



**Higher National Qualifications**

**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017**

**Care**

## Introduction

This year the HN Care team completed external verification of the following awards:

GK89 15	HNC Social Services
G7ME 15	HNC Social Care (lapse date 1/8/2017)
G9AM 47	PDA Health and Social Care Supervision
GK2D 47	PDA Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice
G9V5 47	PDA Health and Social Care: Administration of Medication
GK2E 47	PDA Promoting Positive Behaviour
G9T2 49	PDA in Leadership and Management for Care Services

HNC units verified during visits were:

### **Mandatory units:**

H8MN 34	Care in Contemporary Society
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me
H8MM 34	Health Wellbeing and Safeguarding
H8WM 34	Lifespan Development Theoretical Approaches
H8NM 34	Care Practice
DH3K 34	Social Care Theory for Practice
DH3L34	Social Policy and its Application
DH3M 34	Psychology for Social Care Practice
DH3N 34	Sociology for Social Care Practice
DH3P 34	Protection of Individuals from Possible Harm and Abuse

### **Graded units:**

H8X9 34	Graded Unit 1
F291 34	Graded Unit 1

### **HNC Option units:**

DH44 34	Mental Health Issues in a Care Setting
DH3W 34	Understanding Loss and the Process of Grief
H1MX 34	Promoting Positive Behaviour
DJ1N 34	Understanding and Supporting Behaviour
DJ1N 34	Understanding and Supporting Behaviour

### **PDA level 7 units:**

F6CW 34	Supervise the Protection of People
F6CX 34	Supervise People
FY1D 34	Promote Quality of Life through Dementia Skilled Practice
DK2X 04	Administer Medication to Individuals
F9D9 34	Administration of Medication
H1MY 34	Promoting Positive Behaviour Interventions
H5TD 34	Support Individuals with Programmes to Promote Positive Behaviour
H5N8 34	Promote the Development of Positive Behaviour in Children and Young People

**PDA Level 9 units:**

- F8VK 36 Contributing to Workforce Development in Care Services
- F8VM 36 Leadership for Care Services
- F8VL36 Develop, Manage and Support Practice in Relation to the Protection of Individuals
- F8VN 36 Managing Care Principles and Quality Improvements
- F8VJ 36 Supervision and Professional Development for Care Service

**Category 2: Resources**

**Criterion 2.1: Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.**

Tutors delivering level 8 awards were all registered as managers with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

**Criterion 2.4: There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials.**

Overall reports show evidence that regular review meetings are held and minuted. Reviews of materials are taking place and were seen to be updated on an annual basis. Reports also note robust evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials.

One centre visited operates an assessment panel system which ensures all learner work is examined, and markers can then confirm the marker decisions taken. There was evidence of centres using electronic and paper formats to demonstrate initial and ongoing review of assessment environments, resources, and equipment. Reports also show robust evidence of equipment and reference materials being made available for verifiers to see, and evidence that these are reviewed for the current delivery programme. One report noted that the centre provided robust master folders which included copies of policies and procedures, and reference and learning materials.

Reports also evidenced informal and formal discussions held during scheduled meeting times, and evidence of standardisation/internal verification for graded units being closely examined.

Minutes of meetings included discussions around the word count requirements and this being formally recorded. Action plans provided good examples of centres updating their guidance documents.

One college centre placed underpinning materials on their intranet for individual learners to explore, which evidenced making good use of social media platforms and the college online forums.

## **Category 3: Learner support**

### **Criterion 3.2: Learners' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.**

Learners' development needs and prior achievements were matched against the requirements of the award through a variety of methods, including interviews and workplace assessors' feedback. Learners were also assisted in development of individual learning plans.

Centre staff were commended on their commitment to directed study which contributed to the registration requirements of the SSSC.

One centre provided learners with notes from planning meetings, and individual learning plans to ensure they maintained scheduled contact with their assessor, and that their needs were supported. Additional needs were identified and provision for additional support made available. In one instance the class representative raised relevant development issues on behalf of learners.

The level 9 Professional Development Award report showed learners had all successfully completed the SVQ 4 in preparation for the taught programme.

### **Criterion 3.3: Learners must have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly.**

Overall, reports demonstrated robust evidence to show learners have regular contact with tutors and assessors. This is evidenced through additional learner support from assessors and student support services.

Class-based support was also seen to be available in relation to the structure of the graded unit. There was clear evidence that learners have scheduled contact with assessors to review progress and revise their assessment plans. Notes of meetings with assessors were signed and documented with specific feedback provided to learners.

A range of methods is used to ensure learners have access to tutors. These included selected dates for additional support being made available, regular contact via email for those on distance learning programmes, scheduled formal arrangements ensuring contact and support.

It was also noted that staff ensured issues raised by learners were addressed and support was provided, as were classroom discussions, in all three stages of the graded unit. Monthly contact with assessors through tutorials, individual meetings, and e-mail were used to exchange comments and suggestions to aid study. Written feedback to individual learners is clearly provided and recorded appropriately in all centres visited.

## **Category 4: Internal assessment and verification**

### **Criterion 4.2: Internal assessment and verification procedures must be implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.**

Centres were confirmed to be working in line with SQA assessment guidance in this area, and reports demonstrate good practice.

Copies of unit specifications and assessment support packs (ASPs) were available for all visits. It is noted in reports that the internal verification systems demonstrated effective adherence to quality standards. Sampling of work and records of internal verification minutes were all made available for the external verifiers.

Consistent internal assessment and verification procedures are being implemented and these ensure the standardisation of assessment, with the meetings involved being well minuted. Completed records showed consistency of assessors and verifiers across centres visited. One college had developed a new series of procedures for their first year of delivery of the HNC in Social Services.

In the graded unit, learner work achieving less than 50% of the mark was subject to remediation, and detailed written feedback was provided to individuals, along with strict word limits for the areas of remediation required.

The internal verifier reviewed all marks awarded and the assessment strategy in place was followed for SVQ units in Professional Development Awards (PDAs).

One report evidenced 100% verification was put in place for this first year of using a revised graded unit, and verification using a checklist was concise, clear and easy to follow.

### **Criterion 4.3: Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.**

Centres have followed the award guidance available. Reports show them using SQA-produced materials in support of units which have also been subject to internal verification and appropriate action planning.

There was robust evidence of assessment instruments, methods, and selection being valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair. Centres are working to SQA requirements and using the assessment strategies recommended.

Centres based their marking system for the graded unit on SQA Care guidelines, overall the marks awarded were justified and assessment instruments used were working well.

In the delivery of the PDAs, all assessment methods and materials were in line with the arrangements for each unit and met the standard required for the PDAs.

**Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the learner’s own work, generated under SQA’s required conditions.**

Overall, verification reports show that great care was taken by centres to ensure compliance with this requirement; for example, centres have malpractice and plagiarism policies in place and these are clearly explained to learners.

The majority of centre reports evidence that tutors ask learners to sign each piece of their coursework to ensure authenticity. Evidence for the mandatory SVQ units contained in the awards included authentication forms, and reports from placement supervisors were also provided.

In the PDAs, assessment evidence was noted to be the learner’s own work on each script, and all were generated under SQA’s required conditions. Staff are alert to any aspect of plagiarism, and the low learner numbers allow them to assess a learner’s style and presentation of work, which ensured good practice.

In one centre delivering the HNC, where previous plagiarism examples were dealt with appropriately as per centre policy, learners are now made aware of this requirement and asked to sign an individual disclaimer form.

The majority of centres require learners to sign a plagiarism form, to evidence each assessment as their own work. For assignments containing a front cover sheet this is also signed and dated by both tutor and learner. Cover sheets include the word count as well as a clear statement that work produced is that of the learner.

Most colleges are now using plagiarism software programmes, and regular checks are also being made to ensure the learner is using appropriate sources in essays and that it is their own work.

One centre asks learners to sign a copy of the malpractice policy at induction, and explains there should be proof that the work they have achieved is original. All learners must cite sources used, to validate the evidence they have collated. Throughout the process both assessor and internal verifier hold planned feedback sessions and discussions with the learners, which allows them to gauge the learners’ understanding of the concepts that they have written about, and to confirm that the work is their own.

**Criterion 4.6: Evidence of learners’ work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA’s requirements.**

Reports noted that assessors were using marking grids when assessing learners’ work, and internal verification was supporting assessor judgements, as well as highlighting areas for development.

Learners’ work was found to be accurately and consistently judged by centres, in line with SQA requirements, and decisions reviewed consistently met the standards for the awards. Internal

verifiers were seen to provide support for assessors and are working to the assessment strategy.

One centre used a three-stage verification process, with good recording of assessment and verification decisions made.

During this first year of delivery the HNC graded unit was subject to increased sampling of marking to ensure consistency in approach. Reports show that all remediation required was also checked and double marked by a second assessor. Minutes of both standardisation and verification meetings contained ample evidence of centre staff discussions, and noted that active steps were being taken to encourage consistency in judging evidence.

**Criterion 4.7: Learner evidence must be retained in line with SQA requirements.**

All centres showed evidence of working to SQA policy on retention of assessed work. Examples show that evidence was securely retained in line with SQA requirements.

There were variations in the time that evidence is held. One college had a strict policy in place in relation to retention of learner evidence, while in another all material was returned to learners at the end of the course, although consideration was given to the college holding some evidence for a longer period than normal as this was their first cohort in the HNC in Social Services.

One college has a records manager in post who oversees the implementation of the retention policy, including erasure of electronic evidence materials.

In one centre, a retention period for evidence was noted in the systems pack, showing that this centre retains evidence for three years. The centre was advised by their external verifier that SQA policy on retention has been reviewed and amended.

**Criterion 4.9: Feedback from qualification verifiers must be disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.**

Examples from reports note the extent to which external verification feedback is reported to staff teams.

Where centre co-ordinators manage the external quality procedures, they disseminate external quality reports directly to managers and other relevant staff. Centres also hold internal verification group meetings to discuss report feedback. If action points were noted these are discussed and centres contact SQA for clarification of quality assurance issues.

Reports noted feedback from previous visits being evidenced in minutes of meetings, and centres using these as a guide to further develop teaching practice. One report shows that the manager and the main lecturer ensure information is e-mailed to staff and is used to inform future practice.

Feedback from qualification verifiers is disseminated to heads of centre and used to inform assessment practice. One college reflects feedback to staff following qualification verification visits across all awards. Another reported that when SQA reports come through to the quality unit of the college these are then discussed at team meetings, reports are then passed directly to the faculty, and they are also placed on the college's shared drive.

Internal verifiers' tracking system ensures information from reports is discussed and any issues are resolved. Centre staff go through feedback given once it is received from SQA. The lead assessor advised that a feedback report on the roll-out of the PDA will be given to managers to ensure they are engaged with the qualification and value it.

## **Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers**

The following good practice points were identified in reports of visits during session 2016–17:

- ◆ Support pack for the graded unit written in a very user-friendly manner
- ◆ Staff offer extra individual time and meetings with learners
- ◆ Staff team meetings held four times a year
- ◆ Electronic tracking system supports sound assessment and verification processes
- ◆ Placement manager writes observation of work undertaken by learner
- ◆ Staff members attended SQA workshops for Care and Social Services as part of CPD
- ◆ Use of Moodle to provide on-going learner support and guidance
- ◆ Assessors and internal verifiers maintain regular contact with students and with each other
- ◆ Sharing of good practice between assessors and internal verifiers
- ◆ Verification checklists used for internal verification purposes to track progress
- ◆ Additional experts invited to deliver relevant unit content
- ◆ Detailed course evaluations completed by learners
- ◆ Electronic recording system greatly improved quality of assessment materials
- ◆ Submitting proposed assessments for prior verification helped delivery and assessment
- ◆ Checks on learner progress were extremely robust — very good practice

## **Specific areas for development**

The following areas for development were advised to centres during session 2016–17:

- ◆ Log of meetings would assist standardisation and review
- ◆ Internal verifier should formally record comments for assignments verified
- ◆ Evidence of referencing should be placed in body of assignments as well as in bibliography
- ◆ Direct observations of practice should be detailed and specific to work role and purpose
- ◆ Declaration of authenticity to be completed by each learner for the graded unit
- ◆ Include authenticity declarations in systems pack to ensure trackability



- ◆ Date PowerPoint materials to show when reviews and updates took place
- ◆ Suggest pre-assessment exercise or task to ensure readiness for assessment of vocational units in the awards