

Moderation Feedback – Visiting - 2005

Management

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

**This moderation group consists largely of HN Units.
It is closely related to 243 Management Skills.**

General comments on moderation activity

The level of moderation activity in this group is similar to that undertaken last session. In many cases, the Units moderated have been in existence for some time. Some centres have begun delivering new Units produced under the revised HN Design Principles but most intend to start them during the coming session.

The visits confirmed the experience of previous years which is that most centres carry out their assessment and internal moderation responsibilities seriously and carefully. It is very encouraging to be able to report again that this is the case.

Because most of the Units are well established centres have developed ways to address any difficulties with Units and to develop appropriate methods of assessment. For example, assessment for A6GS 04 Structure of Business Organisations for part-time candidates often requires them to report on their own organisation.

The new Units may pose some new challenges for centres and for candidates. This is particularly likely with respect to the increased use of assessment in controlled conditions. Some centres have begun to incorporate assessments like this into their existing assessment instruments and have thus been able to develop expertise in preparing candidates for this type of assessment.

This moderation group is closely related to 243 Management Skills and similar issues arise for both groups. It may be helpful to read this report in conjunction with that for 243 Management Skills.

Specific issues identified

It has already been noted that most of the Units moderated have been in existence for some time. Centres have developed suitable arrangements for assessment which have, in most cases, been tried and tested. This means that the process of assessment generally raised no significant issues and there were no significant difficulties in moderation.

The new HN Units will mean some changes for Colleges and there may be a need during the coming session for Moderators to be alert to any problems which these may cause and ensure that they are fed back to those who can take action to resolve them. There is evidence that changes (eg to Unit specifications) can be made quickly so this kind of feedback may help centres address any difficulties.

SQA procedures worked well largely because moderation staff are helpful, supportive and efficient. However, this group contains Units which are closely related to Units in 243 Management Skills. They are often delivered as part of the same awards to the same groups of candidates. This can mean that centres are visited by two different Moderators for what seems to be much the same thing. It seems sensible that, if at all possible, visits should be combined with a single Moderator looking at both groups at the same visit.

Feedback to centres

Most centres have considerable experience of delivering the Units in this moderation group. It is easy to find examples of good practice such as:

- ◆ a master folder for each Unit containing instruments of assessment, assessment strategy and so on
- ◆ robust and clear systems of recording candidate performance

There is some variation between centres as to how effective the above are. Sometimes, for example, folders contain a number of alternative instruments of assessment and it is not clear which ones have actually been used. Some centres are better at keeping folders up to date than others. Internal moderation practice varies also. In some cases, a clear sampling frame is drawn up and available at moderation. In others, scripts are merely initialled while in at least one centre the front 'cover sheet' includes space for internal moderation comments. Recording of candidate performance also varies. In some cases, a single sheet shows how candidates have progressed through a Unit, where they have had re-assessment and what their result is. This makes it easy to track what has happened. In others relevant information is provided on several sheets or confined to individual candidate records. Some systems are easier to follow than others.

The new Units may provide the stimulus for all centres to review documentation and make modifications where required. Current practice does mean that most centres have a strong foundation on which to build which is very encouraging.

There are two areas in particular which centres may wish to consider:

1. giving detailed feedback to candidates — the use of special 'cover sheet' for assessments on which feedback can be given seems to be increasing. Some centres actually use two pro formas — one for each assessment and one to keep an overall tally of Unit progress. It is increasingly common also to see script comments. All this is time-consuming but it does seem to pay dividends and does highlight a commitment to candidates and to helping them to do as well as possible. Most centres do explain to candidates what is needed when re-assessment is required but additional feedback may enhance the learning process.
2. develop marking guidelines for each instrument of assessment — and follow them once they are developed. This helps to standardise assessor judgments and contributes to consistency of assessment between cohorts and between different assessors. Some centres do this well but it is a practice which can be further developed. It is particularly important for new HN Units to ensure that candidates do achieve the requisite SCQF level. Where exemplar assessments are used, the marking guidance supplied can be annotated to show how the centre has interpreted them.

Overall, though, centres are assessing Units in this moderation group in a capable and competent manner for which they deserve credit.