Stirling Management Centre in October 2009. Attendance at this event provided delegates with feedback on external verification activity for academic year 2009–10. It is clear that the good practice and issues for improvement had been embraced by the centres selected.

No issues concerning the understanding of Evidence Requirements were identified at central verification. Centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Units.

No issues concerning assessment were identified at central verification. Candidate work was well presented, clearly marked and internally verified.