



Higher National and/or Graded Unit

National Units

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017

Music (63)

Introduction

The units verified this session were:

D641 11	Appreciation of Music
F58M 12	Appreciation of Music
F5E9 12	Compositional Techniques
F58F 12	Creative Project
DJ28 33	Keyboard Skills for Music Production
DJ2A 34	Live Performance 1
F58J 12	Music: An Introduction to the UK Music Industry
F58L 11	Music: Aural Skills
F508 34	Music: Graded Unit 1
DR33 35	Music: Graded Unit 2
F58K 11	Music: Live Performance
H1M6 35	Music History 2
DJ2W 34	Music Second Study 1: Composition
DR18 34	Music Second Study 2: Composition
H1M7 34	Music Theory 1
DJ35 34	Songwriting 1
DJ0M 35	Songwriting 2

Category 2: Resources

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

At almost all centres there were effective initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials. The effectiveness of the initial and ongoing review process was reflected in the fact that the outcome of most verification visits was successful.

There were very few recommendations to improve the effectiveness of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments. Where the review was a meaningful process, this was reflected in the success of the verification visit.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) were matched to the requirements of the award in all centres. All centres verified had robust interview and audition processes. There were no significant recommendations made during verification visits.

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

In all centres verified, candidates had scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly. There were recommendations to improve the effectiveness of this process in more than a few centres. The recommendations focused on greater formalising of feedback to record and track progress – there were recommendations that centres should ensure there is evidence that the learner has viewed feedback and that feedback to the candidate is focused on the extent to which candidates meet the requirements of the assessment.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

In most centres visited it was found that internal assessment and verification procedures were implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.

There were more than a few instances of good practice relating to internal assessment and verification procedures. In one centre the internal verifier had provided detailed internal verification records, and had also made recommendations to enhance the learner experience and facilitate the generation of high-quality evidence. The thorough internal verification records provided a clear direction of travel to address issues. In another centre it was viewed as good practice that the curriculum and quality manager was providing a path to develop internal verifiers, providing support for new verifiers. Where internal verification was meaningful and new verifiers were supported, generally the visits were successful.

There were more than a few recommendations relating to internal assessment and verification. Recommendations were made that centres keep a record of ongoing standardisation discussion to help address any resulting actions arising from discussions and that sampling of candidates' work take place at the first opportunity in the delivery of Music: Graded Unit 2 (DR33 35) to detect any issues early. It was also recommended that the instrument of assessment contains the corresponding unit code(s) to improve version control.

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

Assessment instruments and methods, and their selection and use were found to be valid, reliable, equitable and fair in almost all centres.

One centre verified was using a bank of interview questions for Music: Graded Unit 2 (DR33 35). This was found to be good practice, as it will standardise the assessment of the interview across all learners.

There were recommendations on more than a few external verification visits. Examples of recommendations were:

- Explore the possibility of devising new assessments to suit local needs and have them prior verified.
- Consider revising the assessment instrument to use language more suitable for learners.

Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.

Assessment evidence was found to be the candidates' own work, generated under SQA's required conditions, on all visits. There was a recommendation to use plagiarism detection software for all written submissions, to reduce the workload on the assessor and verifier and to implement more effective plagiarism checking. Using a search engine to look for sections of a learner's text will not identify plagiarism between learners or between year groups.

It was recommended that where work is generated independently, the learners sign a declaration.

Criterion 4.6: Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements.

Evidence of candidates' work was accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements in most centres.

In one centre, following the assessment of all three stages of the graded unit, a meeting takes place, involving other curriculum staff, and led by the assessor. This review forms part of this centre's internal verification and is good practice.

There were recommendations this session against criterion 4.6. Examples of recommendations were:

- Record minutes of their standardisation/marking meeting so that the findings could be used to standardise future decisions.
- When grading Music: Graded Unit 2 (DR33 35) the focus should be on the learners' musical experience and skills.
- For Music: Live Performance (F58K 11) it is recommended that the assessor consider making a greater distinction between rehearsal and performance environment, and consider the appropriateness of learners sitting or standing for the sense of occasion.
- For Music: Live Performance (F58K 11) it is recommended that the technical requirements are provided through a standard band stageplan, microphone/DI positioning and list of requirements for performance.
- When recording evidence for Music: Live Performance (F58K 11) it is recommended that the assessor should complete a comments field for each checklist item to detail the extent to which the learner has met, or not met, the requirements.
- The quality of assessment practice and decisions can be enhanced by undertaking cross-marking with another site within the centre, where applicable and possible.
- When using centre-devised instruments of assessment, it is highly recommended to create marking guidelines to accompany these instruments of assessment.
- A reminder that Music: Graded Unit 1 (F508 34) requires a minimum of three audio/visual artefacts in the evidence.

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

In almost all centres candidate evidence was being retained in line with SQA requirements.

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

All centres were effective in disseminating feedback from qualification verifiers to staff and using this to inform assessment practice. In one centre, there is additional support using the centre's systems form to highlight recommendations for the curriculum and quality leader to address with the delivery team. As a result, the centre can track the implementation of improvements, which is good practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ Use of a question bank to standardise interviews for Music: Graded Unit 2 (DR33 35)

- ◆ Team meetings to review the quality of graded unit evidence before internal verification led by assessor
- ◆ Centre system to record and track recommendations by external verifier for curriculum and quality leader to implement
- ◆ Detailed verification records and feedback by internal verifier enhancing the learner experience and facilitating the generation of high-quality evidence
- ◆ Review of curriculum by the curriculum and quality leader to begin addressing issues identified by verification in other curriculum areas
- ◆ Development of staff competency in verification by support from the curriculum and quality leader

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ Wider use of marking guidelines to standardise assessment and focus assessment decisions.
- ◆ Recording of comments next to checklists to detail the extent to which the learner has or has not met the standard.
- ◆ Further use of plagiarism detection software to ensure authenticity.
- ◆ Developing internal verification to ensure continuous improvement.
- ◆ Centres are advised to arrange external verification visits at the first opportunity so that issues can be identified earlier and learners given the chance to remediate, where necessary.
- ◆ It may be useful to revise pre-delivery review schedules to ensure that all assessment related materials and resources are still current.
- ◆ Careful checking of visit plans to ensure that all required evidence is present for the external verification visit.