



**Higher National Qualifications 2011  
Internal Assessment Report  
Business Management**

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

# Higher National Units

## General comments

The centres selected for external verification in the main demonstrated a good understanding of the standards required. This was the first year that new Units from the revised HN Business framework (2010) were available and centres need to ensure that, as they adopt these Units, they scrutinise the new Unit specifications — particularly in relation to the mandatory aspects contained within the Statement of Standards: Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills and Evidence Requirements.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The majority of centres visited were using Units from the 2004 Business framework. Assessors were in the main familiar with the most up-to-date Unit specifications and mostly used the SQA-produced assessment exemplars. SQA occasionally updates Unit specifications and assessment exemplars. It is therefore essential that centres regularly check for such changes. It would be prudent that a check is made and recorded at the time that each Unit passes through the pre-delivery phase of the internal verification process. Centres should also be alert to changes made during the academic session.

## Evidence Requirements

It is important that staff involved in delivery and verification regularly refer back to the Unit specifications to refresh understanding of the Standards and Evidence Requirements. It is vital that centres match each assessment exemplar against the requirements in the corresponding Unit specification, to ensure that candidates will have the opportunity to generate the necessary evidence that will meet all of the Evidence Requirements at the appropriate standard. A record of this process should be recorded in the pre-delivery phase of internal verification. All assessments, whether SQA-produced assessment exemplars or not, must be put through this scrutiny at internal verification. This is an essential quality check that should identify any potential issues prior to delivery, and such issues should be recorded and acted upon.

## Administration of assessments

The vast majority of centres use the SQA-produced assessment exemplars. Some centres do create their own alternative assessments and where this is the case it is highly recommended that locally devised assessments are submitted to SQA for prior verification. It is hoped that changes to the prior verification process will in future allow centres to share locally devised assessments if they wish to do so. This would allow centres greater choice and is likely to highlight opportunities for the integration of assessments between Units. The benefits of this change are entirely dependent on centres opting to share assessments that successfully pass through prior verification.

## Further general feedback

There were some excellent examples of feedback provided to candidates, which is to be commended. Access to assessment was in line with relevant legislation and there were no apparent barriers.

## **Areas of good practice**

During the course of this year's verification visits a number of areas of good practice were identified. In some instances in internal verification, problems or ambiguities in assessments were recorded and corrective action was noted. Also in internally verifying candidate evidence there were occasional differences of opinion noted, along with an explanation of how matters were resolved. It was refreshing to see that where discussion was merited it is taking place and being recorded. This adds a reassuring transparency to the internal verification process and validates internal verification as a quality check.

Feedback given to candidates was often comprehensive and very helpful. This can be time consuming and it is appreciated that under continuing pressures within education that detailed feedback is commonly being provided to candidates.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Centres need to continue with their efforts in applying the appropriate standard when assessing candidate evidence. Care needs to be taken when adopting the Units in the new 2010 HN framework to ensure that the correct requirements are identified. Continuing care must be taken in judging the suitability of assessments regardless of whether they are SQA-produced assessment exemplars or locally devised. There is a continuing need for centres to identify and distinguish between situations that merit remediation versus undertaking a full second assessment. This is particularly important as more centres start to adopt the new frameworks where the mode of assessment and assessment conditions are in many instances more flexible.