

HIGHER NATIONAL UNITS

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

The following Higher National Units were verified during visits to five Further Education Colleges:

A46Y34	Conducting Tours
A7C235	Tour Operating: Brochure Production and Customer Relations
A7C335	Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism
A7C435	Tourism Planning and Development
D4EN34	Visitor Attraction Operations
D4EW34	Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product
D4EX33	International Tourist Destinations
DJ9P35	Tour Operations
DJ9V35	Surface Transportation and Cruises
DJ9W34	Structure of the Travel and Tourism Industry
DJ9Y34	Retail Travel Practice
DK0733	International Tourist Destinations
DK0334	Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product
DK0E34	Applying Marketing Principles in Travel and Tourism
DK0435	Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism
DK0G34	Air Travel: Reservations, Fares and Ticketing

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

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

Internal verification was generally 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. Discussions with candidates in two centres confirmed that assessment procedures were being carried out as stated in the centre documentation.

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 had 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 them for prior verification. This also applies where more than one group is sitting the same assessment at different times. This is particularly applicable where re-assessment is necessary in tests of knowledge or practical tests where there is only one possible answer. Centres should note that candidates must be presented with the same type of assessment but with different questions or practical exercises i.e. the candidate must not resit the same test.

Centres opting to use oral testing for both remediation and/or reassessment purposes should ensure that the entire process is carefully documented

In some cases comprehensive teaching and learning packs were also presented and it was evident that the centres involved had prepared candidates well for assessment using a mix of nationally produced and centre devised materials. In one centre this information was available on-line to all relevant staff.

Centres should ensure that internal verifiers and assessors are appropriately qualified and are being continuously professionally developed.

HIGHER NATIONAL GRADED UNITS

TITLES/LEVELS OF HN GRADED UNITS VERIFIED

The following Higher National Graded Units were externally verified at a Central Verification event held on 8 and 9 June 2007:

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

Units were received from thirteen centres. Five of these centres had been visited by external verifiers in the interim period between commencing the units and submitting the completed work for Verification. In some cases this resulted in adjustments to the marks allocation in candidates' submissions for the Planning stage.

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

All candidate submissions were based on SQA exemplars. Verifiers sampled six candidates from each centre across the three grades A, B and C. Results from eleven of the thirteen submitting centres were accepted.

SQA had provided assessment exemplars and marking schemes for the planning, developing and evaluation stages for each Unit and in most cases these had been adhered to.

Many projects were well presented and worthy of the grades attained. 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 marking is still not consistent. Marking ranges from lenient to severe which was, once again, accepted with relevant feedback from verifiers being provided to the centres concerned.

The evaluation stage was handled better in some centres this year with candidates providing realistic statements with self-criticism and praise where appropriate. However there were still many submissions where this has not been tackled well and centres should consider ways of preparing candidates better and encouraging a more reflective and critical focus on how well they approached the project.

In some cases the candidature was clearly either not prepared, or more worryingly, not of the calibre necessary to tackle projects at this level.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

It was evident that there had been a better input on basic project management skills including the setting of aims and objectives, particularly in second year submissions. However candidates from some of the centres submitting for the first time would have benefited from additional support from tutors in terms of developing skills in report writing and layout.

Candidates should be encouraged to use spelling and grammar checks if word processing the Planning and Implementation stages. Many presentations identified as passes were disappointing in this respect and consequently content fell below industry standards. Grade 'A' passes should only be awarded where the candidate has received little input and guidance from the tutor.

Normally the evaluation stage has been hand written under supervised conditions. However word processing or recording is permissible but only in the presence of a supervisor who will ensure that the assessment conditions are met.

With reference to specific units:

DK0D 34 Tourism Graded Unit 1

Two exemplars are currently available for this Unit. Centres choosing to use either of these should adhere to the marking schedules within and not try to 'mix and match' between the two. This is because the balance of knowledge and skills is different in each, as reflected in the marking schedules.

Generally the areas relating to marketing and customer care were weak and tutors should emphasise the importance of these in relation to the overall project.

DK0C 34 Travel Graded Unit 1

Centres should note that following the Central Verification event the marking scheme in the AEP for this unit will be reviewed by the Qualification Support Team. Any centres yet to present this Unit should 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. 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 again clear evidence of involvement with industry/organisations, There were also a number of good examples linking theory to practice.

However as this project is quite narrowly focused tutors must give more 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 2006 report are reiterated:

- Half marks must not be awarded as this is no longer current practice.
- 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 central verification should not include any draft versions of the candidate's script.)
- Candidates whose first language is not English should be encouraged to undertake language support throughout their time on the course. Work must comply with industry standards.

NATIONAL UNITS

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

TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS VERIFIED

National Units were also verified during visits to four of the five FE Colleges visited.

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

Feedback is given in the National Qualifications Senior Verifier Report.

General comments:

Advice on good practice and areas for further development: