

Moderation Feedback – Visiting/Central - 2005

Information Systems and Computing
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Qualification area

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

G5V5 15	HNC Computing
G5VT 16	HND Computing: Software Development
G5VV 16	HND Computing: Technical Support
G7GL 15	HNC Computing
G5F0 21	SVQ Using IT – level 1
G5F0 22	SVQ Using IT – level 2
G5F0 23	SVQ Using IT – level 3
G5F2 23	SVQ Installing and Supporting IT Systems – level 3
G7JH 23	SVQ IT User – level 3
E994 09	Introduction to Computers – Access 3

General comments on moderation activity

This session saw a majority of centres moving from the “pilot” version of HNC/D Computing (Software Development and Technical Support), to the recently validated (2004) HNC Computing. The corresponding HNDs were validated in early 2005. It is anticipated that all centres offering the award will have transferred to the new product by September 2005.

The Graded Unit (Examination) included in the revised HNC has a new format – Section 1 contains 30 multiple choice/multiple response questions and Section 2 now contains 7 extended response questions, including 1 question intended to integrate across the 3 component units from which the examination questions are drawn. Mark allocations for questions in the 2 sections have also been amended. SQA has produced assessment exemplars (AEs) for this unit. At Central Moderation held on 26 and 27 May 2005, moderators felt that candidates attempting an AE for this unit had generally performed well. The introduction of multiple response questions did not appear to cause candidates problems. Centres presenting candidates for the “pilot” award examination unit continued to produce their own Instruments of Assessment (IAs), mostly prior moderated, although SQA had also provided AEs for this unit (D77K 34). Extended response question answers showed a gradual improvement in content and quality. One centre actually modified an AE but did **not** have it prior moderated. Fortunately at moderation the amendments were found to be appropriate and acceptable.

The other units comprising the HNC did not appear to cause delivery or assessment difficulties, except in one case where a centre was relying on credit transfer from vendor assessment/qualifications and no evidence was available to support the 2 units concerned. The moderator provided detailed advice on how to rectify this situation within a short time span, and the centres results were then accepted. Another centre received a hold for a unit constituent of year 2 HND Software Development but after a period of rectification, this was also lifted – see Section 5 (statistics).

The “pilot” versions of the HND awards did not appear to present problems for centres and/or candidates. High quality submissions were presented for moderation in all units, especially the Graded Units (Projects) in both streams.

2005 saw the launch of new SVQ standards for **IT User** replacing the existing **Using IT** awards at levels 1, 2 and 3. A launch event was held at the Glasgow Science Centre. Of the reports received to inform this report, only 1 involved a visit to a centre delivering the new standards. No candidate material was available to moderate and a return visit date has been organised. The report for Introduction to Computers at Access 3, commended the centre on the quality of its delivery, instruments of assessment (IAs) and candidate submissions.

Specific issues identified

Issues that arose included the following:

1. The relationship between vendor qualifications and HN units requires clarification. One centre had candidates completing vendor qualifications and HN units simultaneously, but was not assessing the HN units, operating on the precept that when the vendor qualifications were gained, then credit transfer would be awarded to/for the HN units. This is problematic especially if a candidate(s) is unsuccessful in achieving the vendor qualifications. It perhaps needs to be made clear that if credit transfer is to be a valid mode of operation the vendor qualifications need to be completed first.
2. Centres need to be advised that if they pick up an SQA produced AE and modify this, for whatever reason, then this modified AE essentially becomes a new IA and should therefore be prior moderated
3. The accuracy of the content of SQA product lists used to arrange which items/units are to be included in moderation visits is still giving moderators (serious) cause for concern. An example of this was a centre whose SQA product list showed 41 active HN units in moderation group 357. When a sample was highlighted and forwarded to the centre, the moderator was contacted by the centre and informed that **none** of the highlighted units were being delivered. The centre agreed to forward a centre-generated list of active 357 units. When received this was found to contain 25 units. It is not unreasonable to assume that the 25 units intimated by the centre should have been subsumed within the 41 notified by SQA. They were **not** – both lists were mutually exclusive. This causes difficulties in that moderators then have to negotiate what the moderation sample is to be. Awarding body information supplied to moderators should be definitive.
4. The guidance, advice and assistance supplied by all SQA Moderation Section staff to moderators is to be commended, and is extremely worthy of note
5. It was generally felt that the second moderation group meeting, concentrating on the new SQV IT User standards was extremely beneficial to moderators.

Feedback to centres

Moderators continue to provide centres with much useful and supportive advice and information.

There were however continued concerns over the quality and quantity of information entered on candidate evidence/scripts by assessors. Centres were advised to clearly show **where** and **why** credit was being given to particular aspects of candidate submissions, and not to simply provide an overall mark or result. Some centres were still using half marks in their marking schemes and were advised to discontinue this practice.

Advice was also provided on the maintenance of internal unit master files and on alternative methods of recording the results of assessments. This was particularly the case in SVQ visits, in an attempt to reduce the volume of evidence items inserted by candidates into their portfolios. VQ centres, and ultimately candidates, were encouraged to try to claim more than one element of a unit standard per evidence item rather than having one item per standard element. This situation should be assisted by the production of appropriate supporting documentation by SQA for the new SVQ IT User awards.

Where appropriate centres were encouraged to make their internal moderation systems more robust and transparent – good practice identified here included the stamping of scripts, which had been the subject of IM activity, and the issuing of receipts to candidates submitting work for assessment. The increase use of VLEs for assessment purposes is noted here and will require monitoring in future especially if e-moderation becomes part of moderation group activity.

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Good practice points recognised by moderators in reports included:

- Well produced marking schemes – allowing easy standardisation
- Well produced checklists – allowing clear recording of candidate performance
- Internal moderation records easily available
- Quality of (unit) control folders – showing standardisation
- Double marking regime(s) in place
- Candidate scripts clearly annotated to show where assessors have awarded marks – but see above
- Integration of assessments across units where practicable
- Centre staff and candidates easily accessible during visits
- Guidance provided to candidates documented (project units)
- Realistic scenarios for project briefs and detailed candidate instructions
- Good procedures for recording candidate group working
- Innovative use of ICT for candidate assessment use, recording systems and results
- Delivery folders provided to assist delivery especially in case of change in staff
- Staff enthusiasm and commitment to candidates
- Clear and meaningful candidate feedback being provided
- Inclusion of time management input, as added value, especially for project units
- Staff induction processes – new assessors to unit inducted by principal assessor
- Regular updating of instruments of assessment