



**National Qualifications 2012
Internal Assessment Report
Mental Health Care**

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified:

Mental Health Care — Higher (C06G 12) which is allocated 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6.

Units:

Understanding of Mental Health and Mental Illness (DF6H 12)

Stress and Stress Management (D10Y 12)

Caring for People with Dementia (D11A 12)

General comments

The role of the external verification team is to support centres delivering the component Units from the Higher PBNC Mental Health Care Course. This course comprises of one mandatory Unit — Understanding of Mental Health and Mental Illness, and one optional Unit from a choice of two — either Caring for People with Dementia, or Stress and Stress Management.

These Units can be delivered on a stand-alone basis, but all centres visited were using the Units to contribute to the Course award.

The introduction of new National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials replaced the existing NABs, and feedback from centres visited was very positive. Although all centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of the national standards, the updated NABs raised a few queries which were easily resolved.

Centres presented sufficient evidence that they were knowledgeable and aware of the course arrangements and requirements. Higher PBNC Mental Health Care remains a popular and relevant course. This Course raises awareness and promotes positive mental health and well-being.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Appropriate use of Unit specification had been employed with on-going updating of learning and teaching approaches to accommodate the needs of learners. The component Units of this Course are designed to raise awareness and to develop knowledge and understanding of mental health and mental illness, to assist candidates in demonstrating their underpinning knowledge throughout all stages of the project. The majority of instruments of assessment used were from the revised NABs. The previously approved NABs were removed from the SQA Secure Site at the end of February 2012. It is recommended that those centres who have retained copies of the old NABs do not utilise them for formative or any other form of assessment as the current NABs are designed to maintain currency

and assist the learners who are being presented for the externally assessed project.

Evidence Requirements

There is a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the Units and the quality of evidence presented by centres was of a high standard with robust internal verification evidenced. Evidence requirements include written and/or oral evidence generated by notes, classwork and research, to which all centres complied.

Administration of assessments

Internal Unit assessment using the appropriate NABs was administered by centres. Marking guidelines to assist centres in the assessment of these Units are included in individual NABs.

Satisfactory evidence of attainment of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for each Unit was available at all centres in the form of written responses. To maintain reliability and credibility, assessment evidence was produced under supervision, ensuring that it was the candidate's own work.

Areas of good practice

Learning and Teaching Approaches:

Activities employed in the delivery of Units demonstrated innovative planning that engaged and motivated learners. It was evident from teaching folders that a range of techniques are used including: relevant and appropriate classroom activities, peer teaching, virtual learning, student directed projects and presentations, research and debate, all supported by lecturer exposition and PowerPoint presentations. Appropriate use of internet resources was also evident.

Examples include the use of video conferencing as a means of delivery to include all learners in the study process when the geographical location could create a barrier to learning. One centre organised a mental health conference with local partners which was based on one of the case studies for the Higher PBNC Mental Health Care Award. This example of innovative practice included speakers from relevant organisations, role play and discussion.

Candidates were issued with comprehensive student packs and additional materials to assist learning. Students who met with visiting external verifiers were positive about the teaching and learning approaches used. It was evident from their responses that both the subject and experience were viewed as productive and beneficial for progression and employment within the care sector.

Internal Verification

The enthusiastic approach to this process had been helpful in identifying potential issues and standardising the approach to all aspects of the learning process.

Pre-delivery standardisation meetings with on-going support have resulted in clarification of levels of feedback and marking guidelines for the new NABs, which is especially important when different members of staff and campuses are involved. There was clear evidence of the internal verification systems applied to individual assessments, within master folders, and schedules of planned IV activity.

Most centres made use of student evaluations and feedback to monitor the effectiveness of the learning and teaching experience.

Specific areas for improvement

Standardisation

The new NABs have raised a number of internal issues and centres should arrange a pre-delivery standardisation meeting to ensure that the interpretation of assessment and marking guidelines is consistent and appropriate for all candidates.

Although the comments provided by academic staff were generally positive, it should be noted that there are significant changes in the assessments tool which require clarification and agreed consistency to avoid creating barriers to learning. An inclusive approach to assessment, taking into account the needs and experiences of their learners should be agreed pre-delivery. The additional support needs of learners require to be taken into account when preparing for assessment experiences and when considering any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

Marking Assessments

Marking styles varied and a preferred method might be to provide a tick only where a mark is given. Although it is acknowledged that providing a lot of ticks on good work can provide useful positive feedback, overuse may give confusing messages to candidates on their progress. Students should be able to understand clearly what the feedback is telling them and what is expected of them to demonstrate progress.

Written feedback should be given to all candidates about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better — not just those who require to remediate or re-sit assessments. Some papers simply stated that the learners had 'achieved' with no advice about how to go about making improvements for future submissions.

A variety of feedback sheets are being used. These should be standardised by centres before delivery and focused on the needs of learners. Some of these documents included the recording of quality activities that are of no interest or help to learners and appeared to reduce the relevant information offered to candidates.

Remediation

Where candidates have not attained the standard necessary to pass a particular Outcome or Outcomes, they should have the opportunity to be re-assessed. SQA's advice is that there should normally be one Unit re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances two. In some cases candidates will be required to resubmit original work which has been revised to take account of earlier weaknesses. In all cases, evidence from the original assessment should be used for formative purposes prior to re-assessment.

As there is only one NAB for each Unit the issue of remediation was discussed. Centres were advised to produce a second assessment, which should be subject to their own internal verification processes and also submitted to SQA for prior verification.