



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Applied Sciences**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National Qualifications in this subject.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DJ89 34: Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1

DW8J 35: Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 2

General comments

Five external verification visits were carried out by the team this academic session, with four of the visits relating to Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (DJ89 34) and one of the visits relating to Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 2 (DW8J 35).

Centres that were verified had a clear understanding of the standards required, the visits were successful and no major issues were identified. Learner submissions were generally of a high or very high standard.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The current Unit specifications were in use, instruments of assessment were fully compliant with the requirements of the Unit specification, and assessment instruments were valid and reliable.

All of the assessment specifications had been internally verified; the revised marking scheme (Graded Unit 1) was in use at all of the centres visited. There was a good grasp of the expected standard by both assessors and internal verifiers. Final grades were arrived at through discussion between assessors and internal verifiers. All of the centres operated documented appeals procedures.

Evidence Requirements

In general, External Verifiers were in complete agreement with the marks and grades awarded to learners at all centres sampled. Second marking of scripts (internal verification) was universally applied.

The reluctance of learners to take on any analysis and interpretation in the development section of the project was an issue. This remains the main factor in learners failing to achieve top grades.

Administration of assessments

All assessments verified were administered in line with the requirements of the Unit specification and SQA guidance. Centres generally had a good understanding of the levels required for the grading of learners. Records of learner achievement were retained as required, and internal verification policies and procedures were available in course documentation — master folders. Generally, internal course teams met on a regular basis to monitor learner progress and undertake standardisation activities.

General feedback

Assessments were appropriate, the marking fair, equitable, reliable and consistent. Learner feedback was evident on all marked scripts. This was timely, helpful and appropriate. The aspect of the authenticity of learner evidence remains a minor issue and it is being systematically addressed by all centres visited through a variety of approaches.

Areas of good practice

The External Verifiers' comments in relation to good practice are included below:

- ◆ The allocation of the final grade was based not only on the arithmetical summation of marks for each component but based on the application of the SQA criteria for the Unit. Each learner's script clearly indicated the justification of the final grade
- ◆ Excellent, timely and comprehensive learner feedback at all stages of report preparation
- ◆ Projects submitted were of a high or very high standard
- ◆ Helpful annotation of scripts with the grading criteria reference numbers
- ◆ New members of staff were well supported in the delivery and assessment of the Unit by experienced staff members
- ◆ A pre-Unit checklist is completed annually prior to Unit delivery; this includes a review of any issues that have been identified during the previous delivery phase of the Unit
- ◆ Good use was made of the Presentation Skills in Science Unit (DG70 34). Learners used this Unit to outline their project topic — this is subject to peer and staff feedback and it has assisted learners in shaping the scope of their final project
- ◆ Evidence was presented of internal verification across the learner range
- ◆ The internal verification process was used to support a new member of staff who was delivering the Unit for the first time
- ◆ An appeal was resolved through the internal verification process, with two staff members looking at the grounds for the appeal and the manner in which it was resolved
- ◆ Good use of anti-plagiarism software
- ◆ Documented feedback meetings with a summary of learner discussions
- ◆ Good use was made of the centre's VLE for course delivery/recording
- ◆ Centres ensuring that new members of staff are fully briefed as to SQA requirements in Unit delivery
- ◆ Excellent quality control throughout the qualification pre-delivery process

Specific areas for improvement

The External Verifiers' comments in relation to area for improvement are included below:

- ◆ Centres should ensure that more time is devoted to analysing and interpreting data
- ◆ Centres should ensure that the marks awarded by the internal verifier are recorded as well as the initial assessors' marks on the marking schedule
- ◆ Centres should develop a learner declaration form regarding anti-plagiarism, that is signed by the learner
- ◆ Centres should ensure appropriate use is made of anti-plagiarism software