



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2012  
Childcare**

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

The centres visited this year have all displayed a good understanding of the national standards for HN Course Units. Work sampled across the centres indicated that candidates were working to a suitable standard and being assessed appropriately.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Across all centres, the visited assessors appeared to be familiar with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials. Some centres had made good attempts to integrate Units where appropriate, and therefore reduce the burden of assessment for their candidates.

## Evidence Requirements

Centre teams were clear on the Evidence Requirements for the Units sampled and almost all had very good checklist tracking systems to ensure coverage of Evidence Requirements, particularly where Units had been integrated. This was evident across level 7 and 8. Assessors and Internal Verifiers worked hard to ensure that SCQF requirements for level 7 and 8 were met. The feedback from assessors indicated that candidates were being reminded of the SCQF requirements regularly throughout their Course of study.

## Administration of assessments

Centres appear to be working well with both the HNC Early Education and Childcare (EE&CC) and the Professional Development Award (PDA) Childhood Practice qualifications. They appear to be paying particular attention to the integration of assessment in order to reduce the assessment load. External verification feedback indicates that there is some good practice, particularly where curriculum and assessment and language literacy and numeracy have been integrated with the Working in EE&CC Workplace Units.

Corrections to candidate work are clearly marked, and appropriate recording of candidate results remains a priority for all centres. Centres are also showing increased use of virtual learning environments, such as Moodle and Blackboard, to support candidates with assessment administration, provision of feedback, accessing of materials and group support mechanisms.

All centres visited had good, robust internal verification systems in place that allowed for a satisfactory degree of self- regulation across the qualifications verified.

### **General feedback**

Centres have again shown some highly developed feedback mechanisms which have had a positive impact on student learning and achievement. However, consistency of this approach still needs to be addressed in a few cases.

All External Verifiers reported that while centres were a little daunted by the new quality assurance system, they were still keen to raise issues and discuss new ways of working in an open and purposeful manner. All centres visited were keen to discuss the revision of the HNC EE&CC award. Some centres indicated that they felt that although the award was working well, it needed to be updated and refreshed to take account of current thinking, new practices and the wider role of the childhood studies practitioner.

### **Areas of good practice**

The increased use of Moodle and Blackboard, in support of assessment administration, provision of feedback, accessing of materials and provision of online group support mechanisms, was noteworthy.

Assessors appear to be paying particular attention to the integration of assessment.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Throughout the sector, providers should place further emphasis on ensuring appropriate integration of assessments.

# Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

HNC Early Education and Childcare (EE&CC) Graded Unit 1

Professional Development Award (PDA) Childhood Practice Graded Unit 2

## General comments

All centres visited this year appeared to have a good understanding of the national standards for HN Graded Units 1 and 2. Candidates across the centres visited were working to an appropriate standard and assessed accordingly.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, assessors appeared to be familiar with the Unit specifications and had produced appropriate instruments of assessment. Most centres provided candidates with support materials in the form of a guide booklet to help them develop their evidence gathering skills.

## Evidence Requirements

External Verifiers reported that the centres visited were comfortable with the Evidence Requirements for Graded Units 1 and 2. Clearer distinctions were made this session between the Graded Unit levels of 7 and 8 following earlier concerns. External Verifiers noted that centres offered candidates appropriate guidelines for each level and appropriate topic selection was more evident this year.

## Administration of assessments

All centres appeared to have a good understanding of where and when to best place the Graded Unit in the programme of study, ie after mandatory Units had been completed and candidates had undertaken placement experience. External Verifiers found that assessments were generally marked promptly, and feedback given to candidates in order that students could progress to the next stage.

Almost all centres had robust internal verification procedures in place and standardisation of candidate work across assessors was clearly evidenced. Centres appear keen to ensure appropriate standardisation of the Graded Unit. Often the internal verification of the Unit is in excess of the requirements for SQA quality assurance; however this is often to support assessors and is not considered an issue by the External Verifiers.

## General feedback

External Verifiers reported that centres provided good levels of feedback for candidates, often with one-to-one meetings to ensure candidates were clear on

how to move to the next stage. Overall, centres have again provided positive learning environments that allow candidates to select suitable topics for investigation.

### **Areas of good practice**

Very good use of detailed feedback is being used by some centres to support candidates through all stages of the Graded Units. Candidates can reflect on their learning and identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Within the marking of Graded Units 1 and 2, there remains the emphasis that when offering a high grade the centre should ensure there is appropriate analysis of findings.