



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2012
Beauty Therapy**

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

Centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. The centres have delivered the current HNC/HND Beauty qualification over several years and there was only centre externally verified where these qualifications were new to the centre.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres are familiar with the Unit specifications and have developed instruments of assessment over time which often have been sent to SQA for prior verification. The majority of centres use the SQA assessment exemplars for the mandatory Units within the HNC and HND framework.

Centres do not often use the HN online candidate support packs for body massage; facial treatments; face and body electrotherapy. These are available on the SQA secure website and can be downloaded to a college intranet/VLE.

Centre staff are advised to check that they have the most current Unit specification from SQA before delivering the Unit.

Evidence Requirements

Centres have a clear understanding of Evidence Requirements for the HN Units being delivered. Two centres which received external verification visits were advised to look at streamlining certain written assessments for the Body Massage, Depilation, and Face and Body Electrotherapy Units in order to avoid over-assessment.

The SQA assessment exemplars for the mandatory Units give clear guidance on the Evidence Requirements.

Administration of assessments

Many centres are making the transition from storing their Unit assessment material in paper-based master files to electronic files.

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

Assessors map across Units to find if there are instruments of assessment which can be cross-referenced; this streamlines the assessment process.

Internal verification includes pre-delivery internal verification as well as final verification activity. Most centres are storing internal verification material on the centre intranet which can be viewed by staff and External Verifiers.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates was generally very good. This was evidenced by the verbal feedback recorded from candidates interviewed, and from the written feedback evidenced on assessor feedback forms attached to candidate assessments.

Candidates interviewed were very positive about their course and felt they had good access to their tutors who gave them very good support and guidance. One centre's HN candidates felt that their input was valued and they had taken a role as mentors to other candidates.

Some candidates commented that they found the Face and Body Electrotherapy Unit difficult to complete in the timescale.

They had enjoyed the opportunity to participate in work experience as part of their course and other activities. which had included industry stakeholders.

Centres are providing additional enrichment activities from industry/commercial stakeholders in order to enhance their candidates' experience at their centre.

Areas of good practice

A centre had mapped where Unit assessments could be cross-referenced in order to avoid over-assessment for candidates.

A centre has a mentoring student scheme where candidates were encouraged to mentor a candidate in the year/qualification below them in order to share their previous learning and experiences with the less experienced candidate. This builds confidence in the candidates and allows them to effectively contribute to the learning experience of others.

A centre has developed a system where all assessment material and internal verification is available digitally on their staff 'share point'. A 'lead verifier' for each Unit is appointed and staff have to receive permission to access the assessment material. The centre has found that this helps standardisation and ensures the correct and most current assessment material is being used, especially when the centre has multiple assessment sites.

A robust internal verification system included an overview of internal verification activity acknowledging the internal verification which had taken place and incorporated SQA verification requirements, along with QELTM throughout its internal verification procedures.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres to continue to ensure the candidate's level of study and evidence does reflect the SCQF level of the Unit being delivered.

Assessors to ensure steps are taken to avoid plagiarism within candidates' evidence; these steps should build on the plagiarism information candidates receive during their induction to the Course/Unit.

Continue to streamline and cross-reference assessment across Units where appropriate.

Higher National Graded Units

Beauty Therapy: Graded Unit 1

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 the Unit, centres usually ensure that an experienced assessor mentors the new assessor on the process and 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. The centres use the assessment exemplars and the marking guides contained within the exemplar. The assessment exemplar for Graded Unit 2 does not give a mentoring record pro-forma for recording meetings with candidates. However, there is an example in the Graded Unit 1 assessment exemplar which some centres use.

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. This minimum evidence does not justify full marks for that stage. Centres do not always appreciate that the sections on the marking guide are the minimum evidence required from the candidates. The assessor can justify giving more marks if the candidate response has included more depth and breadth.

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

The diary sheet within the Graded Unit 1 assessment exemplar could be used by candidates to provide more evidence of logging their planning activities, rather than it just being used to record dates.

Administration of assessments

To deliver the Graded Units, experienced assessors are normally drawn from a team. They work closely together and it is common practice to cross-assess by double marking the candidate evidence. Candidates may be anonymous to the second assessor in order to ensure that marking is fair.

Centres will ensure that their internal verification procedures have been completed for Graded Units in order to standardise the marking and grades awarded by the assessor. 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 and most centres have adopted this recording mechanism for feedback.

Generally, written feedback from assessors to candidates can at times be limited which then doesn't reflect the marks awarded to the candidate.

While candidates can feed back that the Graded Units are hard work, most have enjoyed the experience and see the relevance to their studies. Candidates for Graded Unit 1 can take great pride in preparing their treatment area with additional decorative objects to impress their clients and enhance the centre treatment area.

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' evaluation stage as it reduces the information and statistics they have in order to compare and contrast their pieces of equipment.

Centres agree to visit dates when they have only have assessed evidence for the planning stage. This does not allow the external verification process to verify the potential grades to be awarded to 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. Additional guidance on marking is often given by External Verifiers during the course of their external verification visit.

Areas of good practice

Two assessors are present during the presentation for the Graded Unit 2 evaluation stage in order to ensure standardisation in marking.

Detailed lesson plans with planned timed activities and reference to Curriculum of Excellence contained within each lesson plan.

For the Graded Unit 1 planning stage, candidates were encouraged to consider sustainable and environmental issues.

Additional specialist equipment used to examine clients' skin condition, for example skin moisture tests and use of an I Scope, allows a detailed skin analysis to be performed.

Centre-devised assessor guide to marking Graded Unit 1 on what the centre requires in order for their candidates to achieve a higher grade.

Assessor encourages candidates to comment on the assessor feedback given and asks candidates to comment if they feel the feedback was fair. The assessor feels that this allows the candidate time to absorb the feedback and understand the assessor comments before moving on to the next stage.

Specific areas for improvement

Assessors should refer to the guide given within each Graded Unit specification and follow the requirements for an A grade and C grade.

Centres need to devise a marking guide on what is expected from candidates in order to be awarded a higher mark than 50%.

Continue to encourage candidates to improve their scholarly skills in critical thinking and evaluative writing.

Centre to standardise an approach to referencing and ensure consistency across assessors on the presentation of project reports.

Assessors must provide detailed assessor feedback on candidate evidence which reflects their marking/grade decision.

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 also gives advice on remediation and re-assessment.

For Graded Unit 1, ensure candidates are given random clients by the assessor and they use a known client for the project.