



Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017
HN Personal Social Development (159)

Introduction

HN verification activity was successful, with almost all centres satisfying verification report criteria. Qualification verifiers were impressed with the high level of commitment of HN assessors to the learning and teaching delivery of programmes. Candidate feedback was very positive indeed about the learning process and candidate assessment responses were consistent with the level of the qualifications. Internal verifiers were consistent in their responses, which contributed to the standardisation of the assessment delivery.

Higher National Units

DE3R 34	Personal Development Planning
DVOM 34	Work Experience
F870 34	Developing the Individual within a Team
F3HT 34	Personal Enterprise Skills
D7HJ 34	Employment Experience 1
DH21 34	Working within a Project Team

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.

(This criterion should be completed for regulated qualifications only.)

This specific criterion is N/A for Higher National Qualification Units. However, qualification verifiers carrying out external verification activity will comment in their report where a centre may show good practice in relation to competence, occupational experience and the requirements of the qualification, if appropriate.

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

Almost all centres provided consistent evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of the assessment environments and equipment. Centre documentation and procedures revealed that risk assessment strategies were in place, as well as regular testing of equipment. There were routine annual checks and periodic checks of assessment environments, which were part of a schedule of risk assessment activities. Staff were able to respond to issues relating to the assessment environment (internally and externally at site locations) as and when situations arose.

Centres make good use of SQA assessment support materials and have confidence in their delivery. Almost all centres create master teaching packs containing a bank of resources, which include reference, learning and assessment materials. There was good evidence of initial and ongoing assessment checks being carried out and recorded using internal audit documentation

eg current unit specification, current assessment instruments, checking for any SQA updates and changes to the qualification, standardisation minutes and actions points, and internal verification sampling.

Almost all centres are aware of the SQA three-stage model of verification whereby assessors and internal verifiers have a pre-planned schedule of assessment and internal verification sampling occurring at HN level.

Centres are well resourced with state-of-the-art technology and equipment which is more than suitable for the delivery of HN qualifications, eg Smartboard technology and access to a range of ICT equipment (such as: phones; tablets; iPads; WiFi; internet and intranet resources). Learning resources were current and provided a wealth of customised formative and summative assessment materials to support HN delivery.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Almost all centres utilise SQA Connect to identify candidate prior achievements to match these against the requirements of the award. Most centres identify candidate development needs at the pre-entry/induction stage, and create an individual (paper-based or electronic) learning plan which follows the learner throughout their learning journey. Some centres have advanced systems in place to record candidate development needs, which are well supported through robust guidance and learner support systems and procedures.

Evidence from qualification verifier reports consistently supports this:

'The centre will run a check on SQA Connect to ascertain the candidate's current achievements. If they have already attained a unit then they will be given RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) for this. If a candidate presents with a development need then this would be discussed at their interview or on induction'.

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

HN Visiting Verification activity revealed candidates do have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress. This varies on an individual basis, as there is a certain amount of leeway given to the self-directed learner, where one might need more support than another.

Almost all centres had a programme schedule which highlighted where regular reviews were being undertaken. This was further evidenced using an individual learning plan (ILP) which was part of an electronic and/or paper-based system within a centre. There was good evidence to show how the ILP was being used to track candidate progress and to identify development needs across the learner journey. Most centres have well developed internal systems and procedures to review candidate progress, and to revise assessment plans accordingly. Assessment plans vary to suit the needs of the candidate and the programme of learning, eg from a one-page ILP to a complex range of information that documents the entire learner journey, including: initial enrolment/induction stage; details of the programme of study; the support provided; referral for a specific need; candidate achievements, including special achievements and post destinations.

Verification reports summed this up accordingly at HN level:

'Candidates have close contact with their assessors within the classroom environment. Feedback is provided both written and orally. Should a candidate have any difficulties completing the unit then flexibility is built in to their programme to accommodate this. Assessment plans would also be adjusted accordingly'.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

From the reports sampled almost all centres have robust internal assessment and verification procedures in place to ensure the standardisation of assessment, for example:

'The centre has a robust verification system in place. All pre-delivery checklists were completed. Standardisation takes place at verification meetings which are held regularly throughout the academic year. All documentation was available. Minutes of meetings were detailed and actions followed up'.

Assessment is being carried out routinely at each stage of the assessment process, eg as and when candidates complete an assessment for a unit. There is a marked shift away from end-of-unit assessment approaches as the current IV processes support ongoing remediation and re-assessment opportunities where appropriate.

Most assessment and IV procedures are well documented prior to external visiting verification activity. SQA qualification verifiers are aware that a centre may have a schedule of verification activity across a three-year cycle and that they cannot expect that verification has been carried out prior to a visit. Centre assessment and internal verification procedures and policy documents were made available and qualification verifiers were able to see the cycle of verification activity within a centre.

There was consistent evidence of scheduled standardisation meetings with the use of decision logs to record decisions made. The internal assessment and verification system and procedures are becoming more consistent and standardised across various sites, where colleges have merged.

'Internal verifiers are verifying the assessors work, commenting on decisions made and referring minor points for the assessors to take note of. This was consistent across all the campuses'.

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

Qualification verifiers routinely confirmed that: centres are 'using the SQA ASPs to record the candidate's evidence and work'. There was some evidence that assessment instruments including the delivery of HN units are moving towards being standardised across the whole centre.

All faculties within a centre have their own working folder which identifies how the units are delivered within that vocational area. Various methods of assessment are being used such as product evidence, questioning and observation.

Centres were keen to use SQA assessment instruments and were confident in their selection and use of these. SQA assessment support packs were routinely in use across a range of providers. Almost all centres had contextualised the assessment support materials to fit into programme delivery. Candidate evidence was of a very high quality as reports indicated that:

‘All work is completed to a high standard by all candidates. Assessors are judging consistently across the whole centre. The majority of assessors are providing supportive and consistent feedback to the candidates. The amount of evidence being produced to support the units is of a good standard.’

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

Qualification verifiers routinely commented that centres ‘ensure that all the work that the candidates produce is their own as the candidates sign a declaration disclaimer form to confirm such during their induction’.

Almost all centres had candidate disclaimers completed while most understood the requirement to ensure that candidates adhered to the assessment conditions. Centre policies and procedures supported the quality assurance requirement to ensure candidate work was not compromised by plagiarism and malpractice. Assessors and internal verifiers were fully aware of policies and procedures to ensure candidate evidence was their own work and were vigilant in this respect.

At HN level almost all centres use ICT software like Turnitin to check candidate assignments for plagiarism and/or any malpractice.

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

Almost all centres consistently and accurately judged candidate performance to SQA’s requirements. The standard of candidate work at HN level was consistently high and revealed well organised folios and detailed reflection on learning experiences, for example one verification report stated:

‘HN folio evidence for the work experience unit was accurately and consistently judged by the assessor. The candidates themselves had recorded the work experience journey with meticulous accounts and provided an honest reflection of their experiences.’

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

Almost all centres retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements, and longer if necessary. Candidate evidence may be retained for longer periods by some centres due to other awarding bodies and/or funding requirements. This can vary from the minimum requirement of three weeks to as much as 3 years.

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

All centres comply with this criterion. Visiting verification reports reveal that centres routinely disseminate reports to staff and these are used to inform assessment practice, for example:

‘Feedback from qualification verifiers is disseminated within the centre whereby the report is printed for discussion. The assessor and internal verifier have a standardisation meeting to discuss the report and any development issues/recommendations.’

Standardisation meetings and decision logs were routinely in use and highlighted areas for improvement as well as good practice. Good practice tends to be highlighted within course teams and curriculum faculties. Most centres upload verification reports to the internal intranet to allow access to the content for all staff.

Areas of good practice report by qualification verifiers

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

Candidate folios for the HN units sampled in visiting verification activity provided a wealth of evidence. Assessor feedback was supportive and detailed, and encouraged candidates to provide analysis, justification and reflection.

One example of good practice was highlighted in the delivery of Employment Experience 1 (D7HJ 34) where the centre supported candidates in using Microsoft PowerPoint presentations for all their course work: ‘The centre encouraged students to prepare all their work and evidence for this unit by utilising Microsoft PowerPoint’.

The delivery of work experience allowed candidates to gain valuable transferable employability skills.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Most centres adopt the SQA preferred model of verification known as the three-stage model. A specific area for development is in the consistency and standardisation of how it is actually implemented.
- ◆ Good practice should be recorded in standardisation minutes and be more widely recognised and discussed within centres.
- ◆ Initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments and equipment should be recorded in standardisation meeting minutes and records.
- ◆ Initial and ongoing reviews of reference, learning and assessment materials should be recorded using internal audit documentation.
- ◆ Assessor verifier awards (both Workplace and non-Workplace) should be more widely encouraged and available to staff to support them in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).