

Research and Information Services

Monitoring Standards Report



## **HND Travel and Tourism (G7MD)**

## Introduction

SQA has been carrying out an annual monitoring standards programme since 1998. The exercise plays a very important role in ensuring that we continue to offer qualifications of a consistently high standard. The process involves scrutinising candidate evidence, assessment material and marking guidelines for the current year and comparing these with archived evidence from a previous year's exercise where available, to judge if standards are being maintained over time. Centres with candidates taking the units in the current sample are asked to submit the work of two candidates who have been awarded a bare pass and whose evidence as far as possible exemplifies the standard for the qualification. HN unit specifications for both the current and comparator years are made available to the scrutiny teams. The panels are chaired by the Senior Verifier (mostly) and the other two members of each group are an experienced verifier and where possible an external specialist from Higher Education or an expert from industry or related sector. The Units scrutinised were:

- ◆ DK07 33 International Tourist Destinations
- ◆ DK04 35 Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism

## 1 Source documents

A revised framework has been adopted since the previous monitoring exercise in 2002. This introduced a small but significant change to the qualification title: from 'HND Travel with Tourism' to 'HND Travel and Tourism'.

However, the main changes relate to the structure of the framework. This has been re-worked to fit in with the new HN design principles and the inclusion of two new Graded Units. Most centres agreed that the Graded Units have made the course more demanding, but that the overall standard remains consistent.

The Units sampled in this exercise had also been re-written.

SQA now provides assessment exemplars which centres can use under secure conditions. This has been the main change to assessment practice. Centres can, however, continue to devise their own instruments of assessment in accordance with the new Unit specifications.

Eight centres, all FE colleges, provided evidence for two candidates for each of the Units. All the submissions were considered.

## **2 Assessment instruments**

Most centres used the assessment exemplars issued by SQA for both Units. The Panel felt that these assessment exemplars were appropriate and well written.

However, for one Unit, the SQA assessments exemplars were the only assessment instruments available. The Panel commented that centres should be encouraged to devise their own assessment instruments in order to assess candidates who have not achieved at the first attempt.

Moreover, where there were alternative assessments, there was very little evidence that any of the alternative assessment instruments had been subject to basic internal verification or to prior verification.

The assessment instruments that were used were sufficiently demanding, taking into account level, industry requirements, and the time allowed for the tasks.

Only in centre-devised Units were assessments integrated across Outcomes.

Apart from one misplaced case there was no evidence of integration across Units.

Assessment documentation which had been developed by centres often omitted either the assessment conditions or the criteria to pass. Whilst it has been assumed that this information was provided for candidates in a verbal form, it is better practice to provide this information in writing.

## **3 Evidence of candidate performance**

Most centres submitted scripts for candidates who were borderline passes or fails. On the whole, the submissions allowed the Panel to judge the performance of candidates.

Where an SQA exemplar had been used as the assessment instrument, the evidence presented by centres was acceptable.. The alternative instruments used by some centres also provided largely appropriate evidence.

Although centres submitted evidence of the internal verification of assessment instruments that had been devised by the centres, there was little evidence that any internal verification of candidate material had taken place.

The presentation of candidate material varied. In most cases the level of presentation was reflected in the final grade. The Panel felt that the decisions made by the majority of centres were accurate and appropriate. However, it was noted that three centres were lenient in gauging candidate performance.

There was evidence of good feedback to candidates — but only in some centres.

There was evidence of re-assessment in one Unit. The re-assessment instruments used were of a required standard.

Overall, the marking was fair and the results correctly reflected the candidates' performance, although there were some examples of both overgenerous and negligent marking (see Appendix).

## **4 Comparing standards over time**

In one Unit the subject matter was largely unchanged and the standard was generally consistent with 2002. However, there were variations in standards, especially where centres used their own instruments of assessment.

The other Unit specification was re-written in 2004 and both the content and Evidence Requirements changed. It is therefore difficult to make comparisons with 2002. (See individual Unit reports in appendix.)

## **5 Conclusions**

Based on the limited evidence of two Units, the Panel concluded that standards are being upheld at the relevant SCQF levels.

The provision of assessment exemplars by SQA has led to greater standardisation across centres. In some centres, additional assessment instruments had been developed which were similar to the exemplar materials. The Panel's main concern (with most centres) was the lack of evidence for either internal verification or prior verification of these assessment instruments.

Where alternative assessment instruments were used, they were generally appropriate. However, in some centres there were differences between the centre-devised and SQA-devised instruments which could affect standards.

The Panel noted that in most cases assessment conditions and criteria for a pass were missing from the assessment instruments provided to candidates — but was aware that centres may have provided this information verbally. This information ensures that candidates are aware of the conditions that apply to each assessment test and of the criteria that they must meet in order to achieve each Outcome.

## **6 Recommendations for centres**

- ◆ Centres should continue to work to improve standards of assessment, including:
  - Providing appropriate feedback for candidates
  - Ensuring that internal verification procedures are in place.
  - Looking at alternative means of assessment, including the possibility of providing video evidence when candidates have made presentations.

## **7 Recommendations for SQA**

- ◆ SQA should provide further detail on the requirement to ‘present to industry standards’.

### **Initial Response**

Unit specifications and assessment exemplars will be revisited as relevant national occupational standards are reviewed. The preference is normally to try and build in more specific detail to assessment exemplars as to do so in unit specifications can date them very quickly.

# Appendix: Unit report

## 1 The Units

Unit	Main Purpose	Candidate Profile	Uptake
<p><b>DK07: International Tourist Destinations</b></p>	<p>The Unit is designed to develop the candidate's knowledge of the principal worldwide tourist destinations and attractions.</p>	<p>These Units are intended for candidates who expect to take up a career in travel and tourism. Candidates are primarily students in colleges who have entered further education directly from schools. Adult returnees have always formed a small percentage of the total number of candidates, whilst EU and overseas students represent a growing market. The Unit is also relevant to those with appropriate work</p>	<p>SQA figures in the Arrangements document for the course indicate that uptake is around 300–400 candidates. Candidates following HND Tourism also take this Unit.</p> <p>This is a mandatory Unit in Travel and Tourism at SCQF level 6.</p>
<p><b>DK04: Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism</b></p>	<p>The Unit is designed to enhance a basic knowledge of marketing by providing the candidate with the opportunity to put theory into practice through the gathering of marketing information and the development of a marketing plan for a travel and tourism business, based on an assessment of the market place.</p>	<p>experience who wish either to formalise their qualifications or progress in travel and tourism.</p>	<p>This is a compulsory Unit in the course. Evidence was sampled from seven presenting centres, all colleges of further education.</p>

## 2 Assessment instruments

<b>DK07: International Tourist Destinations</b>	
<b>Fitness for purpose/ integration</b>	<p>An SQA assessment exemplar is available for this Unit. It is recommended that two assessment instruments are used to generate the required evidence. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a practical mapping and short-answer question, closed-book test</li> <li>◆ open-book practical assignment</li> </ul> <p>All centres sampled used the assessment exemplar issued by SQA.</p> <p>The assessment exemplar integrates assessment across Outcomes 1 and 2. Given the debate in the Conditions of Assessment section below, there would seem to be a possibility for integration with a communications Unit, but there was no evidence that any of the presenting centres had pursued this.</p>
<b>Quality of presentation</b>	<p>The Panel felt that the assessment exemplar was generally very clear and well written.</p>
<b>Level of demand</b>	<p>The Panel felt that the assessment exemplar presented assessment instruments that were sufficiently demanding, taking into account the requirements of industry for candidates at this level and the levelling for the Unit (SCQF level 6).</p>
<b>Conditions of assessment</b>	<p>The Panel observed that conditions of assessment in the assessment exemplar were generally well stated. There was some debate about the skill requirement in Outcome 3, which states that candidates must present information to a standard acceptable to industry. The debate centred on whether the Unit was developing the candidate's knowledge of place, as stated in the purpose of the Unit, or whether communicating this knowledge was equally important. One Panel member felt that where oral and PowerPoint presentations were used, centres should submit video evidence of candidate performance.</p>
<b>Guidance on criteria for pass and validity to PCs and range/summary</b>	<p>There are clear instructions on what to do, including information on pass marks and checklists for the assignment.</p>

<b>DK04: Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism</b>	
<b>Fitness for purpose/ integration</b>	<p>An assessment exemplar is available for this Unit. It is recommended that two assessment instruments are used to generate the required evidence. These are based on a case-study scenario in which candidates are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ collect and analyse marketing information for a travel- or tourism-related business, event or project</li> <li>◆ develop a marketing plan for a travel- or tourism-related business</li> </ul> <p>In most cases, centres have used the assessment exemplar issued by SQA. However, where centres used their own scenario, the standard varied. In one example it was felt that the boundaries of the product as described in the scenario had not been sufficiently clarified — with the result that candidate responses were less focused. Where alternative scenarios had been created, there was no evidence that the centre had requested prior verification.</p> <p>The assessment exemplar integrates assessment across Outcomes 2 and 3 and this had taken place in all presenting centres. The Panel noted one misplaced example of integration with Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 2.</p>
<b>Quality of presentation</b>	<p>The Panel felt that the overall standard of presentation was better than the comparator year (2002) because candidates had better access to information technology and relevant software for producing bar charts, diagrams etc.</p>
<b>Level of demand</b>	<p>In the Panel’s opinion, the level of demand of the Unit has not changed. Areas for concern arise mainly where centres have used their own assessment instruments.</p>
<b>Conditions of assessment</b>	<p>On the whole, centres do not give details of either the assessment conditions or the criteria to pass. Whilst it has been assumed that this information is provided for candidates in a verbal form, it would be good practice to provide this information in writing.</p>
<b>Guidance on criteria for pass and validity to PCs and range/summary</b>	<p>There are clear instructions on what to do, but centres did not provide sufficient guidance on how the assessment would be marked.</p>



### 3 Evidence of candidate performance

<b>Overall</b>	
<b>Examples of good assessment practice/summary</b>	<p>Centres have followed SQA procedures correctly in delivering this Unit. One centre appeared to have delivered the closed-book test online, which the Panel considered to be particularly good practice because the pictorial images in the test were very sharp and presented in colour (in contrast to the black and white copy from one centre in which the images were very unclear). This of course assumes that the centre carried out the test in a secure environment.</p>
<b>Comparison over time</b>	<p>The International Tourist Destinations Unit specification was re-written in 2004 and both the content and Evidence Requirements have changed. It is therefore difficult to make comparisons with 2002.</p> <p>The previous Unit was very open and generated an enormous variety of responses. The new Unit generates specific evidence which is easier to mark, enables comparisons between centres and is, therefore, more useful in helping to identify a national standard. However, it is levelled at SCQF 6 whereas the previous Unit was probably level 7.</p> <p>The introduction of a clause in the SQA assessment exemplar which permits remediation (as opposed to re-assessment) in the closed-book test has certainly made the Unit a lot easier for candidates and helps, perhaps, explain why there were no alternative instruments of assessment submitted.</p> <p>Although the Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism Unit was updated in 2004, the standard is generally consistent with that in 2002 as the subject matter is the same. However, as stated above, there were variations in standards especially where centres used their own scenarios.</p>

<b>DK07: International Tourist Destinations</b>	
<p><b>Accuracy of assessment decisions</b></p>	<p>Centres submitted scripts for candidates who were mainly borderline passes or fails, although one centre submitted work for two very good candidates. The evidence presented by centres was very mixed and the Panel noted that candidates who had performed very well in the first task often performed poorly in the assignments and vice versa.</p> <p>The Panel felt that three of the presenting centres were rating their candidates' performance too highly.</p> <p>All centres managed to get their candidates through the closed-book test without the need for re-assessment. Although an element of remediation is permitted, it is unlikely that every candidate will pass at the first attempt. Centres should have a second test prepared for this eventuality. One centre had incorrectly added up the marks awarded in the closed-book test, which indicates lack of internal verification or cross-checking.</p> <p>It was also noted that in the assignment some centres passed candidates who had not ensured that their presentations matched the needs of the customer.</p>
<p><b>Consistency of application of standards</b></p>	<p>The Panel observed that the application of standards was very variable in marking the assignments. One Panel member noted the use of an inappropriate level of 'cut and paste' in the assignment presentations. Another member expressed concern about differing standards arising through different methods of presentation (as identified in 2.4 above) and felt there should be video evidence of actual delivery.</p> <p>The requested internal verification documentation was missing from some submissions.</p>

<b>DK04: Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism</b>	
<b>Accuracy of assessment decisions</b>	<p>As requested, centres submitted scripts for candidates who were mainly borderline passes or fails, although one centre submitted work for two very good candidates. The evidence presented by centres was fairly standard where the SQA assessment exemplar had been used as the assessment instrument, but standards varied where centres had used their own scenarios.</p> <p>The Panel felt that three of the presenting centres were rating their candidates' performance too highly.</p>
<b>Consistency of application of standards</b>	<p>The Panel observed that the application of standards was variable. The requested internal verification documentation was missing from some submissions but that is not to say that it hasn't been carried out.</p>