



**Higher National Qualifications**

**And**

**Scottish Vocational Qualifications**

**Senior Verifier Report**

**2008**

**Subject:** **Travel and Tourism**

**Sector Panel or SSC:** **Travel and Tourism**

**Date:** **21 July 2008**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification which has taken place within Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in this subject.

## HIGHER NATIONAL UNITS

### FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

#### General comments:

The following Higher National units were verified during visits to three Further Education Colleges:

DK04	35	Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism
D40H	34	Visitor Attraction Operations
DK03	34	Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product
DK07	33	International Tourist Destinations
DJ9P	35	Tour Operations
DJ9W	34	Structure of the Travel and Tourism Industry
DJ9Y	34	Retail Travel Practice
DJ42	34	Creating a Culture of Customer Care
DK0E	34	Applying Marketing Principles in Travel and Tourism
DK0G	34	Air Travel: Reservations, Fares and Ticketing
A7C5	34	Tourism Law

#### Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

There were no holds placed on any of the units verified.

Internal verification was carried out in accordance with SQA requirements. Master folders were well organised with full records of internal verification reports, notes of standardisation meetings, unit specifications, learning plans, valid instruments of assessments, and model answers. Constructive comments on student feedback were also noted at two centres which proved particularly helpful when remediation was required.

Discussions with candidates in one centre confirmed that assessment procedures were being carried out as stated in the centre documentation. However dissatisfaction with assessment overload and bunching of assessment tests was noted. This seems to be a perennial problem.

AEPs are still being used which helps to ensure consistency in the application of national standards. Scripts were accurately marked and there was evidence of cross-marking and thorough constructive feedback to candidates.

Only one Centre used the SQA prior verification service. In the absence of alternative instruments of assessment or AEPs necessary for re-assessment purposes, centres are recommended to prepare their own tests and submit those for prior verification (see 2007 report). Where alternative assessment strategies are in operation it is even more important to obtain prior verification.

In one centre GDS training was available to Air Travel candidates, both in their own time and in the classroom, which enabled them to complete the required evidence at their own pace.

Provision for non-native speakers is now a major challenge when setting assessment tests and in providing feedback. This was identified as an issue in two centres. Candidates whose first language is not English should be encouraged to undertake language support throughout their time on the course. Written work must comply with UK industry standards.

## HIGHER NATIONAL GRADED UNITS

### TITLES/LEVELS OF HN GRADED UNITS VERIFIED

*Insert details below*

The following Higher National Graded Units were externally verified during visits to six FE Colleges in May and June 2008.

DK0D34	Tourism: Graded Unit 1
DK0C34	Travel: Graded Unit 1
DK0A35	Tourism: Graded Unit 2
DK0935	Travel and Tourism: Graded Unit 2

There were also two development visits followed by verification to lift holds which had been placed on centres delivering graded units in the previous academic year.

### FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

#### General comments:

All candidate submissions were based on SQA exemplars. Verifiers sampled candidates from each centre across the three grades A, B and C. Some problems were identified in visits with three centres being 'held'.

SQA had provided assessment exemplars and marking schemes for the planning, developing and evaluation stages for each unit and in the majority of cases these had been adhered to. Many projects were well presented and worthy of the grades attained. Verifiers commented that graphs and charts worked well particularly where colour was used to differentiate data. Many centres used detailed checklists with very supportive feedback to candidates for each stage of the project.

However, there was evidence that marking was still inconsistent within centres. Marking in several cases was deemed to be lenient and this was reflected in feedback provided to the centres concerned.

The evaluation stage was handled better in more centres this year with candidates providing credible statements with self-criticism and praise where appropriate. However there were still many submissions where this has not been tackled well and centres should continue to develop approaches to preparing candidates better and encouraging a more reflective and critical focus on how well they executed the project. Some examples of plagiarism were identified in several centres.

#### Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Before delivering a graded unit (GU) both assessors and internal verifiers must be familiar with the unit standards and the requirements of the GU projects.

Lecturer input on basic project management skills including the setting of aims and objectives and timescales was again evident, particularly in second year submissions. However it is still the case that candidates from some centres would have benefited from additional support from tutors in terms of developing these skills as well as report writing and layout. SFEU are known to be developing a package which will help centres to deliver these preliminary skills (contact the subject mentor at SFEU).

Where word counts are provided in SQA documentation centres should note that these are for guidance only and candidates should not necessarily be penalised for reduced or excessive content. The main thing is to ensure that it is relevant.

All candidates, but particularly non-native speakers, should be encouraged to use spelling and grammar checks if word processing the Planning and Implementation stages. Many presentations are still disappointing in this respect and content in many cases is still below the required standard. Centres should

also remember that a Grade 'A' pass should only be awarded where the candidate has received little input and guidance from the tutor.

Assessors are encouraged to discuss grades with candidates rather than marks. However it is emphasised that this is only guidance. SQA is trying to discourage assessors from focusing on marks – especially marks that are divided too finely (1 mark for this, 1 mark for that) as this can distort grades. The best approach is to ensure candidates have met the minimum evidence and judge how well the candidate has met these based on the Grading Criteria. A focus on grades is an easier way of managing student expectations and avoiding arguments between students and tutors and/or between students. Focusing on individual marks can lead to disputes especially around fail/pass or grade borders. Any assessment that is on one of these borders should be thoroughly checked at internal verification or through double marking. If candidates are shown their marks then they may query each mark whereas assessors may have been looking at things in a more holistic way.

However detailed marking sheets are useful to both internal and external verifiers especially where comments have been provided to indicate why marks have been allocated. Assessors should not, however, consider overall grades until the entire submission, including evaluation, is complete.

In all GUs candidates must use a recognised referencing system to acknowledge sources of information used in the project.

For further guidance, the following guides are now available from SQA

*Guidance on Graded Units: Using the design principles for Higher National Certificates and Diplomas*

*Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher Certificates and Diplomas*

With reference to specific units:

DK0D 34 Tourism Graded Unit 1

It is intended that there will be three exemplars available for this unit. Centres choosing to use these should consider timetables and the correct sequencing of units to ensure that candidates have the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle the chosen GU. The balance of knowledge and skills is different in each of the exemplars, so centres will have to adapt timetables to suit.

Centres should encourage candidates to create programmes which include a mix of both centre based and linear itineraries and the evidence should cover the whole of Scotland. Above all, the itineraries should be both sensible and feasible.

Generally candidate responses relating to marketing and customer care are still weak and tutors should stress the importance of these in relation to the overall project.

DK0C 34 Travel Graded Unit 1

It is intended that there will be three exemplars also be available for this unit. Centres presenting this unit are reminded to discourage candidates from making direct contact with suppliers as one of the key aspects of the project involves the candidate taking on the role of the travel agent or tour operator.

DK0A35 Tourism Graded Unit 2

In several cases it was noted that candidates had been encouraged to become involved with suitable organisations in the tourism industry. In contrast to DK0C 34, this is commendable practice as it provides the candidates with a more meaningful learning experience.

As this project is based on the investigation of an issue or problem in a tourism organisation or business, candidates should be encouraged to collect as much relevant data as possible within the time available. Centres should encourage candidates to present statistical data in graphical format, preferably in colour, as this might enhance a candidate's grade. Ideally there should also be a good balance of primary and secondary research.

Centres should be aware that candidates achieving an 'A' grade must include clearly thought out solutions to perceived problems or suggestions or new approaches in response to the changing needs of the organisation.

## DK0935 Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 2

In many of the projects sampled there was clear evidence of involvement with industry/organisations. This project is quite narrowly focused and tutors must continue to give clear guidance on the appropriateness of topics selected to ensure their relevance to the award and their viability. The candidate should also be able to access relevant sources of data and research in carrying out further investigation on the identified issue.

Finally the following points highlighted in the 2007 report are reiterated:

- Centres are encouraged to cross or double mark all candidate submissions to ensure consistency of marking. Where there are several presenting lecturers within a centre, it is recommended that an internal verification mechanism is set up to ensure that marking is standardised.
- Candidates must not include web pages as attachments. This is clearly stated. Instead all relevant information used in the development stage should be listed as sources in the bibliography.  
(Centres should also encourage candidates to keep appendices to a minimum and evidence submitted for verification should not include any draft versions of the candidate's script.)

## **SVQ AWARDS**

### **TITLES/LEVELS OF SVQ AWARDS VERIFIED**

*Insert details below*

No information available

### **FEEDBACK TO CENTRES**

**General comments:**

**Advice on good practice and areas for further development:**

## **NATIONAL UNITS**

**(i.e. Freestanding units which contribute to NPAs or NCs etc.)**

## **TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS VERIFIED**

*Insert details below*

**See separate report on National Qualifications.**

## **FEEDBACK TO CENTRES**

**General comments:**

**Advice on good practice and areas for further development:**

