Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
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 and visited this year showed signs that the impact of regionalisation was starting to settle. Whilst staffing profiles had changed significantly there was a high degree of success with qualification verification. Some changes are continuing and systems and procedures will continue to be standardised across sites in the newly merged centres. 2014–15 has been a period where there has been little change with regard to SQA's approach to quality assurance and centres have generally adapted well to evidencing the criteria in the system.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The success at external verification events supports the view that assessors and centres are familiar with the Unit specifications, the ASPs and the associated standards. During the visits, staff were generally comfortable with the delivery of the Units and the methods of assessment. The greatest challenge is ensuring that there is parity in the interpretation of standards and assessment approaches across different sites and between different staff delivering the same Units.

It is important that staff continue to refer back to the Unit specifications to maintain a reference point for the Evidence Requirements and the standard associated with the Units and the SCQF levels. Where staffing has been affected centres will have to continue to ensure that all staff, especially new staff, are given suitable information, guidance and support.

Evidence Requirements

Centres and staff had a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements in each of the Units that were externally verified. Maintaining consistency between staff is crucial and whilst some centres are holding appropriate standardisation events it is still an area where more might be done at some centres.

External verification identified positive feedback from learners about the level of support and guidance that centres and staff provide.

Administration of assessments

All centres are reported as organising and assessing candidates in accordance with the requirements set out in the Unit specifications. Some discussion took place regarding word counts in some Units, and unless they are specified under the Evidence Requirements section within the Unit specification the word counts are advisory and/or guidance. As such there is a degree of flexibility.

Centres need to maintain a check to ensure the authenticity of project work and oral checks may help in this area. Some centres used anti-plagiarism software as

part of the authentication process and also used the grading form in Turnitin for feedback.

General feedback

The verification reports and discussions with candidates indicate that there were some excellent examples of feedback, which is very valuable for candidates seeking to improve performance. Feedback can be time consuming to create and centres continue to build on past good practice in this area.

Areas of good practice

The increasing use of electronic authenticity checkers is a positive development. Centres are also increasingly providing feedback in electronic format as well as using electronic submissions as a means of increasing control over the timely submission of assessments. The quality of the feedback continues to evidence that centres and staff are investing in this important vehicle that allows candidates to reflect on current performance and make progress in improving future submissions.

Specific areas for improvement

Whilst using a recognised form of referencing and citations is not a mandatory requirement, their adoption and use when appropriate is an area where encouragement needs to be maintained for work undertaken out of class. This is really an ongoing effort and the large numbers of candidates progressing to study at degree level makes it particularly important to maintain the progress that has been made in this area.

As stated in past reports, areas for improvement are more about maintaining current efforts. For example, continuing to make checks on plagiarism is in effect a task which requires being undertaken each year. The security of all assessments again continues to be very important.