



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Biology**

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

Higher National Units

Titles/levels of HN Units verified:

DJ1K 34 Cell Biology: Theory and Practice

DP4L 34 Animal Biology

DP4M 34 Plant Biology

DP4P 34 Genetics

F3SJ 34 Biology: An Introduction

F3X2 34 Classification and Identification of Organisms

General comments

Two external verification visits were carried out by the team this academic session.

Centres that were verified had a clear understanding of the standards required. The visits were successful and no major issues were identified.

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.

Exemplar assessment instruments were being used, and locally devised assessment instruments were consistent with national standards.

Evidence Requirements

In general, External Verifiers were in complete agreement with the marks and grades awarded to learners at all centres sampled. Internal assessors and verifiers had a good understanding of the Evidence Requirements for each of the Units that were verified.

Administration of assessments

Assessment procedures were fully documented and implemented to meet SQA requirements. Evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments, procedures, equipment and materials were available at all centres sampled. All of the centres sampled recorded standardisation activities between assessors, and outcomes of external quality assurance exercises were disseminated to appropriate staff.

General feedback

Assessments were appropriate and the marking was fair, equitable, reliable and consistent. All centres sampled took appropriate steps to ensure that assessment

evidence was the learners' own work, with open-book assessments subject to anti-plagiarism software.

Areas of good practice

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

- ◆ The use of a secure SharePoint database ensured high levels of document control and file sharing. This ensured that staff deployed robust assessment and internal verification/quality assurance processes as all approved users had access to current assessments, records of verification, learning and teaching materials and standardisation records.
- ◆ Learners were positive and enthusiastic about the course, resources, enthusiasm and competence of lecturers. Learners were confident that success would enable them to articulate to further studies.

Specific areas for improvement

No specific areas for improvement were identified during the external verification visits undertaken this academic year.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DP50 35 Applied Biological Sciences: Graded Unit 2

General comments

One external verification visit was carried out by the team this academic session. The centre had a clear understanding of the standards required, the visit was successful and no major issues were identified.

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.

Evidence Requirements

In general, the External Verifier was in complete agreement with the marks and grades awarded to learners. The centre sampled took appropriate steps to ensure that assessment evidence was the learners' own work.

Administration of assessments

Assessment procedures were fully documented and implemented to meet SQA requirements. Evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments, procedures, equipment and materials was available at the centre sampled. Outcomes of external quality assurance exercises were disseminated to appropriate staff.

General feedback

Learners' development needs and prior achievements were matched against the requirements of the Group Award.

Areas of good practice

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

- ◆ Learners were positive and enthusiastic about the course, the level of supervision and how the Graded Unit had developed their confidence in undertaking scientific research. The Graded Unit developed practical skills at a high level in unfamiliar and original contexts. Learners were confident that achieving a good grade in their Graded Unit would enable them to articulate to further studies.

Specific areas for improvement

No specific areas for improvement were identified during the external verification visits in academic session 2014–15.