



Internal Assessment Report: Administration and IT

Sector Panel or SSC:

Council for Administration

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 following Units were externally verified:

DE1L 34: IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications

DE1N 34: IT in Business: Databases

DE1M 34: IT in Business: Spreadsheets

DE1P 34: Office Administration

DE2G 35: IT in Business: Advanced Word Processing

DE1X 35: Office Management

DE3K 35: Information Technology in Business

DE1R 34: Office Technologies

DE3K 35: Information and Communications Technology in Business

In November 2008, a Subject Network meeting was held in Stirling. This event provided feedback on verification activity during the academic year 2008–09 and a progress update on the limited review of the HNC/HND Administration and Information Technology. It also gave centre staff the opportunity to network with colleagues, including the verification team. This event was well attended and feedback was very positive.

During 2008–09, there were several development visits to centres to provide guidance and support on the assessment of HN Units. Centres can request a development visit from SQA. Feedback from the development visits was very positive.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

There are four main areas to highlight:

- ◆ Centres are continuing to develop assessments which integrate Units, reducing the assessment burden for candidates. Where this takes place, centres should consider making use of the prior verification service offered by SQA to ensure that the assessment is set at the required level and covers all knowledge and skills.
- ◆ Some centres made good use of work experience to contextualise learning — for example, an informal ‘Work Experience Week’ between semesters where students had the opportunity to use their IT skills and administrative knowledge to solve real business problems.
- ◆ More centres had taken steps to ensure the authenticity of candidate work, with some making use of anti-plagiarism software. Many centres included plagiarism statements as part of all uncontrolled assessments.
- ◆ While the quality of feedback is improving, this varies in quality and quantity.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units moderated (central)

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

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

Feedback to centres

General comments

Central verification of Graded Unit examinations took place in June 2009. There was limited activity in this area, in line with the centre selection plan covered in SQA's verification strategy.

DE1T 34 — HN Administration and IT: Graded Unit 1

Some discrepancies with Assessment Exemplar Pack 3 (Publication Code CB4835, 1st Edition, December 2008) were identified by the verification team. The team worked with the Qualifications Manager to review this pack. Following the review, the Qualifications Manager provided written guidance to centres. A review of the exemplar was later undertaken and a revised document has been placed on the SQA secure website.

Similarly, Assessment Exemplar Packs 1 and 2 were reviewed to ensure that the multiple choice/multiple response questions were suitable for centres using Office 2007. Two centres suggested amendments to the assessment exemplar packs and submitted them for prior verification, giving permission for these amendments to be made available to the sector. The amended assessment exemplar packs, for Office 2007 candidates, have been placed on the SQA secure website.

Centres are reminded that there is a formal process for providing comments to SQA on issues with assessment exemplar packs. Following this process will ensure that issues identified are addressed in the correct manner.

Centres are strongly advised to take advantage of the prior verification service to ensure that centre-devised assessments are at the appropriate level. If a centre devises a paper which is not judged to be at the appropriate level, then this will be rejected at central verification and will lead to a 'Not Accepted' decision.

Feedback from centres at the Subject Network meeting confirmed that the revised specification for Graded Unit 1 had given a greater spread of grades, reflecting student performance.

DE22 35 — HN Administration and IT: Graded Unit 2

This Graded Unit examination remains a challenge for students, particularly in time management and planning of responses.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

There are three main issues to highlight:

- ◆ Centres are reminded that there is a formal process for providing comments to SQA on issues with assessment exemplar packs. Following this process will ensure that issues identified are addressed promptly and in a co-ordinated manner.
- ◆ Centres are strongly advised to take advantage of the prior verification service to ensure that centre-devised assessments are at the appropriate level. If a centre sets a paper which does not meet the standard then this will be rejected at central verification, leading to a 'Not Accepted' decision.
- ◆ To ensure the integrity of assessment exemplar packs, centres are reminded that all packs must be kept secure. Each assessment exemplar pack contains the statement: 'Whilst the example provided is intended for guidance, it may also be used as an instrument of assessment, as long as the centre ensures the integrity and confidentiality of the assessment in the first and subsequent years of use and between centres'.