



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Art and Design**

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

Those centres that were externally verified all showed good understanding of the delivery and assessment requirements of the HN Art & Design Units. The national standard was clearly understood and this was demonstrated in the accuracy of both the assessment and internal verification of candidate folios. To maintain this accuracy it is important that staff are aware of the quality of work produced in other centres and so centres are encouraged to keep and share exemplar material from work that has been externally verified.

Work produced was varied, creative and reflected the quality of tuition and emphasis on the need for candidates to have an individual artistic approach.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Up to date knowledge of the current Units was one area where centres need to ensure staff are fully briefed.

Evidence has shown that, in all centres, staff have a good understanding of the requirements stated in the Unit specifications and have produced clear documentation and guidance both for staff and students. All were aware of, and used, the exemplification material published by SQA.

Evidence Requirements

The majority of the portfolio work that was externally verified indicated that further education centre staff have a good knowledge and clear understanding of the Unit specifications and what evidence is required to meet the stated criteria. There were a few isolated instances where staff had either misread or misinterpreted the specification but this was more of an accidental oversight than lack of understanding and was addressed successfully at verification.

Administration of assessments

Centres have clear and informative documentation covering all aspects of verification and assessment. Quality assurance ensured course materials were valid and were countersigned.

Assessments were detailed and covered remediation requirements where applicable. Good practice included staff team marking and informative discussion around the assessment of candidate work.

The internal verification process also benefitted assessors where they were present and participated in informed discussion during the internal verification process.

It should be emphasised to all centres that the internal verification process is not just about documentation but requires subject expertise and knowledge when verifying assessments.

Where assessment is integrated over a number of Units there must be a clear matrix or structured assessment sheet that shows where Outcomes are integrated.

General feedback

Diagnostic feedback was part of quality assurance in all departments and ensured awareness of progress and attainment. In general, this feedback was ongoing and was of a good standard, clearly stated, supportive in nature, and welcomed by the students as a positive benefit.

Candidate feedback was articulate and encouraging, reflecting the high quality tutoring and commitment of the Art and Design staff in each centre.

All centres presented assessment documentation as requested and met the requirements for an external verification visit.

Areas of good practice

Those centres that had created time and opportunities for staff to look into employing an integrated approach to Unit delivery had been able to create a more effective, flexible course delivery and assessment structure.

Where staff had emphasised transferrable skills and utilised existing research and investigation across the course, there was a marked improvement in the work produced and in the understanding of the Art and Design process. There was also more time available for teaching specific skills.

Allowing staff to visit other centres as part of continuing professional development had enabled them to feel more confident in the assessment process, created an awareness of current developments, and brought fresh approaches to the construction and delivery of their courses.

Taking part in group assessment, rather than individually assessing, had allowed staff to discuss candidate work, enabling more effective and consistent assessment.

Centres that encouraged students to be confident in showing their personal creativity and had structured the development of ideas, coupled with relevant annotations in their sketch books, produced exciting, high standard work overall.

Use of virtual learning environments (such as Moodle) and blogs had positive benefits for understanding and feedback.

Centres where support-for-learning staff had interviewed students prior to them commencing the courses and had identified needs which were then

communicated to the Art and Design staff provided a sound awareness for additional help and support. Art and Design staff could also feedback their own observations of needs.

Specific areas for improvement

Where a centre has a sole tutor, or that tutor is in an outreach campus, it is essential that this person has a complete understanding of SQA procedures and the requirements of an external verification visit. Responsibility for this has to be devolved within their campus with preferably a subject specialist used as a liaison contact to ensure that subject-specific matters are dealt with correctly.

Where Art and Design Units are delivered by another subject area, the centre must ensure that the Unit specifications are delivered with the specialist emphasis intended. This may mean again, liaising with a subject specialist to ensure content and assessable materials meet the subject specialism requirements.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

F1X2 34 Art and Design 1
F1X3 35 Art and Design 2
FA6G 34 Contemporary Art Practice 1
FA6H 35 Contemporary Art Practice 2
FA6E 34 Visual Communication 1
F0H9 35 Visual Communication 2
F7FD 34 3D Computer Animation 1
F4PG 35 Filmcraft and Animation 2
F2G6 34 Art Glass Production
F13R 35 3D Design 2

General comments

The Graded Unit delivery and assessment in particular seems to be well understood by all centres. The only concerns this session have been as a result of the college mergers. In some cases, Art and Design departments fell behind their normal schedule and were not as well prepared for external verification as before. The quality of work had not suffered but assessment and internal verification in some cases was not as prepared as usual, causing some problems for the External Verifier.

The majority of departments that had managed to complete the Units prior to the external verification showed clear and accurate understanding of the Unit specifications, national standard and SQA requirements.

There is still a reluctance among Art and Design staff to award marks at the top of the scale.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The Unit specifications are by now well understood and are being assessed correctly. Exemplification materials are still being used, enhanced and improved, without affecting the requirements of the Units.

Where problems had arisen it was due to staff not being fully prepared for external verification, with some elements still not fully completed, assessed or internally verified. This will probably not occur again when mergers are completed.

Evidence Requirements

Generally the evidence submitted was of a good, to very good standard, which was evidenced in the variety, quality and breadth of artistic creativity displayed.

The Evidence Requirements were presented particularly well in sketch books, portfolios and electronic media. Much of the research, investigation, and development were well annotated and showed good understanding of the Unit specifications. Evaluation continues to show in many instances sound understanding of the processes the candidates have gone through in completing the Unit. However, there still are instances with far too much writing that is just padding.

Administration of assessments

Centre documentation was generally of a very high standard, covering all aspects of centre and SQA requirements. Assessment material was well written, clearly indicating all requirements for internal and external assessment and verification. Specific times were set aside for all aspects of course management with appropriate documentation covering, mentoring, feedback, assessment and internal verification.

Group marking was often used to ensure clear understanding of each candidate's work before recording the grade and mark. This proved to be most effective and marks were concordant with the national standard.

Internal verification was at its most effective when both assessor and Internal Verifier discussed the candidate work and assessment material.

General feedback

All candidates who were interviewed appeared both articulate and knowledgeable about their work and the courses they were undertaking. All praised the quality, enthusiasm and commitment of the Art and Design staff. Most intended to continue with their course either at college or in higher education. They spoke highly of the support they had received and how the feedback from staff had been positive, supportive and relevant. This was well documented in the mentoring feedback sheets.

Areas of good practice

Centres which encouraged students to be confident in showing their personal creativity and structured the development of ideas, coupled with relevant annotations in their sketch books, had produced exciting, high standard work overall.

Where design briefs had been supported with clear explanations of what they meant as well as clearly stated criteria to be achieved, students felt more confident in tackling them.

Mentoring sessions were most successful where candidates came to them with clear knowledge of what they were for and what could be discussed.

Feedback to candidates was at its best when clearly stating where work met the stated criteria and where it was not meeting it and what they should do, without leading or directly influencing.

Specific areas for improvement

Departments should try to ensure that the Graded Units are delivered with sufficient time to complete and remediate, if necessary, before the end of session. Relevant annotation, particularly on the development sheets should be encouraged as an additional means of explaining the creative process.

Evaluations need more thought, emphasising the relevance of the processes that had been gone through, the evolution of ideas, time management successes or otherwise, what had been achieved and where other approaches or emphasis might have improved the final outcome; rather than a blow-by-blow progression of everything that had happened throughout the Unit.